

## “A Comparison of the Conceptions of God in the Thinking of Paul Tillich and Henry Nelson Wieman”

[15 April 1955]  
[Boston, Mass.]

*In the winter of 1953 King chose his dissertation topic and enrolled in the required course Directed Study in Thesis and Dissertation Writing taught by Jannette E. Newhall.<sup>1</sup> Working with Newhall and DeWolf, King developed a bibliography, a preliminary organizational outline, and a short introduction.<sup>2</sup> During the summer of 1953 King contacted Wieman and Tillich to ask if they knew of any similar comparisons of their thought.<sup>3</sup> Beyond these exploratory letters, though, the newly married King did not work on the dissertation while serving as pastor in charge of Ebenezer during the summer. After studying during the fall and winter, King passed his final comprehensive examination in February 1954 and began working extensively on the dissertation.<sup>4</sup> On 9 April, just a few days after he accepted the call to Dexter, King's outline was approved by the Graduate School.*

*In the first chapter, after explaining his choice of the topic, King reviewed his sources. In the second chapter he explored the methodologies of the two theologians. By using a “method of correlation” Tillich sought first to describe the questions generated by the human condition and then to examine the specifically Christian symbols used to answer those questions. Wieman appealed to the scientific method, using “sensory observation, experimental behavior, and rational inference” to analyze Christian beliefs. In chapters 3 and 4 King described Tillich's and Wieman's conceptions of God. In the fifth chapter he compared and criticized their ideas.<sup>5</sup>*

*King's initial drafts of the dissertation were marked by the flawed citation practices that characterized his other academic essays and the final version of the dissertation. King appropriated virtually all of his first draft of the introduction*

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1. Jannette E. Newhall (1898–1979) studied at Radcliffe and Columbia and received her Ph.D. from Boston University in 1931. After teaching at Wheaton College in Norton, Massachusetts, she worked at Andover-Harvard Theological Library and other libraries in Massachusetts. Newhall was librarian and professor of research methods, as well as Brightman's longtime assistant, at Boston University's School of Theology from 1949 until her retirement in 1962. Her course on research methods covered, among other things, correct citation practices and ethical use of sources. See Newhall, Syllabus, Thesis and Dissertation Writing, 4 February–22 May 1953, MLKP-MBU: Box 115.

2. See King, Draft of table of contents, 4 February–22 May 1953, MLKP-MBU: Box 114; also drafts in MLKP-MBU: Boxes 96 and 107.

3. King's letters to Wieman and Tillich, probably written in early August, are not extant. For their replies, see Wieman to King, 14 August 1953, pp. 202–203 in this volume; and Tillich to King, 22 September 1953, pp. 203–204 in this volume.

4. See King, Qualifying examination answers, Theology of the Bible, 2 November 1953; History of Doctrine, 20 November 1953; Systematic Theology, 17 December 1953; and History of Philosophy, 24 February 1954; all published in this volume, pp. 204–210, 212–218, 228–233, and 242–247, respectively.

5. For a longer analysis of the dissertation's content, see the Introduction, pp. 23–26 in this volume.

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verbatim from an article by Walter Marshall Horton.<sup>6</sup> Newhall noted that in one of King's footnotes he cited a source not listed in the bibliography.<sup>7</sup> King corrected the error in later versions, but the introduction still contained several plagiarized passages.

King's faulty citation practices were rooted in the notecards he created while conducting research on Tillich and Wieman.<sup>8</sup> Large sections of the expository chapters are verbatim transcriptions of these notecards, in which errors he had made while creating his notes are perpetuated. In one case, although King properly quoted Tillich on the notecard, he used a section of the quotation in the dissertation without quotation marks.<sup>9</sup> Some of the notecards were adequately paraphrased from Tillich and Wieman, but many others were nearly identical to the source. King rarely noted down proper citations as he took notes, particularly from secondary sources. After reading an author's interpretation of a Tillich quotation, for example, King would transcribe the interpretation, the Tillich quotation, and the footnote to Tillich's writings but would neglect to mention the secondary source. One of his most important uncredited sources was a Boston University dissertation on Tillich that DeWolf had read just three years before. In the introduction King noted his reliance on "valuable secondary sources" and acknowledged Jack Boozer's "very fine" dissertation; thereafter, however, King obscured the extent to which he utilized this secondary source by citing it only twice.<sup>10</sup> He also relied heavily on a review of Tillich's *Systematic Theology* by Raphael Demos, King's professor at Harvard, and on several essays in a collection entitled *The Theology of Paul Tillich*, underreporting these sources in his citations.<sup>11</sup>

King completed his draft of the dissertation while serving as the full-time pastor of Dexter. "I rose every morning at five-thirty and spent three hours writing the

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6. Walter Marshall Horton, "Tillich's Role in Contemporary Theology," in *The Theology of Paul Tillich*, ed. Charles W. Kegley and Robert W. Bretall (New York: Macmillan, 1952), pp. 36-37.

