FAITH AND REASON IN THE THEOLOGY OF HENRY NELSON WIEMAN

by

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ABSTRACT

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Henry Nelson Wieman attempts a radical reconstruction in theology comparable to that attempted by John Dewey in philosophy. Theology is to be transformed into an empirical science. If the function of theology is not merely to edify, it must concern itself with matters of fact. Idle metaphysical speculation must be replaced with statements that are empirically verifiable. Statements not so verifiable are condemned as useless for theological purposes.

Fundamental to this undertaking is Wieman's position in regard to faith and reason. While he assigns an important role to faith, faith is not to be construed as a way of knowing. Faith is a matter of self-commitment, and such commitment is vitally important in the creation of new hypotheses. But these hypotheses must always be subjected to the tests of reason, and reason is essentially a matter of empirical verification. Such hypotheses can be known to be true only after the tests of reason have been scrupulously applied. There is no immediate way of knowing that can dispense with these tests and checking procedures. Religious faith becomes a very potent source of evil when not directed by

the most reliable knowledge available. We are never, Wieman argues, to believe anything we do not know.

The problem of this dissertation is to determine whether Wieman's theology represents the empirical reconstruction for which he argues. Wieman maintains that his theology is formulated in such a way as to be capable of empirical verification and that his conclusions are in fact supported by the most reliable scientific evidence. Are these claims substantiated?

A careful analysis of the structure and content of Wieman's theology reveals a number of serious tensions in his thought. While he develops a theory of inquiry that may legitimately be regarded as scientific, he contradicts this in his view of specifically religious inquiry. While he constructs a reasonably coherent naturalistic theory of value, there is implicit in his thinking another theory of value that repudiates this. These conflicts culminate in his conclusions as to the proper object of religious faith. While he does construct the outlines for an empirical notion of God, our ultimate commitment is not to this. Our ultimate commitment is to that which goes beyond all human understanding.

We conclude that Wieman's theology does not represent the empirical reconstruction for which he argues. His theology rests on the basis of certain unquestioned beliefs that are not supported by empirical evidence. Indeed, some of these are clearly not empirically verifiable. Faith in the sense of believing what goes beyond the evidence is operative here. The basis for these beliefs is not to be found in terms of any cognitive support, but in terms of a mystic vision.

These beliefs seriously compromise Wieman's entire enterprise.

While his theological conclusions certainly involve some radical innovations, this is not due simply to his commitment to a scientifically oriented methodology. Even his treatment of method is compromised by his mystic vision. The scientific and mystic strands of Wieman's thought do not form a coherent system.

While Wieman never repudiates his claim that there is no immediate way of knowing, these beliefs are the functional equivalents. They provide the foundation upon which Wieman constructs his theology.

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INTRODUCTION

Henry Nelson Wieman attempts a radical reconstruction in theology comparable to Dewey's radical reconstruction in philosophy. Theology is to be transformed into an empirical science. If the function of theology is not merely to edify, it must concern itself with matters of fact. Idle metaphysical speculation must be replaced with statements that are empirically verifiable. When Wieman is talking theory of knowledge, he comes very close to espousing the verifiability principle of meaning associated with logical positivism.

It is this emphasis that has led many to regard Wieman as one of the most tough-minded empiricists to engage in the theological enterprise. Typically, those who subscribe to the above principles are not concerned to transform theology, but to abolish it.

A frequent criticism of Wieman is that his methodology is much too restrictive to permit a discernment of all those most important and subtle truths that constitute the subject matter of theology. God is not an object--certainly not an object that can be discerned on the basis of sensory observation. While theology need not contradict the findings of empirical science, these truths need to be supplemented by knowledge acquired in a different way. Theology is primarily concerned with revealed truths.

While Wieman assigns an important role to faith, this is not to be construed as a way of knowing. There is no necessary conflict between

faith and reason, but we must have a correct understanding of what each is. Faith is a matter of committing oneself to something, and such commitment is vitally important in the creation of new hypotheses. But these hypotheses must always be submitted to the tests of reason, and reason is largely a matter of empirical verification. Such hypotheses can be known to be true only after the tests of reason have been scrupulously applied. There is no immediate way of knowing that can dispense with these tests and checking procedures.

We are never to believe anything we do not know. While Wieman is clearly in the tradition of American pragmatism, he vigorously attacks the voluntarism associated with William James. Much, if not most, religion has been evil; and a primary reason for this is that it has been devised merely to edify, to provide comfort to the believer. The dynamics of faith must be directed by the most reliable knowledge that is obtainable. The will to believe becomes a very potent source of evil when not constrained by empirical evidence.

The thesis for which I shall argue is that Wieman, as theologian, is a man of faith; not merely in the sense of being committed, but in the sense of believing certain propositions that are not supported by empirical evidence--in any scientific sense of 'evidence.' While there is some justification for regarding Wieman as a tough-minded empiricist, this is at a superficial level. At a "deeper" level, the theological level, there are some fundamental beliefs that are not only not empirically verified, but are empirically unverifiable. The dynamic force of these beliefs on Wieman's thought is not to be explained in terms of any cognitive support, but in terms of a mystic vision.

These beliefs seriously compromise Wieman's entire enterprise to reconstruct theology along scientific lines. While Wieman's theological conclusions certainly involve radical innovations, this is not due to his rigorous application of a scientifically oriented methodology. Even his treatment of method is compromised by his mystic vision. The bold new program for a radical reconstruction in theology dies a death by a thousand qualifications.

While Wieman never repudiates his claim that there is no immediate way of knowing, these beliefs are the functional equivalents for an immediate way of knowing. They provide the foundation upon which Wieman constructs his theology. Without these first principles, Wieman would be merely a consistent, though interesting, naturalist.

CHAPTER I

FAITH AND KNOWLEDGE

Henry Nelson Wieman's first book, Religious Experience and Scientific Method, was published in 1926, the same year as the Scopes trial. Here Wieman boldly calls for the use of scientific methods in theology. Rather than retreating from science and claiming that religion is not concerned with factual truths, he argues that religion urgently demands the clearest and most precise knowledge that can be had, and that this is only available through the use of scientific methods. Of course the Bible is largely myth, but the Biblical writers were attempting to get at something of great importance. However, they were clearly mistaken about many things in their prescientific thinking. The task of theology is not to recapture and systematize some truths that were had in ancient times, but to develop and employ techniques of inquiry that are at least analogous to those that have proven so successful in the physical sciences. While the Bible may provide useful insights and hypotheses, the subject of our inquiry is not a history of ideas about God, but God. What Wieman calls for is a scientific investigation of God.

The heretical thing, the really shocking thing, about this book was that it seemed to put the faith of our fathers entirely under the judgment of science. If one maintains that religion is vitally concerned with factual truths, how can one hand over the faith in this wholesale

way to science? Is there no room in Wieman's theology for faith at all?

Wieman has always maintained that these sorts of criticisms rest upon a confusion. If we have a proper understanding of what faith is and what knowledge is, we shall see that there need be no conflict between faith and knowledge. A commitment to scientific method is in no way inconsistent with having a dynamic religious faith. Indeed, it is the utilization of such scientific methods that is to provide the Intellectual Foundations of Faith.

In this section we shall be concerned with an analysis of Wieman's general view as to the relationship between faith and knowledge. While much of his discussion of faith is tied in with his views as to the proper content of faith, we shall here focus upon the dynamics of faith, i.e., faith considered from a psychological point of view.

While Wieman has given various characterizations of faith, the emphasis throughout is upon commitment. When Robert Calhoun asked in 1937 whether Wieman considered faith less sure than knowledge, Wieman replied by saying, in effect, that the question is misguided. If faith is conceived as the act of committing one's self to something, the question whether it is less or more certain than knowledge is a category mistake.

To illustrate his view Wieman contends, "If I have knowledge that a certain man is trustworthy, that alone is not faith. But if I commit myself to that judgment by leaving a child in his keeping and go off without anxiety, that is faith. The knowledge that he is trustworthy does not become any less certain when it becomes faith. What makes it faith is not the element of uncertainty but the element of self-commitment. Faith which is noble and good is knowledge plus self-

commitment."[1] Since Wieman is concerned with not confusing knowledge and faith, I think it would be clearer had he said "self-commitment plus knowledge," but this is not crucial.

What Wieman is contending here, as he continues to do, is that faith is logically distinct from any notion of belief in a proposition. Faith, considered as an act of commitment, is a very different sort of thing from believing that a proposition is true. However, our faith ought to be guided by knowledge. The function of knowledge here is to inform us as to what our commitment ought to be directed. We should never, apparently, commit ourselves to anything we do not know.

But we need to note that immediately following, Wieman adds, "There is a further factor in faith. Any concrete thing, whether it be a pebble on the beach or God in the universe, is always far deeper and more many-sided than any knowledge we can have of it. Therefore, when we commit ourselves to it in the light of our surest knowledge, we are committing ourselves to something that is bound to do things to us that we cannot foresee."[2]

This second factor, which is again an enduring feature of Wieman's notion of faith, recognizes the limitations of our knowledge. As we shall see later, knowledge always involves an abstraction from the complex richness of any existing reality. Thus, our knowledge inevitably falls far short of a complete and adequate explanation or even description of the object in question. Thus, "A worthy faith is knowledge plus commitment plus the recognition that our knowledge is not complete. Such faith does not require any belief that goes beyond knowledge."[3]

This last statement seems clearly false to Calhoun. In his reply

he argues "If I actively trust anyone, even my closest friend, such action does require 'belief that goes beyond knowledge!'"[4] When Wieman added his second factor Calhoun thought Wieman really did recognize that faith must go beyond knowledge. In any case, Calhoun concludes that "Faith in God seems to me necessarily to go beyond all that I can possibly know."[5]

Wieman takes it that Calhoun "is saying that one must have beliefs which go beyond knowledge in order to have a faith which gives deep peace, buoyancy and mastery over circumstance, as great religious faith always does." But this is not Wieman's position, for he says, "I hold exactly the opposite view. I hold that a conquering and indestructible faith does not depend on any belief which is less sure than our surest knowledge. A faith that depends on some belief that is shaky is not more secure than that belief. I do not need to form speculative and analogical beliefs about matters deep-hidden in the keeping of God in order to live in perfect peace with God."[6]

Wieman's argument here with Calhoun contains the nucleus of the tension that runs throughout all his thought concerning faith. On the one hand, we are to commit ourselves only to what we know; on the other to what we do not know. Wieman wants first of all to make a sharp distinction between faith as the act of committing one's self from faith in the sense of believing something which goes beyond the evidence. As an act of commitment faith may be directed or guided, that is, given content, in a number of ways. One may commit oneself on the basis of certain beliefs derived from tradition without any criticism, one may commit oneself blindly on the basis of authority, one may allow one's commitment

to be guided by "inner experience" etc. On this view, then, one's faith may be reasonable or unreasonable. That one makes a commitment on the basis of evidence does not make it any the less a matter of faith.

Here we have been talking about what may be called the life of faith, that is, the role of commitment in the practice of religion. Wieman, however, wants to make a sharp distinction between the function of religion and that of theology or philosophy of religion. Faith is the crucial element in religious living. Religion is not a matter of cognition or reason, it is a vital matter of commitment. It is, however, a matter of great concern that we commit ourselves to that which is worthy of such commitment.

The function of reason is to determine what is worthy of our ultimate commitment. This is not, apparently, the work of religious living, but of theology. While as we shall see when we investigate his view of the method of scientific inquiry, faith has a function to play in inquiry, this is not a matter of revealing certain truths. As he argues, commitment in some sense is necessary in coming up with new insights or hypotheses; however, faith is not involved in the testing or verification of such hypotheses. That one is passionately committed to the truth of a proposition does not in any way make that proposition true. Now there are difficulties even here in Wieman's position, but this we shall examine in connection with his methodology.

In the practice of religion can we devote ourselves in an absolute commitment of faith solely to what we know? Part of the difficulty in Wieman's dispute with Calhoun is that neither party devotes any attention to an analysis of what is meant by 'go beyond' when they argue about

whether faith goes beyond what we know. Presumably, Calhoun is claiming that all acts of self-commitment require beliefs and that these beliefs involve statements, not that contradict what we know, but cannot be adequately supported in terms of the evidence we have available. They involve what James would regard as overbeliefs. Wieman seems to be arguing that we do not need such overbeliefs in order to commit ourselves.

Wieman does, however, insist that all our knowledge is limited; and in two ways. First of all, all knowing involves an abstraction from the concretely given in experience. As we shall see later, this involves a selection and simplification of the rich content of experience. Thus, no item of knowledge expressed in propositional form can do justice to all the data of experience. Secondly, all knowledge of existing things is a matter of probability. It is always subject to revision in the light of new evidence. It is always fallible.

In the light of this view as to the nature of knowledge can we make a commitment solely on the basis of what we know? Now what sort of question is this? What sense of 'can' is involved here? Inasmuch as we are comparing actions with knowledge, 'can' cannot refer to logical possibility. An action in no case can involve a self-contradiction. We must be asking about whether it is psychologically possible to commit oneself solely on the basis of what one knows.

Wieman argues here that one can commit oneself without any beliefs whatsoever. But what is a belief? If we regard a belief as the spring of action, that is, as a disposition to act in a certain way in a specified situation, then all actions involve belief. On this view the relation between actions and beliefs is analytic. We determine what a

person believes by observing how he acts. The fundamental question, though, is not a matter of 'belief'. Wieman's point is that one should not claim to know what he doesn't know. Beliefs tend to escalate psychologically into knowledge claims.

But is not knowledge also a disposition? Don't we get at what a person knows by observing how he acts? What is the difference between belief and knowledge? On Wieman's view knowledge is belief plus good reasons to support that belief. Thus, what he is claiming is that we should commit ourselves only when we have good reasons for the beliefs that govern such commitments. There is no sharp distinction between beliefs and knowledge, since all knowledge involves probabilities. But at some point when we have "pretty good" reasons to support our belief we are entitled to call it an item of knowledge.

While Wieman seems to be taking an extreme intellectualist position here, one needs to keep in mind that he does not mean that 'knowledge' entails absolute certainty. Knowledge is what we might call reasonable belief, or belief supported by good reasons. If one's actions are governed by what one knows, then one is not operating on the basis of mere belief; although it would be odd to claim that one does not believe what one knows. The point, however, is that in this case one has something better than mere belief. One can, Wieman argues, make a commitment without forming any beliefs that involve propositions that are unsupported by the evidence.

A religious commitment, however, is not just a commitment; it is, Wieman insists, an ultimate commitment. While one might agree that one can make some commitments without forming beliefs that go beyond the

evidence, can one make an ultimate commitment with this restriction? Well, what is meant by 'ultimate commitment?'

Unfortunately, all of Wieman's discussions of ultimate commitment are in the context of his own conclusions regarding what ought to be the object of our commitment. Sometimes he argues that a commitment is not ultimate unless it is directed to what he, Wieman, takes to be ultimate. It is on this ground that other theologians such as Tillich are accused of being idolatrous. But he also uses 'ultimate' in a psychological sense to distinguish a certain mode of being committed. It is this latter sense that we are here concerned to examine.

While nowhere does Wieman engage in any extensive analysis of 'ultimate commitment,' by noting what he says in various places we can, I think, come to some understanding of what he intends to designate by this phrase.

In Man's Ultimate Commitment Wieman says, "Faith is the act by which the individual commits himself in the wholeness of his being so far as he can to what he believes will transform man as he cannot transform himself to save him from evil and endow him with the greatest good, provided that he meet the required conditions."[7] The context makes it clear that he is talking of religious faith; consequently, he is referring to an ultimate commitment. We note here three characteristics of such a commitment: (1) One "commits himself in the wholeness of his being so far as he can," (2) the object of such a commitment promises to "save him from evil," and (3) it promises to "endow him with the greatest good."

Concerning (1) an ultimate commitment is wholehearted. However we conceive of the human personality, (id, ego, super-ego; or reason,

spirit and appetite) an ultimate commitment is a unified act. It involves no inner conflict. One has no reservations, conscious or unconscious.

Wieman's second point is that such a commitment promises to save one from evil. While we shall discuss this later, what Wieman has in mind here is the despair and meaninglessness so much discussed by the existentialists today.

Thirdly, such a commitment promises "the greatest good." Is this ultimate good? Not, I think, in any metaphysical sense. What is promised is not eternal beatitude, but rather the greatest good that is possible for a man at this time in history.

In commenting upon the passage we have cited above, Wieman claims, "What has just been said about faith can be put in more conventional language by saying that faith means to accept the Saviour as Lord and Master. These words immediately suggest a very popular and conventional form of Christianity. But the same words apply to all forms of religion when 'Saviour' refers to <u>whatever</u> the individual may believe has the power to save from evil and when 'accepting as Lord and Master' means to give priority over all else in one's daily life to the demands of this saving agency."[8]

Thus, we can add another characteristic of an ultimate commitment: (4) it takes precedence over every other priority. I don't think anything is added by "in one's daily life." A commitment is ultimate only if it takes priority over all other commitments. This supposes we may have a number of commitments, but if we have an ultimate one it is ultimate just in the sense that all other ones are to be judged in terms of this one

commitment. All the others are subservient to it, and presumably are justifiable only on the basis of what is commanded by our ultimate commitment.

If we look at what Wieman said previously in The Source of Human Good, we see much the same view. "Religious faith is basically an act -- the act of giving oneself into the keeping of what commands faith, to be transformed by it, and to serve it above all."[9] While this is related to (1) above, I think there is an additional element here. One gives oneself. An ultimate commitment requires nothing less than one's whole self. "All habits, interests, and structures of personality are thus condemned when they hinder the living of the life demanded."[10] Thus, we may add (5) An ultimate commitment demands complete self-surrender.

But what are the criteria for determining the limits, if any, of one's commitment? How are we to go about determining the completeness of one's commitment? What is the test of ultimacy here? We frequently take it that if a man is willing to risk his life for something, then this is an absolute commitment. What are you willing to die for if need be? Is this not a way of determining what, if anything, is ultimate for the individual? And if he is, as a matter of fact, willing to give up his life for this, is this not then an ultimate commitment? Can any man give more? Is this not all we have and in that sense ultimate?

Of course, it may in some cases be as difficult and demanding to commit one's life to something as one's death. But in either case one is giving his life; either in continual and whole-hearted devotion until the end, or by sacrificing his life now.

However, is this the absolute limit for testing one's commitment? It seems I might be willing to give my life for some cause, but still not willing to sacrifice the lives of others for such a cause. Would not my commitment be "more ultimate" if I were willing to sacrifice not merely my own life but e.g., the life of my son whom I love. Is this not the paradigm case of an ultimate commitment? God gave his only beloved son. Abraham was willing to sacrifice Isaac -- again his only son whom he loved deeply.

Of course it is crucial here that one love one's son greatly. A general may be quite willing to risk the lives of thousands of other men's sons for some cause, but this hardly tests the ultimacy of his commitment. Is he willing to risk the life of his only beloved son in the engagement?

While I think it is difficult to set up criteria of a specific sort to test the ultimacy of an individual's commitment, still if a commitment is indeed ultimate then one is presumably prepared to sacrifice whatever is demanded -- period.

Does an ultimate commitment than entail that we be prepared to sacrifice human reason? Wieman certainly would want to deny this. If we note what he says about committing ourselves only to what we know, then a commitment may be ultimate without entailing that we give up reason. Presumably, we are prepared to sacrifice whatever we know is demanded. To hold fast to what we know, and this is a matter of human reason for Wieman, cannot be considered a limitation on the ultimacy of our commitment. To suggest otherwise is merely to deal in paradoxes.

Indeed, one of Wieman's central concerns is to show that there is something worthy of our ultimate commitment; and 'show' is a matter of

appealing to human reason. The problem here, however, is not merely a matter of determining what is worthy of our ultimate commitment, but also of determining whether anything is so worthy. In contrast to Paul Tillich, Wieman denies the universality of religious faith. It simply is not the case that all men have an ultimate commitment to something or other. Rather than an age of faith, we are living in an age of disillusionment. To this writer Wieman's view here seems much more consistent with our present experience than that of Tillich.

One does, of course, have to decide how to live one's life; this is a forced option. A failure to make a decision in this respect is in effect a decision. However, one is not forced to play the game of ultimate commitments. One may refuse to make any commitment in an ultimate way. "Since the problem of man's ultimate commitment is so difficult and exposed to such tragic error, many refuse to make any profound commitment of faith." However, Wieman is quick to add, "But when one does this he is nevertheless caught willy-nilly in some process of transformation and thereby backs blindly into his own fate without using his mind to find his way."[11]

But if we decide not to make any ultimate commitment this exacts a price. "...when one does not give himself in full devotion to anything whatsoever, he inhibits, frustrates, or anaesthetizes himself because the whole self can be expressed and exercised only to the measure that one commits his whole self in faith."[12]

While we shall have an opportunity later to look more closely at Wieman's analysis of the human situation out of which the problem of religious commitment arises, it is important to notice here that part

of Wieman's argument for the reasonableness of making an ultimate commitment is cast in egoistic terms. The failure to commit one's life to anything in an ultimate way results in a life Wieman characterizes as infected by guilt (for refusing to make any such commitment), loneliness, despair, a sense of futility, and meaninglessness. In short, such a life lacks any unifying principle that gives direction and significance to one's existence.

If we decide to make an ultimate commitment, the promise is that guilt, loneliness, etc., will be overcome and our life will be rich in felt quality, it will be experienced as meaningful, etc. Still, some qualifications are needed here. First, as we shall see, we can't simply <u>decide</u> to make an ultimate commitment. It is not merely an act of will. But secondly, Wieman does not maintain that the negative qualities we have mentioned can ever be completely overcome. As we noted above, "...the whole self can be expressed and exercised only to the <u>measure</u> that one commits his whole self in faith."

Thus, it seems there is a direct ratio between the degree of one's commitment and the amount of freedom from the negative experiences we have characterized. The more full and complete one's commitment, the more one is free from guilt, loneliness, despair, etc.. At least this is what the object of one's commitment promises.

But can an <u>ultimate</u> commitment admit of degrees? What then does 'ultimate' mean? I don't think Wieman wants to say that an ultimate commitment admits of degrees, but that we may approach in our lives more or less to an ultimate commitment. Thus, 'ultimate' serves as a reference point or standard against which one may measure the degree of one's

commitment. In fact, I think Wieman would agree that no existing individual is capable of an ultimate commitment in this sense. We all fall short of the glory of God. However, Wieman is not always consistent in this; sometimes using 'ultimate' to refer to this ideal standard, sometimes to what is humanly possible.

In any case, we do not make an "ultimate" commitment once and for all. Our commitment needs continual renewal, and this to a large extent is the function of religion.

But why do so many refuse to make an ultimate commitment? There are many reasons, but, as we noted, one of these is that "the problem of man's commitment is so difficult and exposed to such tragic error." Wieman has never maintained that religious faith as such is a good. From the beginning he has insisted that religion is not to be thought of as necessarily good. Indeed, he expresses the view that much, if not most, of it has been a bad thing. Why? Because it does generate an ultimate commitment, but has paid insufficient attention to the direction of such commitment. The "passionate inwardness" characteristic of religious faith is an extremely dangerous force if not directed to what does "save." The more ultimate our commitment the more risk is involved for both good and evil.

I think Wieman would agree that from a limited, individual point of view many things might save a person from a drab meaningless life. For example, the commitment of a storm trooper to exterminating the Jews to purify the Aryan race might well save his own life from meaninglessness. But such commitments are disastrous for the human race. Precisely because religious faith is passionate and ultimate, it demands

the guidance of reason; thus Wieman's insistence that we commit ourselves only to what we know. Without knowledge it is better not to make an ultimate commitment. There is nothing divine about madness whether religious or not.

Is it reasonable, given these factors, to make (or attempt to make) an ultimate commitment? Obviously this depends upon our knowledge of the object of such faith. If we were sure that x would deliver us all from evil and bring about the greatest good, clearly the only reasonable thing would be to bet everything. But then there would be no risk, no gamble involved. It would be a sure thing. Is Wieman claiming that we have certain knowledge concerning the object of religious commitment? In a sense I think he is. While he has always insisted that knowledge is a matter of probability which encompasses some uncertainty, the possibility may approach very closely to certainty. "I know there is a God with as much certainty as I know there is a self called me that does the committing. To be sure there is an element of probability in my knowledge that I exist, that the world exists, that there is better and worse. By fine-spun, logical analysis you can bring that tiny bit of uncertainty into the light. But it is so remote that for all practical purposes it is negligible: and when we talk about religious faith we are talking about practical purposes, not abstract, academic, elaborate logical analysis by which some uncertainty can be found in everything we know."[13] Whether he can make good his claim here we shall have to see when we examine his arguments concerning the content of religious faith. But this claim is fundamental in Wieman; not merely something he claimed in 1937.

But if this should prove to be the case, what of the risk of faith that he emphasizes in the same article. He has always insisted that faith involves a risk. Of course, there are courses of action that are irreversible, and thus absolute. Had Abraham put the knife to Isaac, this could not be undone, (except by virtue of the absurd?). Thus, if there is any element of uncertainty in our knowledge, such action involves an element of risk; and this in spite of the fact that we are here concerned with "practical purposes." But this is hardly adequate in any case to account for the sort of risk that Wieman talks of in connection with ultimate commitment.

Here we are up against a fundamental tension not only in Wieman's concept of faith and reason, but also in his views as to method and in his conclusions. On the one hand he claims that we should commit ourselves only to what we know. Never believe anything that you do not know. One can make an ultimate commitment without in any way going beyond knowledge. On the other hand, what we know is always only probable and never adequate to the rich complexity of what is given in immediate experience. Thus, an ultimate commitment must be to that which is largely unknown.

In the early article we have been quoting he also says, "Faith is absolute self-commitment to this unexplored totality of value that throngs and pours and throbs upon me in the form of innumerable stimuli playing upon my psycho-physical organism in every concrete situation. Masterful faith cuts free from the dominating control of every specific good, every specific belief, idea, object of desire and aversion, because this faith renders the individual subject to one and only one dominant

control. This dominant object of devotion which frees the individual from the control of every specific object of desire and fear, is God, the uncomprehended totality of all that is best in this present concrete situation."[14]

Now let's see. On the one hand we are to make an ultimate commitment only to what we know. On the other hand we are to make an ultimate commitment to "the uncomprehended totality of all that is best..." While Wieman doesn't always utilize this latter phrase, there is at bottom always something very vague that is the object of our ultimate commitment. In his earlier work he simply refers to "that something" or "that reality." Later on he seems to become somewhat more definite; he refers to "the uncomprehended totality of all that is best..." or "the totality of meaning and value." In his most recent works, he refers to "the source of human good."

Can these two views be reconciled? In Wieman's earlier work he seems to be largely unaware that there is any problem at all. Later, he indicates that he understands the "confusion" of his critics and has a clear way of showing that what he is saying is perfectly consistent. In his later work he always talks of a dual commitment. As he states in his "Intellectual Autobiography," "I distinguish two levels in the self-giving of faith. At one level, commitment is guided by the ideas which one happens to have at the time concerning what transforms man creatively. But there is a deeper level of commitment. At this second level, one is motivated by the intention to give himself, in the wholeness of his being so far as he is able, to what in truth does save and transform no matter how different it may be from one's ideas about it."[15] Further,

Wieman adds, "If one cannot distinguish between his own ideas and what his ideas seek to apprehend, he is unfit for religious inquiry and also for every other kind of inquiry. Religious thinking is existential, engaging the total self. It becomes neurotic if it binds one to a given set of ideas."[16]

How are we to understand this? While Wieman throughout his later work refers to the dual nature of our ultimate commitment, it is not perfectly clear what he wants to say. In places it seems that all he is saying is that we have to commit ourselves to what we know, while recognizing that we may be mistaken. In Man's Ultimate Commitment he says, "By reason of the mysteries which encompass our existence, one's religious commitment should take on a dual character, on the one hand guided by the farthest reach of his inquiry, on the other practiced as a faith in the sense of recognizing his liability to error and the tragic consequences of error in such a commitment as this. A man's religious devotion becomes a form of pernicious idolatry leading to dogmatic fanaticism and blind cruelty if he does not practice his ultimate commitment in this dual manner, on the one hand seeking the best knowledge he can get, on the other recognizing his fallibility and accepting the consequences of it."[17]

What Wieman is arguing here is certainly sane and sensible. One of the dangers inherent in making an ultimate commitment is fanaticism. And I think Wieman is right that this is fueled by the failure to realize that one might be wrong, that one may not be in possession of the ultimate truth beyond all possibility of error. On the other hand, there is the danger among intellectuals, who realize the complexities of every

issue and the fallibility of the human mind, to withdraw from the life of action and make no commitment in terms of any of the vital issues. Thus, we ought to commit ourselves to the best that we know, while recognizing that we may be wrong. Thus, there are certain actions we will not take (blind cruelty) for we recognize our liability to error. We will not, presumably, put the knife to Isaac, for we cannot be sure that it is God that is commanding this.

But if there is this qualification on our commitment, can it be an ultimate one? While Wieman has said things that are not consistent on this point, it seems clear that our ultimate commitment is not to what we know. Above he referred to a dual commitment; to what we know and to "recognizing his liability to error." But can recognizing one's liability to error be the object of a commitment?

Frequently, he seems to be saying that our ultimate commitment is to inquiry itself. Our ultimate commitment is not to any ideas that we now have concerning what is best, what will save us from despair, etc., but to the process of continual inquiry. In Intellectual Foundations of Faith, after indicating what he doesn't mean by 'faith', Wieman says, "Rather it is a commitment of one's total self to this inquiry to find the way of man's creative transformation toward the greater good."[18]

But can this be what Wieman intends? Does he not want to distinguish between religion and theology? One might argue that the theologian is committed to inquiry of a certain sort, but is this synonomous with religious commitment? Throughout Wieman emphasizes the practical nature of religion; how am I to live my life? Can a commitment to inquiry in itself provide any guidance in terms of action?

Again Wieman is talking of a dual commitment. On the one hand our commitment is to be guided by what we have found out, what we know; but on the other hand we are committed to continual inquiry, for we realize that our knowledge is never final. Thus, we commit our lives in practice on the basis of the evidence we have at that time, while at the same time searching for more adequate knowledge. While there is, of course, a risk involved in any practical commitment, this is proportional to the accuracy of our knowledge. But we have to decide how we are going to live our lives. This is a forced option. We can reduce this risk by ever seeking more accurate knowledge.

But does this apply to the ordinary religious person? I think Wieman would say that it does. While he may not be professionally involved in the process of religious inquiry, he can guide his life on the basis of such inquiry. Just as the ordinary man can profit from the latest scientific discoveries, the religious man can profit by utilizing the most accurate religious knowledge that is discovered.

Is this all Wieman means when he talks of a dual commitment? I think not. Coextensive with his talk about committing ourselves to inquiry and the recognition of our fallibility, he talks of a commitment "to what is supremely important, not alone for himself but for all mankind."[19] What is it that is supremely important? "What is supremely important is the actuality which the belief seeks to apprehend. No belief ever apprehends any actuality completely and perfectly, least of all the actuality of what is sought by faith. 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."[20]

This is characteristic of Wieman's discussions of the object of ultimate commitment. Our ultimate commitment is to be directed to "the actuality," "a problem," "a question." He seems to treat all of these as though they were equivalent. He typically slides from one concept to another and back again so that it is extremely difficult to know just what he does mean to say. However, I don't think we can reduce Wieman's view that "the commitment of liberal religion (what he advocates) is not to a belief but to the actuality which the belief seeks to apprehend" to a commitment to inquiry.

One continuing criticism of Wieman by more orthodox theologians is that he places reason above faith. That is, while he allows for faith in the sense of commitment, the ultimate criterion for the direction of faith is reason. Our ultimate commitment, on this view, is not to God but to human reason. It is this that displays the arrogance of reason.

As we have seen, there is some justification for this interpretation of Wieman. When he explains what he means by a dual commitment it seems frequently that all he means is that our ultimate commitment is to reason. But throughout there is constantly in the background that commitment to a rather shadowy "actuality" that we seek to understand. While he argues that we can commit ourselves without believing anything we don't know, he maintains that "Faith always extends far beyond present knowledge, not necessarily in the sense that one claims to know what he does not know, but in the sense of commitment to what is much more than one's present understanding of it and in some respects likely to be

very different from one's beliefs about it. It is easy to demonstrate that every concrete reality is more than, and in some respects different from, any statement which the human mind can make about it. All statements are abstractions."[21]

Wieman's statement here that "Faith always extends far beyond present knowledge" would seem to indicate that his position has changed since his debate with Calhoun in 1937. However, we should note that even in 1937 he maintained that , "Any concrete thing, whether it be a pebble on the beach or God in the Universe, is always far deeper and more many-sided than any knowledge we can have of it. Therefore, when we commit ourselves to it in the light of our surest knowledge, we are committing ourselves to something that is bound to do things to us that we cannot foresee."[22] Thus, along with his insistence that we not believe anything that goes beyond the evidence, there has been also the insistence that a commitment to any concrete reality is a commitment to something that is more than what we know. But, apparently, we need not believe anything that goes beyond what we know concerning the nature of this concrete reality in order to commit ourselves to it.

This is not, I suggest, merely a caution against taking our knowledge to be more certain than it is. While we shall have to inquire into Wieman's notion of God later, the "actuality" that he keeps referring to is supposedly an existing concrete "something"; not merely a negative principle to remind us of our fallibility. As we have noted, our knowledge of any concrete thing always and necessarily falls short of an adequate and full understanding of that thing in its tremendous complexity. Thus, a commitment to any concrete thing always involves a risk.

Is such a risk reasonable? Clearly this is contingent upon how much we know about the nature of that to which we are committing ourselves and what the chances are of its delivering what it promises. If we attend to some of the things Wieman says, it would seem that we cannot make any such calculation antecedent to our commitment. Such a commitment not only goes beyond what we know in the sense that we can only infer with some degree of probability what "it" may do to us; it's difficult to see how we would even go about attempting to determine whether such a commitment was reasonable.

In what sense and to what degree is this "actuality" unknown to us? This is a crucial question prior to asking whether it is reasonable to commit ourselves to it. At this point in our analysis it is not at all clear what it could mean to commit oneself to an unknown "actuality". This is a question that we will have to postpone until we have examined Wieman's notion of God.

It does seem that our ultimate commitment is not to reason, if we attend to what Wieman sometimes says about this "actuality." In The Source of Human Good he says, "Religious faith is basically an act -- the act of giving oneself into the keeping of what commands faith, to be transformed by it, and to serve it above all. More specifically, it is the act of deciding to live in the way required by the source of human good, to maintain association with a fellowship practicing that commitment, to follow the rituals designed to renew and deepen this commitment, to search oneself for hidden disloyalties to this devotion, to confess and repudiate these disloyalties. All habits, interests, and structures of personality are thus condemned when they hinder the living of the life

demanded."[23] If it transforms what we want, our "interests and structure of personality" etc., it is difficult to see how reason could operate antecedently.

We must, Wieman argues, commit ourselves to what we know, our ideas about the "source of human good," the "reality that saves," etc. But our ultimate commitment is not to any of these ideas however much they are supported by the evidence we have. Our ultimate commitment is not to any ideas, but to the "reality," however different this may be from any of our ideas about it. In Wieman's most recent book he again talks of a two level commitment. On one level he commits himself to what he knows, and such knowledge results from a commitment to religious inquiry. "If man devotes himself in all sincerity to this inquiry he can ordinarily find something that he can believe with a conviction sufficiently strong to justify his wholehearted commitment to it."[24] When he talks of believing with conviction I take it he means to say a belief that is supported with evidence such that one is rationally convinced; we then have knowledge. "But his <u>ultimate</u> commitment will not be to this, even though he is ready to die for it, fail for it, suffer for it, and live for it. His ultimate commitment is to what does in truth operate to transform our lives toward the greater good even if it be beyond his knowing."[25]

If a man is committed to something such that he is "ready to die for it, fail for it, suffer for it, and live for it," what sense does it make to say that this is not an ultimate commitment? What does 'ultimate' then mean? We have noted some of the difficulties in giving criteria here. Apparently what Wieman is saying is that while we may be prepared

to die for what we believe (know?) will transform our lives toward the greater good, we must still realize that our beliefs (knowledge) may be mistaken. Thus, while we commit our lives to what we conceive to be what saves, we are nonetheless ready to change our ideas and consequently the direction of our commitment if new evidence so suggests.

We have, I think, a problem here which is in some ways similar to that which so many have noted in the theology of Paul Tillich. We cannot talk of God directly according to Tillich (except to say that God is Being-itself). We commit ourselves to God by way of symbols. However, to take any symbol as ultimate is idolatrous. Our ultimate commitment is to Being-itself. We must recognize that our symbols are symbols and not descriptively true of the ultimate. Thus, our ultimate commitment is to that about which we cannot speak.

Wieman's notion of a dual commitment involves similar considerations. There is that in existence which transforms man, saves, etc., but this is largely unknown. In any case, all our knowledge is limited and fallible. We must commit ourselves to God by way, not of symbols in Tillich's sense, but by way of our limited and fallible knowledge. But to take our knowledge as certain and fully adequate is a form of idolatry. Our ultimate commitment is to that which is "the source of human good", whatever that might turn out to be.

Can we commit ourselves to "the source of human good" independent of any ideas we have about what this is? Can we commit ourselves to some "actuality" without any further determination of what this is? What does it mean to commit ourselves to God, as opposed to our ideas about God? These are, I think, serious problems with Wieman's view. However, we

are here dealing with the content of faith and will have to postpone our inquiry until we attempt to determine what Wieman means by 'God.' Is this something completely unknown?

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER I

[1]Henry Nelson Wieman, "Faith and Knowledge," Christendom, I, (1935-36), p. 763.