7. King, "Draft of chapter 1," 4 February-22 May 1953, MLKP-MBU: Box 107.

8. It is unclear when King created these notecards. He probably wrote the bulk of them in Boston the summer of 1954 before moving to Montgomery, since many of his materials, particularly articles in scholarly journals, would not be available in Montgomery. He did, however, continue to check out library books from Boston University's library while in Montgomery. See Florence Mitchell to King, 15 October 1954, MLKP-MBU: Box 117.

9. See King, Notecard on "Freedom," 1948-1955, CSKC.

10. See Jack Stewart Boozer, "The Place of Reason in Paul Tillich's Concept of God" (Ph.D. diss., Boston University, 1952). Boozer (1918-1989) received both his bachelor's degree in philosophy (1940) and B.D. (1942) from Emory University. He entered graduate school at Boston University in 1942, but interrupted his studies to serve as an Army chaplain in Europe from 1944 to 1947. He returned to Boston in 1948 and received his Ph.D. in 1952. Boozer taught at Emory from 1950 until his retirement in 1987, serving as professor of religion and chair of the department of religion. His publications include *Faith to Act* (1967), coauthored with William Beardslee, and *Rudolf Otto. Aufsätze zur Ethik* (1981), which he edited.

11. Horton, "Tillich's Role in Contemporary Theology," pp. 26-47; George F. Thomas, "The Method and Structure of Tillich's Theology," pp. 86-105; David E. Roberts, "Tillich's Doctrine of Man," pp. 108-130; John Herman Randall, Jr., "The Ontology of Paul Tillich," pp. 132-161; all in Kegley and Bretall, eds., *Theology of Paul Tillich*. Although King's dissertation topic was similar to Charles Hartshorne's essay "Tillich's Doctrine of God" (in *ibid.*, pp. 164-195), he did not utilize the essay extensively. See also Raphael Demos, Book Review of *Systematic Theology* by Paul Tillich, *Journal of Philosophy* 49 (23 October 1952): 692-708. A signed copy of this review with King's marginal comments is in MLKP-MBU: Box 107.

thesis," he later wrote, "returning to it late at night for another three hours."<sup>12</sup> In November 1954, several months after leaving Boston, King returned to that city for consultations with DeWolf and Schilling.

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DeWolf and Schilling had mostly praise for King's draft, pointing out only minor changes necessary for their approval. In characteristically brief fashion, DeWolf returned King's draft with very few corrections or marginal comments, praising King for succeeding "with broad learning, impressive ability and convincing mastery of the works immediately involved." Schilling, evaluating one of his first dissertations as a professor, provided more extensive comments than DeWolf. In two instances Schilling noticed that King had improperly cited his sources by "inaccurately" quoting a Tillich text and omitting quotation marks around another paragraph. Acknowledging that the first draft was "competently done, . . . carefully organized and systematically developed," Schilling promised to approve the dissertation after the appropriate changes were made.<sup>13</sup> King incorporated many of these corrections, but made few other changes as he revised the dissertation.

After submitting the final draft sometime before the 15 April deadline, King returned to Boston to defend his work before an examining committee. Chaired by Schilling, the committee included DeWolf, Peter A. Bertocci, John H. Lavelly, Richard M. Millard, and Newhall.<sup>14</sup> On 31 May the graduate school faculty of Boston University officially voted to confer the doctorate on King at the university's commencement on 5 June. Unable to be present for the service, King received the Ph.D. in systematic theology in absentia.

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12. King, *Stride Toward Freedom* (New York: Harper, 1958), p. 26.

13. See L. Harold DeWolf, First Reader's Report, 26 February 1955, p. 333-334 in this volume; King, Draft of chapter 3, 1954-1955, MLKP-MBU: Box 96A; and S. Paul Schilling, Second Reader's Report, 26 February 1955, pp. 334-335 in this volume.

14. Walter G. Muelder, dean of the School of Theology, was a member of the committee but did not attend the oral examination. See Boston University, Transcript of Record, 5 June 1955, BUR-MBU.

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## Chapter I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1. Statement of problem

The problem of this dissertation is to compare and evaluate the conceptions of God in the thinking of Paul Tillich and Henry Nelson Wieman.

It was in the year of 1935, at a ten-day seminar on religion, that Paul Tillich and Henry Nelson Wieman, along with several other distinguished religious thinkers, gathered at Fletcher Farm, Proctorsville, Vermont, to discuss some of the vital problems of religion. One of the most heated discussions of the conference was a discussion on the nature of God, in which all lecturers took part.<sup>1</sup> In this particular discussion, Tillich and Wieman ended up in radically different positions. Wieman contended that Tillich "was at the same time more monistic and less realistic than he . . . pluralistic at the human level and monistic at the transcendent level." Against this monistic thinking, Wieman sought to maintain an "ultimate pluralism whereby God was in no way responsible for evil . . . with no statement as to the ultimate outcome of the struggle between it and good and as opposed to God, not merely an instrument of God for good."\* Tillich in reply "commented upon Dr. Wieman's complete break with the Christian tradition and Greek philosophy, and characterized his position as in direct line with Zoroastrianism . . . the plurality of powers and the duality of good and evil. . . . God was a duality and at the same time ultimate, which was a contradiction in terms."†

It is probable that Wieman and Tillich went away from this conference not fully understanding each other's position. The controversy between Wieman and Tillich arose again a few years later when Wieman, in The Growth of Religion, grouped Tillich, Barth, Brunner, and Niebuhr together as "neo-supernaturalists." In a review of this book, Tillich sought to make it palpably clear that Wieman was erroneous in his grouping. Tillich writes:

What we have in common is simply the attempt to affirm to explain the majesty of God in the sense of the prophets, apostles and reformers—a reality which we feel is challenged by naturalistic as well as the fundamentalistic theology.‡<sup>2</sup>

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\* Quoted from Horton, Art. (1952), 36.

† Ibid.

‡ Tillich, Rev. (1940), 70.

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1. Horton, "Tillich's Role in Contemporary Theology," p. 36: "A high point in the conference was a three-cornered discussion on the nature of God, in which all the lecturers took part."

2. Horton, "Tillich's Role in Contemporary Theology," pp. 36–37: "It is probable that neither of the two understood the other very fully at this first meeting. . . . A few years later, in *The Growth of Religion* (1938), Wieman grouped Barth, Brunner, Niebuhr, and Tillich together as

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## Chapter V

A Comparison <sup>and Evaluation</sup> Of The Conceptions of  
God in <sup>the thinking of</sup> Wieman and Tillich

We turn now to a discussion of the basic problem of this ~~chapter~~ dissertation, viz., comparing and evaluating the conceptions of God in the thinking of Wieman and Tillich. Up to this point we have attempted to interpret the conceptions of God held by Wieman and Tillich separately, without any mention of their points of agreement ~~or~~ disagreement. Now we will ~~look~~ look at their conceptions ~~of God~~ ~~together~~ together, with a view of determining their ~~of similarity and of dissimilarity~~ convergent and divergent points.

We shall see as the discussion develops that Wieman and Tillich have much more in common than is ordinarily supposed. It has been a not too infrequent tendency to group Wieman with the naturalistic thinkers and Tillich with the

15 Apr 1955 This affirmation does not put God outside the natural world as Wieman claims. And so Tillich goes on to affirm:

With respect to myself, I only need point to practically all my writings and their fight against the "side by side" theology even if it appears in the disguise of a "super." The Unconditioned is a qualification of the conditioned, of the world and the natural, by which the conditioned is affirmed and denied at the same time.\*<sup>3</sup>

In other words, Tillich is seeking to make it clear that he cannot be labeled a supernaturalist. The Divine, as he sees it, is not a being that dwells in some transcendent realm; it is the "power of being" found in the "ecstatic" character of this world.<sup>4</sup>

It is clear that in neither of these debates has the real difference between Wieman and Tillich been defined. Yet there is a real difference which needs to be defined. This dissertation grows out of an attempt to meet just this need.