[2]Ibid., pp. 763-64.

[3]Ibid., p. 764.

[4]Robert Calhoun, "The Power and Wisdom of God," Christendom, II, (1937), p. 38.

[5]Ibid., p. 38.

[6]Henry Nelson Wieman, "The Absolute Commitment of Faith," Christendom, II, (1937), p. 203.

[7]Henry Nelson Wieman, Man's Ultimate Commitment, (Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1958), p. 20.

[8]Ibid., pp. 20-21.

[9]Henry Nelson Wieman, The Source of Human Good, (Chicago, Ill.: The University of Chicago Press, 1946), p. 46.

[10]Wieman, Commitment, pp. 46-47.

[11]Ibid., p. 22.

[12]Ibid.

[13]Wieman, "Absolute Commitment," pp. 203-204.

[14]Ibid., pp. 204-205.

[15]Henry Nelson Wieman, The Empirical Theology of Henry Nelson Wieman, ed. by Robert W. Bretall, The Library of Living Theology, Vol. IV., (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1963), pp. 6-7.

[16]Ibid.

[17]Wieman, Commitment, p. 21.

[18]Henry Nelson Wieman, Intellectual Foundations of Faith, (New York: Philosophical Library, 1961), p. 2.

[19]Ibid.

[20]Ibid.

[21]Wieman, Commitment, p. 21.

[22]Wieman, "Faith and Knowledge," pp. 763-64.

[23]Wieman, Source, pp. 46-47.

[24]Henry Nelson Wieman, Religious Inquiry, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968), p. 81.

[25]Ibid.

CHAPTER II

A SPECIAL RELIGIOUS WAY OF KNOWING

While there are difficulties, as we shall see, in presenting a definitive account of Wieman's conception of the method of inquiry to be employed in religion, he has been consistent and most emphatic in his negative claim that there is no special religious way of knowing. This claim is what I would like to examine in this section, for it is the most fundamental claim that he makes. According to Wieman, if we are to know God at all we must know Him as we know anything else. While this claim has been variously formulated, the basic conception has remained constant throughout Wieman's work. While God is indeed a very special sort of being, we have only our ordinary, fallible faculties of cognition.

Wieman's first major work begins with a denial of any religious way of knowing. "Two views have been held concerning the way we know God. One has asserted that we must know God just as we know any other object; that there are no powers or faculties of knowledge except those by which we know ordinary objects, and that we must know God as we know trees and houses and men or else not know Him at all. The other view has tried to show that knowledge of God is a special kind of knowledge; that there is a certain feeling, inner sense, eye of the soul, instinct, or intuition, faith, spiritual organ, moral will, or what not which has God as its special object; that trees, houses and men may be known

through the data of sense; that God is discerned in this special and peculiar manner."[1]

It is this peculiar way of knowing that Wieman is concerned to reject. What he does not want to deny is that there may be very special experiences "which provide the data that may lead to a knowledge of God if correctly interpreted...But if faith, feeling, intuition, and moral will are represented as giving us an immediate kind of knowledge in which there is no need for the analysis and interpretation of immediate experience by means of concepts, then the assertion amounts to the second of the two above mentioned views. Then the claim is that a certain kind of immediate experience gives us knowledge without the intervention of any further intellectual processes."[2]

That this view persists throughout Wieman's work can be seen by looking at a couple of his more mature volumes. In The Source of Human Good, he says, "Any claim to truth beyond the evidence is not a mark of sanctity or virtue or humility. Rather, it displays either the arrogance of faith or an irresponsible childishness. Often these two go together. No appeal to divine revelation, the sanctity of authority, direct communion with God or any other source allegedly superior to the tests required to guard the fallible human mind from error can escape the condemnation just asserted."[3]

We shall have occasion later to see whether Wieman's own conclusions go beyond the evidence and whether this ad hominem might thus be appropriately applied to him. However this may be, he clearly intends to go against an important and persistent tradition in theology concerning the way of religious knowledge. He denies that there is any revealed

knowledge.

Again in Man's Ultimate Commitment he claims, "We do not have any reliable knowledge until after the tests of knowledge have been applied. In this sense there can be no knowledge which transcends reason, even though a great part of experienced reality does transcend both knowledge and reason."[4] Thus, he continues to insist upon the distinction which he made from the beginning between experience and knowledge. All knowledge is mediate in the sense that it involves certain testing procedures, and these involve analysis and interpretation. There is no case in which experience and knowledge are to be identified. There is no immediate way of knowing.

While we will examine Wieman's position more thoroughly later, initially we need some notion as to what he means by 'immediate'. On Wieman's view all knowledge involves both interpretation and inference. As we shall see, knowledge is always in the form of statements and this involves a conceptualization of experience, a structuring of what is given. Further, all knowledge involves some use of rational inference. While in some places he talks of inferring to the existence of objects on the basis of sense data, this is not an invariable element in his thought. Nor, I think, is this something to which he need be committed. However, there is another function of inference that is fundamental to his theory of inquiry. This involves not an inference from experience to objects, but an inference to further experience. If one is making a knowledge claim, this must contain an inference to further experience. As he insists, no statement is to be deemed knowledge until after the the tests of reason have been applied. Such verification procedures are

possible only if our claim to know is formulated in such a way that it carries inferences to further experience.

A claim to immediately know something, then, Wieman takes to be a claim that denies either that any interpretation or any inference is involved. Such a claim involves the view that knowledge in this case does not require any "further intellectual processes."

While I do not intend to investigate all the various attempts to make out a special way of religious knowing, I do want to examine the view that there is an immediate way of knowing that is peculiar to religion; for it is this claim that Wieman is most concerned to refute, and, I think, the notion that lies beneath many of the claims for such special knowledge.

As has been suggested, Wieman argues against any "immediate knowledge" primarily on the grounds that it involves a confusion arising from the identification of knowledge and experience. "Immediate experience never yields knowledge, although it is one indispensible ingredient in knowledge inasmuch as it provides the data from which knowledge may be derived."[5] That is, immediate experience is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for knowledge. Thus, while experience may be direct and immediate, knowledge is always mediated in some way by reason.

While there has been considerable discussion recently concerning the claim for an immediate way of knowing in religion, most critics of such a special way have failed to take the claim seriously. Consequently, not much light has been shed on the basic issue involved. While I do think there are good reasons for denying, with Wieman, an immediate way of knowing, this is an issue which deserves careful consideration.

Perhaps one of the most forceful advocates of an immediate way of knowing is John Baillie. In Our Knowledge of God he seems to argue for just the sort of position that Wieman is most concerned to refute, for he says, "We are rejecting logical argument of any kind as the first chapter of our theology or as representing the process by which God comes to be known. We are holding that our knowledge of God rests rather on the revelation of His personal Presence as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."[6]

Before examining this contention, we should note that Baillie is not taking the way of unreason here. He is not saying that there is no place for rational considerations at all in theology. Wieman would certainly agree when Baillie asserts, "A religion that refuses to exhibit its own reasonableness is fellow to a political regime that refuses to submit to a free referendum, and it is no accident that the two are products of the same age."[7] However, Wieman would certainly not agree when Baillie continues, "But though the proper area of assumption is a very narrow one, it nevertheless belongs to the very profoundest region of the spirit's life. The most important of all verities is a verity that cannot be argued."[8]

While Wieman would maintain that the most moving, and in this sense meaningful, experiences are not subject to argumentation, this is because the question of truth or falsity does not arise here. While we may make assumptions, and these may be true, they are known to be true only as the result of "further intellectual processes." It is most important that "the most important of all verities" be argued. Otherwise we cannot know that it is a verity.

But let us examine Baillie's argument. His support for an

immediate way of knowing God is based upon two sorts of considerations: (1) the difficulties involved in the traditional proofs for the existence of God, and (2) the way we actually come to the knowledge of God.

While Baillie does think that the traditional proofs for the existence of God are all fallacious, his most serious objection to them is that they are wrong in principle. "Let us consider what we do when we reach any reality from some other reality which is already known to us. This other and previously known reality may in its turn have been deduced from a third reality our knowledge of which was again prior to our knowledge of the second. Yet if we are to avoid the fallacy of an infinite regress, this process of constantly falling back upon prior premises must somewhere reach its term in some reality which is known to us in some more direct way than by deduction from something already known. Not all our thinking can be discursive; it must contain some element of immediacy."[9]

Baillie is not denying, we should note, that no reality can be known by way of deduction. But in any such procedure we must start with some "reality which is known to us in some more direct way." The fundamental mistake in the traditional proofs is that they have things backwards. They start from premises that are less certain than the conclusion. As Descartes saw, there are serious difficulties in accepting the testimony of the senses. What he failed to see was the even more serious difficulties involved (his egocentric predicament) when one presumes an immediate knowledge of self.

Baillie concludes this chapter with a critical comment on Descartes' approach, "...We find ourselves even more profoundly repelled

by the humanism of the Cartesian starting-point than by the subjectivity of it--though indeed the two are very closely interrelated. It is error enough to be surer of oneself than of one's friends; but it is a still greater error to be surer of oneself than of God."[10]

Much of the burden for Baillie's showing that the traditional proofs are wrong in principle would seem to rest on his making out a case for knowing God in an immediate way. However, it seems clear that some of his objections to the traditional proofs are on theological rather than purely epistemological grounds. In the section we have been following he seems to think that what is immediately known is the ground of other things that are known, and 'ground' seems to be used in a metaphysical as well as an epistemological sense. Since God is ontologically prior to other realities, Baillie seems to think He must be epistemologically prior. Further, we should note that in the above that what is immediately known is also that which is more certainly known.

Wieman insists that deduction is not sufficient for knowledge of any existing "reality." Like Baillie, the ultimate appeal is to experience. Thus, broadly conceived, they may both be considered empiricists. As Wieman says, "If God is inferred only, we must fall back on the arguments or 'proofs' for God's existence. I have no truck with such arguments or proofs. If we had to prove by argument that the United States existed, or the physical world existed, or the people about us, or the houses and trees, we would not be able to continue our existence. Fortunately, we find these realities inevitably, moment by moment."[11]

Is Wieman then allowing, after all, that there is a kind of immediate knowing? When he says "we find these realities inevitably"

this certainly sounds much like knowing immediately. However, I don't think he is contradicting himself here, although we will have to examine his position here more fully later. To say that God is not inferred only is not to say that inference plays no part in such knowledge. Nor is he committed to an immediate way of knowing when he talks of "finding a reality." We may have immediate experience of a "reality", but this is not to be deemed in itself knowledge.

What Wieman would object to is Baillie's conclusion that there must be some immediate way of knowing, if 'immediate' means a kind of knowing which involves no inference. But if we deny an immediate way of knowing does that make all knowledge impossible? One obvious answer to Baillie is that all our knowledge <u>is</u> in some sense hypothetical. The claim to know does not necessitate that we are prepared to go back to some proposition that is known immediately. One way of establishing a knowledge claim is to show that it follows from certain propositions that are <u>accepted</u>.

Baillie himself talks of the "area of assumption." Why not simply refer to such starting points for deduction as assumptions? Need we commit ourselves to knowing immediately that they are true? To regard such initial premises as assumptions does not, however, imply that they cannot be argued. Baillie has, I think, an overly simple view as to the intellectual processes involved here. One way of arguing for or against an assumption is to see what follows from it. It is generally acknowledged that propositions in science, for example, are not tested in isolation from all other propositions that relate to it.

Wieman wants to distinguish knowledge by acquaintance from know-

ledge by description. As he says, "Logic has its part to play in all knowledge, of course; in knowledge by acquaintance as well as in knowledge by description. But knowledge by acquaintance is logic plus, while knowledge by pure description is not."[12]

For Wieman this plus is a matter of sense perception, but for Baillie immediate knowledge apparently transcends both logic and sense perception. That Baillie is not only arguing against deduction is evidenced when he asserts, "it is not as the result of an inference of any kind, whether explicit or implicit, whether laboriously excogitated or swiftly intuited, that the knowledge of God's reality comes to us. It comes rather through our direct personal encounter with Him in the Person of Jesus Christ His Son our Lord."[13] And that this encounter is not a matter of sense perception is evidenced when he says, "The realities of sense are more obvious, but His is the more intimate, touching us as it does so much nearer to the core of our being."[14]

How then do we come by this special sort of knowledge which involves no "inference of any kind" and is to be contrasted with the "realities of sense?" In answering this question, Baillie significantly qualifies his claim of immediacy. While he argues that "we are more directly and intimately confronted with the presence of God than with any other presence," he asserts, "it does not follow that He is ever present to us apart from other presences."[15] Further, "The Christian knowledge of God is not given to any man save in conjunction with the telling of an old, old story."[16] This leads Baillie to say, "Clearly, then, the immediacy of God's presence to our souls is a mediated immediacy."[17]

In explicating this last phrase, which Baillie admits to be

paradoxical, he engages in an autobiographical account of how he came to know God; concluding, "It was, then, through the media of my boyhood's home, the Christian community of which it formed a part, and the old, old story from which that community drew its life, that God first revealed Himself to me. This is simple matter of fact. But what I take to be matter of fact in it is not only that God used these media, but that in using them He actually did reveal Himself to my soul."[18]

The curious thing about this account of "mediated immediacy" is that Baillie takes this to be a very special sort of experience, for he claims, "we have here to do with an experience of an entirely unique kind, its uniqueness lying precisely in this conjunction of immediacy with mediacy--that is, in the fact that God reveals Himself to me only through others who went before, yet in so doing reveals Himself to me now."[19] While one would certainly want to admit the purported object of such an experience to be unique, the question is whether such an experience is special by virtue of its epistemological structure.

What Baillie seems to be arguing here is that given the conceptual framework, i.e., the "old, old story", then one may have an immediate experience of God. While one's experience is necessarily mediated by one's religious tradition, still there is in the experience of God a direct apprehension which involves no inference.

But if this is the case, then it would be difficult to argue that the uniqueness of this experience lies "precisely in this conjunction of immediacy with mediacy", for this could well be argued for ordinary sense perception. Consider the following account; It was, then, through the media of my boyhood's home, the English speaking community of which it

formed a part, and the "old, old language," from which that community drew its life, that I first saw a chair. This is a simple matter of fact. But what I take to be matter of fact in it is not only that 'chair' had a use in that language, but that in using that language I actually did see a chair.

While there may be important differences in these two cases, they are analogous, I propose, in their "conjunction of immediacy with mediacy." The acquisition of some language, it seems to me, is certainly an important condition for seeing a chair as a chair. However, given such a conceptual scheme one does see such things as chairs immediately, in the sense that no inference to such objects as chairs are involved.

Thus, it seems clear that Baillie's experience as so described cannot be unique qua experience. Of course if one takes a sense datum theory of perception then all seeing of "real objects" involves an inference, but surely this is not forced upon us. Wieman is quite willing to allow for experience as such to be immediate, in the sense of involving no inferences. If all Baillie is claiming here is a special sort of experience "which provides the data that may lead to a knowledge of God if correctly interpreted...", then there is no quarrel with Wieman.

But Baillie clearly does want to claim more than this. He claims that "our knowledge of God rests...on the revelation of His personal Presence as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." And "rests on" is not to be construed as 'derives from' or 'inferred from.' The uniqueness Baillie claims involves an immediate way of knowing. While much of what Baillie says about the necessity of history, the "old, old story," etc., might lead us to think that he would agree that the sort of immediacy he is

claiming involves interpretation, we need to be careful here. To say that one is interpreting one's experience is tantamount to admitting that one is not quite sure. As we have indicated, Baillie takes the knowledge of God to be that which is most sure.

As has been suggested, many critics of an immediate way of knowing have failed to take the sort of claim made by Baillie seriously. C. B. Martin, for example, describes Baillie's position as follows: "I have direct experience (knowledge, acquaintance, apprehension) of God, therefore, I have reason to believe that God exists."[20] But, as we have seen, this is not what Baillie is claiming. Baillie is explicit when he says, "it is not as the result of an inference of any kind...that God's knowledge comes to us." Baillie is not saying I have such and such an experience <u>therefore</u>.....

Wieman too tends to argue against such claims on similar grounds. "If I have been taught from earliest infancy to react to the figure of Jesus with awe and reverence and even ecstacy, the quality of my experience is no evidence that Jesus reveals the uttermost nature of Reality."[21] But to speak of evidence is to speak of an inference, and the claim of immediate knowledge denies any inference is involved. Baillie is not claiming that the quality of his experience <u>provides evidence for</u>....

How are we to account for this persistent misunderstanding? One reason that might be suggested is that philosophers such as Martin and Wieman fail to fully appreciate the radical difference between what they consider to be knowledge and the sort of thing people like Baillie are arguing for. For Martin and Wieman all knowledge involves propositions;

'God exists,' 'Jesus reveals the uttermost nature of "reality". This is a matter of knowing that such and such is the case; and 'knowing' is to be analyzed in some such manner as 'having adequate evidence or reasons for.' Thus, any discussion of a knowledge claim necessarily involves a discussion of evidence or reasons. From this point of view the only question then is whether such evidence is adequate; whether from such and such an experience one may legitimately infer that such and such is the case.

While it would seem that the issue is a matter of different ways to the same place, it may be that different places are involved. If this is the case, then criteria for knowledge in one sense would not necessarily be applicable for knowledge in this other sense. To demand evidence of someone who claims that evidence is not involved certainly does not carry us very far in our understanding of the issue.

Apparently, Baillie is not claiming to know that. In discussing Kant, he says, "He opposed, and rightly opposed, that intellectualistic notion of revelation which made it consist in orthodoxy, that is in quasi-scientific truths or ideas about God."[22] While Baillie is not denying that something about God's grace, etc., is revealed to us, the crucial and most fundamental aspect is God's self-revelation.

But if he is claiming to know is it not legitimate to ask what it is that he knows in regard to God's self-revelation? I think not. Rather, we should ask who he knows. For what Baillie claims is to know God. He is not merely claiming to know about God, he is claiming to know God directly, a "direct personal encounter." What is revealed is a

Presence."

According to Baillie, the closest analogy to knowing God is our knowledge of other minds. In discussing this, he rejects, as does Wieman, the view that we know other minds through an argument by analogy. He contends, "Our knowledge of other minds is not merely a derivative from our knowledge of other bodies or of our own minds or of both together, but is itself a primary and original mode of consciousness..."[22]

In illustrating this he says it is like our conception of society. "...the conception of society is not a posteriori but a priori conception...We cannot possess the concept of otherness prior to our first encounter with another, yet that conception is not inductively derived from the encounter, but is called into being on occasion of it and contributes to it the very character which would be required as the basis of such an induction; just as the conception of tridimensional space, though it could not be present in my mind prior to my first encounter with a solid body, is not derived by induction from that encounter, but is given with it as the necessary condition of my apprehending the body's solidity."[23]

Thus, as applied to our knowledge of God, a necessary condition for having a conception of God is an encounter with Him, and a necessary condition for this encounter is a conception of God. Neither can be had without the other. God reveals Himself and the conception of God is "called into being" simultaneously.

But it is difficult to see why this should be on the basis of Baillie's analogy. Why could I not have a conception of tridimensional space prior to my first encounter with a solid body? This would seem to

be the case only if 'having a conception of tridimensional space' is made to include 'having encountered a solid body.' And this would certainly be odd; making it true by definition. However, this involves a very fundamental issue that we cannot hope to adequately investigate here.

Perhaps, however, we may gain some insight into what Baillie is claiming if we investigate the analogy with our knowledge of other persons. Consider our knowledge of Sam Smith. In knowing Sam, is the conception of Sam given along with the encounter with him? Frequently, I should think, this is the case. Sam comes up and says, "I am Sam Smith." You see Sam and gain a conception of him.

Further, I think it is correct to say that one's conception of Sam is not derived in this case inductively, because it is not derived. That is, one does not infer what Sam looks like, one sees what he looks like. But one may infer what sort of character Sam has on the basis of his appearance, the remarks he makes, etc. If one's conception of Sam includes the latter, then this is derived inductively; an inference is involved here.

But is it a necessary condition of having a conception of Sam Smith that one meet him face to face--a direct personal encounter? Assuredly not. One can gain a conception of Sam from being told about him, reading his resume, looking at his photograph, etc. Indeed, one can conceive of Sam on the basis of no information about him at all.

But what has the genesis of our ideas to do with knowledge? There is a sense of 'know' which does require a direct personal encounter. One cannot claim to <u>know Sam Smith</u> unless one has at least met him.

Otherwise, we say only that we know of or know about Sam. Baillie is claiming to know God in a sense analogous to 'I know Sam Smith,' and this does necessitate a direct personal encounter. In this sense Baillie would be quite right in saying you can't know God unless you have had a direct personal encounter with Him. But it doesn't follow that you couldn't know of or know about God without such an experience.

If we allow that the claim to know Sam Smith includes the claim of having had a direct personal encounter, does this mean that the question of evidence is irrelevant? It would surely be odd to ask, "What's your evidence for knowing Sam?" Appropriate questions would be "How did you come to know him?", "Where did you meet him?," etc. But questions of evidence don't arise here simply because nothing has been asserted about Sam.

But suppose the person with whom you are talking doubts that Sam exists? He doesn't ask for your evidence for knowing Sam, but may ask for your evidence for knowing that Sam exists. That is, 'I know Sam' entails 'that Sam exists.' And it would seem to be quite appropriate to ask for evidence concerning the latter.

But if I know Sam I may well object to the demand for evidence. I don't need evidence; I have something better. While we sometimes speak of the evidence of the senses, this is philosophically important, I think, only if we are committed to a sense data theory of perception. Evidence must be appealed to only in cases that are unclear--where there is some inference involved. This is not a case like that. Do you demand evidence for the existence of that chair? Of course not; you see it. I don't require evidence for the existence of Sam; I see him every day.

We are intimate friends. I know him, and this knowledge is based upon a direct personal encounter. This knowledge is superior to any mere evidence, any knowledge of.

If pressed, however, I can present evidence to the skeptic that Sam exists. Birth certificates, drivers' licenses, etc., are all to the point here. It is this sort of thing that I should think would constitute evidence. On the basis of such documents one may induce that Sam exists.

But I don't need to appeal to mere evidence here. I can arrange for the skeptic to meet Sam; to have a direct personal encounter with him. Would meeting Sam convince the skeptic that Sam exists? I would normally think this would suffice.

But knowing that this man here exists is not sufficient for knowing that this man here is Sam Smith. Any old presence will not do, it must be the presence of Sam Smith. Clearly it will not meet the doubts of a skeptic for this man here to say, "I am Sam Smith." The problem is not simply a matter of perception. It is a matter of correctly identifying what we perceive. If seeing this man is to convince the skeptic that Sam Smith exists we must show that what he perceives is the man Sam Smith. Here, there is nothing for it but to appeal to evidence--birth certificates, etc. While the skeptic may continue to doubt, thinking the documents might be forged, there comes a point where all reasonable doubt is removed. But there is no question here of knowing immediately that Sam Smith exists.

Thus, while critics of an immediate way of knowing do misconstrue what is being claimed when they ask for evidence for 'I know God', if

such a claim for an immediate way is like our knowledge of other persons one can ask for evidence for 'God exists', for reasons for thinking that x has encountered God and can distinguish God from other entities. For, as we have seen, 'I know God' entails that 'God exists' and 'I have had a direct encounter with him.' Thus, while Baillie focuses on personal knowledge of God, this does not dispense with propositions about God.

While in both our knowledge of other persons and our knowledge of God the grounds for believing x exists may be a personal encounter, there are important differences here. In regard to Sam, we can introduce Sam to our skeptic friend. We can, ordinarily, put him in a position so that he too can have a direct personal encounter with Sam. Further, there are criteria for 'Sam Smith exists.' Evidence may be cited for 'I have met Sam.' And, we can tell whether x can distinguish Sam from other persons.

In the case of God things lie rather differently. One cannot simply call God over and introduce him to the skeptic. Nor is it clear how we are to go about telling whether x has had an experience of God, nor how we could tell whether he can correctly identify God.

While Baillie emphasizes knowing God in the sense of a personal encounter, it clearly is not this sense of 'know' that will provide the starting point for deductions. What we need here are statements about God. If the immediate way of knowing that Baillie argues for is to function as the epistemic ground for deduction, this knowledge must be formulated in terms of statements.

Of course, proponents of an immediate way of knowing God, like Baillie, do not claim it is just like knowing another person. God is, after all, hidden in a way that other persons are not. God must reveal

himself to us. The situation here may be illuminated by considering the following sketch:



What do you see? Suppose A says that all he sees is a pattern of light and dark patches; it is perfectly ambiguous. But B, when asked what he sees, says, "Jesus." B sees Jesus, A sees only patches of light and dark. In this situation A would quite naturally say that B, if not lying, is interpreting what he sees as Jesus; he is taking x to be Jesus. But B would surely deny this if he <u>sees</u> Jesus. Once you see Jesus, there

is nothing ambiguous about this picture at all; it is perfectly clear. There is no interpretation or inference involved--you immediately see Jesus.

But A, who hasn't had the experience of seeing Jesus here, will insist that B must be, at best, taking this to be Jesus, for surely this is to be distinguished from clear cases of perception such as seeing that chair. However, B will tend to insist that it is very much like seeing a chair. If there is no interpretation in seeing a chair, then there is no interpretation in his seeing Jesus. This is also a case of direct perception.

In arguing against this, it is quite probable that A will start to talk of evidence and reasons for saying that this is Jesus. He will certainly deny that the evidence here, the light and dark patches, support the claim that this is Jesus. After all, A is not blind. He can see every bit as well as B.

But B denies that such light and dark patches are <u>evidence</u>. The question of evidence does not arise <u>for him</u>. He directly perceives Jesus. And this is not simply a psychological claim. Jesus is there to be seen.

Does B know that Jesus is there? Of course. His knowledge rests upon a direct perception. But can he support his claim to know? Is there anything he can do to convince the skeptic? Well, he is prone to simply say--look. But there are persons who look and look and look, and still do not see. One can point out certain features--the curve of the nose, position of the eyes, the long black hair and beard, the white robe. But there still remain some who cannot see Jesus. In these cases

one concludes that there are some persons who for some reason cannot see what clearly is there to be seen. A kind of blindness is involved.

But is A correct when he asserts that there is some interpretation involved here? From the linguistic fact that we who see do not say 'interpret' it does not follow that no interpretation is involved.

In addition to A and B, consider C (a believer like Baillie), and D (a Buddhist unfamiliar with the "old, old story".) A sees nothing but patches of light and dark, B sees the man Jesus, C sees Jesus Christ our Lord and Master, and D sees a compassionate man with long black hair wearing a flowing white robe.

In this situation A will tend to say that B, C, and D are all taking these patches as ..... B will deny an interpretation in what he sees, but will argue that C is surely involved in some interpretation when he says Jesus Christ. D would likely say that no interpretation is involved in his description of what he sees, but that both B and C are interpreting what they see in terms of their religious and cultural background.

Is there something here which is immediately perceived in all these cases and involves no interpretation? The difficulty here is in attempting to talk about what is presented in perception apart from any conceptualization. The attempt is to talk of what is experienced bare. And it is this that is impossible. One cannot say what one sees without subsuming such under some concept. For A the concept of patches of light and dark, for B the concept of Jesus, etc.. Thus, any saying of what is immediately perceived involves a conceptual element.

But is the admission of a conceptual element to admit an element

of interpretation? Are all cases of seeing really cases of seeing as? We do ordinarily reserve 'seeing as' for situations that are somewhat ambiguous, for cases in which what is seen can be taken in two or more ways. (Cf. Wittgenstein's duck-rabbit) To say 'interpret' is to admit that one is not sure about his description of what he sees, or to admit that an alternate description might also be appropriate. If all cases of perception were to be called cases of 'seeing as', then 'seeing as' would perform no function in ordinary discourse. And we do want to distinguish what is clear from what is not so clear.

However, when we deny that any interpretation is involved it seems that we are denying all cultural influences, that the saying of what one immediately perceives is independent of one's conceptual frame. While Baillie does attempt to include this in his notion of mediated immediacy, he does imply this naive view when he says that we should simply "take experience as we find it." But to deny any interpretation is not to deny such influences in the ordinary sense of 'interpret.' We don't say interpret when what we see clearly falls under a given concept and no other. When we say he is interpreting, we are suggesting that there are viable alternative conceptions under which a given experience may be placed.

When Wieman claims that all knowledge involves an element of interpretation, he does not mean to say there is no distinction to be made between cases where we say 'interpret' and cases where we don't. As I understand his position, he is not arguing that we should say 'see as' rather than 'see'. Rather, what he is claiming is that even in cases of clear perception such as 'I see a chair,' there is still an element

of interpretation; that this involves a conceptualization of our experience. We don't say 'interpret' here, but this is simply due to the fact that we all share the same criteria. While we may feel very such in such a case, it is still possible to be in error, for 'I see a chair' includes an inference to 'a chair exists.' If any doubt arises, this can be checked by the appropriate procedures, e.g., calling in others. It is publicly verifiable.

While Baillie denies that there is an inference involved in knowing God, he certainly does not deny that one's conceptual frame is relevant. Indeed, the hearing of the "old old story" is a necessary condition for such knowing. One cannot know God without the proper category of thought. As in our sketch, one cannot see Jesus without having in mind Hoffman's portrayal.

Thus, the dispute between Wieman and Baillie might appear to be, in part, verbal. Both hold that one's conceptual frame, however this be acquired, is a factor in any saying of what one apprehends. Baillie talks of a "mediated immediacy", for he doesn't want to imply that there is anything dubious or subjective in knowing God. When Wieman says that all knowledge involves an element of interpretation this does not imply that all knowledge is dubious or subjective--as in cases where we <u>say</u> 'interpret.'

While they agree that all knowledge involves an element of interpretation, there still seems to be a fundamental difference in their positions. Wieman is not primarily concerned with the genesis of our ideas, whether immediate or not. He can allow that there are "primary and original modes of consciousness" that are fundamental to various

sorts of knowledge. But a mode of consciousness is not in itself a mode of knowing. Experience never carries with it a guarantee of truth; having an experience is always to be distinguished from knowing. Even though there are many cases where there may be no felt need for verification, this is always relevant, indeed necessary, in establishing a knowledge claim.

Baillie does seem to collapse the distinction between having an experience and knowing. He attempts to get around this by emphasizing the personal aspect of knowing God. But, as we have seen, this simply will not do the job. For what is revealed is a Presence. And to say this entails that there exists something that presents itself. But even this minimal "knowledge" is not enough. Not just any old presence will do. Baillie claims to know "His personal Presence as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." And this entails some propositional knowledge; namely, that God exists and reveals himself to Baillie as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Thus, the demand for evidence, for reasons, surely is appropriate here.

Of course, one might argue that there are verification procedures embodied in the religious community which derive from the "old old story." If Baillie were claiming that we have knowledge only after these testing procedures have been applied, then one might argue that this sort of religious knowledge would fall under Wieman's first category--we know God as we know anything else. While special categories may be involved, the epistemological structure is akin to the way we know anything at all.

Whether we can read Baillie in this way, however, is dubious. He

did maintain in his discussion of "mediated immediacy" that "we have to do here with an experience of an entirely unique kind." Further, the claim here is that this unique experience yields knowledge that does not require further testing. Throughout, Baillie has claimed that this knowledge involves no inferences of any kind. If we are to test a claim to know, it would seem to be necessary that such a claim contain an inference to further experience. If this is involved, then the claim for an immediate way of knowing must be given up.

While Baillie is usually taken as arguing for a special, unique, way of religious knowledge, this is problematic. His discussion of "mediated immediacy" would tend to support this. However, in explicating the way in which we know God he claims it is like our knowledge of other persons, society, and tridimensional space. These latter cases are also supposed to be cases of immediate knowing. Thus, it would seem that Baillie is not claiming that religious knowledge is unique in this respect. Whether it is unique in any epistemic way, I suppose, depends upon how much it is like these other modes of knowledge.

Let me summarize. Wieman's argument is quite simple. All knowledge involves both interpretation and inference. Claims for a special religious way of knowing are special simply in that they deny any interpretation and/or inference and are not subject to such tests and checking procedures. Thus, there is no special religious way of knowing.

While Baillie does not mean to deny that interpretation is involved in what he calls immediate knowledge, he insists that no inferences of any kind are involved in our knowledge of God. Further, it is difficult to see how there could be any sort of tests or checking pro-

cedures. But if the sort of knowledge Baillie argues for requires such, then the sort of knowledge claimed is not immediate in any important sense. Whether such tests are possible or not, it follows that there is no immediate way of knowing that is to be marked off from the way we know any reality at all.

If Baillie is claiming that the way we know God is immediate just like the way we know other minds, society and tridimensional space, then it is not claimed that religious knowledge is special and unique. In this case, there is no conflict with Wieman's contention that there is no special religious way of knowing.

While to conclude that there is no immediate way of knowing that is peculiar to religion does not carry us very far, it does rule out a large volume of religious literature. If there is no special way of knowing, the question still remains how it is that we may hope to gain knowledge of religious significance. Presumably, this is to follow the same methods that are involved in all knowing whatsoever. Wieman's position on this we shall examine in the next chapter.

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER II

[1]Henry Nelson Wieman, Religious Experience and the Scientific Method, (New York: Macmillan, 1926), p. 21.

[2]Ibid., p. 21.

[3]Ibid., p. 22.

[4]Wieman, Commitment, p. 137.

[5]Ibid., p. 22.

[6]John Baillie, Our Knowledge of God, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1959), p. 132.

[7]Ibid., p. 16.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Ibid., pp. 147-48.

[10]Ibid., p. 154.

[11]Wieman, "Can God Be Perceived?," Journal of Religion, XXIII (Jan. 1943), p. 25.

[12]Wieman, Religious Experience, p. 28.

[13]Baillie, Knowledge, p. 143.

[14]Ibid., p. 155.

[15]Ibid., p. 178.

[16]Ibid., p. 180.

[17]Ibid., p. 181.

[18]Ibid., pp. 183-184.

[19]Ibid., p. 185.

[20]C. B. Martin, "A Religious Way of Knowing," New Essays in Philosophical Theology, ed. Antony Flew and Alasdair Macintyre, (London: SCM Press, 1955), p. 78.

[21]Wieman, The Issues of Life, (New York: Abingdon Press, 1930), p. 189.

[22]Baillie, Knowledge, pp. 161-162.

[23]Ibid., p. 213.

CHAPTER III

SCIENTIFIC INQUIRY

If there is no immediate way of knowing that is peculiar to religion, how are we to obtain religious knowledge--if there be such? While Wieman does want to distinguish religious from other sorts of knowledge, this does not, purportedly, involve a difference in method. All knowledge of existing states of affairs involve the same method.

There are, however, difficulties that face any commentator on Wieman's method. There appears to be on the one hand a very tough-minded empirical method which involves public verification, but on the other a rather tender-minded method which relies on a more personal concept of knowledge. While he maintains that the latter is simply an adaptation and application of the former, this is problematic. When he is talking theory of knowledge in general he seems very tough-minded and rigorous indeed. However, when it comes to religious inquiry in particular much of this rigor seems to be missing.

In this section I shall be concerned with an exposition of what we may call his general theory of knowledge, reserving consideration of his views on specifically religious knowledge for the next section.

The most obvious and direct influence on Wieman's theory of knowledge has been John Dewey. Like Dewey, Wieman takes what may be regarded as a contextualist approach. That is, rather than beginning with certain

assumptions or dogma that one takes to be infallibly true and working out the implications of such basic propositions, Wieman is concerned with an analysis of the procedures that have in fact produced knowledge.

While Wieman does not deny that he has an epistemology, he would certainly agree with Dewey's repudiation of what Dewey calls "epistemology". According to Dewey, "Theories of knowledge that constitute what are now called epistemologies have arisen because knowledge and obtaining knowledge have not been conceived in terms of the operations by which, in the continuum of experiential inquiry, stable beliefs are progressively obtained and utilized. Because they are not constructed upon the ground of operations and conceived in terms of their actual procedures and consequences, they are necessarily formed in terms of preconceptions derived from various sources, mainly cosmological in ancient and mainly psychological (directly or indirectly) in modern theory."[1]

While Wieman does not deny that he has a metaphysic, it is denied that his theory of knowledge derives from such. One does not deduce a theory of knowledge, one induces such from an analysis of "the operations by which, in the continuum of experiential inquiry, stable beliefs are progressively obtained and utilized." While there are, I think, some assumptions which Wieman makes (both cosmological and psychological), these are in principle subject to revision in light of the ongoing process of inquiry.

Given this approach, if we are to hope for an adequate theory of knowledge we must look to where "stable beliefs are progressively obtained and utilized." Like the positivists abroad and his pragmatic

predecessors at home, Wieman has been much impressed by science as a method of obtaining such stable beliefs. But we must not overemphasize the factor of stability here. Science is a continuum, an ongoing process that involves the correcting and revising of beliefs. The advantage of scientific methodology is that it is self-corrective; providing a means for detecting errors in our theories and progressively attaining ever more adequate ideas.

Thus, science provides a paradigm case of the process by which knowledge is obtained and utilized. While we may have reservations about the way such knowledge is used, as Wieman certainly does, science does provide us with knowledge. There is no philosophic problem here. What is needed is an analysis of the process, the procedures, that makes this possible.

While there is a sense of 'know' that is to be distinguished from 'knowing that', if our analysis in chapter one is correct this is not independent of 'knowing that'. One cannot make a knowledge claim without making some statements. As Wieman says, "...knowledge must present itself in the form of statements. We can have all manner of experiences, some of greatest value, which cannot be articulated in the form of statements. Therefore these experiences are not in themselves instances of knowledge. But we may be able to make statements about them, and these last can be instances of knowledge."[2] While this is a rather recent statement, the same view is implicit in Wieman's earliest work.

Wieman has widely been regarded as a very thorough-going empiricist, but 'empiricist' needs some explication. It has been in the history of philosophy common practice to contrast 'empiricist' with

'rationalist.' Borrowing from Kant, it is common to say there are two and only two sorts of statements: analytic and synthetic. Analytic statements are true in virtue of some intrinsic connection among the concepts involved. Synthetic statements that are true are not so simply in terms of any internal relations, but involve some tertium quid, this being supplied by experience. The empiricist claims that while analytic statements may be known a priori, synthetic statements can be known only a posteriori. He denies that there are any synthetic statements that are known a priori. Analytic statements, on this view, are not informative or descriptive of any existing state of affairs. If they inform at all, it is merely about the way in which we use language. Synthetic statements are known to be true only a posteriori, that is, this knowledge derives from our experience of things in the world, not merely from reflection.

A similar distinction was made by Wieman in 1929 in terms of knowledge by description and knowledge by acquaintance. "Knowledge by acquaintance, according to our usage, is of that which has been experienced by some one, or presumptively could be if the right kind of organism could be placed in the right situation. Knowledge by description, on the other hand, is of that which could not be experienced by any organism or mind whatsoever, because it does not refer to any of the data of experience."[3]

While Wieman thus admits that there is a kind of non-empirical knowledge, this is so because knowledge by description "does not refer to any of the data of experience." While empiricists generally must allow some role for a priori knowledge, it is clear which sort is to be prized. In The Source of Human Good Wieman claims, "Truth concerning

the heavy events which determine our existence by giving us value has been confused with truth concerning those rarefied events which are nothing but linguistic symbols, namely, marks on paper and vibrations of the air when ordered and used for communication." Further, he adds, "Since the confusion is so subtle and persistent between specifiable structure which pertains to nothing save linguistic events and specifiable structure which pertains to heavy events of existence, let us reserve the term "true knowledge" for the latter only."[4]

While 'true knowledge' is an odd locution, Wieman's point is clear enough. Perhaps we may substitute 'valuable knowledge.' But when Wieman talks of knowing it is safe to assume he is talking about what he has called knowledge by acquaintance.

While it may be that in Wieman's early work he undervalued the importance of knowledge by description, he has never maintained that such knowledge was not an important element in what he has called knowledge by acquaintance. Indeed, some of his later works even include coherence as one of the tests of truth. The point that he wants to insist on is that without at some point a system of concepts referring to experience, we have merely a system of concepts, and these are not in themselves informative of any existing reality, any of the "heavy events" that determine human destiny.

But to indicate Wieman's emphasis on experience does not carry us very far in understanding his empiricism. Views as apparently disparate as Baillie's also emphasize experience in the cognitive process. What is needed is some more adequate understanding of his view as to the nature of experience and its role in knowing.

Perhaps the first thing to note about Wieman's conception of experience is that it never provides an absolute guarantee of truth. Wieman is committed to a thorough-going fallibilism here. Obviously, not all synthetic statements are items of knowledge, but what more is required? Is it a necessary condition of knowing p that p be true? According to Wieman, "If we follow correctly the rules of inquiry, the resulting statement is valid knowledge even though it may not be true. The demand that knowledge be infallibly true is a demand which would make it impossible to use the word "knowledge" to refer to any statement ever made by any human being."[5]

While on some of Wieman's analyses of 'true' I don't think he has to take this position, what he says here is clearly consistent with his approach which takes scientific knowledge to be paradigmatic. If we demand that our knowledge be infallible, then there could be no scientific knowledge, for we are never in a position here to claim absolute certainty. While there may be certain linguistic puzzles involved in the view that one can legitimately claim to know p even though p is not true, any view which leads to the conclusion that there is no scientific knowledge is clearly unacceptable. To claim to know never entails, according to Wieman, the claim to be absolutely certain. This fallibilism extends not only to general principles supported inductively, but also to our knowledge of particular matters of fact. To know that 'this is red' is never absolutely certain; nor even that 'I am here now experiencing a red sensation.'

The two basic concepts for understanding Wieman's conception of experience are quality and structure. These correspond in a rough way

with the Aristotelian notions of matter and form. Every experience is an experience of something, a content, a quality or complex of qualities. But experience is not normally purely chaotic, it has some order, some structure.

But the quality of an experience cannot be defined, for 'quality' refers to a feeling, and such feelings are ineffable. While one can give a verbal definition of how the term 'quality' is to be used, one cannot convey what is denoted by the term in such a definition.

However, there are difficulties even here. On Wieman's view every quality experienced by every human being is unique. You cannot have the quality that I experience, nor I yours. Nor can I experience now the quality that I experienced a moment ago. It is not just a matter of bad luck that my wife cannot bake pies like my mother used to bake, for one of the factors that enters into the quality of an experience is the condition of the experiencing organism. While my wife may be a better cook than my mother was, the quality of the pies I savored as a small boy cannot be repeated.

When G. E. Moore claimed that 'yellow' was indefinable, he was correct on this view if he was saying that the quality yellow cannot be defined. But not because yellow is a simple unanalyzable property, but rather because the quality of yellow can only be experienced. But again, to experience the quality yellow is not to be identified with knowing that one is experiencing the quality yellow.

The quality yellow, however, is not to be regarded as a simple atomistic impression of sense. In contrast to the British tradition of empiricism, experience is viewed holistically. While one's experience

may for some purposes be analyzed into such discrete items as sense-data, this is a matter of analysis. And such analysis always distorts the quality of the whole. The whole has a quality that cannot always be explained in terms of its parts.

Empiricism, whether in the British tradition or the Pragmatic contextual tradition in which Wieman is operating, is concerned to distinguish between what is "given" in experience from the interpretation placed upon such immediate data by the human mind.

John Locke wanted to distinguish among sensible properties those that belonged to the object proper and those that arose in the human mind due to some power in the object. While these latter are due to some power in the object, it seems safe to claim that for Locke these properties are not properly to be regarded as in the object. Primary properties such as solidity, extension, figure, motion or rest, and number are objective properties of things, but the secondary properties of color, sound, taste and odor are merely in us.

While Bishop Berkeley argued against this division of sensible properties into primary and secondary, he did want to make a distinction between what is immediately perceived and what is only mediately perceived. The distinction here is between what is presented to the senses without any inference being made by the human mind and what does involve such a mental operation. To cite his example in the Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous, we immediately perceive the letters on a page, but only mediately the meaning of those sensible marks.[6]

It seems clear that in both of the above cases the aim is to get down to something about which we can be absolutely sure. While the

secondary properties, Locke thought, were tainted by the human mind, the primary properties of objects impress us just as they are. Our ideas, then, of these primary properties are direct copies of reality. For Berkeley, so long as we stay with what is immediately perceived we cannot make a mistake.

While Wieman also wants to distinguish between the "given" in experience and the interpretation placed upon experience by the human mind, he rejects the approach taken in the British tradition. While there may be good reasons, given some purposes, for making a distinction between primary and secondary properties, these reasons are a matter of utility only; it would be a mistake to think we are distinguishing the real from the merely phenomenal. Color is just as much a fact of experience as is weight, and Berkeley is right in rejecting the sort of distinction Locke tries to make out.

But Berkeley's distinction between what is immediately perceived and what is mediately perceived is misleading also. While we do immediately experience something, any verbal description of what we experience involves interpretation and is consequently not absolutely certain. To see <u>that this is a letter</u> involves conceptualization. The notion of perceiving a black patch on a white field involves interpretation just as does seeing the meaning of a sentence. There is no way to say what we perceive that can get around all interpretive elements. The notion of sense-data is a highly sophisticated notion that is the result of much philosophic thought. To say that sense-data are what is "given" in experience is to abstract from experience, that is, to simplify,to leave a great deal out of consideration. To talk of sense-data is not to get

at experience "bare."

What is immediately experienced is what Wieman intends to signify by 'quality.' Indeed, according to Wieman's metaphysic, "Quality...is the ultimate substance of the world out of which all else is made. Hard, soft, bright, red, odorous, painful, joyous, sorrowful--all are qualities experienced as events." But to name such qualities involves something more than immediate experience. These are known only as the result of analysis. Rather than simple atomistic impressions, "Quality is substantial, concrete, massive, inexhaustible in the fullness of its existential reality, which is the concrete event."[7]

Eugene T. Gendlin in attempting to explicate what he means by the "raw, present ongoing functioning (in us) of what is usually called experience" does about as well, I think, as anyone in describing the sort of stuff that Wieman has called 'quality.'

> It is something so simple, so easily available to every person, that at first its very simplicity makes it hard to point to. Another term for it is 'felt meaning,' or 'feeling.' However, 'feeling' is a word usually used for specific contents--for this or that feeling, emotion, or tone, for feeling good, or bad, or blue, or pretty fair. But regardless of the many changes in what we feel--that is to say, really, how we feel--there is always the concretely present flow of feeling. At any moment we can individually and privately direct our attention inward, and when we do that, there it is. Of course, we have this or that specific idea, wish, emotion, perception, word, or thought, but we always have concrete feeling, an inward sensing whose nature is broader. It is a concrete mass in the sense that it is 'there' for us. It is not at all vague in its being there. It may be vague only in that we may not know what it is. We can put only a few aspects of it into words. The mass itself is always something there, no matter what we say 'it is.' Our definitions, our knowing 'what it is,' are symbols that specify aspects of it, 'parts' of it, as we say. Whether we name it, divide it, or not,

there it is.[8]

With Dewey, Wieman wants no bifurcation of nature. As he said in 1924, "By experience we mean the sensuous qualities in that temporal and spatial structure that go to make up nature..."[9] While there are difficulties here, Wieman wants to say that we are in direct contact with the ultimate substance of the universe. While this might seem to lead to an idealist position, Wieman has always insisted that he is a realist. Quality exists independently of the human mind, but obviously cannot be experienced independently of the human mind. To talk of a noumenal realm of being, to talk of things as they are in themselves, is at best useless speculation.

But to immediately experience the qualities out of which all is made is not to have knowledge of such qualities. "Diversity of kinds and nuances of change in the quality of events as they occur are infinite in their complexity, although we have names to discriminate only relatively few of them."[10] What we know is always relatively barren compared to the richness and complexity of immediate experience. Experience bare, if we may speak in this way, is, as James would say, "a blooming, buzzing confusion." To cognize is to structure such experience, and 'structure' "is the name we give to the demarcations and interrelations of events whereby we can apprehend them as different events and yet in meaningful relation to one another."[11]

The way in which this is done is by abstracting from the concrete particular experience certain general features that can be found to occur in other experiences also. While strictly speaking this experience of a cherry here and now is unique, we could not say even that what I see is

red without the abstract concept of red. The redness experienced here and now is meaningfully related to other occurrences of a similar quality. It is structured quality that can be repeated and made public.

Quality and structure are interdependent. We cannot meaningfully talk of one without the other. Form and content are linked together in cognition. The mind is not to be conceived as a tabula rasa, a merely passive recipient of qualities. We select certain qualities, give them names, and neglect all the rest. Given the limitations of the human intellect this is a necessity. We cannot deal cognitively with the inexhaustible fullness of reality.

One of the advantages of scientific method is that it enables us to simplify the rich complexity of experience. "Putting it roughly, we may say that scientific method is a device by which we disencumber ourselves of the great mass of experience in order to pick our way through the intricate space-time structure of all experience. The quickest, easiest, and surest way to pass from one object to another in thinking, especially when one is dealing with a great number and variety of objects, is to ignore everything about the objects save their space-time structure and to consider only certain distinctive features of that."[12] Since quantum physics one would not want to emphasize "space-time structures," but I think Wieman's point concerning simplification is not affected.

Science, then, selects from the rich undiscriminated flow of experience only certain data that are useful in carrying forth its purposes. Wieman agrees with Perry's claim that, "Scientific description, then, is governed by two motives, on the one hand, unity, parsimony, or simplicity, the reduction of variety and change to as few terms as

possible; and on the other hand, exact formulation."[13]

In a later work Wieman argues that science not only abstracts from the data of experience on grounds of utility, but that this is also important in selecting among alternative theories. Such selections are reasonable, for "Science could never have made the advances which it has made if it had chosen complex instead of simple theories, theories which did not carry implications applicable to a great diversity of problems, and theories which were not elegant and thus incapable of inspiring the scientist with joy and satisfaction in the beauty of his discoveries."[14]

The notion of simplicity here, I think, is much more complex than this passage seems to indicate. Frequently the simpler, more elegant theories in terms of their formulation have had to be given up for more complex formulations of wider scope. There is frequently a tension between simplicity of formulation and simplicity of application that Wieman doesn't seem to recognize. However, the notion of usefulness in some sense is widely recognized.

There is a further problem here when Wieman talks of elegance. Can elegance be a criterion in the selection of alternative theories? While this is a very difficult question to answer, one might well argue that our conception of what is elegant is derivative. That is to say, what we take to be the more elegant, more aesthetically satisfying theory, derives from the satisfactoriness of this theory on other grounds. On this view it is the usefulness of the theory that makes it elegant, not its elegance that makes it useful. Thus, theories which "carry implications applicable to a great diversity of problems" create in us aesthetic satisfaction.

In science this selectivity is a deliberate and conscious procedure. But we don't always, or even normally, select data and organize it in this deliberate and self-conscious way. In the Wrestle of Religion with Truth Wieman emphasizes the importance of habits in this process. He even begins this section on habits by saying, "What we perceive is determined by our habits."[15] If we take this statement seriously, this would seem to make perception a highly arbitrary affair determined by the way we have happened to be conditioned.

If we follow what he says subsequently, however, it seems clear that Wieman does not mean determined by our habits, but rather influenced by our habits. He is not saying that perception is subjective, nor is he denying that we see objects. What he is maintaining is that the sort of objects, the way we interpret our experience is influenced greatly by our habits.

In discussing our perception of a penny, he says, "When we see a penny we select only a tiny bit from all the experience that pertains to it. All the rest enters our awareness only to that minimum degree necessary to signify the tiny bit we have selected as distinguishing the penny. And what is this tiny bit? It is an interaction between organism and environment which we characterize as round, flat on two sides, reddish-brown, etc., on the other."[16] Wieman does not want to repudiate his realism here, although from some points of view it is qualified.

While in veridical perception, objects in our visual field (perhaps we should say qualities) are causal factors, they are not sufficient to account for our perception. Seeing is not to be identified with having something in one's visual field. Perception also involves taking

note of. It is this focus of attention that is determined by our habits. Perception is not a one way affair, from object to perceiver, but rather a transaction, "an interaction between organism and environment." Thus, both the "organic set" of the organism and the object in the environment contribute to what is seen. Wieman would surely agree that what is "given" in experience sets limits upon the possible interpretations that might be produced.

But what determines our habits, the organic set of the organism? To say that we structure our experience as we do because of our habits may shed some light on why we are not normally conscious of such structuring, but in no way justifies any particular structure. In The Source of Human Good Wieman claims that, "This 'cutting-up' of the continuity of existence is determined by a selectivity of attention, which is, in turn, determined by biological reactions, by the system of linguistic signs, by the physical instruments used, and by the cultural demands of the time and place."[17] In an article called "Knowledge, Religious and Otherwise" he adds that the "needs of personal security" are sometimes coercive in our interpretation of experience.[18]

The inclusion of subjective and accidental factors such as personal security and cultural demands would seem to lead to an extreme relativism. If these factors are involved in the very act of perception, can there be any empirical knowledge at all? Wieman does say that "Every culture and age has a different structure of events and, to that extent, a different world. In like manner, the world known to science is different from the world accessible to common sense." However, he continues to say, "But one is no more real than the other..."[19]

Again, Wieman is maintaining that our "world" is largely the result of the way we structure our experience, and that this is to be accounted for not only in terms of the qualities that we experience but also in terms of the mental categories and needs of the perceiver. From the point of view of common sense, this desk is solid, hard, inert. To the physicist this desk is composed of atoms in a vast sea of empty space. The atoms are not even solid, being essentially energy.

But when Wieman talks of the different worlds that result, he is not saying e.g., that there are two desks--a common sense one and a scientific one. Common sense selects certain rough data such as hard, solid, inert. Physics, while beginning with the rough data of common sense, bases its claim concerning atomic structures on highly refined data that are far removed from common sense. It is not only a matter of structuring the same data in different ways, some difference in data is also involved. But the complexity of qualities constituting the "desk" is rich enough to accomodate both views. There is no necessary contradiction between common sense and physics here.

Paradoxes do arise, however, when it is claimed e.g., that the desk is not really hard. Surely the hardness of the desk is as well verified as any sophisticated theory about atomic structures. The confusion here is due to a shift in language. 'Hard' refers to a common sense quality. To deny that the desk is hard, 'hard' must mean something entirely different from what it means in ordinary discourse. There is certainly no justification for thinking that the desk as conceived by the physicist is more "real" than the desk as conceived by common sense, although we may allow that the desk is constituted of atoms as the

physicist maintains. There is no reason to think that atoms, the parts, exist in an independent self-subsistent way while the desk does not.

We have talked of the desk "as conceived by," but does the physicist perceive something different from the desk I perceive? For all his sophisticated training, I suspect he sees pretty much what I see when I look at the desk. There is no sharp distinction in Wieman's theory between 'perceive' and 'conceive'. While we may agree with the view that the two are interdependent, do we not need to make some distinction? There is a persistent, and I think unnecessary, vagueness here in Wieman that leads to a number of problems.

While there are a wide variety of world views that have earnestly been held by somebody or other, and doubtless there will continue to be such plentitude in the forseeable future, how are we to arbitrate among them? While common sense and science do not necessarily contradict each other, they frequently do so. Indeed, one of the problems with common sense itself is that it is notoriously inconsistent. All these various ways of structuring our experience cannot be correct, for they are different ways--they contradict each other. Are there not criteria which are independent of origins and are free from subjective factors which can be used to confirm or disconfirm these myriad ways of structuring experience?

Typically, empiricism has been understood to be just such a method of verification. While the ideas we have may be a function of subjective and arbitrary factors, sensory observation determines which ideas (propositions) are correct and which incorrect. We cannot believe now that the moon is made of green cheese, for men have gone there and have <u>seen</u> that

this is not the case. Perception is the ultimate and definitive check on all our man-made constructions and flights of fancy. Perception, when we attend to it, is coercive in its effect; it restructures what we claim to know.

Obviously, it can't be this neat and simple for Wieman. Not only do our inherited ways of thinking influence our judgment as to the theories that initially make sense to us, they extend down into the very act of perception itself. But, again, if all these non-rational environmental factors determine our habits, and our habits "determine" what we see, how can there be any empirical test for truth? We can strive to be consistent, but can this be any help in arbitrating among world views--none of which are perfectly consistent? It would seem that we are reduced to making an existential decision at this point; a decision on the basis of no evidence whatsoever.

Whether or not one calls himself an existentialist, this latter view is very popular today. The notion of evidence only makes sense within the context of a certain system of thought. Each system (game) has its own rules. But among the various systems, one cannot make a rational judgment. Here one simply has to decide whether or not he is going to play that sort of game.

But this is not Wieman's view. While he does argue in one place that what we perceive is due to non-rational factors beyond our control, we can nonetheless make corrections here. To illustrate the way in which this can be done, he uses an example from C. I. Lewis: "The example is the experience of looking at a white wall and seeing a spot of red paint, so it seems. The spot is in truth not red paint but an after image

of red projected on the wall by an established reaction of the psychosomatic organism. Impulsively, inevitably, beyond my power of control, I project the red image as though it were a spot of red paint. While my seeing of the red paint on the wall cannot be corrected because of the established propensity of my organism, my believing that it is a red spot can be corrected. I can test the correctness of my perception by following the rules for reaching knowledge as these were above described."[20]

Let's consider; I cannot correct my seeing, but I can test the correctness of my perception. What does Wieman mean to say here? Consider the rules he refers us to: "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 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 observations under the specified conditions to discover if the data do appear in the order required to warrant accepting the statement as having met the tests of probability."[21]

Unfortunately, Wieman is not always consistent in his use of 'perception.' Sometimes this is used synonomously with 'having an experience,' sometimes with 'being aware of' and sometimes includes the affirmation of a proposition. His considered view, however, is that perceiving is not merely a matter of undergoing an experience, but involves a focus of attention and its attendant structuring of experience.

This involves an inference that goes beyond one's immediate experience to something public. Seeing a red spot, on this view, entails that there is a red spot to be seen. To claim that there is a red spot entails that one will have the appropriate experience when specified conditions are satisfied.

When Wieman says that "my seeing of red paint on the wall cannot be corrected" he must mean something like 'my seeming to see'. While my seeming to see red paint cannot be corrected, due to the psychosomatic condition of my organism, my belief, i.e., my making an inference to the existence of red paint, can be corrected.

But how is such correction to be made? How are we to know that "the spot is in truth not red paint but an after image of red projected on the wall"? Presumably we are to formulate a proposition, following (1) and (2), 'there is red paint on the wall.' Thus, (3) red paint will be observed presumably by any "normal" observer under specified lighting conditions. (4) Such persons do not observe red paint under such conditions, thus, the original proposition has been disverified.

Of course, we have packed a great deal into the notion of a "normal" observer. The quality of redness is not something that simply impresses itself upon us without any interpretation on our part. To see red, one has first of all to have the sort of organism that is sensitive to that spectrum of light. One also has to have the concept of redness, and understand 'on the wall.' Further, it is necessary to have that focus of attention that selects red from a myriad of other qualities that might be attended to. And these are only some of the necessary conditions that might be mentioned. Whether the sufficient conditions for

declaring an observer normal could be stated without circularity seems doubtful. If one does not see the red paint that is on the wall, then we declare him abnormal whether we can explain why he doesn't see it or not.

But if we include seeing red paint on the wall as part of the conditions of being a normal observer, what happens to the notion of public verification? Are we not privileging our conviction concerning the red paint in a most gross and arbitrary fashion?

While the above considerations may count against those who are after some infallible empirical data upon which to construct our knowledge, I don't think this counts against the position that Wieman is maintaining here. From the point of view of practical reason, the perception of red paint is unproblematic. While there are no "brute facts" on Wieman's view, all perception involving some structuring of the data, still the perception of red paint is relatively free of structure. That is, the structural elements are minimal.

While I think Wieman is right in rejecting the sort of criterion Berkeley utilizes for distinguishing what is immediately perceived from what is mediately perceived, Berkeley does have an important point to make here. Clearly there is some distinction that needs to be made between seeing a word and seeing the meaning of that word. The latter is hardly a case of sense perception at all. The structural element here predominates almost entirely.

Much of what Wieman has said concerning the cultural demands of the time and place, the needs of personal security, etc., are virtually irrelevant to the perception of red paint. What makes red useful as

empirical data is its invariance. Whether one is an idealist or realist, theist or atheist, capitalist or communist makes virtually no difference here. The perception of red is independent of these larger constructions. While the perception of red does involve some structure, this is not problematic, for we all, or almost all, structure our experience at this level in the same way. It is this that Dr. Johnson failed to realize when he thought he was refuting Berkeley by kicking a stone. No responsible person denies that stones are hard, heavy, etc., regardless of his metaphysic.

Given our realization of the invariancy of red, we are willing then to correct our judgment in regard to red paint on the wall if we believe that others do not see what we see. That is, we are willing to change 'I see' to something of the form 'I seem to see.' While 'red' is not precise enough nor sufficiently invariant to satisfy the requirements of refined data for science, it is sufficiently invariant to provide a means of verifying or disverifying our common sense judgments.

As we have indicated, science provides for Wieman a paradigm case of knowing. But more than that, in his earlier work he maintained that essentially science is the only way of knowing. As he says in Religious Experience and the Scientific Method, "All knowledge must depend ultimately upon science, for science is nothing else than the refined process of knowing. Scientific method is simply the method of knowing. We call it scientific only because it has been deliberately developed for the purpose of guarding against error. All knowledge is scientific except in so far as it has not developed a method for discriminating accurately between the false and the true."[22]

Apparently, however, when Wieman talks of scientific method this does not rule out what may be called common sense. On this view science begins with the common notions which we ordinarily accept and proceeds to clarify and refine them and remove such contraditions that arise. Science is simply common sense made more refined and consistent. Wieman does not, then, want to draw a sharp line between common sense and science, for both rely on the same method.

What is this method? While Wieman admits that each science has techniques peculiar to its own subject matter, there is a general procedure common to all the sciences in virtue of which they are called scientific. What is this procedure? Wieman has offered a variety of analyses here.

In 1930 he attempted to formulate the scientific method as constituting four steps: "(1) Forming an idea of what course of action will produce specified consequences by observing various consequences that have issued from specified conditions...(2) Ascertain as accurately as possible just what are the conditions under which this course of action can be profitably followed to produce the desired and anticipated consequences. (3) Find or create these conditions, perform the course of action, and observe what happens. (4) Develop by logical inference what further to expect in the light of what has been observed and test these inferences just as the original idea was tested, namely, by steps one, two, and three just described. These further operations and observations should include negative cases, that is, cases in which the absence of certain specified conditions brings about the absence of certain specified consequences."[23]

In a paper published the same year Wieman argues that "There is a defensible method for distinguishing truth from error besides that of the physical sciences...This other method is a commonplace and ancient one. The method of the physical sciences is simply a highly developed and elaborately refined version of it."[24]

While the physical sciences do not and cannot deal effectively with all areas of human importance, we do have this "other" defensible method. "This method might be analyzed in five steps somewhat as follows: (1) Formulate a theory on the basis of prior observations. (2) Ascertain what must be observable, and under what conditions, if the theory is true. (3) Find or create those conditions under which the phenomena should be observable if the theory is true, then make the observation to see if they are. (4) Ascertain what must be observable, and under what conditions, if the theory be false. (5) Find or create these conditions under which the phenomena should be observable if the theory be false and make the observation to see if they are."[25]

Clearly, this "other" method is essentially a restatement of Wieman's analysis of what he regards as basic to scientific methodology. His point here is that it may be more or less rigorous. Science is not to be confused with a particular sort of subject matter nor to be identified simply with being precise. It is essentially a certain way of thinking.

I think we must admit at the outset that none of Wieman's analyses of scientific method are very profound, nor in spite of all his praise of science as a method for acquiring knowledge does he give evidence of an intimate acquaintance with actual scientific work. One suspects that

his views on scientific method derive more from John Dewey than from any first-hand knowledge of scientific procedure. However, the method that he outlines is the sort of thing that we do ordinarily mean by 'science.'

But let us examine this method. The first step, as formulated above, is not, I think, necessary. As we shall see, Wieman does not conceive of this method as a method for discovering hypotheses. Rather, it is a method for the testing or verifying of theories. As we shall see later, he is quite willing to allow faith, mystic vision, intuition, or whatever as a source of theories. What is crucial is that we subject any and all theories to a verification procedure. Thus, whether one's theory be formed on the basis of observation is irrelevant.

The second and fourth steps, however, are of utmost importance: (2) "Ascertain what must be observable and under what conditions, if the theory is true" and (4) "Ascertain what must be observable, and under what conditions, if the theory be false." Implicit here is a theory of meaning that constitutes, perhaps, Wieman's most radical innovation in theology. If we are to "ascertain what must be observable and under what conditions" we must formulate our theories (our theological claims) in terms of such observations or they must carry with them implications to such observations. Our theories must be empirically verifiable.

While Wieman does not affirm the positivist principle that the only meaningful statements are those that are empirically verifiable, he does at times come close to this view. In his "Intellectual Autobiography" he claims that "A theology which repudiates the empirical method of inquiry is futile and misleading."[26] And this is characteristic of the attitude which Wieman has expressed from the beginning. But we should

note that he is not concerned to distinguish between sense and nonsense as the positivists are. Rather, one is tempted to say that he wants to distinguish between useful and useless statements. But this requires some elaboration.

If we follow Wittgenstein and look for the use rather than the meaning of a statement we are close to the approach Wieman takes. There are all sorts of ideas (or statements) that Wieman would acknowledge as having a use—whether they are empirically verifiable or not. And some of these uses are extremely important for human welfare. They are certainly meaningful in the sense that they fulfill a function in the language.

But when we talk about use, we have to inquire as to what they are used to do. In a paper entitled "The Method of Religious Inquiry" Wieman begins by outlining the uses that may be made of 'God.' "Three uses may be made of the notion of God. One may use it to edify, to convert the sinner and comfort the saint, to stabilize society and uplift humanity; or one may use it to achieve conformity to ancient religious traditions or one may use it for purposes of experimentation."[27]

While we have been talking about ideas, not statements, what he says about the idea of God may be generalized. Wieman is not concerned to build into the notion of a statement the notion of empirical verifiability. Statements that are not empirically verifiable are not to be deemed as meaningless in any wholesale way, but rather as useless for purposes of inquiry, i.e., as cognitively useless.

"The most difficult step to take in the search after knowledge is not the actual work of experimentation...But it is rather the formulation

of a fruitful proposition which shall guide the work of experimentation. The old Baconian notion that one could investigate without an hypothesis has long since been demonstrated false. It is equally erroneous to think that any idea can be used experimentally. Most ideas cannot, if we understand by idea any apprehension we may have of an object."[28] Thus, the first important step in Wieman's concept of method is to formulate a fruitful hypothesis, and a necessary condition of its being fruitful is that it be empirically verifiable. As he says in another place, "One of the most important and difficult steps in the quest for truth is to formulate beliefs which can be experimentally tested, however indirectly."[29]

Steps (3), (4) and (5) cited above indicate how we are to "experimentally" test our beliefs once they have been correctly formulated. This is a matter of observation, and "Observation...is a series of perceptual events."[30] As we have seen, while our habits, conditioning, etc., greatly influence what we see in any given instance, there is a way of correcting such subjective factors. We determine that we have made a mistake in any given case by looking again, getting closer, improving the lighting conditions, changing our own physiological condition, calling in other observers, etc. In short, we appeal to experience in a wider context.

Such verification is an ongoing process. We are never in a position to claim that we have the truth absolutely. The "quest for truth" is never a finished matter.

In considering Wieman's theory of truth, I think it is important to get clear as to the sort of problem we are concerned with. Frequently,

there is some confusion as to whether we are asking (1) What the term 'true' means in the English language; what function does it serve? Or (2) What is the relation between language and the world; how do we go about verifying certain propositions?

It seems to this writer that there is much to be said in favor of the view that 'p is true' means 'p'. That is, 'true' adds nothing to the statement of which it is predicated. It serves only as an exclamation mark or a shorthand way of repeating the original statement. 'True' on this view is dispensable. In principle we can say everything we want to say without using the word 'true' or 'truth'.

If we compare Religious Experience and Scientific Method with The Wrestle of Religion with Truth it would seem that the concept of truth is dispensable for Wieman. In Religious Experience he devotes himself to an analysis of the process by which we verify statements. In Wrestle of Religion with Truth he concludes, "Truth, then, consists of concepts put into the form of beliefs that can be verified by way of experimental operations."[31] Thus, it would seem that rather than speaking of truth we could speak about beliefs (in the form of statements) that can be verified. The problem of truth would seem to reduce to the problem of verification.

Of course, to maintain that 'p is true' means 'p', says nothing about the relationship between language and the world; and this, I think, is what philosophers have traditionally been interested in. What Wieman suggests above in answer to our second question is an operational theory of truth.

There is, however, another use to which 'true' is put. That is to

signalize a realist metaphysic. As he said above, truth is not to be equated with verification. It consists in beliefs that can be verified. By 'can be verified' he does not mean to include 'or disverified.' The point is that a statement may be true prior to its verification, although it cannot be known to be such prior to such verification. But we do not make it true in the process of verification. "The experimental verification does not make them true. They may be true before they have been verified. But it is only with respect to experimental operations that they are true. To be true implies some claim concerning the consequences of experimentation, whether or not the experimentation is ever carried out. It is only with reference to some experimental operation, past, present or future that a belief can be true."[32]

Wieman is rather confusing here. If statements may "be true" prior to being verified, how is it that they "are true" only with respect to experimental operations? What Wieman fails to distinguish clearly is 'is true' and 'is known to be true.' But he does want to make such a distinction. Our claim that a statement is true can only be made good by reference to some experimental operations, but this is not to say that the truth of the statement is contingent upon those operations. Wieman's point would have been clearer if he had used "can be known to be true" rather than simply 'be true.' A statement is true if it is verifiable. But 'verifiable' here is being used as opposed to 'disverifiable' not 'nonverifiable.'

While in The Wrestle of Religion with Truth Wieman outlines a sort of operational theory of truth, we should note that he does not identify truth with any sort of verification procedures. This is only the way we

know that a statement is true. But operationalism seems most congenial with idealism, and Wieman has always wanted to insist on his realism. Throughout, Wieman has always included aspects of a correspondence theory. As he says in The Wrestle of Religion with Truth, "Truth...is any specifiable structure pertaining to events and their possibilities. Truth is not knowledge but must be potential knowledge. Hence the structure must be specifiable. When specified in relation to actual events determining the structure, the truth becomes known and is called 'knowledge'.[33]

How do we know when a specifiable structure (statement) is specified "in relation to actual events determining the structure"? One is tempted to say that we know this when the structure of our language corresponds with the structure of the world. But this is not very illuminating. At this point we are driven back to Wieman's emphasis upon operational procedures, on experimental verification.

While there is no basic shift in Wieman's thought concerning verification, this notion is expanded in his later works to include such factors as coherence. In The Source of Human Good he says, "The tests of truth are three-observation, agreement between observers, and coherence. All three of these apply to every proposition alleged to be true, whether it is in the field of common sense, science, philosophy, or faith."[34]

We have talked about observation, but, perhaps, something more should be said about agreement. As I have argued, if 'experimental' is to be used legitimately there must be some notion of public verification. While Wieman is not always clear about this in his earlier works, or at least very emphatic, he does pay some heed to this notion in his later

works. Agreement is one of the tests of truth. But this is not to be confused with mere consensus. Truth is not a matter of majority vote. "'Agreement' here means that observers shall observe the same thing. If another cannot observe what I do, when the same conditions determining the observation are present for the two of us, then the full test of truth has not been met."[35]

Of course, "when the same conditions determining the observation" is problematic. As Wieman realizes, "...all conditions are never the same for any two observations," but adds that "these may be quite irrelevant to the problem under consideration and irrelevant to the kind of observation to be made."[36]

But how do we determine what conditions are relevant and which ones are not? In listing some of the conditions, he includes "...the same kind of training. If one has learned to distinguish what the other has never learned to detect because he has never acquired that focus of attention and that Gestalt of apperception, the question of their agreement or disagreement in observation is irrelevant to the test of truth."[37]

Presumably, Wieman is here contending only that one has to know what to look for. Surely this is unobjectionable. Public verification involves agreement among qualified observers. However, what is to constitute a "qualified" observer is problematic, as we shall see in the next section.

But how does coherence fit into an empiricist view? According to Wieman, coherence "means, first of all, that there shall be no contradiction between the proposition alleged to be true and other propositions held to be true. Ideally, it would mean that the new proposition under

consideration would be one component in a total implicative system which included all other true propositions." While Wieman admits that we have not attained such an ideal and, perhaps, never will, still "within limited fields the known and the newly discovered must form one implicative system."[38]

Unfortunately, he devotes only one short paragraph to explaining what is meant by 'coherence.' In a later work, Man's Ultimate Commitment, he mentions coherence as involved in the method of reason, but does not elucidate what this means. However, he does substitute 'the logical rule of noncontradiction' for 'coherence'. If all he means by coherence is noncontradiction there would seem to be no problem; although I should think that noncontradiction would be a necessary condition for asserting anything, rather than a test for a truth.

Presumably, in The Source of Human Good Wieman has in mind something akin to James' view that a true idea must correspond or agree with reality--one of these realities being accepted beliefs, or as he says, past truths. But can this be a test of truth for Wieman? He never tires of denouncing mere systems of thought. Clearly, he does not intend that this should eliminate the need for observation. It is merely an addenda to all that he says about experimental verification.

Rather than talking of coherence as a test of truth, perhaps Wieman should have brought this in as an ideal. In understanding, we do want to construct a system. We want to see how individual facts may be deduced from general theories. Knowing is not merely a matter of perception. We strive to see how our various experiences are related. If a "new discovery" and the known do not "form one implicative system"

this serves as a spur to further experimentation and/or reflection. But the mere fact that a new discovery is neither entailed by nor entails our present theories surely does not count in any decisive way against its truth--although it may be an embarrassment and be a psychological factor in rejecting it out of hand.

In any case, Wieman mentions coherence as a test of truth in only one paragraph in The Source of Human Good and in a couple of sentences concerning the methods of reason in Man's Ultimate Commitment. Therefore it does not seem to me that this occupies any central place in Wieman's thought.

It is important, however, to note that truth, for Wieman, is not an absolute value. It is a value, but not the only, or even the most important, value. "Truth rests upon the foundation of value, not value on the foundation of truth. Organic reactions with conscious awareness distinguish better and worse long before propositions are formulated and distinguished as true and false. Also the issue of true and false, when it arises, is always incidental and subsidiary to distinguishing the better and the worse."[39]

While in a sense Wieman is taking a pragmatic view of truth here, this should not be confused with the sort of view that James maintained. Nowhere in Wieman do you find him saying that usefulness in any sense makes a proposition true. While value is prior to truth, it is not the case that value determines what is true. We are not to allow feelings of comfort to corrupt our judgment as to what is true. This is sickly sentimentality.

Truth, however, is only one factor in our decision to accept a

proposition. While Wieman insists that truth ought to be a necessary condition for accepting a statement, it is not a sufficient one. We accept or reject theories not solely on the basis of their truth. Different theories, on this view, may all equally well account for the observable facts of experience. In this case we rightly make appeal to such factors as scope and simplicity. We are here making our decision not on the basis of truth but on that of utility.