The concept of God has been chosen because of the central place which it occupies in any religion; and because of the ever present need to interpret and clarify the God-concept. And these men have been chosen because they are fountainhead personalities; and because each of them, in the last few years has had an increasing influence upon the climate of theological and philosophical thought.

## 2. Sources of data

The primary sources of data are those works of Tillich and Wieman in which the concept of God is treated. Prominent among Tillich's writings which contain discussions of the conception of God are the following in chronological order: The Religious Situation (1932), The Interpretation of

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\* Tillich, *Rev.* (1940), 70.

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'neo-supernaturalists.' In his review of this book, Tillich rejected Wieman's interpretation of all four, while also objecting to the grouping. 'What we all have in common,' he says, 'is simply the attempt to affirm and to explain the majesty of God in the sense of the prophets, apostles and reformers—a reality which we feel is challenged by the naturalistic as well as the fundamentalistic theology.'

3. Horton, "Tillich's Role in Contemporary Theology," p. 37: "This affirmation does not put God 'outside' the natural world, as Wieman claims, even in the case of Barth. . . . 'With respect to myself, I only need point to practically all my writings and their fight against the "side by side" theology even if it appears in the disguise of a "super." The Unconditioned is a qualification of the conditioned, of the world and the natural, by which the conditioned is affirmed and denied at the same time.'

4. Horton, "Tillich's Role in Contemporary Theology," p. 37: "The Divine, as he sees it, does not inhabit a transcendent world *above nature*; it is found in the 'estatic' character of *this* world, as its transcendent Depth and Ground."

History (1936), The Protestant Era (1948), Systematic Theology I (1951), and The Courage to Be (1952).

The main works of Wieman which contain discussions of the conception of God are: Religious Experience and Scientific Method (1927), The Wrestle of Religion with Truth (1927), The Issues of Life (1930), Normative Psychology of Religion (1935), The Growth of Religion (1938), and The Source of Human Good (1946).

The writings of Tillich and Wieman relevant to our problem also include several articles found in various theological and philosophical journals. These articles may be found listed in the Bibliography.\*

### 3. Review of the work of other investigators

Since the publication of his magnum opus, Systematic Theology, in 1951, there has been an upsurge in the number of investigators of Paul Tillich's thought. Prior to that time James Luther Adams of the Federated Faculty of the University of Chicago had been the chief interpreter of Tillich to American readers. Adams selected and translated the essays contained in The Protestant Era which was published in 1948. As a final chapter in this book Adams wrote an excellent interpretation of Tillich's thought entitled "Tillich's Concept of the Protestant Era." Adams had earlier translated a chapter of Tillich's Religiöse Verwirklichung and published it in the Journal of Liberal Religion.† W. M. Urban was asked to give a critique of this article which appeared in the same issue of the journal under the title, "A Critique of Professor Tillich's Theory of the Religious Symbol."‡<sup>5</sup>

In 1952 a very fine dissertation was done in this school by Jack Boozer entitled, The Place of Reason in Tillich's Conception of God.

Since the publication of his Systematic Theology, the investigators of Til-

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\* For a general account of all sources of data see the Bibliography. Writings of Tillich and Wieman will be designated by abbreviations. All other

references will include the names of the authors and abbreviations of their works.

† "The Religious Symbol," Journal of Liberal

Religion, 2 (Summer, 1940), 13-34.

‡ Journal of Liberal Religion, 2 (Summer, 1940), 34-36.

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5. Boozer, "Place of Reason," pp. v-vi: "James Luther Adams of the Federated Faculty of the University of Chicago has been the chief interpreter of Tillich to American readers. Adams selected and translated the essays contained in The Protestant Era which was published in 1948. . . . In addition to selecting and translating the essays Adams writes as the final chapter in the book a splendid interpretation of Tillich's thought entitled 'Tillich's Concept of the Protestant Era.' . . . Adams translated a chapter of Tillich's Religiöse Verwirklichung and published it in the journal, asking W. M. Urban to write a critique which appeared in the same issue of the journal under the title, 'A Critique of Professor Tillich's Theory of the Religious Symbol.'"