Here, I think, Wieman is on sound ground. It is not the case on this view, that e.g., the Ptolemaic theory is false and that of Copernicus true. Rather, we accept the Copernican account because we can do more with it. Wieman defends his metaphysics and even his theory of value not on the basis of their truth, but on the basis of utility. After outlining various theories of value in The Source of Human Good, Wieman, in arguing for his contextualist view, says, "...we take it not because it alone is true. We take the complex contextualist interpretation for the same reason that we take a cat by the nape of the neck. Both in practical action and intellectual inquiry, we can do more with value when we take it this way."[40]

This view does lead Wieman to make some rather odd statements--indicating that incompatible theories are all true. But on this view "Any theory of value is true if it identifies value with some one or more of the elements which we find are always present whenever we choose between alternatives."[41]

I think Wieman is overgenerous here in allowing all these alternative theories to be true. However, one can see how this sort of position derives from his general theory of knowledge. We cannot expect any

theory to account for all the facts of experience, for experience is always much richer and more complex than any possible theoretical formulation. No cognitive structure can encompass all the infinite data that might be attended to. Of course, a true theory may nonetheless be worthless on other grounds.

While I have not attempted to deal with all the difficulties that might be raised in regard to Wieman's general theory of knowledge, on the whole it seems to me to be a viable position. In comparison to the British tradition it seems to me that there is much to recommend it. But to simply summarize our investigation, it seems clear that Wieman on this score is surely an empiricist in the American pragmatist tradition. While his analysis of scientific methodology is not thorough or exhaustive, he does include those elements that we typically have in mind when we think of such procedures. It calls for verification by the senses and requires that such verification be capable of replication by other qualified observers.

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER III

[1]John Dewey, Logic: The Theory of Inquiry, (New York: Henry Holt, 1938), pp. 534-535.

[2]Henry Nelson Wieman, "Knowledge, Religious and Otherwise," Journal of Religion, XXXVIII (Jan. 1958), p. 13.

[3]Wieman, Religious Experience, pp. 25-26.

[4]Wieman, Source, p. 177.

[5]Wieman, "Knowledge," p. 13.

[6]George Berkeley, Three Dialogues Between Hylas and Philonous, (LaSalle, Ill.: Open Court, reprinted 1960), p. 11.

[7]Wieman, Source, p. 302.

[8]Eugene T. Gendin, "The Significance of Felt Meaning," Encounter, ed. by Ramona Cormier, Ewing Chinn, Richard Lineback, (Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1970), p. 563.

[9]Henry Nelson Wieman, "Experience, Mind, and Concept," Journal of Philosophy, XXI (Oct. 29, 1924), p. 561.

[10]Wieman, Source, p. 302.

[11]Ibid.

[12]Wieman, "Experience," p. 569.

[13]As cited in Religious Experience, pp. 160-161.

[14]Wieman, Commitment, p. 149.

[15]Henry Nelson Wieman, The Wrestle of Religion with Truth, (New York: Macmillan, 1927), p. 83.

[16]Ibid., pp. 89-90.

[17]Wieman, Source, p. 205.

[18]Wieman, "Knowledge," p. 16.

[19]Wieman, Source, p. 205.

[20]Wieman, "Knowledge," p. 15.

[21]Ibid., p. 13.

[22]Wieman, Religious Experience, p. 23.

[23]Henry Nelson Wieman, The Issues of Life, Mendenhall Lectures, 12th series, (New York: Abingdon Press, 1930), pp. 187-88.

[24]Henry Nelson Wieman, "Religion and the Physical Sciences," World Tomorrow, XIII, (Feb., 1930), p. 57.

[25]Ibid.

[26]Wieman, Theology, p. 3.

[27]Henry Nelson Wieman, "The Method of Religious Inquiry," The New Republic, XLVIII (Sept. 29, 1926), p. 140.

[28]Wieman, Wrestle, p. 58.

[29]Ibid., p. 23.

[30]Wieman, Source, p. 181.

[31]Wieman, Wrestle, p. 22.

[32]Ibid.

[33]Wieman, Source, p. 164.

[34]Ibid., p. 211.

[35]Ibid., p. 212.

[36]Ibid.

[37]Ibid., p. 213.

[38]Ibid., p. 214.

[39]Ibid., p. 164.

[40]Ibid., p. 6.

[41]Ibid., p. 3.

CHAPTER IV

RELIGIOUS INQUIRY

William James claimed in The Varieties of Religious Experience of philosophy, "If she will abandon metaphysics and deduction for criticism and induction, and frankly transform herself from theology into science of religions, she can make herself enormously useful."[1] Wieman has taken this sort of challenge seriously. Much of what he does can be understood as an attempt to work out such a program. What he attempts is a radical reconstruction in theology comparable to Dewey's radical reconstruction in philosophy.

However, we must immediately take note of some fundamental differences between Wieman's approach and that advocated by James. Nowhere is Wieman involved in any serious way with a critical comparative study of religions. His view is that our problems are given in the context of the Christian tradition and that therefore an inquiry into other traditions is an evasion. As James himself pointed out--these are not live options.

Throughout, Wieman speaks of religious inquiry. Indeed, his latest volume is entitled Religious Inquiry. But this phrase is ambiguous. It may be taken as comparable to scientific inquiry. In this sense no subject matter is specified. 'Scientific' indicates the sort of method that governs our investigation. On this view, then religious

inquiry would be inquiry that was religiously motivated. 'Religious' would be predicated of the person undertaking the inquiry indicating his motives, commitments, etc...In this sense we have something comparable to religious philosophy as opposed to philosophy of religion. In the first case our first principles are religious ones; in the second they are philosophic only.

On the other hand 'religious inquiry' may mean an inquiry into religion. On this interpretation 'religious' is used simply to indicate the subject matter under consideration. As we saw in chapter two, Wieman denies that there is any special religious way of knowing. Thus, it would seem that 'religious' cannot be used to indicate a kind of method of inquiry. There is only one way of knowing, and this is scientific--at least if we focus on his earlier work.

Thus, 'religious inquiry' as used by Wieman would seem to mean an inquiry into the nature and function of religion. In an early work he says, "With respect to religion there are three classes of people: the religious rationalizers, the irreligious rationalizers and the religiously inquisitive. The first class may think about religion from the outside to defend it; the second class may think about religion from the outside to destroy it. But only the third class thinks about it from the inside with a view to discovering precisely what may be the good of it."[2]

But what is meant by 'from the inside'? May not one think about it "from the outside" with a "view to discovering precisely what may be the good of it?" Does 'from the inside' mean that one has to be religious in order to critically evaluate religion; that one must be religiously committed prior to one's investigation? If we attend to what Wieman says

about specifically religious inquiry I think this is the case. For this reason I think that it is more appropriate to regard Wieman as a theologian rather than as a philosopher of religion.

From the beginning, however, Wieman has called for the application of the scientific method in religious inquiry. Although in his later work he is not so insistent upon the use of the term 'scientific', his basic position has not changed. But it is important to note that he is not calling for a sociology or psychology of religion. Rather he is calling for a "scientific" investigation of the object of religious devotion. It is of the utmost importance for us to determine what is and is not the case about the claims made as to the nature and function of God.

Thus far in our analysis Wieman would appear to be a rather tough-minded empiricist. All knowledge is in the form of propositions that have been publicly verified through sensory observation. Subjective feelings of satisfaction are not to be allowed as in any way constituting a test of truth. However, when we look at what Wieman says about religious inquiry, this method is seriously compromised. It seems to die, as Flew would say, a death by a thousand qualifications.

While he has thus far been using the term 'experimental' in a sense that corresponds to our ordinary usage, there are other uses to which he puts this term.

The scientific method, it turns out, is not strictly applicable to the object of religious devotion. We cannot use the techniques of the several sciences here, "because the scope of each of these is too limited. The behavior which these sciences can investigate is only the simplest sort due to the narrow limitations under which our present scientific

technique labors. No science, for example, can portray that total complexity of behavior called human personality, not because personality is unknowable but because its behavior is too complex for any technique thus far developed."[3]

Thus, it would seem that we cannot use the experimental method in the social sciences, but Wieman does not draw this conclusion. While he claims that e.g., sociology and psychology "have scarcely yet reached the status of science" and that "They still perforce depend in great part upon the rough methods of common sense," these rough methods are also to be praised as experimental. "Of course common sense practices the method of experimentation and achieves much knowledge in that way, but it cannot do so with the accuracy of scientific method."[4]

This way of speaking I think is misleading. The term 'experimental' suggests the more exact procedures of science proper. It might be clearer if we referred to the methods of common sense verification as experiential or simply empirical. However, this is not a crucial matter so long as Wieman explains what he means by his terms and is consistent in their use. Here, there seem to be two senses of 'experimental' to indicate: (1) the rigorous methods of the excact sciences and (2) the less rigorous, though empirical, methods of common sense. So we have a strict and loose sense of 'experimental.'

There is, I think, no serious problem here. We should strive to be as rigorous as we can and further the work of developing an appropriate scientific methodology here, while admitting that the exact methods of the developed sciences are not at this time adequate for dealing with the more complex data of human experience.

As one might anticipate, "if the behavior of the human individual is too complex for any science thus far achieved, much more does the complexity of divine behavior exceed these limits." Thus, "while the exact and refined methods of science cannot investigate God, we have the experimental methods of common sense."[5] While 'experimental' is obviously being used here in a very loose sense indeed, there is presumably a continuity with the stricter sense.

But, behold, in the next sentence Wieman claims that in investigating God, "We can live experimentally, as the saints and prophets have always lived who have given us whatever valuable information we have of God." While the saint and prophets lived "experimentally" we may hope to be more successful than they, for "We can conduct our living experiments with full understanding of what we are doing because we now understand the nature of the experimental method as men of other times did not."[6] Wieman takes it that "living experimentally" is simply the application of the experimental method common to science and common sense. But this needs to be examined.

Exactly what is meant by 'live experimentally'? There is, I think, a legitimate sense that can be given to 'think experimentally.' If we allow for a looser as well as a stricter sense of 'experimental' we may be said to be thinking experimentally when we in our ordinary, non-laboratory, situations encounter problems and proceed toward a solution involving the sort of method we discussed in chapter two. Elementary textbooks on logic frequently talk of the scientific method in this way. We note that our car won't start and hypothesize that it has a dead battery. We replace the battery and observe that the car starts.

However, Wieman seems to have something more in mind by 'live experimentally' than this.

Wieman maintains that living experimentally involves more risk than is involved in conducting experiments in the physical sciences. "It is far more hazardous than any scientific experiment because it involves the whole life, not merely biological existence which may well be sacrificed in scientific investigation. But in religious inquiry one must cast into the experiment those larger goods, including all that one holds dear, his moral character, his highest aspiration, his greatest loves and loyalties, those things without which merely bodily existence is worthless."[7]

Wieman is confused here. The "whole life" is contrasted with "merely biological existence" such that risking the latter constitutes less of a hazard than risking the former. But Wieman is a materialist; biological existence is a necessary condition for any and all human values whatever. To risk one's biological existence is to risk the very basis for all "those larger goods."

What Wieman might argue is that "living experimentally is not more hazardous for the individual so engaged, but more hazardous for the human race as a whole. But this is not at all obvious and would need to be argued. It is hard to imagine experiments more hazardous to the human race than those being conducted with biological weapons. Is religious inquiry, "experimental living," more hazardous than this?

There is, I think, a fundamental mistake here. All living involves a risk, as the existentialists insist. Conducting experiments also involves some risk, but of an entirely different order. While the

biochemist may give himself the new drug for experimental purposes, this is not necessary. Indeed, the more rigorous procedure would demand that he administer it to a number of other persons. He does, of course, take a risk. He risks his reputation, but on the lives of others. Perhaps we should say that it is the volunteers who are "living experimentally." But we are here concerned with inquiry, with gaining knowledge. There is no reason to think that the volunteers learn more about the drug than the biochemist simply because they are the ones that have ingested it.

But later on, 'experimental living' is not contrasted with 'scientific experimentation' but with 'conventional living.' What Wieman is calling for is that we treat all our most cherished beliefs as tentative, that we do not accept any doctrine or dogma as absolute. Implicit here is a skepticism concerning both conventional religion and conventional morality. Cast off all these traditional values and live your life on the basis of a new vision!

Jesus, Wieman maintains, lived experimentally in this sense. He rejected conventional religion and conventional morality. I think we must agree that such living is hazardous indeed. Jesus was executed. To live one's life on the basis of a new, untried plan is more hazardous than living a conventional life which has at least some support in human experience.

One may accept the view that going against established traditions is hazardous, but what has this to do with inquiry? It appears that Wieman is maintaining that this sort of living is necessary in order to inquire. We must investigate religion "from the inside." One must stake "his dearest and greatest goods upon a venture," apparently in order to

conduct the relevant experiment. However, "...we must remember that the value of all such experimenting is measured not by the magnitude of the sacrifice involved but by the nature of the proposition which is being tested and the intelligence, the skill and the caution with which the experiment is conducted." The important thing here has to do with the insight involved in coming up with the hypothesis and the rigor with which it is tested. So, we are still being experimental in the broad sense.

But why must one make such a venture himself in order to investigate? Why not simply ascertain what propositions the saints and prophets were testing and see whether the evidence supports such hypotheses? Wieman is not clear on this. He does maintain that "Jesus made the experiment," but adds, "The results are not yet all in; the experiment is not completed."[8] So others, apparently, need to continue such experimentation. But need it be the investigator himself who makes such ventures?

Wieman seems to think that the investigator himself must make such a personal venture "in order to plumb the depths of the world's behavior, in order to bring to the surface that deep working of the universe which is God..." This involves in part the creation of a valuable hypothesis. Knowledge is not advanced by simply attempting to verify traditional beliefs. Advances in human knowledge are made only when there is a new vision, a new insight. Only by staking one's "dearest and greatest goods" can one "plumb the depths of the world's behavior" and come up with a new vision, a fruitful hypothesis for testing.

As Wieman says in Religious Experience and the Scientific Method, "The scientific genius and the discoverer is not only a great thinker.

He is more. He is aware of happenings which others ignore. The mystic may not be a thinker at all, but if he is mystic...his awareness of fact may be immense. The artist and the aesthete has a widened and sensitive awareness. The prophet, the seer, the lover, are aware of more than the ordinary hard-headed practical man who is solely concerned with fitting into the mechanism of the social system."[9]

If Wieman is merely talking here about some of the conditions he thinks are necessary to be creative in the development of new hypotheses, this cannot contradict his method. For as we have seen, this is a matter of verification procedures. Scientific method is not a method for making discoveries, but for verifying hypotheses. As Wieman realizes, there is "No reliable method by which to make the mind yield up an illuminating idea when it is needed."[10]

However, Wieman seems to have more than this in mind. There clearly is a tension between what he advocates as the experimental method of science and common sense and what he says concerning experimental living. It is this tension between what appears to be two separate methods that lead critics such as Henry Van Dusen to claim that Wieman misuses the term 'scientific method.' "...though he originally employed it in a sense corresponding roughly with what the ordinary man means when he thinks of scientific method, he has so broadened the meaning of the term that it now includes much that the ordinary man very definitely does not mean when he thinks of scientific method (much, indeed, which is not recognized as legitimate method by the disciplines of human thought which seek to achieve the status of sciences), and therefore, in deference to clear thought, the term ought definitely to be abandoned."[11]

Note that Van Dusen's argument parallels one of Wieman's against an immediate way of religious knowing. The charge is that one is giving a persuasive definition; changing the cognitive meaning of a term while clinging to the emotive content. While Wieman admits that scientific method strictly conceived is not applicable to religious inquiry we can live experimentally. But 'experimentally' seems to mean something quite different from its use in science proper. This is surely a possible source of confusion.

However, I don't want to belabor this point, for Wieman is willing, he says, to give up the linguistic point. While he doesn't think that ordinary usage is very precise in regard to 'scientific method,' "I am quite willing to give up the word and think it quite possible that custom will ultimately decree my usage wrong."[12] While Wieman has been rather reluctant in giving up such a fine tough-minded word, in his later work he does not always insist on being scientific. And in Man's Ultimate Commitment he refers simply to the method of reason.

But this does not indicate any important shift in his thinking. The tension is not merely a matter of linguistic usage. On the one hand Wieman argues for a tough-minded, scientific, public, rational method that emphasizes sensory observation. But on the other hand there is a more tender-minded view which seems to demand a kind of personal commitment that is alien to any sort of scientific or even, I would argue, philosophic method. Wieman seems to think that Van Dusen is simply quibbling about words here, but there is a very basic issue involved.

In a section in The Issues of Life entitled "Scientific Method

in Religion," Wieman begins by reiterating his view that "Religion has no way of attaining knowledge of God or anything else save the method we have been describing, whether one calls it scientific or gives it some other name...There is no esoteric religious method of getting knowledge." Yet, four pages later he maintains "the method which yields knowledge will yield a depth and range of knowledge, an esoteric knowledge, in the hands of him who is passionately devoted to the object under consideration, which cannot be gotten by another using the same method who does not have this attitude of intense interest."[13] Wieman is maintaining, apparently, that there is no esoteric method of knowing, yet there is esoteric knowledge. What can be made of this?

In this same section he argues that "There are, in fact, three kinds of knowledge which can be gotten by means of this method we are considering. These three kinds of knowledge are distinguished by the kind of data to which the method is applied...These three kinds of knowledge are: (1) the knowledge which goes to make up the several sciences; (2) the knowledge called common sense; and (3) the most rare and precious knowledge which simple folk seek and find by reason of their loving devotion to the object under investigation."[14]

Previously we saw Wieman distinguishing (1) and (2) in terms of rigor and precision. But some difference in data are also involved. Indeed, it is largely the selection and structuring of more refined data that makes possible the greater accuracy and reliability of scientific method over the rough ways of common sense. There does not seem to be any difficulty in Wieman's claim here concerning difference in data. This is consistent with his general theory.

Our concern here is with that "most rare and precious knowledge." Wieman argues that this does not involve a difference in method, but merely a difference in data. The loving mother, Wieman claims, has knowledge of her child that the scientist does not have, "Because she has access to different data. She looks at the child through the eyes of love."[15]

Does love provide access to data that is otherwise unavailable? Love is notoriously blind. The parent cannot see that her child is a dope addict, for she looks at him "through the eyes of love." Is not love a stumbling block in gaining accurate knowledge?

While Wieman acknowledges that love may be blind, this is so because it is not conjoined with experimental method. Looking "through the eyes of love" does not involve any special sense. The "wise and observant and loving mother" comes to know her child "by the same method, used by the scientist and the nurse, of common sense--by observing conditions, acting experimentally (which includes speaking) and observing the consequences."[16] Love is blind, then, only when it refuses to submit its hypotheses to empirical testing. Intelligent love, according to Wieman, is informed by observation.

But how does it provide access to data not otherwise available? Apparently, what Wieman wants to say is that love simply focuses one's interest and provides the motive power for making careful observations. One is not going to attend carefully e.g., to the child's behavior unless he is interested in the child. "But the kind of knowledge we get depends on what we investigate. And what we investigate is determined by what arouses our interest."[17]

While it is, of course, true that one does not normally gain knowledge of something unless one is interested; Wieman confuses 'love' with 'interest.' The biochemist does not gain knowledge of viruses unless he is interested in viruses, but this does not mean that he loves viruses. He may be interested in learning how to destroy them. Love is not merely a matter of being interested; it involves a commitment to the well-being of the object of love.

Wieman is not, however, merely saying that the mother has data that others have not happened to note. The loving mother "...has access, we say, to data which no other can have."[18] It is not, then, that the mother is simply more interested in the child, or that she has more opportunity for observation--being with the child night and day. She has access to data which no other <u>can</u> have. Seeing "through the eyes of love" turns out to be a necessary condition for having certain data. Thus, Wieman says that her knowledge is an "esoteric knowledge."

But is not "esoteric knowledge" a contradiction? If knowledge involves public verification, as Wieman has claimed, and if love gives one a private access to data that others cannot have, then there is no possibility of others verifying one's claims. Does it make any sense to talk of the mother making an experiment which cannot be replicated by anyone else? Wieman talks, at times, as though seeing through the eyes of love were like seeing through a microscope. Both provide data which would not otherwise be available. But virtually anyone can look through the microscope, at least with some instruction. Presumably, only the mother can see her child through the eyes of love, and for this reason her knowledge is esoteric.

Perhaps, however, we should not emphasize the 'can'. It would seem that while no one but the mother can see her child through the eyes of her mother's love, others can also see the child through the eyes of love. It is trivial to claim that one can only experience what he experiences. Of course no one can have the mother's experience but the mother.

Wieman insists even here that he is not talking of a way of knowing that does not depend upon verification. "The method of getting knowledge..must not be identified merely with experiencing the matter in question. The method is not the experience. The method is the way we deal with the experience. If I experience good health, I do not therefore know what good health is. The doctor may know far more about what good health is, than I, although he may be a sickly man while I am exuberantly healthy."[19]

This view is consistent with Wieman's behavioristic orientation and his general theory of knowledge. 'Good health' does not refer to an inner sensation, it refers to something public. Thus, one's experience of one's own good health does not place one in any privileged position in terms of knowing what good health is.

But in the next paragraph we notice a rather remarkable shift. "My intimate experience of my own health gives me no advantage at all unless I make use of this same method which all may use." But note this: "I have access to experience which no one else has, therefore, if I apply the right method, I may obtain knowledge of my own health that no one else can gain."[20]

What Wieman fails to take into account here is that if the data

under consideration are private, then the method of verification he has been arguing for cannot be applied. An essential aspect of such verification is a matter of other investigators being able to confirm one's own findings. If no other can have the appropriate data, it is obviously impossible for this to be verified in any public way. Thus, if any method of verification is involved at all it must be an "esoteric method." It cannot be the sort of method that we examined in chapter three.

Religious inquiry seems to require that one be committed to the object of such inquiry in order to be in a position to gain knowledge about it. As we have noted, Wieman argues that in any area one has to be interested in order to profitably investigate. But there is something more that he wants to say. "...The method which yields knowledge will yield a depth and range of knowledge, an esoteric knowledge, in the hands of him who is passionately devoted to the object under consideration, which cannot be gotten by another using the same method who does not have this attitude of intense interest."[21]

Again we note Wieman treating 'interested' as though this meant the same as 'devoted'. Wieman is maintaining that in order to conduct religious inquiry one must be religious. One must be devoted to the object of such inquiry in order to investigate. One must think about religion "from the inside," and we now see that this means that one must be religiously committed prior to investigating.

This is the sort of position which is implicit, I think, in John Baillie's view which we examined in chapter two. But, it's the sort of position that Wieman always argues against if held by someone else. But

Wieman still wants to be scientific; he wants to insist that this way of knowing involves the same method as the way of all knowing. This moves him to equivocate on 'interested.' While it may be the case that one does not gain knowledge of something unless he is interested, it does not follow that one must be devoted to or love that which one is investigating.

Wieman attempts to combine passionate devotion and scientific method in an incompatible way. "When passionate devotion is combined with the most rigorous use of the very best methods of eliciting and correcting errors, then the religious man will acquire knowledge of that order of existence and possibility to which he is devoted that another man cannot acquire. Therefore, the religious individual or group, providing the rightful method of seeking knowledge is used, will attain a depth and scope of knowledge concerning the object of devotion which is wholly out of the reach of any other."[22]

While Wieman is correct in arguing that scientific method does not entail that one be disinterested in what he is doing, this needs some clarification. At its highest, the scientist does need a passion--for being objective, for not allowing his own subjective feelings to enter as data in his experimentation. But this does not mean that he is devoted to the object of his study. The devotion is to the canons of inquiry.

The contradiction between Wieman's general theory of inquiry and his theory of religious inquiry is most explicit in the volume we have been citing, The Issues of Life. In his later work this is not so clear, but this is because, I suggest, in his later work he does not say as

much about method, and when he does it is in very general terms. However, he continues to argue that religious inquiry must be passionate.

But in what sense must religious inquiry be passionate. Wieman, again, equivocates here. Sometimes he seems to mean merely that one must have a passion for truth, for objective methods of verification. But in other places he continues to talk about a committment to the object of inquiry as a necessary condition of inquiry, of gaining knowledge.

In an important paper published in 1958 he says, "By 'passionate inquiry' I mean a concern to find the truth when the concern is so strong that we cast our whole self into the inquiry in such ways that we are in a state of readiness to recognize our own distorting prejudices and pride and the conditioning which falsifies our institutions and perceptions. In passionate inquiry as I here use the term I mean a zeal for valid knowledge which drives us to search out our own desperate clinging to certain beliefs for the sake of personal security, thereby blinding ourselves to contrary evidence."[23] And this view is surely consistent with his general theory. This concern for evidence, for verification, is common to science and philosophy.

But immediately following, Wieman maintains, "There is a second sense in which inquiry must be passionate if it is to achieve religious knowledge. After we have achieved knowledge in the sense of fair treatment of all the evidence, including logical coherence of propositions, we must cast our whole self in religious commitment of faith under the guidance of this knowledge, not because this knowledge is necessarily the truth, but because inquiry is not religious unless it includes commitment of faith in the form of action and decision shaping the course of

life."[24]

Wieman is apparently saying here only that religious inquiry is not merely a matter of satisfying our intellectual curiosity. It is a matter of existential concern. We are passionately concerned with the conclusions of such inquiry, for they concern us in a most direct and concrete way. We are here concerned with practical reason that bears upon how we live our lives.

However, we should note that the above statement is prefaced with "if it is to achieve religious knowledge." While what follows has to do with the use we put such knowledge to after we have it, this seems to indicate that such passion is a condition for acquiring religious knowledge. But perhaps all that is intended here is that if the knowledge so acquired is to be deemed as religious it must be of deep concern to us. On this reading, Wieman is maintaining that a "religious commitment of faith" is to be made on the basis of knowledge gained from inquiry. Such a commitment does not, apparently, enter into the method of inquiry as such. Rather, this indicates the sort of subject matter involved and the use to which such knowledge is to be put.

This interpretation, however, is discredited in what he later says. "Only when we commit ourselves in a way to be destroyed, if necessary, can we be liberated from the clutch of those beliefs which possess us or grasp us. We are liberated because in this way we find our security not in our beliefs or in our knowledge but in the completeness of our commitment to the reality which saves, no matter how different it may be from our beliefs about it, accepting destruction if that should reveal this reality in its true character. Then, and only then, are we able to

examine critically our religious beliefs and test them to find what error may be in them, even though this testing lead to our own defeat or other loss."[25]

Some sort of commitment, then, is a necessary condition for gaining religious knowledge. We have here in a more recent statement a reworking of the notion of experimental living. Religious inquiry requires a venture, a risk. We must commit ourselves as investigators in a way to be destroyed.

Wieman has from first to last insisted that religious inquiry must be passionate, must involve risk, must involve a commitment. Religion can only be critically examined from the "inside." He has also been persistent in his ambiguity about this crucial matter. What sort of risk is involved, what sort of venture is required, to what must we commit ourselves?

As we have seen, he frequently seems to mean only that our commitment must be to rational methods of inquiry. And this, of course, is consistent with his general theory. In this sense, one may maintain that the scientist must also be committed, must be willing to experiment and test all his beliefs. And all this sort of talk is surely unexceptional. One must have a passion for dispassionate inquiry; one must follow the evidence wherever it leads.

But, apparently, religious inquiry demands something of us that is not demanded in scientific inquiry proper. "In religion in contrast to the sciences the beliefs to be tested very often sustain our total being in a way of life to which we have committed ourselves. Herein lies the source of corruption and self-deception so prevalent in religion.

We cannot truly detect the error in our beliefs if the beliefs are indispensable to our ultimate security as we see it. For this reason religious inquiry must be passionate with a passion stronger than the religious way of life to which we have given ourselves when the religious way is defined by accepted beliefs."[26]

This sort of commitment, however, is presumably to certain rational canons of inquiry. What Wieman is maintaining, correctly I think, is that in dealing with subject matter that involves our own personal security, matters about which we care a great deal, it is difficult to be objective. It is relatively easy to be objective in our analysis and evaluation of evidence concerning matters that don't matter. But when the subject we are investigating touches our own way of life, our own values, then our passion to be objective must be of sufficient intensity to override our commitment to the values, the way of life we are investigating. As Spinoza maintained, one passion can only be overcome by a stronger passion. Wieman is on sound psychological ground here.

There is, as Kierkegaard maintained, a tension between our inner needs, the demands of the subjective thinker, and objective knowledge. And Wieman would agree with Kerikegaard that religious thinking must be passionate. But the passion, apparently, ought to be directed to the quest for objective knowledge. We must not yield to the temptation to allow our inner needs to distort our appraisal of objective truth. We must not succumb to the temptation to talk of subjective truth, or such nonsense as being 'in the truth.' It is crucial in religion <u>what</u> we believe. The "how", the inwardness, the passion only makes religious conviction the more dangerous when it is not directed by the best ob-

jective knowledge available.

This is not, of course, an easy matter. "Theories in the natural sciences are not, as in religion, wrought into the organization of personality at such a depth that any great change in them requires a reorganization of the personality."[27] We cannot be dispassionate in religious inquiry in the sense of not being concerned about the results of our inquiry. But this is also true in the natural sciences. The results of religious inquiry, Wieman is claiming, requires a reorganization of the personality of the investigator that is not required in the natural sciences. Thus, again, the passion for truth must be more intense than in the natural sciences, because we are here dealing with theories that impinge upon the investigator's own personality structure.

In addition to the above reasons for claiming that religious inquiry must be passionate, Wieman reiterates his earlier position that "Passionate inquiry is especially important in taking the first step toward getting religious knowledge. This first step is insight, otherwise called 'intuition'...Commitment to passionate inquiry produces a state of mind in which intuition is most likely to break through the barriers of pride and conditioning."[28] Wieman seems to be maintaining a position akin to that in The Issues of Life, but we should note that he does not here move from 'interested in' to 'devoted to.' However, it is not clear that he is repudiating his previous position. It is simply left vague whether, when he talks of passionate inquiry, he means 'interested in' or 'devoted to.' In any case, this concerns discovery and not verification, and would not seem to contradict his general theory, so long as this enters only into the coming up with new hypotheses.

On the basis of the above, it would appear that in Wieman's more mature thoughts concerning religious inquiry there is no contradiction with his general theory. He does not talk of "seeing through the eyes of love", nor is he explicit in saying that one must be devoted to the object when he talks of passionate religious inquiry. While our passion for truth must be more intense than in the physical sciences, it is continuous with it; being directed to the same canons of inquiry.

But there is still a question whether the above interpretation is adequate. In the passage cited previously, he said, "Only when we commit ourselves in a way to be destroyed, if necessary, can we be liberated from the clutch of those beliefs which possess us or grasp us. We are liberated because in this way we find our security not in our beliefs or in our knowledge but in the completeness of our commitment to the reality which saves, no matter how different it may be from our beliefs about it, accepting destruction if that should reveal this reality in its true character."[29] Is Wieman here talking about a commitment to scientific philosophic method? What is meant by "a reality which saves?"

If one looks at Wieman's mature work, The Source of Human Good, and Man's Ultimate Commitment, it would seem that our ultimate commitment is not to any method of inquiry, but to "a reality that saves," "the source of human good" or "creative interchange". Our question is whether this sort of commitment is the result of inquiry or whether it is antecedent to inquiry. There is much that indicates even in Wieman's later work that a commitment to "a reality that saves", whatever that may mean, is a necessary condition of any useful inquiry into religion. But to pursue this we must now turn to an analysis of how Wieman actually proceeds in his inquiry.

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER IV

[1]William James, The Varieties of Religious Experience, (New York: New American Library, 1958), p. 346.

[2]Wieman, Wrestle, p. 35.

[3]Wieman, "Method of Religious Inquiry," p. 142.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Wieman, Religious Experience, p. 191.

[10]Wieman, Issues, p. 182.

[11]Henry P. Van Dusen and Henry Nelson Wieman, "How Do We Know," The Christian Century, XLVIII, (May 27, 1931), p. 711.

[12]Wieman, "How Do We Know," p. 713.

[13]Wieman, Issues, pp. 197-198.

[14]Ibid., pp. 199-200.

[15]Ibid., p. 203.

[16]Ibid., pp. 202-203.

[17]Ibid., p. 195.

[18]Ibid., p. 203.

[19]Ibid., p. 190.

[20]Ibid., pp. 190-91.

[21]Ibid., pp. 197-98.

[22]Ibid., p. 198.

[23]Wieman, "Knowledge," p. 17.

[24]Ibid.

[25] Ibid., p. 18.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid., p. 19.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Ibid., p. 18.

CHAPTER V

THE PROBLEM

Summarizing a life's work, Wieman says in his "Intellectual Autobiography," "My intellectual life has been focused on a single problem. Every significant influence which has played upon me has been directed to this inquiry. The problem which has engaged me for the past fifty years can be put in the form of a question: What operates in human life with such character and power that it will transform man as he cannot transform himself, saving him from evil and leading him to the best that human life can ever reach, provided he meet the required conditions?"[1]

While he has not always formulated the problem in just these terms, this is clearly the sort of problem with which Wieman has been concerned from the beginning. Part of the problem, indeed, has been to formulate the problem. In a more general way, the problem may be stated as: What must I do to be saved? While any concise formulation of the problem requires considerable explication, putting it in the first person singular emphasizes the existential nature of the problem.

As we saw in the last chapter, religious inquiry is passionate inquiry. The problem is not merely an intellectual puzzle. The answer is of vital concern to the inquirer. However, it is also important to keep in mind that Wieman is not only concerned with personal salvation.

Wieman's concern is more extensive than this. Thus, how can we be saved? The concern extends to all men.

Throughout Wieman's writing there is a concern to get clear as to what the problem is and to state it in such a way that we can effectively deal with it. This emphasis upon the problem of religious inquiry derives to a great extent from Wieman's general theory of knowledge, his pragmatic orientation. While Wieman is not, I think, committed to the view that all thinking begins with a problem, it is clear that he thinks that much confusion arises in thought when we are not clear as to the problem that should guide our thinking. Scientific method, or more broadly, reason, is a way of solving problems. But reason does not, by itself, pose the problems to us. As we have noted, our interests determine what we investigate. Scientific method is neutral in regard to subject matter; we have to decide how we are to use this method, to what sort of problem we are to direct our inquiry.

In this sense, faith precedes reason. Faith in the sense of a commitment to seeking a solution is prior to reason. As we have seen, Wieman argues that such a commitment is a necessary condition of the application of reason. Such passionate concern determines how we direct our vast technical capacity and scientific methodology. Before we can have any hope of preventing this planet from becoming uninhabitable for man, we must have the will, the commitment, to seek a solution to our most pressing problems.

But are our interests arbitrary? Is Wieman merely claiming that he happens to be interested in this sort of problem? While we shall have to examine Wieman's position here in more detail in connection with

his theory of value, he does not think that all interests are arbitrary. While some interests surely are not universal, some are; those which arise due to the nature of man qua man. Men are concerned with, interested in, certain things simply because they are men.

But this is not to say that our interests are not affected in any way by reason. Inquiry frequently redirects our interests by bringing to light certain problems of which we were previously unaware. Indeed, one of the major and ongoing tasks in responsible inquiry is to get clear as to what the problem is. After some inquiry it frequently turns out that the problem was not as we originally conceived it. Thus, our interests are redirected.

But what has all this to do with religious inquiry? Surely, 'religious' does not merely indicate the intensity of one's interest. Does it not also indicate a certain sort of subject matter, i.e., religion.

Traditionally, attempts to define religion begin with an analysis of the "world religions" and proceed to indicate what all of these have in common. Thus, the hope is that we will come up with the essence of religion. The attempt is to determine what is common to all those things called religions and peculiar to them. What this typically results in is a list of various beliefs or doctrines.

But this is not Wieman's approach. While I don't think he would argue against such an approach, for some purposes, nonetheless, it is largely irrelevant to what he is concerned to do in religious inquiry. On Wieman's view, such beliefs do not get at the heart of religion. At most, they constitute what men in the past have taken to be answers to

certain problems. We need to drive deeper--to the problem that has occasioned these answers.

As he begins Man's Ultimate Commitment, "Religion like every other persistent and important concern in human life should be defined by the problem which it tries to solve."[2] The problem, as we have seen, is a matter of salvation.

It has been common since Kierkegaard to take a functional approach to religion emphasizing not the doctrines but the existential human condition, and I think there is much to recommend this approach. However, are we to define religion in terms of some problem? If we look at the various world religions, it would seem that there is considerable disagreement as to what the problem is. Even within Christianity there is considerable disagreement as to what the problem is. Is the problem a matter of saving our souls from Hell so that they can enjoy eternal beatitude in heaven? Or is the problem a matter of doing God's will?

In any case it hardly seems as though we should attempt to define religion in terms of the problem it attempts to solve. Even if we agree that the problem that religion seeks to solve is as Wieman claims, are there not non-religious attempts to solve the same problem? Is not the consumption of alcohol an attempt by many to solve the problem? What about the use of drugs? What about a commitment to Communism or to Anti-Communism? Cannot all of these be attempts to solve the problem? While Communism may be a borderline case, surely no one would regard the consumption of alcohol as a religion. It is not only the problem that we must consider in defining religion, but the sort of answer given. Whether something is to be regarded as a religion has to do

with the beliefs, rituals, attitudes, etc., which are involved. Of course, a sort of Neo-Bachic religion could grow up around alcohol in the way a religious cult has grown up around the use of drugs. But drinking is not in itself a religious attempt to solve the problem. If we are to ask whether Wieman provides a religious alternative or an alternative to religion we must wait to see what sort of answer he proposes.