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lich's thought have almost tripled. Numerous articles have appeared in theological and philosophical journals dealing with some phase of his thought. The most obvious evidence for the growing interest in Tillich's thought is the fact that the editors of *The Library of Living Theology* chose him as the subject for the first volume.\* This volume contains fourteen essays on various aspects of Tillich's thought by men like W. H. Horton, T. M. Greene, George F. Thomas, John Herman Randall, Jr., Charles Hartshorne, Reinhold Niebuhr and J. L. Adams. At the end of the volume Tillich himself gives a reply to the interpretations and criticisms of his thought. If the enthusiasm of the contributors to this volume is an index of what is to come, we may expect even more extensive investigations of Tillich's thought in the future.

Wieman's thought has also been investigated quite extensively. Ever since he published his first book in 1927, Wieman's thought has been interpreted and criticised by thinkers of all shades of opinion. Throughout the nineteen thirties and early forties theological and philosophical journals abounded with interpretations of Wieman's thought, and with the publication of his magnum opus, *The Source of Human Good*, in 1946, such interpretations and criticisms continued with tremendous strides. It is probably no exaggeration to say that hardly a volume has appeared in the last twenty years in the fields of philosophy of religion and systematic theology, which has not made some reference to Wieman's thought, particularly to his conception of God.

The present inquiry will utilize from these valuable secondary sources any results which bear directly on the problem, and will indicate such use by appropriate footnotes.

#### 4. Methods of investigation

Several methods of procedure will be employed in the investigation of the problem stated for this dissertation. They are as follows:

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\* Kegley and Bretal (ed.), TPT. This series is consciously imitative of Paul A. Schilpp's, *The Library of Living Philosophers*. The editors admit that they are seeking to do for present-day theology what Schilpp has done

and is continuing to do so well for philosophy. Each volume of *The Library of Living Theology*, like *The Living Philosophers*, will be devoted to the thinking of a single living theologian, and will include (1) an intellectual autobi-

ography; (2) essays on different aspects of the man's work, written by leading scholars; (3) a "reply to his critic" by the theologian himself; and a complete bibliography of his writings to date.<sup>6</sup>

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6. "Introduction" to Kegley and Bretal, eds., *Theology of Paul Tillich*, pp. vii-viii: "[Schilpp's] idea was original and unique: to devote each volume in the series to the thinking of a single living philosopher, and to include in each (1) an intellectual autobiography; (2) essays on different aspects of the man's work, written by leading scholars; (3) a 'reply to his critics' by the philosopher himself; and (4) a complete bibliography of his writings to date. . . . Our aim, quite simply, is to do for present-day theology what he has done and is continuing to do so well for philosophy."

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- (1) Expository.  
We shall begin by looking at the thought of each man separately. In this method we shall seek to give a comprehensive and sympathetic exposition of their conceptions of God.
- (2) Comparative.  
After looking at the thought of each man separately, we shall look at their conceptions of God together with a view of determining their convergent and divergent points.
- (3) Critical.

A critical evaluation of their conceptions of God will be given. In seeking to give this critical evaluation two norms will be employed: (i) adequacy in expressing the religious values of historic Christianity; and (ii) adequacy in meeting the philosophical requirements of consistency and coherence. We shall also seek to discover the extent to which Tillich and Wieman claim to measure up to the standards by which they are here criticized, thus making the criticism internal as well as external. As a rule, critical appraisal will be preserved until a thorough elaboration of Tillich's and Wieman's positions has been made.<sup>7</sup>

Perhaps it is appropriate at this point to say a word concerning the general philosophical and theological orientation of Wieman and Tillich. For Wieman, God, or "creativity," or "the creative event," is the producer, or the production of unexpected, unpredictable good. In specifying the nature of the creative event Wieman is both eloquent and illuminating.

Throughout Wieman's thought it is very easy to see the influence of Whitehead and Dewey. His naturalism and empiricism are quite reminiscent of Dewey. Like Dewey, he speaks of processes of creation, and also describes the production of good as issuing from a context of events. On the other hand, he goes beyond Dewey by insisting that the emergence of value is the work of God. Wieman sees a great deal of value in Whitehead's "principle of concretion," but he is generally skeptical of his metaphysical speculations. Disagreeing both with Whiteheadian metaphysics and Dewey's humanistic naturalism, Wieman's thought lies between these systems, containing a few features of both, and some few emphases foreign to both.

The immediate background of Tillich's philosophy is the ontological and historical strains of nineteenth century German speculation. The later, post-Böhme philosophy of Schelling, the various mid-century reactions against the panlogism of Hegel, like Feuerbach and the early Marx, Nietzsche and the "philosophy of life," and the more recent existentialism, especially of Heidegger—all these have contributed to Tillich's formulation of philosophic problems.<sup>8</sup>

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7. Boozer, "Place of Reason," p. vii: "As a rule, critical appraisal has been reserved until a thorough elaboration of his position has been made."

8. Randall, "Ontology," p. 132: "The immediate background of Tillich's philosophy is certain of the more ontological and historical strains of nineteenth century German speculation. The later, post-Böhme philosophy of Schelling, the various mid-century reactions against the panlog-

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There is also a monistic strain in Tillich's thinking which is reminiscent of Plotinus, Hegel, Spinoza and Vedanta thought. In his conception of God he seems to be uniting a Spinozistic element, in which God is not a being, but the power of being, with a profound trinitarian interpretation of this, which allows for what is traditionally called transcendence.

## 5. The structure of the dissertation

The Introduction presents the main problem of this study and presents a brief summary of what other investigators have contributed to it. The materials on which this study is based and the methods which it follows are also set forth.

Since the question of method is of such vital importance in theological and philosophical construction, it will be necessary to discuss the methodologies of Tillich and Wieman. This will be done in Chapter II. In Chapter III an exposition of Tillich's conception of God is presented. In this Chapter it will be necessary to devote a few pages to a discussion of Tillich's ontology as a whole, since it is his ultimate conviction that God is "being-itself." In Chapter IV an exposition of Wieman's conception of God is given. In Chapter V the conceptions of God in the thinking of Wieman and Tillich will be compared and evaluated. Chapter VI will give the conclusions of the dissertation.

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ism of Hegel, like Feuerbach and the early Marx, Nietzsche and the 'philosophy of life,' and the more recent existentialism, especially of Heidegger—all these have contributed to his formulation of philosophic issues and problems."

## Chapter II

### THE METHODOLOGIES OF TILLICH AND WIEMAN

The question of theological method has been much discussed during the past century. Many hold that only as one settles this question can one expect to settle any other, for it underlies every other. Tillich and Wieman agree that the question of method is of fundamental importance, and both take pains to elaborate their methodologies.

Since the question of method is of such vital importance in theological construction, it is hardly possible to gain an adequate understanding of a theologian's basic thought without an understanding of his methodology. So we can best begin our study of the conceptions of God held by Tillich and Wieman by giving an exposition of their methodologies. We turn first to Tillich.

#### 1. Tillich's method of correlation

Throughout his theology Tillich undertakes the difficult task of setting forth a systematic theology which is at the same time an apologetic. His aim is to show that the Christian message actually does answer the questions which modern man is being forced to ask about his existence, his salvation and his destiny.

Tillich's theology is quite frankly a dialogue between classical Christianity and modern man. In this it is analogous to the work of the second century apologists who mediated between Christianity and late classical culture.

The method used to effect this apologetic task is the "method of correlation." In Tillich's first book entitled, *Das System der Wissenschaften nach Gegenständen und Methoden* ("The System of Knowledge: Its Contents and Its Methods"), theology is defined as "theonomous metaphysics." This definition was Tillich's first step toward what he now calls the method of correlation. In the method of correlation Tillich seeks to overcome the conflict between the naturalistic and supernaturalistic methods, a conflict which he thinks imperils real progress in the work of systematic theology and also imperils any possible effect of theology on the secular world. The method of correlation shows the interdependence between the ultimate questions to which philosophy is driven and the answers given in the Christian message.<sup>1</sup>

Philosophy cannot answer ultimate or existential questions qua philosophy. If the philosopher tries to answer them . . . he becomes a theologian. And, con-

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1. Paul Tillich, *The Protestant Era*, trans. James Luther Adams (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), p. xxvi: "The method of correlation shows, at every point of Christian thought, the interdependence between the ultimate questions to which philosophy (as well as pre-philosophical thinking) is driven and the answers given in the Christian message."

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versely, theology cannot answer these questions without accepting their presuppositions and implications.\*

In this method question and answer determine each other; if they are separated, the traditional answers become unintelligible, and the actual questions remain unanswered. Philosophy and theology are not separated, and they are not identical, but they are correlated.<sup>2</sup> Such a method seeks to be dialectical in the true sense of the word. In order to gain a clearer understanding of this method of correlation it is necessary to discuss its negative meaning.