Of course, such slogans as "Jesus is the answer" are rather meaningless if we don't know what the question is. But this suggests that, perhaps, religion should not be conceived as an attempt to solve a problem. Do most religious persons consider religion as posing a question? Wieman agrees that tney do not; "Most people who practice education, government, the family, and industry, are quite unaware of the basic problems of human existence which these beliefs and practices try to solve."[3]

When Wieman says that religion should be defined in terms of the problem, he is not, I think, saying that it is. Rather, what he is proposing is a theoretical definition, not a lexical one. If we are concerned not merely with a description but with evaluation, then we ought to start with a problem. Wieman takes religion to be problematic. If we are going to profitably inquire, we need to begin with the problem. Many institutions have outlived their usefulness. Institutions have a way of perpetuating themselves beyond any utility they once may have had.

Further, I think we should realize that Wieman is here concerned with religion as the subject for inquiry, not as an institution only.

Clearly certain practices may solve certain problems without the practitioners being aware that this is the case.

In the end, I think, Wieman would admit when he says religion should be defined by the problem that this is not only a methodological should, but a normative judgment on his part. Religion, considered as an institution, has been used to solve all sorts of problems that have nothing to do with the religious questions. It has been a weapon to suppress independent thought, to extend political control, to inject nationalistic wars with religious fanaticism. But these functions are perversions of religion.

For purposes of inquiry, we need to get clear as to the problem, and this is the first task. Is Wieman claiming that all religions are attempts to save man from something? I think he is, but nowhere does he argue this in any detailed way. Nowhere does he engage in any comparative analysis of religions. As we have seen, religious inquiry is passionate inquiry. Such problems do not arise merely from intellectual difficulties. Wieman maintains that these sorts of problems necessarily arise in the context of one's own tradition. "The religion of Western culture is an inheritance from Christianity and Judaism; hence we have no vital access to the depth of any other living faith. Some few experts may achieve erudition about Buddhism, Confucianism, or the religion of the Australian aborigines; but even they learn only the observable fact. They cannot acquire the personal intimacies and vital resources of these other fellowships. Western man must find his strength in his own tradition--we have to accept this inescapable fact."[4]

Right from the first, then, we note that religious inquiry, in spite of Wieman's continual emphasis upon the empirical facts, is not, apparently, concerned with the "observable facts" only. We cannot inquire into other religions, because all we can have here are the observable facts.. We apparently need something more; some "personal intimacies and vital resources." We must, apparently, study religion from the "inside." We must be within the circle of faith, it seems. And this is precisely one of the points for which we saw John Baillie arguing. In order to profitably investigate it would seem that our experience must be mediated by the "old, old, story." We cannot inquire into other religions, because all we can have here are the observable facts.

But is the problem Wieman states the religious problem within the context of our tradition? While we shall have to examine more closely what Wieman means by 'salvation,' I think it is clear that his use of this term is not what has been meant by Christians in the past. He does argue in The Source of Human Good that this is what Christianity was "really" about--although Christians may not have been aware of it. In the end, however, Wieman is not much concerned to show that he is a Christian or even that the problem that concerns him is peculiarly tied to the Christian tradition. If this is not the problem that Christianity has been concerned with, it is what it ought to be concerned with.

From the start Wieman has taken a normative approach to religion. As we have seen, he does not claim that religion is necessarily good. He thinks that covertly all theologians take a normative approach. They

pick and choose among what they take to be authoritative. Thus, the honest thing in this situation is to admit one is making such normative judgments and to search for some rational standard for making them.[5] We cannot escape the responsibility for our judgments by an appeal to past authorities, for there is here an inevitable element of selectivity and interpretation.

As we have noted, Wieman claims that what he takes to be the religious problem arises from the nature and conditions of human existence. There are, he maintains in Man's Ultimate Commitment, "two features which are characteristic of the human level of existence".... "The first of these features generating the problem for religious inquiry is man's capacity for undergoing radical transformation. He can be transformed to the depths of cruelty and misery and to the heights of saintly virtue and blessedness. He can experience horror and boredom on the one hand; he can also experience ecstasy and a sense of glory which is faintly suggested by great music and other forms of high art."[6]

While Wieman maintains that the "capacity for undergoing radical transformation" is one of the features of human existence which generates the religious problem, I think this is misleading. The fact, if it is a fact, that man can be so transformed is that which provides some hope that the problem of human existence can be overcome. While it is important to note that one can be transformed to the "depths of cruelty and misery", this is not inevitable; it can go the other way. It is this possibility that provides the hope that we can be "saved."

While it is indisputable that persons change, the crucial phrase

here is "radical transformation." We shall have to see later what this means. Here we can only pose the question: what is to constitute radical transformation? Does this mean that a person can change in so radical a manner that one cannot in principle predict the direction of such change? If this is the case, is there not a radical risk involved in such change? If we cannot predict the outcome, can we in any sense use reason to guide such change?

The religious problem that arises, according to Wieman, when we look at this capacity for radical transformation, he states as "What can transform man in such a way as to save him from the depths of evil and bring him to the greatest good which human life can ever attain?"[7] If the transformation is so radical that we cannot predict the direction of such change, how can we know that it will "bring him to the greatest good....?"

The second feature Wieman points to is "Man's awareness of his own original experience which is his own true self. This original experience stands in contrast to the superimposed patterns which are common to all members of the society and distinctive of none."[8] What Wieman is saying here is, I think, extremely important and something which, as we have seen, is intrinsic in his concept of experience.

As we have noted, there are two basic categories in Wieman's analysis of experience, quality and structure. When Wieman talks of original experience he is referring to an awareness of certain felt qualities of our experience as opposed to the way in which we structure such experience. This is the sort of thing emphasized by contemporary existentialists and phenomenologists. If we compare our experience

in all its richness to the relatively barren categories of science one wonders if we are talking about the same thing at all. Is my present experience of this rose merely a matter of having x sense qualities? A thing, anything, as experienced is not reducible to any congery of sense data.

What science purposely leaves out of account are all those qualities which do not fit neatly into its schemas. Knowledge in general, on Wieman's view, is always and necessarily a relatively abstract matter. It deals in universals, not particulars. It leaves out the uniqueness of any particular experience; relegating this to mere subjectivity.

But man does not live by knowledge alone. Wieman maintains that we are aware of a "depth" of experience for which, largely, we have no categories. As we have seen, experience is a transaction between subject and environment. There is an interaction between the biological organism and his environment which provides the materials out of which knowledge is constructed, but knowledge never exhausts such materials. But what is meant by 'awareness'? Wieman agrees that much of what affects us is not at the conscious level. Many, if not most, of the factors that condition our existence we are not conscious of. But, nonetheless, Wieman claims there is a sort of subliminal awareness, however dimly felt this may be, of a quality of living that we do not realize in our lives. We have awareness of possibility yet unrealized.

Original experience, then, is an immediate awareness. An awareness that is not mediated by concepts, an awareness that involves neither inference nor interpretation. This awareness contrasts with

our structured ways of perceiving such that it creates a tension. Kierkegaard talks of the tension between subjective needs and objective uncertainty; concluding that "subjectivity is truth." Wieman does not want to speak in this way, but there are parallels here. For Wieman, however, the tension is between our awareness of possibilities of value and the largely automatic and culturally conditioned ways of structuring our experience which leave out much of what is most valuable.

There is, I think, a revolt among the young against both institutionalized religion and against reason. Both seem to be irrelevant in terms of enriching our personal existence. The use of drugs and interest in mysticism can be understood, in part, as an attempt to somehow come into contact with that elusive quality in experience that is normally quite vague. There is in Wieman's discussion of "original experience" a mystical element, but this we shall have to develop later.

Of course, drugs and mysticism may be regarded not as a search for something, but as an escape from something. I think both are involved. But what are we trying to escape from? The evil from which we need to be saved, according to Wieman, may be analyzed as "Inner conflict, futility or meaninglessness, guilt, and loneliness."[9]

Given the widespread publicity to these sorts of problems in existentialist thought, I think we need not go into any great detail here. Inner conflict arises due to the lack of anything to which we can give ourselves wholeheartedly. What part of us wants, another part rejects. Our personalities are not unified. Our various interests conflict. There is no higher synthesis.

The sense of futility or meaninglessness Wieman thinks arises "when one awakens to the contrast between his original experience with its potentialities and its freedom over against the mechanisms of adjustment demanded by an impersonal social order." Guilt is due to the refusal to make an ultimate commitment, to refuse to deal with the question as to what I am to live for. "This evasion of responsibility leads to self-deception, futilities, failures, blindness to opportunity for greatness and nobility." Loneliness arises when one "awakens to the fact that people recognize in him only the conventional patterns of adjustment to society and not the original experience which is himself."[10]

While we may analyze these ills in various ways, they all stem, Wieman thinks, from the same source. This is a matter either of making an ultimate commitment to the wrong thing, or the refusal to commit ourselves in an ultimate way to anything. Both are disastrous.

The assumption, not only in Wieman, but with existentialists, is that we are getting at the human condition here: that the sorts of problems Wieman talks of are universal problems that all men at all times must deal with. Clearly, if we state the problem in sufficiently general terms, man has always been concerned to escape from what he takes to be evil and to endow his life with the most good possible. But are inner conflict, meaninglessness, guilt, and loneliness descriptive of the evil as man has experienced it in all ages?

While this is a difficult problem to argue, it would seem that the sort of existential problems Wieman emphasizes, particularly in his later works, is characteristic only of some men. I think there is no

question that many today do experience life as meaningless, futile, etc., but doesn't this require a certain material affluence? To become aware of this dimension of experience would seem to require a certain amount of leisure. The problems as characterized by the SDS, children of upper middle class parents, are not in any obvious way the same as those which the Panthers talk about.

It would seem that most men in most ages are concerned with physical survival. The problems of men in the ghetto have to do with getting enough food to eat and fighting off the rats that threaten to devour their children. Is this properly described as existential nausea? Are not psychological, or spiritual, problems a luxury that can be indulged in only by the well-to-do bourgoisie? While anxiety may properly characterize the problem for some, is not fear a more accurate description of the emotion of the many? The American Indian was not anxious, he was afraid of the white man's military and economic aggression.

I think Wieman would admit that most men most of the time have been concerned with such practical and day to day problems. But the most pressing immediate problems are not necessarily the most basic problems. Wieman would not, however, want to turn our attention away from such practical problems. Indeed, religion can be merely an escape from such problems and consequently an evil. But religion has also attempted to raise man's thought above such daily preoccupations. It asks concerning the ultimate meaning of human life.

While some might argue that religion is not concerned with economic or social problems, this surely is not Wieman's position. Indeed,

I think he would argue that, to some extent at least, the existential problems we have discussed arise from social causes. How we delimit a problem is to a large extent a matter of utility. While Wieman takes the existential problem to be basic, this is not to say that it has no vital connection with all sorts of other, more immediately practical problems. Indeed, many of these obvious social ills can be attributed to our failure to solve these existential problems. "The concentration camps of the Nazis and other evils of like sort occurring throughout the expanse of human history are the outward manifestations of this inner condition "of the human heart." These horrors are what men do when they are driven by inner boredom of social conventions which suppress the freedom and power of original experience; when guilt begins to multiply itself; when loneliness leads to desperate efforts to liberate the hidden self and make it recognized by others."[11]

From a broader perspective then, the problem is not merely the psychic ills which we have mentioned. Such ills as the existentialists describe are only symptoms of a disease that lies deep in the human heart and causes all these social evils and injustices that we could ameliorate, but don't. While Wieman has been accused of sharing with the Humanists an optimism about human nature, this is not substantiated by reference to his later work. The basic problem then, the religious problem, is centered not in society, but in human nature. We need, certainly, to deal with all the social evils. But this is not basic; this is a technological matter. The basic problem is man himself. We need a guide to the greater good, but also we need ourselves to be transformed such that we are willing and able to do what is necessary to

its attainment. "The problem of religion is to discover what will deliver man from this evil deep laid within the human personality or, if it cannot be cast out, then somehow to bring it under control and, if possible, make it the servant of the good."[12]

The problem is not, however, merely a matter of discovering what will deliver man. "A baffling part of this religious problem emerges after the initial steps have been taken toward its solution. This further difficulty is encountered when men discover that they cannot commit themselves completely and perfectly to what might deliver them from evil. They cannot free themselves from all inner resistances to the commitment. Always to some degree they are unfaithful in the depths and complexities of the total self. In the language of the Christian tradition, this unfaithfulness is called sin. In this case the problem is not to get rid of this sin, since that is impossible, but to treat it so that it will not be an insuperable barrier to what can save and transform."[13]

The problem, then, would seem to have two distinct dimensions. On the one hand the problem is to discover that which will deliver man from evil. This would seem to be an intellectual problem demanding a commitment to inquiry. As we have seen, Wieman frequently talks as though this is what demands our ultimate commitment. But there is also another problem that is not a matter of intellectual inquiry. If and when we discover that which would save us, the problem is to make an ultimate commitment to this. Here the problem is volitional rather than intellectual only. But when we say volitional, this does not mean merely willing such a commitment. As we have seen, an ultimate commitment is

an act of the total personality. The problem here is analogous to what the Greeks referred to as Akrasia. Contrary to Plato, Wieman is maintaining that the problem is not merely a matter of knowing what the good is, but also a matter of doing what is demanded by the good. One may know, apparently, what will save without doing what is necessary to be saved from evil. While we cannot eliminate entirely such inner resistance to making such a commitment, we may, presumably, discover a way such that this resistance is not an insurmountable barrier to salvation.

There is, then, on Wieman's view a flaw in human nature. As he has indicated, this cannot be eradicated for it is inherent in the psychological make-up of man. But this would not seem to enter into our intellectual constitution; our reason, although limited, would not seem to be contaminated by "sin." However, if we look at what Wieman says in The Source of Human Good it appears that our way of apprehending value is also corrupted. As he begins a chapter on "The Human Predicament", "Three features intrinsic to man's way of apprehending value render life perilous, with the rising power of technology."[14] The rising power of technology including atomic weapons now threaten our very existence. Thus, the immediate evil from which we need to be saved is annihilation.

"The first of these characteristics is the limited range of human appreciation. The values which man can appreciate are microscopic compared to the depth and fullness of value involved in every important human undertaking." "There is a second crippling fault in the human sense for value. Whatever apprehension of good and evil man attains is always distorted, when not perverted, by the dominion of self-

concern." "A third feature of man's way of discerning good and evil is equally dangerous to our existence when technology magnifies the power of human control over the course of events. It is resistance to change in the structure of appreciative consciousness."[15]

While we shall have to analyze what Wieman is maintaining here in connection with his theory of value, we do need to note that the problem is not only a matter of failing to commit ourselves to that which saves, but enters into our way of apprehending value itself. Reason, as we have argued, is essentially a matter of verification; but if the data with which reason is to deal is distorted as Wieman is claiming, how can we hope to inquire as to what is worthy of an ultimate commitment? Is an ultimate commitment, faith, a prior condition of inquiry even in Wieman's mature view?

Wieman is not, in contrast to the usual form of Humanism, claiming that man is basically good. Indeed, he maintains that there is a basic flaw in human nature. We need somehow to transcend our mere humanity. Human nature is perverse and corrupt. Man is a sinner--although Wieman's use of this term means something different from what it may mean in traditional Christian theology.

The basic problem, then, that constitutes for Wieman the religious problem is man himself. The psychic ills described as meaninglessness, loneliness, despair, as well as the gross injustices and cruelty and needless pain in our social and political structures are effects of a basic fault in human nature. It does seem appropriate to say that the religious problem for Wieman is sin. What is required is that we be transformed such that this sin does not block the realization

of good--not only in our own lives, but in the lives of all men. The alternative, Wieman contends, is destruction in a straight forward and literal sense. Religious faith is an either or proposition. Given the technological power of destruction, man must either be transformed or he will physically destroy himself.

However we formulate "the problem" it is essentially a problem of value. In its most simple form it asks, How can human life obtain the greatest good possible? The problem of "sin" is a problem in virtue of the fact that it prevents, according to Wieman, the realization of such good.

As we have noted in connection with Wieman's theory of inquiry, the most important and difficult step is to discover a fruitful hypothesis to guide our inquiry. Much of Wieman's thought has been directed to just this task. To a large extent he has rejected traditional ways of formulating the religious problem, for he feels they are not useful for purposes of inquiry, and this means that they do not lend themselves to empirical investigation.

While thus far we have been discussing the nature and scope of the religious problem, we might have begun with Wieman's notion of God, for his initial definitions of God serve to focus our attention on the same sort of problem. In The Wrestle of Religion With Truth he asks, "What proposition about God can be made which will serve to guide any experimental investigation? Certainly those statements which pile up honorific adjectives about God cannot serve. God may be "a spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth." But such a proposition has little value

for the experimental method of search after knowledge, although it certainly presents a delightful and inspiring object of contemplation."[16]

Now I don't think Wieman's objection is merely that we are "piling up honprific adjectives" here. As we shall see, Wieman does not hesitate to do this in regard to his notion of God. What Wieman objects to, I think, is that we are being precipitous here. We are claiming to know what God is prior to inquiry. Indeed, some of these adjectives are such that it is impossible to empirically verify or disverify whether there is anything in existence which has them. Many of the metaphysical properties attributed to God Wieman thinks have no "cash value," i.e., they are irrelevant to a consideration of the religious problem. What we need is some initial definition of God that is not final, but will merely point to the sort of thing that we are to investigate. As he says later in the same volume, "Much damage has been done to religion by premature finality in the definition of God... any assumed knowledge that goes beyond what we actually know merely results in producing an idol."[17]

But if we reject the traditional theistic notion of God as useless for experimental purposes, how are we to begin? "...might we not formulate a proposition about God in some such fashion as this: God is that in the universe which will yield maximum security and increase of human good when lives are properly adjusted to him?"[18] While in Wieman's earlier work he begins with an investigation of the object of religious devotion, one can see that this is not in any important way different from his later approach. In both cases the emphasis is upon

a problem. 'God' is used to refer to whatever saves man from evil and "yields maximum security and increase of human good."

As we noted in the section on faith, Wieman claims that it is essential that we distinguish between our ideas or beliefs about something and what these ideas seek to apprehend. We need to distinguish the question from any particular answer. We need first, then, a conception of God that indicates merely the question--what we seek to apprehend. "Let us try to state the formal concept of God as distinguished from particular beliefs. Very briefly, God is that feature of our total environment which most vitally affects the continuance and welfare of human life. More specifically, God is that character of events to which man must adjust himself in order to attain the greatest goods and avoid the greatest ills. Such a statement is purely formal. It does not tell us what God may be. It only indicates the region in which he is to be sought and may be suggestive of the method by which to correct and develop the content of our belief about God."[19]

Presumably, this concept of God does not involve any beliefs that go beyond the empirical evidence, for we are not claiming to know what God is. We have merely framed a proposition that will serve to guide our inquiry. Further, we should note that God is "that feature of our total environment which..." God is not, then, beyond the scope of empirical inquiry. God is a part of nature, where 'nature' refers to that which can be dealt with scientifically.

This way of conceiving of God would seem to follow from Wieman's general theory of knowledge. The first step is to formulate a fruitful hypothesis. However, we should note that nowhere does Wieman treat the

existence of God as an hypothesis. Nowhere does he entertain the radical possibility that religion is simply a mistake. While he doubts all traditional conceptions as to the nature of God, throughout his writing is the assumption that religion has always been an attempt to get at something of profound importance and that that something does surely exist, however inadequately historical religion has dealt with it.

Given Wieman's insistence on scientific method this seems rather strange. Typically those who propose the use of scientific method in regard to religion, begin with what they take to be the fundamental religious hypothesis--that God exists. But nowhere does Wieman treat this as in any way tentative.

Wieman attempts "so to formulate the idea of God that the question of God's existence becomes a dead issue."[20] In doing this he begins with what looks like a form of the ontological argument. In his first book he begins with a definition: "Whatever else the word God may mean, it is a term used to designate that Something upon which human life is most dependent for its security, welfare and increasing abundance. That there is such a Something cannot be doubted. The mere fact that human life happens and continues to happen proves that this Something, however unknown, does certainly exist."[21]

This argument may be put in the following form:

1. God is that Something upon which human life is most dependent for its security, welfare and increasing abundance.
2. Human life happens and continues to happen.
3. Therefore, this Something exists.

Now perhaps Wieman should have added ala Aquinas, "And this all men understand to be God." However, I do not want to raise this question here.

We have said that this is an argument, but this needs some qualification. Wieman is not, I think, trying to convert non-believers here to accept some particular notion of God. Rather, he is deliberately attempting to formulate a notion of God so general that no one can doubt whether this Something exists. Of course, one may well ask about the legitimacy of his use of the term 'God.' Is this not a rather underhanded way of getting everyone in "the fold?" I do think that Wieman is attempting to start with what everyone will admit exists and then to show that this is something which is deserving of religious devotion. While at this stage he is not claiming to know, in any detail at least, the nature of God, he is claiming to know that God exists.

Wieman's move here is in some respects like G. E. Moore's proof of the material world. The point in both cases is to redirect our attention away from thinking that the question is a matter of existence. Essentially, what Wieman is concerned with is the nature of that which does exist.

But let's examine the argument. Obviously, the second premise is contained in the first. When he refers to 'human life' this clearly presupposes that human life exists. Therefore, the second premise would not seem to add anything that is not contained in the definition of God. The crucial problem is concerned with the first premise. While we shall have to examine later what Wieman means by such terms as 'security', 'welfare,' and 'increasing abundance', it is sufficient

here to simply indicate that he means in general what William Frankena has called non-moral value. We are here talking about "the good life" as it occurs in "He had a good life." Now I think that we cannot dispute that having a good life is dependent on various factors. But Wieman wants to say more than this. He is claiming that such good is dependent upon a something; that is, that there is a unitary something that is productive of such good. Further, the claim is that this something exists.

If we look again at Wieman's formulation of the religious problem with which we started this section, one sees the same sort of assumption, "What operates in human life with such character and power that it will transform..." What justification is there for thinking that there is an it involved here? Are we not making an assumption, holding a belief, that goes beyond the evidence in the way we formulate the problem?

As Wieman sees, "Of course one can say that there are innumerable conditions which converge to sustain life, and that is doubtless the fact. But in that case either one of two things is true. Either the universe is a single individual organic unity, in which case it is the whole indivisible universe that has brought forth and now sustains human life; or else certain of these sustaining conditions are more critically, ultimately and constantly important for human welfare than others."[22]

Further, "According to the first view, God would be, or involve, the whole universe; according to the second he would be those most important conditions which taken collectively, constitute the Something which must have supreme value for all human living. The word, 'God',

taken with its very minimum meaning, is the name for this Something of supreme value. God may be much more than this, but he is certainly this by definition. In this sense, with this minimum meaning God cannot be denied. His existence is absolutely certain. He is simply that which is supremely significant in all the universe for human living, however known or unknown he may be."[23]

There are, I think, three basic difficulties with Wieman's position here: (1) What reason, again, is there to think that these conditions form a unity? (2) What reason do we have to show that such a Something exists? and (3) As an empiricist, how can Wieman claim to know that "His existence is absolutely certain?" Is Wieman claiming that this Something is a necessary being?

In regard to the first difficulty, Wieman does not want to embrace pantheism. For very good reason he does not want to identify God with the whole of the natural universe. It is the second alternative that represents his position. God is to be identified with "certain of these sustaining conditions" which are "more critically, ultimately and constantly important for human welfare than are others."

What might some of these conditions be? Consider my present situation. I am obviously dependent upon a number of conditions of a physical sort--oxygen, food, gravity, etc. Further, my welfare is contingent upon the continuation of my salary, a loving relation with my wife and children, the respect of my colleagues, etc. Now these and presumably more constitute a something. But surely this is a very strange something. A something composed of oxygen, food, gravity, continuation of salary, loving relationships, respect by colleagues--to

merely begin to enumerate some of the component parts of this something.

In what sense are all these factors related to each other to constitute a unity? The criterion would seem to be merely that they are things which are necessary, or at least contributory, to my welfare. While I think it would be exceedingly odd to refer to all of these factors as a thing, I think there is no difficulty in seeing that we do have a criterion for the formation of a class.

However, this is not sufficient for Wieman's purposes. We are not concerned merely with those conditions that are most important for the welfare of a given individual, we are concerned with those that are most crucial for human welfare in general. Wieman is not at this point claiming to know what any of these conditions are, but he is committed to the view that human nature is such and the universe is such that the same factors are crucial to the welfare of all persons. But, how can one know this until one knows what these factors are? Might it not turn out that what is important for my welfare is not important or even a negative factor for someone else? While Wieman may be right (this we shall have to examine after we see what his conclusions are), this is not at issue here. What is at issue is his attempt to establish such a unity by definition.

Further, to claim that these various conditions constitute a thing implies that these conditions are relatively constant, that the same conditions endure through time. Might it not be the case that what is most crucial for human welfare at one time is not crucial or even relevant at some other time? To say that x is a thing would seem to attribute a relatively permanent status to x. A thing is not a

fleeting event.

The second problem we suggested is concerned with existence. If we grant that human life is dependent for its security, welfare and increasing abundance upon certain conditions, does it follow that these conditions exist? If we refer to what some of these conditions might be it would seem that we have two different sorts of conditions. As a physiological organism I am dependent upon all sorts of physical conditions--oxygen, food, etc.. On the other hand my welfare would not seem to be contingent merely upon these sorts of things. Are not such factors as love, respect, a sense of accomplishment also involved here? While in some sense all these conditions must be, can we say that they all exist? Does a sense of accomplishment exist in the same sense as oxygen? If 'exist' refers to things in space and time, as Wieman has indicated, can love, respect, etc., be said to exist? Wieman's God seems to include very diverse factors in regard to existence. It would seem that in part man's welfare is not contingent upon things that exist. Do we not need to make some ontological distinctions here?

From the beginning Wieman has wanted to insist that God exists. God is a brute fact of human experience. Religion is not merely a matter of taking up a certain attitude toward what exists, but is a matter of adjusting to the facts of experience. God is not to be reduced to human ideals as in Dewey and other Humanists. In the preface to Religious Experience and Scientific Method he states, "The chief purpose of this book is to show that religious experience is experience of an object, however undefined, which is as truly external to the individual as is any tree or stone he may experience. It signifies some-

thing which extends beyond that space-time occupied by the individual undergoing the experience."[24]

While in Wieman's later work there is little analysis of religious experience, this does occupy a central place in Wieman's earlier work. But even in his early work, he insists that religious experience does not provide a way of knowing that is immediate. The insights so gained must be subjected to empirical verification. However, I think we can understand on the basis of what he does say in respect to such experience why Wieman has never doubted the existence of that Something--which he calls God.

In developing the argument for the existence of this Something, he says, "God we claim, is not a logicomathematical entity. He is an object of immediate experience. Mystical experience of the sort we shall portray, akin to aesthetic and social experience, but clearly different from both, must be scientifically interpreted if we are to know what God is. If by God we mean the object of such experience, without any further attempt to describe his character, then there can be not the slightest doubt in the world that God exists."[25]

This surely seems a strange move on Wieman's part. Is not the fundamental question concerned with whether the mystic is aware of something external to himself? May one not argue that mystical experience is not of an "object?" May it not be merely the projection of one's superego? If such experience is to be interpreted scientifically, how is it that "there can be not the slightest doubt in the world that God exists?" Wieman's reasoning here is indeed rather odd. As he continues, "For there can be no question about the reality of religious

experience; and all experience is the experience of something. Religious experience is just as real as any experience; just as real, for instance, as the experience of a human beloved, or color, or sound, or the experience given in dreams and hallucinations, or those experiences which are said to be of trees and stones. All experiences are of equal reality. The only question that can be raised about them is concerning their precise character and their significance."[26]

No one, I think, can doubt the "reality" of religious experience. That is, if one has an experience one has an experience. But what does he think follows from this? Note the next paragraph. "All experiences signify something. All experiences are experiences of some object or other. The only question is; what object?"[27]

This move is not legitimate. Does it follow from the fact that we have an experience that there is some <u>object</u> that is experienced? While it is certainly true that all experiences have some content, is it not misleading to think that therefore there is an object that is experienced? It is this sort of move that has led to the notion of sense data. Since in hallucinatory experiences we experience something, there must be an object. But this is not a physical thing in time and space, therefore it is a rather strange sort of object--a sense datum. Of course, there may be some utility in talking in this way, but this move is not, I think, forced upon us. Might we not simply say that in hallucinations we seem to see something, but don't? How can one <u>see</u> something that isn't there? Does it provide any illumination to say that we see a sense datum?

Wieman agrees that we do make mistakes in terms of the object we

perceive. "In hallucinations we plainly are mistaken concerning the object experienced. But that does not belie the fact of some object. It could not be an hallucination if there were no true object to give the lie to the hallucination. Absolute skepticism concerning existence of the objects of experience is impossible, even though one must invent an "animal faith" to escape from it."[28]

Here, I think, Wieman is confused. It is the case that we have grounds for saying that some experiences are hallucinatory, only when we take others to be veridical. We know we sometimes make mistakes in perception only because we take other cases of perception to be veridical. Thus, Wieman is correct in the claim that some mistakes in perception cannot provide grounds for a general skepticism.

However, it does not follow from these considerations that all experience is of an object. While hallucinatory experiences are "real" experiences, they are not of an object. It is just this that makes them hallucinations. One can maintain that "All experiences signify something" if one brings in the notion of sense data. While one may do this, it is important then to note that this sort of something is not to be confused with a physical object--or even with an independent existent of any sort. Sense data are not public objects. If one is to claim that one sees something in an hallucinatory experience, this something is not a public thing. It is just this that marks off this experience as hallucinatory. Thus, we make good the claim that all experience signifies something only by equivocating on the sort of thing to be signified. If we don't equivocate here the claim is analytic and trivial.

But, perhaps, all Wieman wants to claim is that even in hallucinations we could not seem to see a thing if in some other context we did not see that thing. That is, even in hallucinations what we seem to see is an object. What Hamlet seemed to see was a dagger before him. Thus, there are daggers. But will this do? Do not persons seem to see all sorts of things that do not exist at all? Persons have visions of ghosts; does it follow that there are ghosts? One indication that a person is hallucinating is that he describes an "object" that no one else has ever seen. Wieman's animal faith carries him far beyond an escape from absolute skepticism.

While Wieman argues that we are not to accept any propositions that goes beyond the empirical evidence, don't we have such a proposition here? While Wieman does not claim, as did John Baillie, a "revelation of His personal presence," do we not have a belief here that functions in much this way for Wieman? While he is careful to not claim to know in any detail the nature of God in his early work, he does claim to know, and with certitude, that God exists. While Wieman does not talk of a "Presence," he does talk of a "Something," a "object."

In Wieman's "Intellectual Autobiography" he gives us a clue, I think, as to what may account for his belief in the existence of Something. In college, he says, he had planned on being a journalist, "But shortly before my graduation, I came to my room after the evening meal and sat alone looking at the sunset over the Missouri River. Suddenly it came over me that I should devote my life to the problems of religious inquiry. I never had a more ecstatic experience. I could not sleep all night and walked in that ecstasy for several days."[29]

Now there is nothing here about a "revelation of His personal Presence as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost," but let us continue: "Since that evening in April I have never doubted my vocation. Never once throughout my life have I doubted the reality of God, whatever the revolutionary changes in my ideas about what, in truth, does have the character and power to transform man after the manner indicated. These changes in my religious thinking never dimmed my awareness of the reality that man is subject to transformation from the worse to the better in ways which he cannot determine, except in the sense of meeting certain required conditions."[30]

Again we are into a nest of difficulties. He seems to speak as though his vocation, religious inquiry, is synonomous with the reality of God, which in turn is synonomous with "the reality that man is subject to transformation..." At such points it is very difficult to refute Wieman, for one cannot make out just what it is that he wants to say. While his ideas of God have undergone revolutionary changes, he has never doubted the "reality of God." What are we to make of this? Just what is it that Wieman has never doubted.

While I don't think one finds "revolutionary" changes in Wieman's conception of God in his published work, it is clear that there have been important and significant changes. Is there something underlying all these notions that has remained constant? Is there something that Wieman has never doubted? I think there are several propositions that he has never doubted and that we have indicated what these are. If we return to the minimal definition of God with which we have been concerned, we can now see that there are certain beliefs involved here

that Wieman has, indeed, never doubted. He has never doubted that there is a trans-human force or process at work in nature that conduces to human good. This belief involves the view that such a process is a unitary one, a Something, and that this is an enduring process in the world. Further, it is not dependent upon human thought, feeling, or volition. It exists in space-time.

This belief is basic to Wieman's theology. Without such a belief it would not, I think, be appropriate to refer to Wieman's work as a theology. But with such a belief one can regard what he does as theology, for his construction does not begin merely with philosophical assumptions. As we shall see, there is throughout in Wieman's work this element of unexamined, uncriticized belief. While much of what Wieman says can be defended on empirical grounds, the evidence that might be cited never quite extends as far as his conclusions. It needs to be rounded out by certain over-beliefs that go beyond the evidence.

We have here something that operates in Wieman's thought very much like an immediate way of knowing. He does claim, as we have seen, to know that God exists. However, we need to add that the emphasis, as in Baillie, is not on the nature of God--but merely on his existence. While some propositions are involved here, Wieman is not claiming to know about God at this point in his thinking. Rather, he is claiming to know merely that God exists. However, this is not entirely empty, for it does involve the claim that God, whatever else that term may mean, signifies something that exists and conduces to human good. There is in the universe a Something that operates to bring about whatever good there may be in human life. Such good is not to be explained in

terms of human effort. There is a non-human source of human good, not merely various sources.

While Wieman would deny that these propositions are known immediately, they do not seem to be backed up by any empirical evidence. We have noted the attempt to argue on the basis of religious experience. Rather clearly, I think, these are rather desperate attempts to escape the charge that at a fundamental level Wieman is relying on precisely the method he denounces others for using.

Of course, when Wieman talks of an operational definition of God, a minimal definition that may prove useful for the purposes of inquiry, one might argue that he is not taking this as true. Rather, such a definition is to be evaluated in terms of its utility. However, nowhere does Wieman take the propositions we have noted as inherent to such a definition as hypotheses. Nowhere does he treat the unity or existence of this Something as hypotheses to be tested. This is not something he has ever doubted; never has he subjected these beliefs to any empirical investigation. But they are claims about the world, not merely linguistic recommendations.

If we focus, again, on Wieman's discussion of the problem, do we not see similar assumptions being made? Throughout he talks about <u>the</u> human problem, not merely human problems. All the various evils that beset human existence are essentially one. <u>The</u> problem is concerned with salvation, man needs to <u>be saved</u>. He formulates the problem such that this presupposes that man cannot save himself. The individual man cannot save himself from evil, but more than this, men collectively cannot save themselves from evil. They can only provide the conditions for

this Something to operate in such manner as to save them. The problem is tailored to the answer that Wieman has in mind.

Wieman has insisted that God is an object of immediate experience, but has also insisted that immediate experience is not to be confused with immediate knowledge. God, like all existing entities, is known by acquaintance, but this requires empirical testing. While Wieman has never disallowed mystical experience or the commitment of faith as avenues for coming up with important insights, such insights are not in themselves knowledge. We can determine whether an insight is a matter of knowledge only after it is formulated in a proposition and tested by empirical methods.

However, in terms of Wieman's fundamental assumptions concerning this Something, his insights have never been subjected to such empirical testing. Wieman, apparently, has had some sort of experience that has convinced him of the truth of certain propositions such that he doesn't think they need to be tested. Indeed, in spite of his claim that all knowledge is a matter of probabilities and consequently fallible, one can know absolutely that God exists, is one, and is the source of human good. This much, he claims, is absolutely certain.

Whether some mystical experience generated these insights or simply convinced Wieman of their truth I am not prepared to say. I suspect, however, that the "hearing of the old, old, story" is largely responsible. Faith, not only in the sense of commitment, but in the sense of believing certain propositions that go beyond the evidence seems clearly to be involved in Wieman's initial approach to religious inquiry.

We have, however, dealt only with what Wieman regards as a formal definition of God. As we have seen, this is not merely formal, for it does involve some content--some beliefs about the nature of God. But to pursue our investigation we shall have to examine Wieman's mature view as to the nature of God. He does claim that as a result of empirical inquiry there is much more that we can know about this Something.

But even here, it is claimed that this further delineation as to the nature of this Something is the result of scientific inquiry. Even the more full bodied view is to involve no beliefs that go beyond the evidence.

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER V

[1]Wieman, Theology, p. 3.

[2]Wieman, Commitment, p. 9.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Wieman, Source, p. 177.

[5]See Wieman's discussion of this in "Authority and The Normative Approach," Journal of Religion, XVI (April, 1936), pp. 172-202.

[6]Wieman, Commitment, pp. 9-10.

[7]Ibid., p. 10.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Ibid., p. 14.

[10]Ibid., p. 13.

[11]Ibid., pp. 14-15.

[12]Ibid., p. 15.

[13]Ibid.

[14]Wieman, Source, p. 27.

[15]Ibid., pp. 27-28.

[16]Wieman, Wrestle, p. 83.

[17]Ibid., p. 179.

[18]Ibid., p. 59.

[19]Ibid., p. 14.

[20]Henry Nelson Wieman, with Douglas Clyde MacIntosh and Max Carl Otto, Is There A God? A Conversation, (Chicago: Willet, Clark, 1932), p. 276.

[21]Wieman, Religious Experience, p. 9.

[22]Ibid.

[23]Ibid.

[24]Ibid., p. 5.

[25]Ibid., p. 29.

[26]Ibid.

[27]Ibid.

[28]Ibid.

[29]Wieman, Theology, p. 6.

[30]Ibid.

CHAPTER VI

A NATURALISTIC THEORY OF VALUE

In dealing with Wieman's methodology we saw that it was advantageous to separate our analysis into two sections. Similar considerations suggest that we follow a similar program in dealing with theory of value. On the one hand, there is a rather straight forward naturalistic theory of value. However, this is seriously compromised when Wieman comes to a consideration of what he calls the creative event. While the conflict in his theory of inquiry is most explicit in his early work, where the emphasis is on methodology; the conflict in his theory of value is most explicit in his later work, where this receives more extensive treatment.