### i. The negative meaning of correlation

Tillich's method of correlation replaces three inadequate methods of relating the contents of the Christian faith to man's spiritual existence.<sup>3</sup> These inadequate methods are referred to as supranaturalistic, naturalistic or humanistic, and dualistic. We turn first to a discussion of the supranaturalistic method.

#### (1) Supranaturalism

The supranaturalistic method sees the Christian message as a "sum of revealed truths which have fallen into the human situation like strange bodies from a strange world."† The chief error in this method is found in its failure to place any emphasis on an analysis of the human situation. According to this method the truths of the Christian faith create a new situation before they can be received. At many points the supranaturalistic method has traits of the docetic-monophysitic heresy, especially in its valuation of the Bible as a book of supranatural "oracles" in which human receptivity is completely overlooked.<sup>4</sup> This method finally ends up seeking to put man in the impossible position of receiving answers to questions he never has asked.

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\* Tillich, PE, xxvi.

† Tillich, ST, I, 64.

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2. Tillich, *Protestant Era*, p. xxvi: "Question and answer determine each other; if they are separated, the traditional answers become unintelligible, and the actual questions remain unanswered. . . . Philosophy and theology are not separated, and they are not identical, but they are correlated, and their correlation is the methodological problem of a Protestant theology."

3. Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), p. 64: "The method of correlation replaces three inadequate methods of relating the contents of the Christian faith to man's spiritual existence."

4. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 65: "In terms of the classical heresies one could say that the supranaturalistic method has docetic-monophysitic traits, especially in its valuation of the Bible as a book of supranatural 'oracles' in which human receptivity is completely overlooked."

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It is chiefly at this point that Tillich criticizes Barth. Tillich is strongly opposed to anything of a heteronomous character.\*<sup>5</sup> A completely foreign substance or authority, suddenly thrown at man could have no meaning to him.<sup>9</sup>

Revelation would not be even a divine possibility if it could not be received by means of forms of culture as human phenomena. It would be a destructive foreign substance in culture, a disruptive "non-human" entity within the human sphere, and could have had no power to shape and direct human history.†

Tillich says in an even sharper criticism of Barth:

The "Grand Inquisitor" is about to enter the Confessional Church, and strictly speaking, with a strong but tightfitting armor of Barthian Supranaturalism. This very narrow attitude of the Barthians saved the German Protestant Church; but it created at the same time a new heteronomy, an anti-autonomous and anti-humanistic feeling, which I must regard as an abnegation of the Protestant principle.‡

In his Systematic Theology Tillich sets forth his criticism of Barth in still clearer terms. All theology as he sees it, has a dual function: to state the basic truth of the Christian faith and to interpret this truth in the existing cultural situation. In other words, theology has both a "kerygmatic" and an "apologetic" function. Barth's theology performs the first of these tasks admirably.

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\* Tillich uses the term heteronomous in relation to "autonomy" and "theonomy." Autonomy means the obedience of the individual to the law of reason, which he finds in himself as a rational be-

ing.<sup>6</sup> Heteronomy means imposing an alien law, religious or secular on man's mind.<sup>7</sup> Theonomy is a kind of higher autonomy. "It means autonomous reason united with its own depth . . . and actualized

in obedience to its structural laws and in the power of its own inexhaustible ground." (ST, I, 85.)<sup>8</sup>  
† Tillich, Art. (1935), 140.  
‡ Tillich, IOH, 26.

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5. Boozer, "Place of Reason," p. 97: "Tillich is strongly critical of anything of a heteronomous character."

6. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 84: "Autonomy means the obedience of the individual to the law of reason, which he finds in himself as a rational being." This sentence appears in Randall ("Ontology," p. 144) without quotation marks.

7. Tillich, *Protestant Era*, p. 46: "Heteronomy imposes an alien law, religious or secular, on man's mind."

8. Randall, "Ontology," p. 144: "It means autonomous reason united with its own depth . . . and actualized in obedience to its structural laws and in the power of its own inexhaustible ground (85)." 'Theonomous reason' is thus for Tillich really a kind of higher autonomy." Ellipsis in original. Randall's quotation from Tillich is not accurate. Cf. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 85: "It means autonomous reason united with its own depth. In a theonomous situation reason actualizes itself in obedience to its structural laws and in the power of its own inexhaustible ground."