This chapter will be devoted to an analysis of that strand of Wieman's thought that is consistent with what I have called his general theory of inquiry. In the next chapter I shall develop that strand of thought which, I think, can best be regarded as a theological theory of value.

As we have seen, both Wieman's attempt to formulate what he considers to be the religious problem and the attempt to give what he terms an operational definition of 'God' are concerned with human good. But we now need to ask, what is meant by 'good'?

As a naturalist, Wieman acknowledged his debt to Ralph Barton

Perry in the development of his theory of value. In an early volume, he says, "We adopt Professor Perry's approach to the problem of goodness or value, although we do not follow him in all his conclusions." Thus, Wieman maintains that "the good is any fulfillment of interest. Interest is any motor-affective attitude."[1]

In a more recent volume Wieman begins a section on value by saying, "Recent thinking about good and evil and right and wrong has been much disturbed about the meaning of the word 'Good.' I shall, therefore, proceed at once to state what I mean by greatest good. It is the most complete satisfaction of the individual that is possible when the individual is viewed in the wholeness of his being. Any good less than the greatest is some approximation to this most complete satisfaction of the individual."[2]

While in this later work Wieman talks of satisfaction, this seems to be merely another way of talking about the fulfillment of interest. There is on this point, I think, no important change in Wieman's position. But we need to emphasize that satisfaction refers to the individual "in the wholeness of his being."

From the beginning, Wieman has made clear that interests are not merely conscious interests. After defining interests in terms of motor-affective attitudes, he adds, "One may have such an attitude with respect to conditions without being conscious of the conditions or of the attitude. Hence, interests may be unconscious as well as conscious."[3]

This, of course, introduces a complication into an empirical theory of value. However, we can see how this is consistent with Wieman's concept of experience as an interaction between the organism

and his environment. We relate to our environment not only on a conscious level, but also on an unconscious biological level. Our motor-affective attitudes may be produced by factors in our environment or in our own person of which we are not aware. We may have a motor-affective attitude of liking something without knowing quite why we like it. Or we may even have such an attitude without being aware that we do have it. While one cannot then determine what a person's attitudes are simply by asking him, surely this is a more adequate view than one which reduces such attitudes to that of which one is conscious. Presumably, one can determine what a person's attitudes are by observing his non-verbal behavior.

Further, this distinction between conscious and unconscious interests provides for the possibility that one may be mistaken about what one values. While Plato maintained that we all seek the good, he had to admit that what we specifically seek, the object of interest, may not in fact be good. On Wieman's view, what we have a positive conscious interest in may not be of positive value; it may not provide that which satisfies "the person in the wholeness of his being." This is not to deny that such satisfaction as derives from the fulfillment of any interest is intrinsically good, but merely that the fulfillment of some interests may frustrate the fulfillment of other interests. "The interests which possess the conscious mind at any given time may find satisfaction in a way which defeats other interests of the same individual. When these latter dominate the conscious self the previous "satisfaction" may be evaluated as the extreme opposite of satisfying. Also the unconscious drives and demands which are being frustrated by

conscious striving may never reach consciousness in such form as to be understood by the individual himself but may manifest themselves in fits of melancholy, in various forms of anxiety, and in self-defeating behavior."[4]

While this is an empirical theory of value, it is one that does not limit interest to what one happens to want at any given time. The object of one's desire may be such as to be detrimental to one's satisfaction in the long run. This is a theory that takes seriously the demands of the unconscious. It does not assume that we know, at least in any detailed way, what it is that satisfies. Rather, what is called for is empirical research into the psychological nature of man to determine what objects of desire do satisfy man "in the wholeness of his being." This is not to be determined simply by polling persons and asking what they do in fact desire. However, it does assume, I think, that if a person were reasonable and knew what did satisfy him "in the wholeness of his being," then he would consciously want this.

Since G. E. Moore, anyone wanting to maintain an empirical theory of value has felt obligated to deal somehow with Moore's criticism of naturalism. While an adequate treatment of this issue would require a dissertation in itself, something needs to be said about the sort of line Wieman takes on this question.

Clearly, part of what has been meant by 'naturalistic fallacy' has nothing to do with naturalism as such. We are here concerned with what has been referred to as the definist fallacy. Moore's main line of argument against any attempt to define 'good' seems to be that good is an indefinable quality and therefore it is a mistake to define it.

But here, it seems, we are simply comparing Moore's view with those that he opposes. We do not settle this issue by simply shouting definist or naturalistic fallacy. Indeed, it is misleading to talk of a fallacy here at all. Fallacies are mistakes in reasoning. A definition is not an argument, although it may play a part in an argument.

There is a sense in which Wieman would agree that good cannot be defined. As we shall see, the quality referred to by 'good' is ineffable and hence cannot be defined. But this does not mean that the term 'good' cannot be defined. One may agree with Moore that yellow is a simple unanalyzable quality. But this does not imply that the term 'yellow' cannot in any way be defined. Definition by genus and species is not the only acceptable way of defining a term.

The open question argument, however, is supposed to show that any attempted definition is mistaken. About any definition of good we can ask of the definiens, "but is that good?" Since it is always supposed to make sense to ask this question, this shows that the definition is not a correct one; for a correct definition involves an equation between the definiendum and the definiens. If the definition were correct, to ask of the definiens if this is good would be trivial, for it would involve asking "Is good good?"

Wieman does not, I think, take this argument seriously, although he does comment on it. As we have seen, he does offer a definition of the phrase, 'greatest good.' On his view, "One must always begin with words and these words must be defined. Furthermore these words must state what it is that one intends to examine. The subject matter may be specified by words which are arbitrarily defined because no words in

current usage with conventional meanings are fit to designate with accuracy the field of inquiry."[5]

What Wieman is suggesting here, I think, is that in some cases it is legitimate to stipulate what one is going to mean by certain terms. One is not purporting to give the conventional meaning of the word here. If we take a definition of 'good' to be stipulative, surely it is inappropriate to ask of the definiens, "Is this good?" One is admitting in stipulating that such a definition does not accord with ordinary usage. In such a case it would only be meaningful to ask of the definiens, "Is this good?" if one is not allowing that it is legitimate to stipulate what one means. The attempt to define in this case is not an attempt to give the ordinary usage of the term.

However, Wieman does not, apparently, think he is stipulating a meaning of 'good' here. Rather, he is giving what may be regarded as a precising definition. He does not need, he thinks, to resort to stipulating, for "such arbitrary definitions are not required; but when words are used with their conventional meanings one needs to select some one of the conventional meanings and define it more precisely than is done in common conversation. To this end I have stated the sense in which I shall use the word "good" although further discussion of the subject is required to make the meaning more definite."[6]

Wieman's position here is that he is simply selecting from among the various meanings of 'good' one such meaning and making it more precise for purposes of investigation. While the word 'good' is used in many ways, do we not sometimes mean by 'good' 'satisfying'? "Common words like "good" and "pig" and "man" have many meanings attached to

them in current usage. No one of these meanings is more right than another...For any man to insist that no other meaning can be given to the word "good" except the one he attaches to it is foolish obstinacy."[7]

Of course, it may make sense to ask whether "satisfaction in the wholeness of one's being" is good. But if it does make sense this is due to the fact that one is using 'good' in another of its ordinary senses. Wieman is not, apparently, claiming to give a definition that incorporates all the manifold meanings that may be attached to this term in ordinary language.

Apparently Moore was not, however, objecting to giving a semantic definition of 'good'. Rather, he was objecting to the attempt to define the nature of good; to give what has been called a real definition, a definition that attempts to encapsulate the essence of goodness. From Wieman's remarks one might think that Wieman is not attempting to indicate what the nature of goodness is, but merely to state how he is going to use the term, 'good.' But let us continue.

A number of objections may be made to Wieman's definition and he attempts to deal with some of them. "When anyone states what is good, the conventional practice in recent times has been to make the rejoinder: But suppose someone says that for him that is not good! So acutely have people become aware of the diversity of evaluations in different cultures and by different individuals and so violent has become the opposition against imposing uniformity that this reaction against any attempt to state the nature of good is almost automatic."[8]

Now it seems clear here that Wieman is not merely giving a

semantic definition of 'good', but, as he says, is attempting to "state the nature of good." Surely, one can object to his definition then without being guilty of "foolish obstinacy." Wieman is not, I think, saying merely that 'satisfaction' is one of the meanings of 'good;' rather he is saying that, properly understood, this is the very nature of goodness. It is this character of satisfaction that confers value on an object. It is this that makes things good.

The objection Wieman mentions is not merely to his use of the term, 'good', but to the attempt to state what the good is. However, he thinks this objection rests upon a confusion. The mistake is to suppose that "a good common to all must necessarily impose a uniformity denying those diverse values necessary to satisfy the unique demands of the individual. Exactly the opposite is the truth of the matter. The individual cannot have those values peculiar to himself unless there is a super-value which sustains this kind of freedom."[9]

If this objection is merely a matter of wanting to provide for some diversity in the way in which individuals seek to satisfy their various interests, then surely Wieman is correct. Freedom of this sort may be a value that embraces such diversity. It is not contradictory to hold a general principle which prescribes that everyone ought to be free to satisfy his unique needs.

"Sometimes", Wieman thinks, "the objection raised against any statement about the greatest good common to all can be resolved by defining words. The objector may attach a different meaning to the word 'good' than the meaning it must have when it designates the supervalue here under consideration."[10] Of course, there is always the

possibility that some objections may arise simply due to verbal confusions, but Wieman's definition is not merely a matter of stipulating an arbitrary meaning, not even a matter of selecting from the many meanings ordinarily used. As he says, he is concerned with "the meaning it must have when it designates the supervalue here under consideration."

Given this, it is difficult to see how Wieman's next sentence follows: "When this is the case there should be no dispute, once the parties concerned understand one another."[11] The dispute, again, is not merely over the use of a word, but about the supervalue "here under consideration." One may well understand what Wieman means by 'good', and still object to this use of the term. This issue is a substantive one. While one might admit that 'good' sometimes has the use Wieman indicates, one may still object to the claim that this is <u>the</u> meaning of the term; that this is the meaning the word must have, that what is indicated here is a "supervalue."

The only substantive issue that Wieman raises here is when he suggests that "The objector might mean that if he were put in a situation where he was most completely satisfied in the wholeness of his being, he would, if he had opportunity, reject that situation and choose another which would be less satisfying. If that is the contention, the objector is appealing to empirical evidence gathered by experiment."[14]

But even here Wieman does not, I think, face up to the force of the open question argument. He entertains the possibility that one <u>would</u> reject that which provides the most complete satisfaction, but does not raise the question whether such satisfaction <u>ought</u> to be chosen. Implicit here is the view that 'ought' can only mean 'would' under

specified conditions. Here we are not dealing with the question concerning any definition of moral terms, but with the question as to whether moral terms can be translated into purely natural terms. Can the meaning of 'ought' be reduced to a disposition to choose such and such under specified conditions? What force there is to the open question argument present itself at just this point. Even if we agree that a person would choose that which provides the most complete satisfaction when he has the opportunity, may we not ask whether he ought to so choose? That he would choose this does not entail that he ought to choose this.

Wieman's position here seems to be typical of naturalists in ethics. Wieman, like Bentham, seems to think that the objector may be basing his objection on some misunderstanding. He may be thinking of satisfaction as a kind of bovine state of satiation. This is not what Wieman has in mind. Once the objector understands fully what is meant by satisfaction, Wieman seems to think that he will agree that this is good.

At bottom, however, I think Wieman would admit that his definition of the 'greatest good' is normative. To say that satisfaction is good cannot be reduced to any statement concerning what men would choose. "It might be impossible for the objector to undertake such an experiment self-consciously because he might feel that his own self-esteem depended on proving himself right. In that case his own state of mind would make it impossible to experience the more complete satisfaction."[12] Thus, there may be cases where one will not choose the most complete satisfaction. Our mental set may prevent this. But implicit here is

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including other persons. Thus the good is not inside the individual. Neither is it outside. It includes both the organic individual and everything outside the individual which must be in existence for him to have the satisfying experience."[14]

The quality of an experience is neither in the object nor in the subject. But this is not to say that we must include everything in the universe in our analysis. When Wieman says "effective environment" he means to rule out as relevant all those innumerable events in the universe that do not affect the quality of the experience in question. The principle for determining what is relevant and what is not he states as follows: "What cannot be changed without changing the experience is a part of that experience even though one can have no consciousness of it and will never know what it is. It is nevertheless a part of the total situation which yields the experience and in that sense is experienced. Therefore what is experienced as the greatest good is unknown to the individual in great part even when he can know certain features pertaining to it by which it is distinguished from other forms of being."[15]

Consistent with his general theory of knowledge, Wieman is maintaining here that many factors enter into our experience of quality of which we have no knowledge. That we value an experience is an empirical fact that is readily determinable, but why we value such an experience is something that may call for extensive investigation. We may never be in a position to indicate with any confidence all the factors that are causally relevant to our appreciation.

However, none of this bears on Wieman's definition of 'greatest

good.' Even if one could show that what "satisfies man in the wholeness of his being" is not arbitrary, this would not argue for the view that the good is such satisfaction. This remains, I think, as a first principle in this strand of Wieman's thought. Whether Wieman is consistent in regarding this as a first principle we shall have to examine later.

If we grant that man's satisfaction in the wholeness of his being is the highest good, the question is raised as to what provides such satisfaction. This clearly would seem to be an empirical question. Indeed, one of the principal advantages that naturalists offer for such a definition of good is that it makes it possible for us to utilize all the sophisticated techniques of science in conducting value inquiry. It transforms such inquiry into a science.

While Wieman has given various answers to this question through the years, it is not until The Source of Human Good that he has an answer that seems to satisfy him. This is not to say, however, that he recants his earlier positions. Rather, he thinks he now has a notion that embraces not only his earlier views, but includes everything of worth in all the various theories of value that have been seriously considered. Rather than repudiate, he tries to swallow them all.

What satisfies a man in the wholeness of his being is a certain process in nature. While this transcends humanity, it is not supernatural; it can be investigated by the empirical methods of science. In referring to this process Wieman uses the terms: 'creative event', 'creative interchange', 'creative communication', or sometimes simply 'creativity.' While he sometimes makes a distinction between 'creativity' and these other expressions, they are typically all used

synonomously.

The claim that creative interchange is that which satisfies man in the wholeness of his being purports to be empirical. If we take seriously Wieman's theory of inquiry, this conclusion is the result of emprical research into the nature of man and his environment. If we are looking for a practical guide to action we need more than the normative principle that human satisfaction is good. We need to know specifically what it is that brings about such satisfaction. While Wieman does not claim to know either absolutely or fully the "reality" which is denoted by 'creative interchange', he does claim to know that this process is what satisfies man in the wholeness of his being.

If we refer to our exposition of Wieman's theory of inquiry, we will recall that the first step in what Wieman then regarded as the scientific method was a matter of formulating a theory on the basis of prior observations. However, as we noted, this is not necessary. Wieman has an insight here into what satisfies man. How he arrived at that insight is not crucial in respect to his claim to know. But what is crucial is that we formulate our theories in terms of statements that are empirically verifiable. We must "Ascertain what must be observable and under what conditions, if the theory be true" and "what must be observable if the theory be false."[16]

If we are to be in a position to test Wieman's claim here, we must be able to discriminate what he calls creative interchange from other events or happenings. In The Source of Human Good he purports to give us the criteria for doing just this. "The creative event is so basic to all our further interpretations of value that we must examine

it with care. It is made up of four subevents; and the four working together and not any one of them working apart from the other constitute the creative event. Each may occur without the others and often does, but in that case it is not creative. We have to describe them separately, but distinctions made for the purpose of analysis must not obscure the unitary, four fold combination necessary to the creativity."[17] These four subevents, then, are each necessary and together they are sufficient for an event to be deemed a creative event.

The four subevents he enumerates are: (1) the emerging awareness of qualitative meaning derived from other persons through communication, (2) integrating these new meanings with others previously acquired, (3) expanding the richness of quality in the appreciable world by enlarging its meaning, and (4) deepening the community among those who participate in this total creative event of intercommunication.[18]

Considering the central role the notion of the creative event does play in Wieman's mature work, one would hope for a more extensive treatment than one finds here. While he discusses this four-fold event in his subsequent work, these discussions essentially reiterate what he maintained in The Source of Human Good. However, by considering what he says in various places I think we may come to some understanding of what is meant by 'the creative event.'

The first subevent I think is the most problematic. Thus, this requires considerable explication. He says this is a matter of the emerging awareness of qualitative meaning derived from other persons through communication. The key concept here is 'qualitative meaning.' While we have discussed Wieman's notion of quality, qualitative meaning

is to be distinguished from the mere experience of quality. Earlier in The Source of Human Good Wieman defined qualitative meaning as follows: "Qualitative meaning is that connection between events whereby present happenings enable me to feel not only the quality intrinsic to the events now occurring but also the qualities of many other events that are related to them. Qualitative meaning is that connection between events whereby the present happening conveys to me the qualities of other happenings and some qualities pertaining to what will happen in the future, as the future is interpreted by the past."[19]

But, as we have seen, on Wieman's contextualist analysis, this would seem to apply to every experience of quality. The quality is not merely in the present object of experience. Both past and future events (as anticipated) are causally relevant to the experience of quality. But, perhaps, 'intrinsic' is to refer only to those qualities that are in the present event being experienced. But this term we shall examine presently.

In explaining what he means here, Wieman says, "As the human organism reacts, it distinguishes and relates events. When it so distinguishes and relates events that what is happening now enables it to recall or otherwise know the sequence of events leading up to the present and also enables it to anticipate future possibilities, we say that these present happenings are 'signs.'"[20] As we noted with quality, we do not, necessarily, know what all these connections are such that we

feel as we do. These connections are largely unknown in most cases. When Wieman refers to qualitative meaning, this seems to add a cognitive element, an element of structure, to the experience of quality. One cannot know quality without some structuring, although one can, and does, experience quality in an immediate way that involves no interpretation.

But what is meant by 'sign?' In illustrating this, Wieman discusses the hearing of footsteps. "They are a sequence of events distinguished by qualities. But they are sign-events. They are signs because they signify that someone is approaching."[21]

Thus, 'footsteps' involves both quality and structure. To call an experience the experience of hearing footsteps involves an interpretation, a conceptualization, of the quality as experienced. But further, they also signify that someone is approaching. When Wieman says 'signify', I take it he does not mean 'imply', but rather that they inductively give evidence that someone is approaching. This is a matter of experience. We have learned to expect the appearance of someone when we hear that congeries of qualities that we structure as footsteps. It is in this way that footsteps become signs of someone approaching.

However, a much wider range of felt quality may be packed into the hearing of footsteps than this. If I may quote Wieman's entire paragraph here, "After twenty years I hear those same footsteps. Now the breadth and depth of meaning conveyed to me by that series of events is far greater. Surges of feeling arise which those steps could not arouse twenty years ago. I greet the person who is approaching even before I can see him. I feel a complexity of qualities pertaining to that person by way of these faintly discernible sounds called 'footsteps.' These

events are no longer merely distinguished by certain sounds, they are connected with innumerable events--tragic and comic, bitter and sweet--that have happened through the years. Something of the quality of many events occurring in the past is packed bodily into the present when I hear those footsteps. I even feel by anticipation something of the quality of emerging future events, when foreseen possibilities have been actualized by association with the person now approaching."[22]

No sharp line can be drawn between 'quality' and 'qualitative meaning', I think. Every experience of quality goes beyond what is contemporaneous with the present event. The distinction here seems to be a relative one. 'Qualitative meaning' involves a more extensive connection with past events and future possibilities entering conscious awareness than does 'quality.'

While Wieman would not agree with Moore's view that good is a simple unanalyzable quality, he does maintain that quality itself is ineffable. It is that reality which all our structures, our words, attempt to deal with. But strictly speaking the quality of an event is unique. I cannot feel the quality of your experience, nor you mine. I cannot even experience the same quality twice. Thus, it follows that in the first subevent described by Wieman quality in any strict sense cannot be derived from other persons.

Qualitative meaning, however, presumably can be "derived from other persons through communication." We have noted that qualitative meaning involves signs. This becomes part of the definition a few pages later when he says, "Qualitative meaning is any structure of interrelated events, together with their possibilities, when these events have ap-

preciable qualities and when the structure as a whole can be represented by signs." And "Signs are those events belonging to the structure which serve to represent the structure as a whole."[23]

Signs, then, apparently belong to the structure of the present event, but serve to represent a much broader structure. In Wieman's example, footsteps, which were part of the structure of the present event, functioned to bring into conscious awareness many qualities deriving from twenty years of association with the person whose footsteps we now hear.

It seems to me that this analysis of value is, perhaps, a useful way of thinking. Clearly the way we feel about a particular thing or happening is not to be explained simply in terms of that thing or happening. Footsteps may, as Wieman suggests, evoke in us a very rich content of feeling that has its roots in many years of close association. But how is such qualitative meaning to be communicated? How is it to be derived from others?

While Wieman thinks there is a kind of creative interchange that goes on at the sub-human level, in The Source of Human Good and his later work he is primarily concerned with the operation of the creative event at the human level. "So long as this is done by the organism without the aid of linguistic communication, the range and richness of qualitative meaning is very limited. Not until the single organism is able to acquire the qualitative meanings developed by other organisms and add them to its own can the world of meaning and quality expand to any great compass."[24]

We are, then, to derive qualitative meaning from others by means of linguistic communication. While Wieman talked about the function of

signs, in his example the sign was not a linguistic entity. However, later he uses 'sign' to refer to both linguistic and non-linguistic events. "A spoken word, a flash of light, the sound of thunder, are signs..."[25]

How are we to communicate the hearing of footsteps? While one would wish for more clarification on some of these points, there is no particular problem here. We structure qualities in certain ways such that this structure is communicable. The concept of footsteps is made public by the structure of our language. While we cannot give another our hearing of the footsteps, we can communicate the concept of hearing footsteps; 'I hear footsteps.'

If the sort of communication Wieman is talking about has to do with the sharing of concepts, there is no problem as to how this is done. But more than this is involved; we are to become aware of qualitative meaning derived from others. As Wieman says in Man's Ultimate Commitment, "Creative interchange is not limited to the acquisition of information alone. One also gets from others appreciations, sentiments, hopes, fears, memories, regrets, aspirations, joys, sorrows, hates, loves, pieties, and other features of that vast complexity which makes up the total experience of every human being."[26]

But how does one get from others appreciation, sentiments, hopes, etc.? If this were a matter of information there would be no difficulty even here. One can through communication come to understand what others appreciate, what their sentiments are about various matters, what they hope for, etc. But this is a matter of information. That we are dealing here with feelings involves no special or peculiar difficulty. We are

still communicating concepts.

However, "gets from others appreciations" is an ambiguous expression. Presumably, we get from others their appreciations. But I can certainly understand another person's appreciations without myself appreciating them. But, again in Man's Ultimate Commitment, Wieman claims that "Creative interchange is that kind of interchange which creates in those who engage in it an appreciative understanding of the original experience of another."[27]

The phrase 'original experience' refers to the unique way in which an individual structures his experience. On Wieman's view each individual is a kind of Leibnizian monad who views the universe from a unique point of view. However, Wieman's monads have windows. That is, they interact with their environment--most importantly other persons. Original experience contrasts with the superimposed conformities of society, it contrasts with the roles we play. When we express our own point of view, when we give others an insight into our own original experience, we are not playing "games people play."

But we don't in the sort of communication Wieman has in mind simply get an insight or even an understanding of the other's point of view, we obtain an appreciative understanding of his point of view. How does this come about? In order to appreciate another's point of view, as opposed to merely understanding what it is, I think empathy is necessary. One must not only understand what the other is saying but must empathize with the person who is speaking. In the section on religious inquiry, we noted that Wieman spoke in terms of "seeing through the eyes of love." Something of this sort seems clearly to be involved here in

the sort of communication that Wieman is talking about. If one is to derive qualitative meaning from others, one must listen sympathetically to what they are saying and attempt to see things from their point of view. One must psychologically identify oneself with the other, at least for the moment.

What sort of language use is involved in this sort of communication? As Wieman insists, correctly I think, the language of science is deliberately designed to eliminate, or at least minimize, those terms that refer to felt qualities. The attempt in science is to get away from qualitative terms that refer to feelings and to substitute terms that refer to something that can be counted, something that is quantitative. This is justified in terms of the purposes of some scientific investigations, for it provides for more precise formulation and permits refined data about which various observers do not disagree. While we may disagree about whether it is hot in this room, we do not disagree that the upper limit of liquid in the thermometer coincides with the mark labeled 75.

While scientific language may be admirably suited to some purposes, it doesn't seem that this will do for the sort of job Wieman has in mind here. We cannot communicate qualitative meaning with words that don't refer to the sort of qualities that are most crucial here--qualities as experienced by the unique individual. We are after some insight, not as to the general, but the particular; how this particular existing individual <u>feels</u> about the world.

In Wieman's short autobiography, in commenting on Tillich's use of non-cognitive symbols, he says some things that may provide some

illumination on the sort of communication that is involved in the creative event. "The expression 'darling' addressed to a child is a non-cognitive symbol. It does not describe nor designate that form of existence which distinguishes the child from other forms of existence. Rather, it refers to the total, unique individuality of the child. This individuality can never be reduced to the structures which the mind can know. We can know that the child is two years old, that he pronounces his words in a certain way, that he is dark, etc. An infinity of structures might be known about the child if we were omniscient. But all this generalization about the child would never give us the immediate experience of his unique individuality which is what we love. To express and to awaken this immediate experience, we must use the non-cognitive symbol...Qualities of feeling and sense immediately experienced are our apprehension of this unique individual. But the qualities cannot be described in their immediacy."[28]

How does this relate to the communication of qualitative meaning? I think that much of the communication that is involved in the creative event must involve what Wieman later refers to as non-cognitive symbols. We do not derive qualitative meaning from another merely through the communication of ideas or concepts, but through an expressive use of language. While it remains true that I cannot in any strict sense feel another's feelings, I can feel something of what he feels. He can through the expressive use of language evoke in me feelings akin to what he feels. While Wieman speaks of feeling another's feelings, this is not, I think, to be understood in a strict sense. But we do have a language for talking about and expressing our feelings, and this is a

public language.

Something of this sort is involved in reading any moving piece of literature. One identifies with some of the characters in a novel and comes to feel as they feel. The primary function of poetry is to evoke in us certain felt qualities; not to inform us that such and such is the case.

Some commentators have been disturbed by Wieman's attack in places on science, thinking this is inconsistent with his empiricism, but this rests on a confusion.[29] Wieman has maintained from the beginning that while the language of science, of precise description, is the ideal for knowing; it is relatively barren in felt quality. Indeed, he has a formula here. "The more inclusive of felt quality any structure may be, the more vague and indefinite it becomes." As he maintains, "That is the reason that the exact sciences reduce to a minimum the qualities entering into the structures which they seek to know because the richer the content of quality, the more difficult to determine accurately the precise structure of change."[30]

But he certainly does not want to relegate felt quality to mere emotive meaning as though this were of little importance. "These two opposing kinds of structures might conceivably be reconciled and developed in a way to magnify one another. But very often, it seems, they compete with one another so that an age or culture or area of life devoted to the creation of scientific and technological structures crowds out and impoverishes the qualitativity rich structures of love, friendship, worship, devotion, loyalty, art, and all qualitatively rich forms of awareness."[31] What Wieman has attempted to do is to reconcile these two sorts of structures. The attempt is to employ scientific

thinking in such a way as to magnify the variety and richness of felt qualities. There is here no inherent contradiction. It is a matter of correctly assigning each function its proper role. We need to know, but we also need to feel.

The first subevent we have been attempting to describe is largely a matter of feeling. This is not to say that no information is communicated, but that what is involved most importantly are those rather vague structures that are rich in felt quality. These are expressed by means of what Wieman later refers to as non-cognitive symbols. How is this done? In Man's Ultimate Commitment Wieman says that creative interchange in its most complete form can be described thus: "You express your whole self and your entire mind freely and fully and deeply and truly to other persons who understand you most completely and appreciatively with joy in the spirits they are."[32]

While Wieman's language here seems to involve those structures that are rather vague, though rich in felt quality, I think we can get some understanding of what he has in mind. The current rage over encounter groups, T-groups, sensitivity training, etc., purport to involve this sort of communication. The attempt is to get persons to express their own feelings and to become sensitized to the feelings of others. One is encouraged to tell the other person what he honestly feels about him. One is to express his rage, hatred, love, feelings of insecurity, sexual desires, etc... There is a Center for Creative Interchange in Des Moines that has been established with Wieman's approval to encourage this sort of communication.

The second subevent Wieman discusses is a matter of integrating

the insight one has derived from the other into one's own thinking. But apparently this is not something one can accomplish by any conscious act. While this is a necessary condition of an event's being creative, it is not to be accomplished by the use of intelligence or will. It is something that may or may not happen. While Wieman makes some suggestions as to what may be helpful, these are not part of any method that can simply be applied. "A period of loneliness and quiet provides for incubation and creative transformation by novel unification." "But mere solitude is not enough. Nothing can be more deadening and dangerous to the human spirit than solitude."[33] The solitude must be creative rather than degenerative as it frequently is.

The integration that Wieman talks of here involves something genuinely new. It is not to be brought into existence on the basis of any purely rational extrapolation from the past. This calls for insight, for invention. It is not simply a matter of adding to one's existing store of knowledge or ways of apprehending value, nor is it a matter of striking any kind of golden mean between the old and the new. What is produced cannot, Wieman insists, be predicted.

While Wieman does not give us a method here, this is not, I think, something that counts against him. No one has been able yet to produce a method for producing new insights. Clearly Mill's methods are inadequate for this purpose. Nonetheless it does happen. We are accustomed to chalk this up to creative genius.

The third aspect of the creative event Wieman describes as the "expanding and enriching of the appreciable world by a new structure of interrelatedness pertaining to events" and claims that this "necessarily

follows from the first two subevents."[34] To say that this expanding and enriching of the appreciable world follows is to say that part of the meaning which Wieman attaches to the integration of new insights is a matter of expanding and enriching one's qualitative meaning. That is, this integration involved in the second aspect of the creative event is such as to bring about this expansion. If it doesn't do this, it is not the sort of integration Wieman has in mind. While he frequently talks of the creative event at work in scientific discovery, the creative event cannot be reduced to producing scientific insight, for there is no necessary expansion or enrichment of the appreciable world involved here--at least this is not a necessary commitment of such scientific creativity.

This third aspect of the creative event is not merely a matter of seeing relationships that one previously did not see. It is not a matter of seeing that certain events are related to others as means to end. Rather, it involves seeing and <u>feeling</u> relationships in such a way that the whole of life takes on a new dimension of meaning. What was previously valued, if at all, as a means is now felt to be intrinsically valuable. Further, many things which were regarded as having no value or even negative value are now seen to be good. One's appreciable world is transformed. It may even be that what one formerly took as good is now seen to be evil.

The last aspect of the creative event is "deepening the community among those who participate in this total creative event of intercommunication." As Wieman says, "The new structure of interrelatedness pertaining to events, resulting from communication and integration of

meanings, transforms not only the mind of the individual and his appreciable world but also his relations with those who have participated with him in this occurrence."[35] As a consequence of the first three subevents one comes to understand and appreciate one's own mind. This does not, however, mean that those involved in the creative event are all of one mind. It is not the case that the creative event eliminates all differences. He is not claiming that all conflict would be resolved and we would all live happily ever after if we only communicated with each other.

Indeed, happiness in any usual sense of the term is not to be expected as a result of the creative event. "Paradoxical as it may sound, this increased community between persons may bring with it a sense of alienation and wistful hunger and even anguish, because one is now aware of misunderstandings in the other. He apprehends in the mind of the other, as he could not before, bitterness, fear, hate, scorn, pride, self-concern, indifference, and unresponsiveness when great need and great issues call. Likewise, the other may apprehend in him in somewhat different areas these ailments of the human spirit. Increase in genuine community...will include all this discernment of illness and evil in one another. Increase in community is not necessarily pleasant; the good produced by the creative event brings increase in suffering as well as increase in joy; community brings a burden as well as a release. Those who cannot endure suffering cannot endure the increase of human good."[36]

While the creative event does not necessarily make us happy in the usual sense of that term, it presumably does satisfy us in the wholeness of our being. It does this by increasing the depth and range of

qualitative meaning in our lives, and "Qualitative meaning is intrinsically good."[37]

There is a problem here. While Wieman's examples of qualitative meaning have suggested states of affairs of which we would approve, this does not follow from the definition. Consider the case of the footsteps. Suppose they are signs that one's jailer, who has been torturing one for twenty years is approaching. "Surges of feeling arise which those steps could not arouse twenty years ago." Indeed, I don't doubt that this would be the case--hatred and terror. But can we maintain that this is intrinsically good? While hatred and terror may in some cases be extrinsically good, do we want to maintain that they are intrinsically good?

Wieman does argue that "Qualitative meaning is good, is positive, intrinsic value, because it satisfies human want. That is to say, it is one ingredient in every instance of satisfaction."[38] This latter statement involves a further confusion with which we must deal more extensively in the next section. But does qualitative meaning always satisfy human want? Does terror satisfy human want? I should think that only "good" qualitative meaning satisfies human want. And this means that only satisfying qualitative meaning satisfies human want.

While one might argue that it is better to be able to feel the various qualities of events than to not be able to feel at all, it is sheer romanticism to claim that feeling as such is intrinsically good. While passages such as the one above suggest that Wieman is a romantic when it comes to feeling, if we stay with his definition of 'greatest good' then human satisfaction remains as the criterion of goodness.

Thus, what is intrinsically good consists of satisfying qualitative meaning, not simply qualitative meaning. To say that qualitative meaning "is one ingredient in every instance of satisfaction" clearly does not entail that qualitative meaning as such is intrinsically good. I think that in places Wieman is misled by 'qualitative.' While he does distinguish between positive and negative quality, he seems to forget this distinction and tends to speak of quality only in the positive sense.

Of course, to say that qualitative meaning is intrinsically good is not to say that it is ultimately good. While it may be in a given instance intrinsically good, this does not entail that all things considered it is to be judged good. As with Dewey, there are no dead ends for Wieman. That which is intrinsically good may have consequences that overweigh this consideration such that ultimately we judge this as bad. As we have seen, qualitative meaning involves not merely the experience of quality, but the integration of qualities. The greater good always involves for Wieman an increase in qualitative meaning, and this involves an increasing integration of quality. While an experience of a given quality may be intrinsically good, it is to be judged ultimately bad if it is destructive of a wider, more extensive integration of qualitative meaning. The greater good is a process of growth in qualitative meaning.

With this understanding, one might argue that hatred or terror may lead to the growth of qualitative meaning, although I think 'terror' is disintegrative as a matter of definition. But even on this view it is difficult to see how we could maintain that terror is intrinsically good.

This is not to say that Wieman's discussion of qualitative meaning adds nothing to the notion of human satisfaction. I think Wieman has some important insights here. But the criterion is still a matter of human satisfaction. Whether a particular event rich in qualitative meaning satisfies is a matter for empirical determination.

As we have noted, Wieman attempts to construct a theory of value that will be broad enough in scope to include what he considers to be the important insights involved in various more specific theories. I think the notion of satisfaction that he makes out is rich enough, or vague enough if one prefers, to include many of the goods for which other philosophers have argued. Pleasure, knowledge, power, harmony, beauty, health--to name a few--may all find a place as being elements in human satisfaction. And it may be that none of these are intrinsically good without some element of qualitative meaning. Surely it is the case that it is the experience of these that is intrinsically good, and this factor of being experienced is built into the notion of qualitative meaning.

While Wieman's discussion of value has taken various turns through the years, one thread that runs throughout his thinking is the notion of self-realization. That which satisfies man in the wholeness of his being is not any static state of pleasure or happiness, but a dynamic process of growth in the direction of actualizing one's potentialities. "The greatest good is not a changeless state of being. The most complete satisfaction can only be found in a process of change but this change must have the character which satisfies."[39]

What provides this satisfaction is what Wieman has called creative

interchange. Presumably, this is the empirical conclusion to Wieman's search. While we are not provided in Wieman's work with any empirical data to support this contention, he does refer us to the work done by men such as Abraham Maslow, Erich Fromm, and Harry Stack Sullivan. Having mentioned Sullivan, Wieman concludes, "These studies and experiments seem to indicate that the human being finds the most complete satisfaction of his individuality in its wholeness so far as that is possible in certain interpersonal relations when other conditions are favorable. This kind of interpersonal relation we have tried to characterize, calling it creative interchange."[40]

Let us attempt to summarize Wieman's argument at this stage of our inquiry. The highest good lies in the satisfaction of human interests, but we need to emphasize here the subconscious needs of the individual as well as conscious desires. The most complete satisfaction derives from the growth of qualitative meaning, but, as I have argued, we should include here only that qualitative meaning that satisfies. What is required to satisfy the individual in the wholeness of his being is a continuing increase in satisfying qualitative meaning. Empirical evidence seems to indicate that this satisfying state of affairs is brought about by a process of creative interchange.

The structure of this argument follows a classical pattern. It begins with the normative judgment that human satisfaction is the good. However, as I have suggested, this may be broken down into a normative judgment plus an empirical one: What all men desire is good, and satisfaction is what all men desire. While Wieman would want to qualify both of the above, these qualifications do not, I think, affect the structure

of the theory. The central contention of Wieman's later work is that empirical research seems to indicate that creative interchange provides that which satisfies the whole man--his conscious interests, but more importantly his unconscious needs.

There are, of course, many difficulties in terms of empirically verifying this theory. While we may be able to translate the notion of satisfaction into what men desire, we are still saddled with many qualifiers. Wieman is not claiming that all men do desire creative interchange. Rather, they would desire it if they had experienced it and were not unreasonable. Further, do we have a sufficiently clear notion of what is meant by 'creative interchange?' Can we distinguish this process from other forms of communication?

While these are all real difficulties, these sorts of considerations do not, I think, count in any special way against Wieman's theory as so far developed. These general sorts of difficulties are to be met with in any naturalistic theory of value that has any initial plausability. While it seems clear that we are not in a position to give an operational definition of 'creative interchange' in any rigorous way, still I think Wieman has indicated enough of the dimensions of this process for us to distinguish it--although this would require considerable sensitivity on the part of the observer. Of course, the problem is compounded by the contention that creative interchange admits of degrees. It's not simply a matter of determining whether this case of communication is or is not creative. It is a question of how creative it is. He doesn't provide us with any guidelines for when we are justified in saying this is a case of creative interchange. Whether such could be

given is problematic, but I see no impossibility here.

However, these questions we need not pursue further, for there are much greater difficulties ahead. Following the argument developed so far, it would appear that creative interchange is extrinsically, or perhaps inherently, good; for it is what produces the sort of qualitative meaning that satisfies man. It would appear that creative interchange is a cause of that which is intrinsically good. But this is not the case. Creative interchange is the source of human good. As we shall see in the next chapter, this means something quite different from the cause of human good.

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER VI

[1]Wieman, Wrestle, p. 35.

[2]Wieman, Commitment, p. 98.

[3]Wieman, Wrestle, p. 160.

[4]Wieman, Commitment, pp. 98-99.

[5]Ibid., p. 99.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Ibid., p. 100.

[8]Ibid., p. 99.

[9]Ibid., p. 100.

[10]Ibid.

[11]Ibid.

[12]Ibid.

[13]Ibid., p. 102

[14]Ibid.

[15]Ibid., p. 103.

[16]Henry Nelson Wieman, "Religion and the Physical Sciences," World Tomorrow, XIII (Feb., 1930), p. 58.

[17]Wieman, Source, pp. 57-58.

[18]Ibid., p. 58.

[19]Ibid., pp. 18-19.

[20]Ibid., p. 17.

[21]Ibid., p. 18.

[22]Ibid., p. 18.

[23]Ibid., p. 23.

[24]Ibid., p. 58.

[25]Ibid., p. 22.

[26]Wieman, Commitment, p. 23.

[27]Ibid., p. 22.

[28]Wieman, Theology, p. 13.

[29]See H. M. Kallen, "Review of The Wrestle of Religion with Truth," Journal of Philosophy, XXV (May 10, 1928), pp. 273-278.

[30]Wieman, Commitment, p. 83.

[31]Ibid., p. 84.

[32]Ibid., p. 23.

[33]Wieman, Source, p. 60.

[34]Ibid., p. 61.

[35]Ibid., p. 64.

[36]Ibid., pp. 64-65.

[37]Ibid., p. 19.

[38]Ibid.

[39]Wieman, Commitment, p. 105.

[40]Ibid., p. 101.

CHAPTER VII

A THEOLOGICAL THEORY OF VALUE

The central claim of Wieman's mature work is that creative interchange is that which saves man from the depths of evil and brings him to the greatest good that is possible. Presumably, this is equivalent to the claim that creative interchange is that which satisfies man in the wholeness of his being. However, I think that quite different conceptions are involved here. Typically Wieman speaks in both philosophical and theological terms. With proper qualifications, he endeavors to translate philosophical language into the language of theology. However, when Wieman speaks of salvation, I shall argue that this cannot be translated into naturalistic talk about human satisfaction.

Creative interchange is creative good, and this is to be distinguished from any sort of created good. It is at this point that we get a theory of value that is quite different from the sort of theory outlined in the previous chapter. It is not, however, that Wieman has simply renounced his earlier views and adopted a different theory in his later work. I think that in addition to his naturalism there has always been this other side to his thinking. In making out Wieman's naturalistic theory we did exercise a certain amount of selectivity. His views have not been quite as neat as the last chapter might suggest. However, the conflict in these two strands of Wieman's thought become most

explicit when he arrives at the notion of creative interchange as creative good.

In order to understand what is meant by 'creative good,' let us begin with an analysis of what this contrasts with--'created good.' As is common, Wieman wants to distinguish between extrinsic and intrinsic good. In his language, "Instrumental and intrinsic created good are alike in the sense that both are made up of events meaningfully connected; but in the instrumental kind the quality of the events is either negligible or irrelevant to their positive value."[1] If an activity has instrumental value, on this view, we value it solely because of what it brings about. His example is the eating of tasteless or nauseating food. In the first case the quality of eating such food is negligible. In the latter there is negative quality. But we value such food, if we do, for the nourishment it provides which enables us to experience later some events having positive intrinsic value. Wieman's notion of instrumental good would seem to be a standard one. Instrumental goods are such for they are means to an end that is intrinsically good; they are causes, or causal factors, involved in the production of that which is intrinsically good.

As we have indicated in our discussion of qualitative meaning, the intrinsic value of a given event is not to be conceived in isolation from all other events; "...intrinsic value may be defined as a structure of events endowing each happening as it occurs with qualities derived from other events in the structure." In illustrating this Wieman says, "...When I chop wood to sustain that other structure of happenings called 'the life of my family in our home,' the values of the activity

may be purely instrumental if the qualities pertaining to the life in my home cannot freely enter conscious awareness as I chop. However, if bonds of meaning are developed between my chopping the wood and the life of my home, so that the lives of the children and the affection of the wife are vivified in conscious awareness by the very act itself, then the activity ceases to be merely instrumental. Then chopping the wood has taken on those qualities pertaining to the total structure of events called 'the life of my home.' It is an intrinsic good, no matter how fatiguing it may be."[2]

The distinction Wieman wants to make between instrumental and intrinsic value is in terms of the felt quality of the event. If one experiences no satisfaction or sense of fulfillment in an activity, but merely values it as a means to an end; such activity has only instrumental value. One values it, but not because of any quality experienced in the activity itself. However, the end for which the activity is performed may color the activity itself. The felt quality of the end may be experienced in the activity which is instrumental in bringing about that end. In such a case a transformation has taken place from what was of instrumental value to something which has intrinsic value. From a phenomenological point of view the separation of instrumental and intrinsic value has been overcome.

This is, I think, an important point. The distinction Wieman wants to make between instrumental and intrinsic value is not exclusive. An activity or thing may have instrumental value, but yet be experienced as having intrinsic value. On Wieman's view, one's life is disintegrated into meaninglessness when most of what one does has only

instrumental value. Then one experiences one's life as merely the carrying out of innumerable duties and responsibilties. The converse of this existential malaise is a life where the joys and satisfactions of the end permeate one's consciousness in the very act of doing those things which are instrumental toward such ends. Here life is whole and integrative. The distinction here between instrumental and intrinsic good is purely for the purpose of analysis. The means partake of the felt quality of the end.

But it is not merely a matter of the ends giving intrinsic value to the means. The means can also enhance the quality of the end. It is not only a matter of achieving a given end, how one arrives is important and contributory to the value of the end. The process of catching a fish and frying it in the open literally enters into the taste of the fish. Fish that one buys at the market, however fresh they may be, do not taste as good as those one catches himself--at least for those who enjoy the activity of fishing. Means and ends here mutually enhance each other.

But if intrinsic value is "derived from other events in the structure," how are we to classify these other events? Ought they not properly be regarded as that which has intrinsic value? Apparently, Wieman regards them as also having intrinsic value. But, the distinction is made in terms of 'events having quality' and 'qualitative meaning.' 'Events having quality' refers to an event that is intrinsically valuable aside from its relation to any other event, while 'qualitative meaning' refers only to those events which have intrinsic value which is largely derived from other events in the structure. "Of course, the quality peculiar to the event now happening may make its own contribution; but

it is qualitative meaning, not merely events having quality, which is the good distinctive of human existence."[3] While Wieman is not explicit on this point, I think he would maintain that the value of the whole is not simply the sum of the value of its parts.

One is tempted to think that all Wieman is talking about here is a certain psychological phenomenon, that of transference, through the association of ideas. One, of course, can come to value the chopping of wood through associating this activity with others that are intrinsically valuable, but the value is not then <u>really</u> in the chopping of wood. The fish that one catches himself do not <u>really</u> taste better. On Wieman's contextual view, however, the experienced quality of an event is contingent not only on the nature of that event in itself, but upon its connections with other events. This is not to say that value is subjective, but it is to say that the subject must be taken into account as part of the total situation.

However, both instrumental and intrinsic value stand in contrast to what Wieman calls creative good. "When good increases, a process of reorganization is going on, generating new meanings, integrating them with the old, endowing each event as it occurs with a wider range of reference, molding the life of a man into a more deeply unified totality of meaning." It is this process that Wieman wants to contrast with what it produces. It is this process that Wieman calls the creative event.[4]

While it would seem that such a process would fall under Wieman's notion of instrumental good, this is not the case. "This creative good has kinship with instrumental value, but it is very different from the kind of instrumental value we have described as one kind of

created good. It has kinship because it produces more intrinsic created good, and in many cases its own qualities are negligible or are not discriminated and appreciated."[35] Why then is it not an instrumental value?

Wieman's answer here is of crucial importance and has wide ranging consequences. "It (creative interchange) is not instrumental because it transforms the mind and purposes so radically that what it produces is never what the initiating mind intended. Therefore, the initiating mind cannot use it as a means for achieving any anticipated consequence of value that can be foreseen in its specific character. The creative event cannot be used to shape the world closer to the heart's desire because it transforms the heart's desire so that one wants something very different from what one desired in the beginning."[6]

Is the creative event, then, of intrinsic value? Wieman maintains that "The creative event also has kinship with intrinsic value and yet is very different. It has kinship because in some instances the qualities of the creative event have maximum abundance. The creative event in the life of the artist is sometimes an ecstasy. So also the emergence of new transformative ideas in the mind of the creative thinker, the moment of vision for the prophet, the 'rebirth' of the religious convert, or the communion of friends may stand forth as a peak of qualitative meaning. However, in the ordinary run of life, for the most part, the creative event reorganizes the mind and transforms its appreciable world without the qualities of the creative event being themselves discriminated and distinguished from the newly emergent meaning. Rather it is the newly

created good that is qualitatively appreciated and not the creative event producing it."[7]

But let's consider these arguments. Wieman maintains that the creative event cannot be an instrumental good, for what it produces is never what the initiating mind intended. But does this show that it is not an instrumental good? I should think that so long as what is produced is a good that what brought this about would be instrumental--whether what was brought about was what we anticipated or not. Indeed, one can never be sure that x is an instrumental good until one sees what in fact x produces. But later, we see that Wieman includes this notion of prediction in his definition: "'Instrumental' refers to what man can use and control as a means to an end."[8]

Well, I suppose that Wieman is free to stipulate this in respect to his use of 'instrumental,' but then can we not regard the creative event as an extrinsic good--leaving out the notion of using and controlling? Wieman talks as though 'instrumental' and 'intrinsic' are exhaustive categories here.

In regard to intrinsic value, Wieman argues that the creative event is not intrinsically valuable, for ordinarily the qualities of this event are not themselves discriminated and distinguished, that is, the creative event is not regarded as a distinct event and appreciated in its own right. But does this show that it never has intrinsic value? Given Wieman's contextual theory of value one would expect that in some situations it might have intrinsic value and in others extrinsic value, and perhaps in others no value at all. Wieman admits that "in some instances the qualities of the creative event have maximum abundance." Does it not

follow then that in those instances it is an intrinsic value? Wieman seems to have neglected his own theory here; talking as though the sort of value something has is in that thing itself regardless of the context.

But let's return to Wieman's argument against regarding creative interchange as an instrumental good. "It transforms the mind and purposes so radically that what it produces is never what the initiating mind intended." This seems to add something to our notion of creative interchange. While in Wieman's discussion of the fourfold event, which purported to give us the criteria for creative interchange, he did not indicate that it changes the initiating mind this radically. While he did claim that it cannot be manipulated, this does not entail that it never produces what one intends. But if it "never produces what the initiating mind intended," how can we know that what it produces is good? This is a more serious consideration than a matter of how we are to use 'instrumental.' But this we will pursue later.

Implicit here there is a view that seems to run counter to the sort of theory we developed in the last chapter. In spite of Wieman's utilizing an interest theory of value, this approach is severely criticized in Wieman's later work. In The Source of Human Good he begins by enumerating various theories of value that he takes to be inadequate. Among these is the interest theory. "One cannot follow predicted satisfaction of interest as a guide because interests undergo an unpredictable transformation when one meets the conditions and follows the procedures necessary to seek their fulfillment."[9] This criticism, I take it, applies not only to conscious interests, but also to what Wieman has called 'unconscious interests.'

But we have seen that Wieman defines 'greatest good' in terms of satisfaction in Man's Ultimate Commitment, published after The Source of Human Good. Thus, it would not seem to be merely a question of an earlier and later view. But perhaps the key here is "predicted satisfaction." His definition of 'greatest good' does not contain anything about prediction. We should note that Wieman is not saying that the interest theory is false. As we have seen, he is quite generous in allowing all sorts of theories to be true. What he is maintaining is that this theory is useless for the purposes of guiding action. "Satisfaction of human want may be true enough as a statement specifying the nature of value, but it is worthless as a guiding principle."[10]

But was the view we examined in the last chapter merely a matter describing the nature of value? It would seem that a more practical application was intended. Wieman has always been concerned with criteria for making choices. But why cannot satisfaction of human want, of human interests, provide criteria for making choices? Because, he maintains, our interests change in an unpredictable way.

In Man's Ultimate Commitment he elaborates this same theme in attacking Perry and his followers. "What one can enjoy or imagine himself enjoying, with the experience and knowledge acquired to date, and with the help of tradition and custom, is no indicator of what he will be able to enjoy with more experience and more knowledge and with that progressive reorganization of his personality which interchange with others will produce. Neither is it any reliable indication of what others enjoy either now or later. The very mind he calls his own will undergo changes in capacity and form of appreciation which he cannot possibly anticipate

The same applies to other persons with whom he is now associated and those with whom he will associate in years to come. Therefore, to choose in terms of anticipated enjoyment of future situations for himself and others is to choose in a way that is doomed to error and disappointment."[11]

Has Wieman given us reasons here to support the contention that past experience is no indicator of what one will be able to enjoy in the future? This contention seems clearly false. Of course, one may make mistakes here, but this should cause Wieman little difficulty. After all, we have seen that his theory of knowledge emphasizes human fallibility. One can certainly admit that one changes and with this the sort of things one enjoys, but this does not entail that past experience is no indicator. Further, one can agree that we should be open to some new experiences, perhaps we will come to value these highly, but would it be wise to base nothing on our past experiences?

There seems to be a further factor here that contradicts Wieman's naturalistic theory. When he claims that our interests change unpredictably, is he denying that there is such a thing as human nature? Is he claiming that because I enjoy something this is no evidence that others will enjoy it? While we certainly need to acknowledge a wide variety of unique interests and needs, we have seen Wieman previously arguing that there are many basic needs and interests that all men have. Whether what I enjoy is a reliable indication of what others enjoy would then be contingent upon what sort of interest is being satisfied.

But does the fact that our interests change count against an interest theory? I know of no interest theorist who would deny that our specific interests change. Indeed, Perry and Dewey call for such change. Our interests need to be informed by the use of intelligence. This

demands a restructuring of our interests, but also in some cases a change in our interests. And there is a sense in which this change is unpredictable. If our interests are to be changed by rational inquiry, we cannot know what this change will be prior to such inquiry. The very point of such inquiry is to discover how our interests ought to be altered. If we knew this prior to inquiring, such inquiry would have no point. On this view we make our choices on the best evidence we have as to what man's long term interests are. We do make predictions as to future satisfactions, but always remain open to revising these in light of the ongoing process of inquiry.

Enjoyment, however, still seems to be that which is intrinsically good for Wieman. It is just that this notion of enjoyment or satisfaction cannot be used as a criteria for making choices to guide action. But why is this? Wieman has another argument against Perry: "In many, if not most cases, pleasant feeling is caused by giving attention to some entity other than the pleasant feeling, say a friend or a baseball game or the future imagined in a dream. Therefore if one gives attention to his own pleasant feeling in order to evaluate it and not to the entity which causes the feeling, attention thus diverted from that entity which causes the enjoyment will result in its fading out."[12]

But does Perry or any of his followers say that we should devote our attention to our own pleasant feelings? What Wieman is contending is that pleasure, or satisfaction, is not an object of desire, and this, I think, is correct. But what is supposed to follow from this? According to Wieman, "Such being the case, to find the greater good one needs to forget his own preferences and feelings of enjoyment and devote himself to what creates progressively in his own person and in his associates

the capacity to appreciate a wider range and diversity of entities even though at the time he cannot imagine what these entities might be, and is totally unable to enjoy them until after the capacity to enjoy them has been created in him."[13] Obviously, all this does not follow from making a distinction between pleasant feeling and what causes pleasant feeling. Interestingly enough, Wieman doesn't mention the more serious argument that is found in Aristotle and Butler that pleasure derives from getting what one wants and therefore cannot tell one what to want. All that follows from Wieman's premises is that we should focus our attention on the object of desire. That we should lose ourselves in order to find ourselves is not necessarily inconsistent with egoistic hedonism, although it may be that it is a much neglected psychological principle.

I have suggested that Wieman is not merely arguing against conscious interests here, but what he has called unconscious ones as well. This is supported by the way in which he formulates the interest theory he is attacking. As he says, "In Perry's language, any object takes on value by reason of the interest in it on the part of some conscious being. The interest may not be actually conscious here and now, but if an object is qualified under specifiable circumstances to excite interest in it when some conscious being becomes aware of it, then it has value under those circumstances and in that relation whether or not any conscious being has yet actually favored it."[14] The important thing to note here is that this formulation would seem to cover the sort of view we saw Wieman arguing for in the previous chapter.

Wieman is not objecting to any particular formulation of an interest theory, he is objecting to the fundamental principle involved

here; that an object takes on value in virtue of some interest in it by some conscious being. While Wieman does not say that the interest theory is false, I think that this is implied by what he does come to maintain. As I shall argue, he seems to be with Plato here in opposition to Aristotle in.spite of all his talk of human satisfaction. As we have noted in chapter two, Baillie was appalled at the humanism involved in the Cartesian point of view. There is something analogous here in Wieman. He is appalled at the humanism that is the starting point of any interest theory. I think his basic reason for objecting to any interest theory is not in the last analysis that it is not a reliable guide to action, but that it is the wrong guide, i.e., impious. The good is not to be defined in terms of human satisfaction after all.

A common criticism of any naturalistic theory of value is that it does not provide us with a normative principle by which we may determine what interests are to be satisfied; how we are to seek our satisfaction. With this Wieman seems to agree. Wieman does not make the assumption typical of humanism that man is good. Man needs to be transformed. It is not merely a matter of satisfying man's interests, it is a matter of determining what these interests ought to be. We need a normative principle here.

It is at this point that it becomes evident that Wieman's talk of salvation cannot be equated with his talk of human satisfaction. Man is a sinner. He is base and corrupt. He must be transformed. If we are to be saved from destruction we must overcome our humanity. We must not presume that man's highest ideals are ultimate. This is a dangerous form of idolatry, for it closes us off to the creative transformation of man's

highest ideals. The highest ideals that are conceivable at a given time may become a positive evil at a later time. The farthest reach of the imagination concerning ideal possibility is a conservative principle if such imagined ideals are taken to be absolute. It blocks the creative transformation toward undreamed of possibilities for good. We must be reborn.

When Wieman moves from created good to creative good, he is moving from a naturalistic theory of value that finds the criterion for goodness in some sort of human satisfaction to what can best be called a theological theory of value. On this latter view the criterion for goodness is not formulated in terms of human satisfaction, but in terms of creative interchange itself. As Wieman says, "Creative good will be our standard and guiding principle in dealing with all problems concerning good and evil and better and worse. Anything is good if it sustains and promotes the release of that kind of intercommunication among men termed the 'creative event.' It is evil if it does the opposite. One act or course of conduct is better than another if it provides more amply the conditions enabling the creative event to produce qualitative meaning; it is worse if some alternative would be more favorable."[15] Here in Man's Ultimate Commitment Wieman is maintaining an act telelogical view, but in his latest book he does allow for rules such that we do not have to decide each individual case in terms of this general principle.[16] But this issue need not concern us here.

To say that something is a standard and guiding principle is not necessarily to say that it is the ultimate criterion. Perhaps all Wieman is claiming above is that creative interchange is to be our

working standard. That is, since creative interchange is the source of increasing qualitative meaning, we can use creative interchange as a practical principle to guide our action. We have here a normative principle, plus an empirical claim; but the normative principle and criterion remains that of qualitative meaning.

But this interpretation is made doubtful in the next paragraph where he says, "According to this standard, one good is not better than another because it contains a greater quantity of good in itself. One might be much greater in value so far as concerns its content of created good. But if the lesser served to release more fully the potency of the creative event, it is the one to choose. The Roman Empire, with all its culture, may have contained far more qualitative meaning than the little Christian sect. Nevertheless, if the latter could release more widely and deeply among men the kind of intercommunication creative of all good, the latter should be chosen and the Empire rejected. Thus the quantitative standard by which one created good is measured against another is not the standard directive of wise choice."[17]

Of course, one might argue that this is still consistent with the view that qualitative meaning is the only thing that is intrinsically good. The Christian sect is to be valued over the Roman Empire if it releases more widely and fully the creative event, for this leads in the long run to more qualitative meaning. This does not rule out a quantitative standard, nor does it deny that qualitative meaning is the criterion of goodness. The hedonist does not deny that sometimes pain is good--extrinsically.

But Wieman is quite explicit, in places, that qualitative meaning

is not the criterion of good and evil. "...Qualitative meaning, for all its goodness, can become demonic and therefore is not to be trusted as a guide to the greater good. In fact, the very goodness of qualitative meaning can carry men down to impoverishment and destruction. Qualitative meaning 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....The gravest peril that men have to face resides in the way qualitative meaning, created good, can arouse an absoluteness and supremacy of loyalty which only its source, creative good, the generating event, really commands."[18]

But the argument here and in the paragraphs that follow is circular. Qualitative meaning is not the criterion, for only creative good, creative interchange, is that which is worthy of our absolute loyalty. His examples do little to show that qualitative meaning, as we have interpreted it, is not a reliable criterion. He mentions the sense of nationality as an example of created good that has "overplayed itself into the distortion that is nationalism."[19] But one might well argue that the evil involved in nationalism is simply that it tends to block the growth of further qualitative meaning, it sets limits upon those who are to be included in the human community. It becomes a disintegrative principle, rather than an integrative one. Qualitative meaning is a general principle and need not be identified with any particular instance of its appearance. As we have noted, it is the expansion and integration of qualitative meaning with which we are concerned.

Wieman insists, however, that the only absolute good is creative good. And 'absolute' means, "what is good under all conditions and cir-

cumstances. 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. It is a good that remains changelessly and identically the same in character so far as concerns its goodness. It is a good that would continue to be so even if all human beings should cease to exist. It is a good that retains its character even when it runs counter to all human good even when it works with microscopic cells prior to the emergence of any higher organism."[20]

But how does Wieman know all this? There seems to be a very large leap here. How do we move from the view that empirical evidence "seems to indicate that the human being finds the most complete satisfaction of his individuality in its wholeness so far as that is possible in certain interpersonal relations" to the conclusion that creative interchange is absolute good?

Part of what Wieman means by 'absolute good' is that "...creative good is absolute in that it is entirely trustworthy. We can be sure that the outcome of its working will always be the best possible under the conditions, even when it may seem to us to be otherwise. Even when it so transforms us and our world that we come to love what now we hate, to serve what now we fight, to seek what now we shun, still we can be sure that what it does is good. Even when its working re-creates our minds and personalities, we can trust it."[21]

Wieman has always insisted that we can make no prediction whatever as to what creative interchange will produce, but if we cannot make any prediction as to the content of this transformation, how can we know that it will be "the best possible under the conditions?"

One might argue as follows: While a child may not be able to

predict what his father will give him for his birthday, he can know that it will be something very good, something that he will come to enjoy a great deal. He can claim to know this, for in the past his father has always given him something of which he became very fond. While he cannot predict what he will receive, he can know that it will be good. We can know that whatever creative interchange produces will be good in an analogous way.

Although Wieman does suggest this line of argument in places, this is not a line of reasoning that is open to him. The child may claim to know, perhaps, but this does not mean that he can be absolutely sure. While he may justifiably claim to be sure if he has very good inductive reasons, he cannot claim to be absolutely certain. When Wieman says "entirely trustworthy" he seems to be saying something more than "is supported by good inductive reasons."

But more decisive than this, we need to note that the child is appealing to criteria for judging the value of what he receives that are exterior to "given by my father." The criterion here has to do with some notion of human satisfaction.

But now do we know what creative interchange is? The fourfold event described in the last chapter seems intelligible, but the claim that creative interchange is absolute good raises serious difficulties. Whatever results from the process Wieman calls 'creative interchange' is good. Suppose we have men gathered together in a group. They communicate with each other such that each comes to appreciate the values and feelings of the others. Each integrates these values acquired from the others into his own valuing system. From this comes a new insight into how we might

conduct our lives, a new vision, a vision of a purified Aryan race, of a Third Reich that is to last five hundred years. As a consequence of this, a heightened sense of community develops among those participating in this total event.

I am quite confident that Wieman would agree that such a new vision is not good, but is rather evil. But if our case can be made to satisfy the criteria for creative interchange outlined as the fourfolk event, how can he maintain this? In a case like this Wieman may resort to the simple expedient of saying that the process in question was not <u>really</u> creative. But then the goodness of the consequences becomes part of the criteria for determining whether interchange is creative, and this involves smuggling in some criteria of goodness other than creative interchange. We cannot simply consider the criteria Wieman discusses as the fourfold event. We make good the claim that creative interchange is absolute good only by emptying it of all empirical content. Creative interchange always produces good by definition.

At this point it becomes extremely difficult to make out what Wieman is saying. The coherence Wieman comes to include as a test of truth breaks down here in his own theory. Part of the difficulty is that Wieman uses 'creative interchange' and similar expressions in a number of different senses and shifts back and forth among these. For our purposes we may distinguish two of these senses. In the last chapter we were discussing what may be labelled as 'creative interchange$_1$.' As I have argued, this is am empirical notion for which we can have behavioral criteria--at least in principle. While this notion is not rigorously defined, this is in general the sort of process that social scientists

can and do investigate--particularly those interested in group dynamics.

But when Wieman talks of creative interchange as absolute good, this introduces a quite different sense which we may label 'creative interchange$_2$.' Here, creative interchange$_2$ is the criterion for making all judgments as to good and evil. Anything is good if it is conducive to creative interchange$_2$, or, we must add, if it is produced by creative interchange$_2$.

As we noted in chapter five, God is that something, however different this might be from any ideas we have about it, upon which human life depends for its increasing goodness. Creative interchange$_2$ seems to operate in much the same way. If we had criteria independent of creative interchange$_2$ for determining what constitutes goodness, we would have an ad hoc hypothesis here; then we could claim that creative interchange is that which produces all good--and at least know what we mean by 'good.' But since creative interchange$_2$ is supposed to be the criterion, we don't even have this. Creative interchange$_2$ is not, I think, an intelligible notion.

If Wieman were saying that creative interchange$_1$ were the criterion for good and evil, he would have an intelligible theory of value; whatever we might think of it on other grounds. But like those who claim that it is God's will that makes something right, Wieman frequently uses other criteria for determining what is God's will. If x does not satisfy man in the wholeness of his being, x did not derive from creative interchange. Thus, again we move from sense one to sense two. But if one is audacious enough to demand criteria for what this something, this source of human good, is, we move back to sense one.

But let's consider for a moment still another use to which Wieman puts 'creative interchange.' Here it is used in neither of the above senses, but in a very broad sense to refer to the emergence of any new insight or hypothesis, as well as the sort of transformation involved in creative interchange$_1$. As we have seen, Wieman argues that we cannot use any of our present criteria for judging the outcome of creativity, for our present criteria need to be, and are, transformed by this very process.

In a sense I think Wieman is right here. We cannot evaluate any new insight solely on the basis of old ways of conceiving the world. A new way of organizing our experience cannot be judged in terms of the old way of thinking. New scientific theories must be evaluated in new ways that incorporate the insights of the new theory.

It is common to think that in regard to new scientific theories we will check these against the same old facts. But I don't think this is quite accurate. What may have been taken to be an infallible fact may prove to be simply not the case. New theories not only reorganize old facts, they may also bring to light new facts and cast doubt on what were previously considered to be facts.

But none of these considerations show that new theories need no verification or do not permit such verification. Needless to say, many new insights prove to be worthless. The phenomenological fact that one has what Dewey called an "aha" experience does not in itself show that one has come up with anything of importance. As we have seen Wieman insist, there is no instance of knowing that does not stand in need of empirical verification.

How do things stand with creativity? Quite different, it seems. Either we restrict the meaning of 'insight' to include only those that are valuable (true or good or useful) or we take the view that all insights are valuable.

In regard to this latter alternative, one commentator sees rather clearly the problem. As Howard L. Parsons points out, "But man cannot always be sure where his emergent insights are leading him. (A view that we have seen Wieman arguing for.) Given one insight, he must accept or reject it, develop its empirical consequences, and act or not act on it. Presented with two or more insights, he must also choose and act. Creativity could not go forward if man did not do so. How can man discriminate between the lesser and the greater insight, the insight that, once elaborated and acted on, more completely advances value in human living? The criterion is creativity; but that is a principle which is not always fully self-revelatory and self-authenticating in the act of insight. Man somehow must determine it for himself. Not only at the biological level is evolution 'opportunistic,' but also at the psychological level. In Wieman's system, man needs a more precise discrimination than he now possesses between transformation that is better and transformation that is worse. And this discrimination is man's, in part, doing the best he can to sort out and evaluate whatever insights he may receive."[22]

Indeed, Parsons is being rather kind here. As we have seen, Wieman argues vehemently against any notion of revelation that dispenses with empirical tests. There are no truths on Wieman's view that are self-revelatory. Clearly, the notion that that transformation that leads

to further and more extensive transformation is good is not adequate as a test for verifying the insights one may receive. Surely, Wieman does not want to maintain that change that leads to more change is good in itself. But if not, then how are we to evaluate these insights? Are all innovations good simply because they derive from some process of interchange?

Wieman's reply to Parsons is, to say the least, curious. In spite of all Wieman's praise of creative interchange and the contention that it and it alone is absolutely good, he agrees that it increases man's capacity to do evil. "Creativity as we know it could not go forward without man. Men must choose between insights and alternatives. The emerging of these is the work of creativity. The higher the level of creativity, reared on the accumulated creations of the past, the greater is man's power to do evil as well as good. The insights and alternatives opened to human freedom by creativity at the higher levels of civilization enable men to do far more evil than was possible when creative interchange between diverse individuals and cultures had not yet created that reach of imagination and multiplicity of alternatives appearing in a mature culture."[23]

Of course, to say that creativity may increase man's capacity to do evil is not to say that creative interchange produces evil. But this is not at issue just here. If creativity merely increases our capacity for good as well as evil, how can we regard this process as absolute good? It would seem that in this case we should regard it as neither good nor evil. Something that merely produces power is amoral. How can creativity be a criterion of value if it merely heightens our capacity for good and evil?

Characteristically, Wieman attempts at this point to show that the capacity to do great evil brought about by creative interchange is not necessarily itself evil. "Man's ability to know evil and do it, gained by way of creativity, is in itself a great good, provided that he does not choose the evil. It is good on at least four counts to have this knowledge of evil: (a) Man cannot guard against evil if he does not know what it is. (b) Evil alternatives, properly modified and under required conditions, can become great goods. (c) Knowledge of evil alternatives is wisdom quite as much as knowledge of good alternatives. (d) Such knowledge provides magnified power and increased freedom."[24]

But none of this gets to the heart of the matter. Obviously knowledge of evil is not evil; it depends upon how this knowledge is used. In continuing his apparent agreement with Parsons, Wieman says that, "The course of creativity in the life of the individual and through history is turned one way or another, held back or promoted, depending on what decisions are made by mean and what course of action they follow."[25] But Parsons was not asking about the course of creativity, he was asking about the criteria for judging the insights which creative interchange bring about. It is not a matter simply of whether creativity is "held back or promoted." Wieman is slipping into his own categories here; a subtle but pernicious move on his part, hardly conducive to creative interchange.

In regard to Parsons' claim that creativity "is not always fully self-revelatory and self-authenticating in the act of insight," Wieman replies, "In making any such choice, what we need to know are the conditions which produce creative interchange. Knowledge of such conditions can be obtained by empirical and scientific forms of inquiry.

Of course, the mind will never be infallible and errors will occur. Also, it is easy to imagine situations where no way of getting such knowledge is available."[26]

Well, Wieman has not dealt with Parsons' charge here at all. The problem is not how we can determine what conditions are conducive to creative interchange. The problem has to do with criteria for evaluating and using the insights which we can assume to be derived from this process. If creative interchange simply increases our power to do good and evil, we need some criteria other than this creativity itself. To recommend more of the same is circular.

As we have seen, Wieman wants to make a very sharp distinction between faith and reason. Creativity is the work of faith, but faith is never a way of knowing or self-revelatory. We must always apply the tests of reason to any and all new insights or hypotheses that faith creates. Reason's work is a matter of verification. In places he comes close to saying that reason must determine whether what is brought forth by creativity is valuable or worthless, true or false, good or evil. In Man's Ultimate Commitment he sounds very tough-minded about this. After praising creativity, he says, "All this creativity can do for us but only on one condition: 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. If we refuse to do this, if we reject the tests of reason in defense of faith in any pattern of religious commitment or moral ideal or mystic vision, the very creativity which would save us will be our destruction because the new patterns emergent will be misapplied, misused, and wrongly selected."[27]

But we need to note even here that reason is to be used "to learn where and how it (a new insight) should be applied to the conduct of our lives." This is not the same as saying that reason should determine whether an insight is significant or trivial, true or false, good or evil. This is consistent with his response to Parsons when he says that what we need to know are "the conditions that produce creative interchange." Whatever creative interchange produces is good. If anything evil results, this is not the fault of creative interchange. We have "misapplied, misused, or wrongly selected" what is produced.

There still seems to be some place for scientific research here. It is up to science to determine the conditions that are most favorable for the operation of creative interchange. But even for this use to be possible, we must have some empirical notion of creative interchange. We seem here to be driven back to creative interchange$_1$. But we must not qualify this in terms of consequences. If we are committed to the notion that creative interchange$_1$ is absolute good, is the criterion in all judgments of good and evil, we cannot waiver. Whatever results from the operation of creative interchange$_1$ is good, so long as it is used to further creative interchange$_1$. The minute we start qualifying, start privileging this claim we fall into the abyss of meaninglessness.

On Wieman's theological theory of value, if creative interchange$_1$ satisfies human beings in the wholeness of their being, this must be a fortuitious circumstance. It cannot be a reason for claiming that creative interchange$_1$ is good, for the standard is creative interchange$_1$. If we take seriously the notion that creative interchange is absolute good, then all Wieman's talk about enjoyment, human satisfaction, etc.,

is irrelevant to determining what is good and what is evil. The standard is creative interchange and if science is to be of any use in furthering the work of creativity, this must be creative interchange$_1$.

The argument of the last chapter concluded that the criterion for judging what is good and what evil was a matter of human satisfaction. On this view it follows that if creative interchange is good, it is good because it satisfies man or is a cause of that which satisfies man.

The argument of this chapter concludes that the criterion for judging what is good and what is evil is a matter of determining whether or not something is conducive to creative interchange; if it is, it is good; if not, evil. If this view is intelligible then we must be referring to that process of communication described in the last chapter, creative interchange$_1$. If we find this conclusion repugnant and slide, when challenged, into talking of creative interchange$_2$, then it is not clear what we are saying--if anything.

One is prompted to ask at this point: which of the two theories of value we have outlined is the one that Wieman really believes? But it seems to me that there is no possible way to answer that question. The question assumes that Wieman is aware that there is a problem here, and this is not, I think, the case. Typically, Wieman has always attempted to go through the horns of this dilemma. But if we examine Wieman's view as to the content of religious faith, perhaps some light will be shed on this question. What is worthy of man's ultimate commitment?

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER VII

[1]Wieman, Source, p. 54.

[2]Ibid., pp. 54-55.

[3]Ibid., p. 56.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Ibid., p. 57.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Ibid., p. 78.

[9]Ibid., p. 12.

[10]Ibid., p. 13.

[11]Wieman, Commitment, p. 120.

[12]Ibid., pp. 121-22.

[13]Ibid., p. 122.

[14]Ibid., p. 120.

[15]Wieman, Source, p. 82.

[16]Wieman, Religious Inquiry, p. 129.

[17]Wieman, Source, pp. 82-83.

[18]Ibid., p. 24.

[19]Ibid.

[20]Ibid., p. 79.

[21]Ibid., p. 81.

[22]Howard L. Parsons, "The New Reformation," Theology, p. 130.

[23]Wieman, "Reply to Parsons," Ibid., p. 137.

[24]Ibid.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Ibid., p. 138.

[27] Wieman, Commitment, p. 150.

CHAPTER VIII

ULTIMATE COMMITMENT

Our ultimate commitment is to God. But if this assertion is to be given content, we must inquire as to what Wieman means by 'God.'

As we noted in chapter five, Wieman began in his earlier works with what he regarded as an operational definition of God for purposes of religious inquiry. There he defined 'God' as "that feature of our total environment which most vitally affects the continuance and welfare of human life," or "that character of events to which man must adjust himself in order to attain the greatest good and avoid the greatest ill."

We are now in a position to specify what this "something" is. That to which man must adjust himself in order to attain the greatest good and avoid the greatest ill is creative interchange. Therefore, creative interchange is God.

We do need to qualify this statement, however; "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. The concrete event is infinitely complex and rich in quality. The intellectual formulation about it is not."[2]

We have seen previously that this is Wieman's position in regard to knowledge. But how does this apply to identifying 'God' and

'creative event?' I should think that both are intellectual formulations. Thus, neither do justice to the concrete event in its infinite complexity and richness. But I think Wieman means more than this when he wants to qualify the identity between 'God' and 'creative event.' 'Creative event' has been designed specifically for intellectual inquiry, not for purposes of religious worship. It does not carry with it the rich content in felt quality that is involved in the word, 'God.' If we may be allowed to use Charles Stevenson's distinction, we may say that while 'God' and 'creative interchange' have the same cognitive meaning, they have different emotive meanings. 'God' conveys more of the emotive meaning than 'creative event', and thus is more adequate in terms of religious worship; in Wieman's terms, it communicates better the felt quality of experience.

But then do we not have a paradigm case of a persuasive definition? Is Wieman not attempting to trasnfer the emotive meaning of 'God' to 'creative event'? While it may operate this way for some readers, I don't think Wieman can be accused here of such a devious device. After all, this identifying is at the end of a rather extensive argument, not at the beginning. He is not saying that they mean the same thing in ordinary language. Indeed, as we have seen, he severely criticizes 'God' for purposes of inquiry. What he does contend is that 'creative interchange' is the reality which underlies the various uses to which 'God' has been put. This is analogous to saying that H_2O is water. Persons had the concept of water long before it was discovered that water consisted of H_2O. While the connotation of the two terms may differ, they denote the same reality.

Further, Wieman is quite explicit in saying that by 'God' he does

not mean all that has been meant by this in the past. As he has insisted from the start, "The word 'God' is irrelevant to the religious problem unless the word is used to refer to whatever in truth operates to save man from evil and to the greater good no matter how much this operating reality may differ from all traditional ideas about it." "The word 'God' should refer to what actually operates to save and not merely to some belief about what operates in this way."[3]

The claim, then, is that Wieman's use of 'God' refers to what actually saves; if traditional ideas do not, then such ideas are irrelevant. But how does Wieman presume to lay down the rules for correct usage? Are we to be allowed to mean by a word anything we want? Is there no established usage that we must adhere to if we are to communicate?

In a reply to Sterling P. Lamprecht, who criticizes Wieman for "mutilating religious terminology," Wieman maintains that the term 'God' is an evaluative term, not a descriptive one. The descriptive meaning of the word has varied widely throughout various ages and cultures, but it has always been used to refer to "what engenders in men certain reactions, such as awe, reverence, self-giving, supreme devotion, a sovereign love and loyalty as to what is felt to be most important not only for oneself but for all men who belong to the tribe or the race. The word 'God' has been associated with these reactions far more than with any clearly defined concept. Therefore, I hold, whatever should rightfully engender these reactions in men, is rightly called God. It is these fundamental reactions, basic trends and needs of life, which should determine what is called God, far more than the particular concept of God which some group or age may happen to cherish."[4]

The first part of Wieman's argument is analogous to the line taken by many contemporary emotivists. The only thing in common among the various uses of 'good' is the expressing of approval. But Wieman adds the notion of rightfully engender. Thus, it is not merely a matter of a common emotive use. But, the word is still basically normative rather than descriptive.

Reiterating his earlier position, Wieman again insists in Man's Ultimate Commitment that "the word 'God' should refer to what actually operates to save and not merely to some belief about what operates in this way." As we have noted previously and will have to examine in a moment, our ultimate commitment should be to what does in fact save, not to what we believe saves. We see here the same sort of argument about the use of 'God.' But Wieman is aware of the difficulty in using the word 'God' as he does. "This raises the question whether one should use the word at all since a word becomes very misleading when it has acquired a conventional meaning contrary to what one wishes to discuss. On the other hand, there is no other word in our language which conveys the meaning of central concern in the religious problem."[5]

At times Wieman seems almost persuaded to discard the use of the term 'God'; but never does. As he indicated above, there seems to him no other term in the language that conveys that which is of central concern with the power that 'God' does. But terms such as 'God', 'grace', 'forgiveness of sin', etc., are religious, not theological or philosophical terms. While these terms are all too vague for theological use, they have the capacity to communicate felt quality as no purely philosophical word can. However, it is of crucial importance to keep the

religious or devotional function of words separated. What may be ideal for the ongoing practice of religious devotion may be worthless as a concept for religious inquiry.[6] It is for this reason that Wieman speaks in two languages. Typically, he speaks first in philosophical terms and then translates this into the language of the Christian tradition.

I think any candid examination will support Wieman's contention that 'God' has indeed been used in a wide variety of ways as a concept. But I don't want to argue that this permits the use he makes of the term. The central question is whether his usage tends to confuse or not. Perhaps the best we can do here is to see what "his God" has in common with the theistic tradition within which he is operating and how it differs. While Wieman maintains throughout that he is a thoroughgoing naturalist, and has been criticized on this basis, it is here contended that his notion of creative interchange has more in common with theism than is usually recognized.

As Wieman says, "Creative interchange as here interpreted has many of the characteristics attributed to God in the Christian and other traditions. On the other hand many characteristics attributed to Deity it does not have. It is not supernatural unless by this term one means that it is the manifestation in human life of a Being whose total character is beyond the reach of human understanding and which confronts us with a mystery so deep that the human mind can never penetrate it very far. If one understands 'supernatural' in this sense, then creative interchange between persons and peoples may be called supernatural."[7]

While the criteria for 'supernatural' is usually quite vague, one common way of distinguishing the supernatural from the natural is on the

epistemological grounds indicated by Wieman. 'Supernatural' on this basis is to be applied to those existents which cannot be investigated by the empirical methods of science. Is this what Wieman is saying? The whole thrust of his methodology is opposed to this. God is to be an object of scientific investigation. The first move, we saw, was to develop an operational definition of God.

Within Wieman's system, every existing thing has a "depth" that far surpasses any intellectual structures we may devise for dealing with it. "Every event is inexhaustible to human inquiry."[8] In this sense, even a stone "is a being whose total character is beyond the reach of human understanding and which confronts us with a mystery so deep that the human mind can never penetrate it very far." Thus, it would seem that Wieman is not admitting anything here that would separate God from other existing things on an epistemic basis.

However, I think there are grounds for regarding creative interchange as supernatural, if one follows an epistemic line here.

In contrast to the theistic concept of God, creative interchange is not omnipotent. Nowhere does Wieman claim that creative interchange will necessarily prevail over the forces of evil. As with James, the final outcome is not yet determined. In this sense creative interchange is finite and limited. It is one force at work in the world, but there are many counterforces at work also. If creative interchange is to save us from destruction, we must commit our lives to this process.

Creative interchange is not a person. And this "for the very good reason that it works at the deepest roots of human personality to create, sustain, save, and transform as no mere person could ever do."[9] Whether

this is a "very good reason" is certainly debatable. But the notion of personality does not apply to Wieman's description of creative interchange. This process has no purposes, no intentions or plans, is not conscious, experiences neither joy nor sorrow, does not love man--in short, has none of the predicates of mind. While Wieman sometimes refers to this process of interchange as "it", he frequently uses the pronoun "he". He defends this latter use by saying, "Certainly most people will symbolize this saving power in personal terms and do so quite properly because no better symbol is available."[10] But clearly a better symbol is available, 'it.' To use a personal pronoun to refer to what is not a person is a very elementary mistake in grammar.

As we noted in chapter five, Wieman claimed that God is one, and this before he formulated the notion of creative interchange. While on his contexualist metaphysics change is taken quite seriously and is a pervasive fact of the world, there is also unity. There is "something which retains its identity and its unity through all change in itself and through all change in other things. It is creativity." Here Wieman makes a distinction that he does not always adhere to. Creativity is to be distinguished from the creative event. Creativity is the formal structure of one kind of event. "Every event is continuously changing, and so also is the kind of event characterized by creativity. But this kind of event has a certain identity and unity throughout all its manifestations, namely, the character of being creative of all changing orders of the world so far as they are accessible to human life at all."[11] Thus, it is not the creative event that is identical through time, but the abstract character of being creative...

While Wieman has always insisted that God exists, we see again the difficulties in maintaining this when here he argues that it is not the concrete existing event that is changeless, but the abstract property of being creative that endures through time. This all sounds very Platonic. Since event A and event B both have the character C, there must be C in addition to and ontologically distinct from the C of A and C of B. But we need not get into the problem of universals here in regard to Wieman, for on his view the only existing realities are entities in time and space, the concrete event. While he insists that creative interchange, God, is not beyond time and space; the creativity which is the unifying and enduring feature of such events clearly is not in time and space, at least not at a time and in a space. The only way he could maintain that such a God exists would seem to be on the basis of some Platonic realism--a position that he repudiates and one that runs counter to his entire empiricist approach.

Wieman does say that "Creativity and the creative event are inseparable..."[12] But then one could not say that God is a unitary changeless being, since the creative event is an event, and all events are "continuously changing." One cannot separate the form or structure of an event and not separate them. If the changeless unitary form is not independent of the changing concrete existing event, then one cannot claim that the creative event is unitary and changeless, nor that it exists. It is merely the form or structure of that which exists.

Is the creative event, like the theistic God, perfectly good? If there is any reason to apply the term 'God' to creative interchange it would seem we must take our stand here. We have seen that creative inter-

change is not omnipotent. If neither omnipotent nor perfectly good, there seems little reason to justify the name 'God.'

In the last chapter we saw some of the difficulties that are involved here. As we noted there, the creative event is absolutely good. But one wonders what this means. The difficulty is when Wieman shifts from human good to the source of human good. In the postscript to The Source of Human Good, Wieman reiterates "The creative event is always and absolutely good." But he continues, "It is good in the sense of creating value. Yet it must often destroy value already created in order to achieve the best possible under the conditions prevailing. Furthermore, what it creates may be turned against itself and so become evil, as, for instance, if I give a man one hundred dollars he may use it to destroy me. If by 'evil' one means the destruction necessarily involved in the creation and conservation of the best possible, or the perversion of what has been created, then in these senses the creative event is evil. But this assertion does not involve any contradiction of the affirmation that the creative event is absolutely good when the precise meaning of this affirmation is understood. Also we must remember that evil is in the world independently of the creative event."[13]

The difficulty here is just when it comes to understanding "the precise meaning of this affirmation." Since the creative event is not omnipotent, Wieman is not saddled with the traditional problem of evil involved in theism. However. this is not to say there is no problem of evil here. While "evil is in the world independently of the creative event," is it not the case that any evil that is very potent, that has any extent, that is organized, is made possible only through the creative

event? If it is the case, as Wieman insists, that the creative event is creative of the human mind and everything distinctive of human personality, must not evil that is distinctively human derive from the creative event? Even if we neglect what Wieman says about the working of the creative event at a sub-human level, it would seem that rape, murder, war, theft--that whole order of evils that are distinctive of the human level of existence-- must be laid at the foot of creative interchange.

Since omnipotence is not one of the properties of creative interchange, there is, I think, no problem about the destruction of lesser goods in order to bring about a higher good. But Wieman's example is problematic. "If I give a man a hundred dollars he may use it to destroy me." If this is the case, then the giving of a hundred dollars to the man was evil--at least prima facie. While one's intentions may have been of the highest, if the results are evil then what contributed to that result was evil.

These considerations, and those in the last chapter, would seem to indicate that creative interchange, in contrast to Theism, is not perfectly good. However, this line of argument involves using 'good' in some human sense. 'Good' as Wieman applies it to creative interchange operates in very much the same way as it does when theists apply the term to the traditional concept of God.

While the God of theism is perfectly good, this would seem to be compatible with any existing state of affairs. In part the goodness of God is defended by contending, when pressed, that divine goodness is not to be confused with our merely human and imperfect notions of what constitutes good. God is not merely humanly good, his goodness is divine

goodness. And this surpasses human understanding. While it may seem that God is reponsible for the evil in the world, this is not the case. After all, what we regard as evil is from a limited finite point of view. As Bishop Berkeley argued, if we could see the whole picture we would realize that what we regard as evil actually goes to make an agreeable harmony in the total scheme of things.

While Wieman does not deny the existence of evil, it is on his view a negative principle. At the most basic level, it is the blocking of the working of creative interchange.

Creative interchange is absolute good, even when what is produced is evil. How can this be? Wieman's answer is very much like the traditional arguments of theism here. Creative interchange is not to be held responsible for the misuse of what is produced. This is man's fault. We have put to evil use what is in itself good.

Since creative interchange is not held to be omnipotent, there would seem to be no difficulty with the position Wieman is maintaining here. But what is the criteria for what constitutes evil? As we have seen in the last chapter, when Wieman is talking not of created good, but creative good; the criteria is creative interchange. What promotes creative interchange is good, what hinders this is evil. "Opposition to creative good is absolute evil..."[14] But, again, why is this evil if creative interchange merely increases our capacity for good or ill?

Perhaps our difficulty here has been in thinking only of what Wieman calls created good. Creative good is something quite different. When Wieman talks of created good he is talking like a naturalist, but when he shifts to creative good we are in a different universe of dis-

course. While he gives reasons for saying that creative good is good, we see later that these are not, in any case, criteria. We are, I think, forced to the conclusion that creative interchange$_2$ is Wieman's fundamental category. Creative interchange is good. If one asks why creative interchange is good, he doesn't understand what good is. He must be thinking of some sort of created good.

Of course, on this view we do not know what we mean by 'good.' Good is the will of God. While creative interchange does not have will, still, good is what is conducive to creative interchange. Since we cannot predict what will be produced by creative interchange, we cannot use any of our present criteria to judge. Who are we with our limited vision, our defective sense of value to judge the working of God? While creative interchange may bring about what seems to us evil, if this ultimately goes to provide the conditions most favorable to the working of creative interchange it is good.

In Wieman's later work the separation between what man can do and what only creative interchange can do is most pronounced. In a chapter on "The Human Predicament" he contends that there are "Three features intrinsic to man's way of apprehending value" which render "life perilous." "The first of these characteristics is the limited range of human appreciation." The second "crippling fault" is that "Whatever apprehension of good and evil man attains is always distorted, when not perverted, by the domination of self-concern." The third fault he mentions is "resistance to change in the structure of appreciative consciousness."[15]

The point Wieman wants to make here is that we cannot use the human "value-sense" as a directive. "When we continue to use our power

in service of the good we discern with the faulty sense of value peculiar to our minds, darkness swiftly gathers. The more strenuously we act and the more earnestly we serve under such guidance, the more swiftly comes the night."[16]

What is the alternative to using our power in service to the good we discern? Apparently, we are to commit ourselves to the good we do not discern. And what is this? The good, I suggest, of creative interchange. But when we predicate goodness of creative interchange, this is not in any ordinary sense of 'good.' Creative interchange is not good in this sense; rather, creative interchange is the source of human good. As such, creative interchange is absolute good--and this claim is immune to any criticism on the basis of what is brought about by creative interchange. It would seem to be compatible with any existing state of affairs. Indeed, this is part of what he seems to mean by 'absolute good.' If we judge otherwise, this is because of our limited vision, our corrupted sense of value, our resistance to changing our structure of appreciative consciousness such that we can "see" that creative interchange is absolute good--that is, accept creative interchange as the criterion of goodness.

In Man's Ultimate Commitment Wieman does not identify, even in a qualified way, creative interchange and God. Rather, he is content with enumerating the respects in which it is like the God of theism and the respects in which it is unlike this. For philosophical purposes Wieman is not much concerned what we call it. His main concern is that we see that creative interchange deserves to be that to which we are ultimately committed. Its goodness is such that it ought to be the object of our ultimate commitment.

In this volume after indicating some of the ways in which creative interchange is not like the theistic concept of God, Wieman then lists seventeen ways in which it is like this notion. These need not here be enumerated, but what he attempts to show is that creative interchange functions in much the way persons in the past have taken God to function. The emphasis here is on the "saving" function of creative interchange.

But what has happened to Wieman's insistence on science, on empirical tests? What about the claim that there is no immediate way of knowing? Presumably, all insights must be verified before they are to be accepted. Has this element of Wieman's thought dropped out with the insight concerning the source of human good?

While, as we have noted, Wieman does not insist in his later work on being "scientific", he does insist that we must commit our lives to that which is knowable. One of his major criticisms of Paul Tillich is that Being itself is completely beyond the scope of human knowledge--an unknowable mystery. "Infinite, omnipotent and perfect are entirely inaccessible to any human understanding. They transcend every possible characterization whatsoever. Therefore, being itself or the power of being can give us no guidance, no direction, no form or order for the conduct of human living, <u>except by</u> religious symbols which are not descriptively true of the infinite. In that sense they are noncognitive."[17]

Wieman continues to insist that while there is a place for noncognitive symbols in the practice of religious worship, these can provide no reliable guidance for the conduct of life. Our commitment of faith must be guided by the most accurate knowledge that can be had. And this

is a matter of statements that are descriptively true, which is a matter of statements that have been empirically verified. If the power of being refers to anything at all, which Wieman doubts, it clearly does not refer to anything in existence, anything that can be known by any empirical methods.

Interestingly enough, one of Wieman's criticisms of being as such parallels our criticism of creative interchange. According to Wieman, "As a necessary condition for the greatest good, being as such participates in the greatest good. As a necessary condition for the greatest evil, being as such participates in the greatest evil. Being as such is neutral with respect to the greatest good and the greatest evil. It can be neither guide nor support in seeking the greatest good nor any good. He who perpetrates the greatest evil and becomes the greatest evil can depend upon it as reliably as he who serves the greatest good and undergoes transformation into the greatest good. To say that being as such is good when it means the basic structure upon which everything must depend in order to exist at all, is to make a false statement. Being as such can do nothing for man except to serve as the ground which is utterly indifferent and neutral to whatever happens."[18]

Wieman does not make any attempt here to analyze what might be meant by 'participate,' but assumes that this means something like 'is a necessary condition for.' His argument is that since being as such is a necessary condition for the existence of anything at all, it must be a necessary condition for the existence of evil. Therefore, we cannot say that being as such is good.

While creative interchange is not a necessary condition for the

existence of everything, it is, on Wieman's view, a necessary condition for the existence of anything beyond bare unstructured matter--if that is conceivable. It is, he insists, a necessary condition for the existence of everything distinctively human. It is the source, perhaps we should say ground, of human personality and mind. But since men are capable of the greatest evil as well as the greatest good, creative interchange must be absolutely neutral in respect to good and evil. To paraphrase Wieman, "As a necessary condition for the greatest evil, creative interchange participates in the greatest evil. Creative interchange is neutral with respect to the greatest good and the greatest evil. It can be neither guide nor support in seeking the greatest good nor any good."

While we have seen that Wieman admits in places that creative interchange is a necessary condition for the greatest evil, he is not consistent here. When praising creative interchange he neglects the evil that may arise as a result of this process. Here he assumes as an article of faith, i.e., as a belief that goes beyond the evidence, that creative interchange always operates to bring about the greatest good. His comments in Intellectual Foundations of Faith are typical in this respect. In one place he says, "This creativity is distinguished from everything else by one outstanding characteristic. It generates insights." But not only this, for in the next sentence he claims, "These insights lead to deeper appreciative understanding of other persons and peoples; they lead to aesthetic perceptions more profound and vivid than previously possible; they lead to scientific generalizations more comprehensive, more precise and more coherent with other generalizations; they lead to greater mastery in the administration of social complexities; they lead to social organiza-

tion releasing more individuals to actualize their potentialities in that relation to one another which is mutually sustaining and mutually stimulating."[19]

How does Wieman know all this? He continues to insist that we should accept nothing that we do not know. We should never believe anything that goes beyond the evidence. But does this not clearly go beyond the evidence? Indeed, does it not contradict the admission that creative interchange is a necessary condition for the greatest evil? While the above does not deny that great evil may also be brought about, his silence here certainly suggests that creative interchange is productive only of the good, the criteria for 'good' being exterior to creative interchange.

As we have seen, if we qualify creative interchange such that only those instances are "creative" which produce insights of which we approve, then we don't know what 'creative interchange' means. In order to know what state of affairs is referred to, we would first of all have to know the criteria for judging what is to be considered good.

There is a very serious problem of meaning here when Wieman talks of creative interchange. As we have noted, while he does not accept the positivist verifiability principle of meaning, he does indicate that statements that are not empirically verifiable are useless. They surely cannot be considered true. At best we are here involved in idle speculation.

How do his claims concerning the working of creative interchange stand in this respect? The fundamental claim is that "It transforms, that is to say, saves unto the best that man can ever attain.." But note the rest of the sentence, "again on condition of faith and other required con-

ditions which are the fruits of faith." Can this be regarded as empirically verifiable?

Suppose that we want to empirically test whether or not this statement is true. How are we to proceed? First we need to determine precisely what counts as that process which is to be deemed creative interchange. This clearly is not merely a matter of communication. In Man's Ultimate Commitment he takes pains to point out some sorts of communication that he does not mean. But do we have a sufficiently precise notion to determine antecedent to the consequences when a situation is to be counted as creative interchange? We have seen some of the serious problems here.

But suppose we do have this concept operationally defined so that we know when we have a case of creative interchange and when we don't. Further, suppose we have criteria for "the best that man can ever attain." We still have problems. One of Wieman's qualifications is that one have faith. How are we to determine that this condition is satisfied? As we noted in chapter one, our commitment must be an ultimate one. But even though we are "willing to die for it, fail for it, suffer for it, and live for it"[20] these are still not sufficient criteria for an ultimate commitment. If creative interchange does not transform our lives to the greater good, can we not always maintain that this is because our commitment was not ultimate?

Further, Wieman always adds the qualifier that the other conditions for the effective operation of creative interchange must be satisfied. What are these conditions? While his description of the fourfold event suggests what he takes some of these to be, they are largely unknown.

This is an area where further scientific research is necessary. But if these are largely unknown, then we cannot determine whether they are satisfied. Thus, if creative interchange does not save to the best, we can always maintain that this is because these other conditions for the operation of creative interchange have not been satisfied.

Antony Flew's challenge in regard to the meaning of theological statements is, perhaps, more crucial in regard to Wieman than with theists, for Wieman also insists that theological statements be empirically verifiable. Flew asks, "What would have to occur or to have occurred to constitute for you a disproof of the love of, or of the existence of, God?"[21] Here we can ask, "What would have to occur or to have occurred to constitute for you a disproof of the power to save unto the best that man can attain of, or the existence of, creative interchange?"

While Wieman sets out demanding that theological statements be descriptively true, and this means empirically verifiable, we see that his claims concerning creative interchange are qualified in such ways that it becomes difficult, if not impossible, to know what state of affairs would count against them.

In listing the ways that creative interchange is like the theistic concept of God, Wieman concludes by saying, "One last characteristic should be mentioned which creative communication has in common with those traditionally attributed to God. It takes the initiative in bringing on religious conversion."[22]

There are two difficulties here that should be noted. First, how are we to square this notion of taking the initiative with Wieman's denial that creative interchange is in any sense a person. Does not 'taking the

initiative' presuppose some notion of will? But further, does this not involve us in the same difficulty in terms of empirical meaning as with traditional theism? What observable state of affairs would count against the claims made concerning the operation of creative interchange in our lives? Throughout Wieman insists that creative interchange cannot be manipulated. We cannot cause creative interchange to transform us. All we can do is to commit our lives in an ultimate way, fulfill all those conditions that are necessary (which are largely unknown), and then wait, hope, and "pray?" If nothing happens to transform us, then "God" apparently "chose" not to do so.

There are many other respects in which Wieman claims that creative interchange operates as people have thought God to operate. There is a sense in which creative interchange answers prayer, performs miracles, etc. But even with Wieman's understanding of these phrases, similar problems attach to such claims in terms of disverification. For example, while creative interchange answers prayer, it may not give us what we want. And, of course, we have to be sufficiently committed.

Given these difficulties, can we claim that a commitment to creative interchange is one that does not go beyond the evidence? Are we in making such a commitment guiding our faith solely on the basis of what we know? As we have indicated, it is not at all clear just what we are committing ourselves to when we commit ourselves to creative interchange.

But perhaps, we need to recall that Wieman frequently talks about a dual commitment. Our ultimate commitment is not to any ideas we may have about what saves, but to the reality which does this. As he says in Man's Ultimate Commitment, "By reason of the mysteries which encompass

our existence, one's religious commitment should take on a dual character, on the one hand guided by the farthest reach of his inquiry, on the other practiced as a faith in the sense of recognizing his liability to error and the tragic consequences of error in such a commitment as this. A man's religious devotion becomes a form of pernicious idolatry leading to dogmatic fanaticism and blind cruelty if he does not practice his ultimate commitment in this dual manner, on the one hand seeking the best knowledge he can get, on the other recognizing his fallibility and accepting the consequences of it. This dual character of religious commitment is required because otherwise one is committed to the limitations of his own mind. Nothing is worthy of man's ultimate commitment which is confined to the limits of his present comprehension, not to mention the malice and perversity always present to some degree in all human interpretations of the good and evil of human life."[23]

If we take this seriously, however, it would seem that man's ultimate commitment is not to creative interchange, but to "what does in truth operate to transform our lives toward the greater good even if it be beyond his knowing."[24]

We see here another dualism. We have noted a dualism in Wieman's theory of knowledge and his theory of value. We have distinguished two senses of 'creative interchange.' On the one hand there seems to be an intelligible notion described as the four-fold event, creative interchange$_1$. On the other, there is 'creative interchange$_2$.' Perhaps one way to make all this intelligible is to maintain that when Wieman speaks of a commitment to what we know, he is speaking about a commitment to creative interchange$_1$. But this is not that to which we are to be ulti-

mately committed. Man's ultimate commitment is to "what does in truth operate to transform our lives toward the greater good even if it be beyond his knowing." As we have argued, creative interchange$_2$ is beyond our knowing. Perhaps creative interchange$_2$ is that to which we should be ultimately committed. On this interpretation, however, 'creative interchange$_2$' must be understood to be a non-cognitive symbol which points to the source of human good. There would be, of course, difficulties here; difficulties, I think, analogous to those which attach to Tillich's notion of God as the ground of being.

While one can sympathize with Wieman's talk of a dual commitment as a hedge against dogmatism, clearly an ultimate commitment to some unknown reality cannot provide a guide to action. While the words 'creative interchange' seem to be descriptive, as these function as an object of ultimate commitment they add nothing to Wieman's earlier view of God as "the uncomprehended totality of all that is best." Being for the good and against sin is not informative unless we specify what we take 'good' and 'sin' to signify, but if we do this then we are involved in our ideas about what is good and what is sinful.

In speaking about this "deeper" level of commitment, Wieman says in his most recent book that "At one level the individual commits himself without reservation or qualification and without doubt to what does create, sustain, and transform human life toward the greater good when required conditions are present, and he does this no matter how mistaken his present beliefs about it may be."[26]

We need to note that here again the commitment is not to inquiry or reason, but to "what does create, sustain, and transform..." This has

been a constant theme throughout Wieman's work. It is, apparently, at this level that we can be sure that we are devoting ourselves to that which is worthy of an ultimate commitment. "Here, then, we have a commitment that cannot be rationally doubted, namely, a commitment to what does in truth operate in human life, when required conditions are present, to make it better."[26]

Surely Wieman is right. We have here a commitment that cannot rationally be doubted. Indeed, I can't see how any risk is involved here at all. But this is absolutely safe precisely because it is absolutely empty. To say that one ought to be committed to whatever is best is, I would argue, analytic. Surely this provides no criterion as to what is best, and consequently sheds no light on what we ought to do.

While I don't think that Wieman has always been aware that such a commitment cannot be a guide to action, in this last work he does accept this. "But this commitment can give no guidance, no direction, unless supplemented by commitment at another level."[27] But even though it cannot be a guide to action, it still purportedly fulfills an important religious function.

"If one can bring his whole self in commitment to whatever makes for the greatest good without claiming to know with certainty what it is, he thereby, in a mystic way, identifies himself with it. To be sure, he is a failure and is forsaken; but weak and foolish and futile as he is, he identifies himself with the best there is. When he acts on it, he must have some idea of what it is. But he knows that his idea about it may be in error and, in any case, falls short of the whole truth. Therefore his ultimate commitment goes beyond his idea and beyond his knowledge. This

is especially true when he has done his utmost and has failed, and for the time being action is no longer possible. In ultimate commitment he identifies himself with whatever does in truth make for the greatest good beyond what he can know or understand and beyond anything he can do. Thereby he finds an ultimate security for his self-esteem so that anxiety falls away and peace ensues. "Into thy hands I commend my spirit.""[28]

We have seen Wieman speak in this way previously, but I think we are now in a position to understand what's involved here. In the section on his theory of inquiry we noted that he does not deny that there is immediate experience. To say that experience is immediate is to say that we interact with our environment in its infinite depth without any elements of interpretation or inference. Interpretation and inference operate only when we attempt to cognize that which we experience. We are in contact with the ultimate substance of the universe, quality.

In chapter two we noted that Wieman rejected the view that we know about existing realities by means of argument. He claimed there that "we find these realities inevitably, moment by moment." We suggested there that this does not commit Wieman to an immediate way of knowing, for we may have immediate experience of a reality without this involving knowledge. I think this latter statement still holds, but it is now dubious that this is all that Wieman means by 'finding a reality.'

When we discussed Wieman's notion as to the problem that he thinks religion attempts to solve, we noted that one way he formulates this is by saying that we have an awareness, however dim this may be, of a quality of existence that is never realized in our lives. We have an awareness of our own "original experience" that is unappreciated by others.

In what we have called creative interchange$_1$ there is an emerging awareness of qualitative meaning derived from others.

We have just noted again that our ultimate commitment is not to that which we know, but to that which goes beyond all knowledge. And what is that? It is the uncomprehended totality of all that is best, whatever makes for the greatest good, what we have labelled creative interchange$_2$, the source of human good.

We have argued that 'creative interchange$_2$' is not an intelligible notion, and similar considerations would apply to these other attempts to indicate that which is worthy of our ultimate commitment. The fundamental argument here was that we are not provided with any concept of what is meant by 'creative interchange$_2$.'

It seems to me that these considerations are decisive in showing that Wieman's conclusions are not consistent with his claim that we should never believe anything we do not know; that his conclusions are not to be derived from what we have called his general theory of knowledge. We have here an ultimate commitment that not only goes beyond what we may legitimately claim to know, but beyond any possibility of having any concepts at all. It is not merely not empirically verifiable, it is unintelligible. How are we to bring our "whole self in commitment to whatever makes for the greatest good?" While Wieman does add "without claiming to know with certainty what it is," we need to keep in mind that if we claim to know at all what it is we are out of the realm of that which is worthy of our ultimate commitment.

But to say this is not consistent with his general theory of knowledge is not to say that this is inconsistent with his theory of religious

knowledge. While, since The Issues of Life, Wieman has kept silent concerning "esoteric knowledge," something very much like this is involved here. While Wieman admits that the object of our ultimate commitment goes beyond all knowledge, he does not allow that what he says here is unintelligible. We don't have knowledge, but there is an "awareness" of this "actuality." We cannot conceptualize this, for conceptualization involves interpretation, but there is still an "awareness," an immediate experience of "the source of human good." But to "find this reality" one must commit himself to this "divine creativity." After criticizing Tillich's notion of the power of being as failing to provide us with any assurance that it is beneficent, he claims that "...the greatest good is available to each. It is found in commitment to the divine creativity."[29]

This awareness seems to be what Baillie meant by a "primary and original mode of consciousness." A necessary condition of having this awareness is an encounter, and a necessary condition of having this encounter is an awareness. The awareness is "called into being" simultaneously with the encounter. One can only "find this reality" in commitment to the divine creativity. But one can have an awareness of this divine creativity only by first committing oneself to it. Wieman attempts to get away from knowledge here by talking about an awareness. But can't we ask what it is of which he is aware? The problems that we raised with Baillie apply equally at this point to Wieman.

But, "He who identifies himself with this source of all human good, experiences in his own person the good which it creates, precisely because he has identified himself with it. All the good brought forth by

this creativity in ages past and in ages yet to come is the personal good of him whose life is given to the service of this divine presence."[30] In the next paragraph, he claims "This is not mysticism." But it seems clear that this must involve what he later admitted to be a sort of "mystic identification," for one is identifying oneself not with any human notion of human good, but with the source of human good--however different that might be from any of our ideas about it.

This awareness, however, is a "mediated immediacy." It seems clear that Wieman could say with Baillie, that "It was, then, through the media of my boyhood's home, the Christian community of which it formed a part, and the old, old story from which that community drew its life, that God first revealed Himself to me."[31] As he insisted in The Source of Human Good, we are to study religion from "the inside." But Wieman's awareness has also been mediated by the scientific community. It is this influence that has led Wieman to a much more thorough-going demythologization of the Bible than Bultmann attempted. But Wieman, too, wants to save the Kerygma, however different that might be from any traditional accounts of it.

While Wieman admits in his last volume that this awareness cannot, by itself, provide a guide to action, it does save man from anxiety and presumably endows his life with qualitative meaning and a sense of purpose. It overcomes the sense of alienation through a mystic identification with the "source of human good." This would seem to be an empirical claim, but how would one go about verifying it? How could we determine whether someone has made a mystic identification with the "source of human good?"

Wieman has always objected to what he regards as that pernicious

sort of pragmatism that seeks to justify religion in terms of its psychological effects on the believer. He always wants to disassociate himself from the Jamesian view that religion is to provide comfort to the believer. However, it is clear that we here find just this view being espoused. The source of human good does not give us a guide to action, but it does provide comfort to those who identify with it.

But is this not a highly personal and private affair? If an ultimate commitment to the source of human good provides no guide to action, if this is cognitively empty, then no risk of faith is involved at all. Let people "believe" whatever vacuous formula they like. If it somehow overcomes their sense of alienation so much the better. If it does not affect their behavior (in any significant way) we cannot be much concerned.

But Wieman's "awareness" is not completely empty. While at one level this goes beyond all concepts, beyond all human understanding, it does mediate the whole of his theology. Indeed, it is this "awareness" that provides the basis for regarding Wieman as a theologian rather than a philosopher. It is this "awareness," which I think can only be regarded as mystical, that provides the ground for Wieman's theology proper.

While Wieman has, in effect, admitted that this "awareness" is ineffable, it nonetheless exerts a powerful influence on the direction of his thought. As with many mystics, this experience is not "completely ineffable." There is a fundamental belief involved here that I think we are now in a position to see. Wieman believes that creative interchange, in some sense or other, is identical with either the very God, or at least with the knowable structure of God's work in the world. While 'God' here does not include all that has been meant by theists, it is meant to refer

to a being that is superior in value to all human ideals.

It is this belief that leads Wieman to equivocate on the meaning of creative interchange, for on the one hand he wants something that is empirically verifiable, but on the other he wants something that refers to "the totality of all good in every concrete situation." This tension between the demand for something that refers to the "actual" source of human good and the demand for empirically verifiable statements runs throughout Wieman's thought.

Further, this belief that creative interchange is God, or Godlike, leads Wieman to severely qualify the demand that we accept nothing that does not meet the tests of reason. Even when we seem to be talking about creative interchange$_1$, the function of reason is not to evaluate what is brought about. The function of reason here is limited to determining how such "gifts" are to be utilized to best promote the further operating of creative interchange. We are not to use our faulty sense of value here as criteria to test the fruits of creative interchange. We are not to apply our limited human understanding of what is good and what is evil as a check on the work of God. Wieman is not to be accused of the arrogance of reason at this point.

We are to commit ourselves in wholehearted devotion to a process of transformation the outcome of which cannot be predicted. But even if we could make such a prediction this would not mitigate the risk, for we are not to evaluate the outcome from a merely human point of view in any case. We are to give ourselves in absolute commitment--to be remade or destroyed. A leap of faith is involved here of a radical nature indeed. Like Abraham, we are to be knights of faith. "Into thy hands I commend my spirit."

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER VIII

[1]Wieman, Wrestle, p. 14.

[2]Wieman, Source, p. 305.

[3]Wieman, Commitment, p. 12.

[4]Henry Nelson Wieman, "On Using the Word 'God': A Reply," Journal of Philosophy, XXX (July 20, 1933), p. 401.

[5]Wieman, Commitment, p. 12.

[6]See Henry Nelson Wieman, "On Using Christian Words," Journal of Religion, XX:3 (July 1940), pp. 259-69.

[7]Wieman, Commitment, p. 28.

[8]Wieman, Source, p. 299.

[9]Wieman, Commitment, p. 28.

[10]Ibid., p. 29.

[11]Wieman, Source, p. 298.

[12]Ibid., p. 299.

[13]Ibid., p. 300.

[14]Ibid., p. 90.

[15]Ibid., pp. 27-28.

[16]Ibid., p. 29.

[17]Wieman, Issues, pp. 13-14.

[18]Wieman, Commitment, p. 104.

[19]Wieman, Issues, pp. 9-10.

[20]Wieman, Religious Inquiry, p. 81.

[21]Antony Flew, "Theology and Falsification," New Essays in Philosophical Theology, ed. by Antony Flew and Alasdair Macintyre, (London: Student Christian Movement, 1935), p. 99.

[22]Wieman, Commitment, p. 22.

[23]Ibid., p. 21.

[24]Wieman, Inquiry, p. 81.

[25]Ibid.

[26]Ibid.

[27]Ibid.

[28]Ibid., p. 75.

[29]Wieman, Issues, p. 102.

[30]Ibid.

[31]Baillie, Knowledge, p. 132.

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