9. Boozer, "Place of Reason," p. 97: "A completely foreign substance or authority suddenly thrown at man could have no meaning to man." The two quotations from Tillich that follow this sentence also appear in Boozer's dissertation.

15 Apr 1955 By lifting the message above any frozen formula from the past, and above the very words of the Scripture, Barth has been able to recover the great recurrent refrain that runs through all Scripture and Christian teaching. But he refuses, with the most persistent pertinacity, to undertake the apologetic task of interpreting the message in the contemporary situation. "The message must be thrown at those in the situation—thrown like a stone."\* Tillich is convinced, on the contrary, that it is the unavoidable duty of the theologian to interpret the message in the cultural situation of his day. Barth persists in avoiding this function, thus falling into a dogmatic "supranaturalism".<sup>10</sup>

All of this makes it clear that Tillich is adverse to all supranaturalistic methods. His method of correlation, the basis of his whole theology, is expressly designed to avoid the pitfalls of supranaturalism without falling back into idealistic liberalism.<sup>11</sup>

## (2) Naturalism

The method of naturalism is the second method that Tillich rejects as inadequate for relating the contents of the Christian faith to man's spiritual existence. Naturalism tends to affirm that the answers can be developed out of human existence itself. Tillich asserts that much of liberal theology fell victim to this type of naturalistic or humanistic thinking. The tendency was to put question and answer on the same level of creativity. "Everything was said by man, nothing to man."†

Naturalism teaches that there is only one dimension in life, the horizontal dimension. There is no God who speaks to man beyond human existence. There is no vertical relationship whatsoever. Whatever is in man completely.<sup>12</sup>

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\* Tillich, *ST*, I, 7.

† Tillich, *ST*, I, 65.

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10. Horton, "Tillich's Role in Contemporary Theology," pp. 30–31: "Barth's 'kerygmatic' theology performs the first of these tasks admirably. Without identifying the message with some frozen formula from the past, or with the very words of Scripture, Barth has been able to recover (for a generation that had lost it) the great recurrent refrain that runs through all Scripture and Christian teaching. . . . But he refuses, as though it were treason, the apologetic task of interpreting the message to the contemporary situation. 'The message must be thrown at those in the situation—thrown like a stone.' Tillich is convinced, on the contrary, that it is the unavoidable duty of the theologian to relate the Christian message to the cultural situation of his day. Barth persists in dodging this duty, thus falling into a 'supranaturalism' that 'takes the Christian message to be a sum of revealed truths which have fallen into the human situation like strange bodies from a strange world.'"

11. Horton, "Tillich's Role in Contemporary Theology," p. 31: "Tillich's method of correlation, the basis of his whole theology, is expressly designed to avoid this pitfall without falling back into idealistic liberalism."

12. Boozer, "Place of Reason," p. 262: "Humanism teaches that there is only one dimension in life, the horizontal dimension. . . . There are no absolute norms, there is no God who speaks

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But this tendency to see everything in terms of the natural is as much an error as to see everything in terms of the supernatural.<sup>13</sup> The error that Tillich finds in naturalism generally is its failure to see that human existence itself is the question. It fails to see, moreover, that the “answers must come from beyond existence.”\* It is partially right in what it affirms; it is partially wrong in what it denies.<sup>14</sup>

### (3) Dualism

The third method to be rejected by Tillich is called the “dualistic” method. Dualism seeks to build a supranatural structure on a natural substructure. It divides theology into natural theology and supranatural theology. Tillich admits that this method, more than any other, is aware of the problem which the method of correlation tries to meet. It realizes that in spite of the infinite gap between man’s spirit and God’s spirit, there must be a positive relation between them. It tries to express this relation by positing a body of theological truth which man can reach through so-called “natural revelation”.<sup>15</sup> And herein lies the falsity of this method; it derives an answer from the form of the question. Like the naturalistic method, dualism fails to see that the answers must always come from something beyond existence.†

It is essentially at this point that Tillich criticises so-called natural revelation. There is revelation through nature, but there is no natural revelation. Natural revelation, if distinguished from revelation through nature, is a contradiction in terms, for if it is natural knowledge, it is not revelation. Natural knowledge cannot lead to the revelation of the ground of being. It can lead only to the question of the ground of being. But this question is asked neither by natural revelation nor by natural theology. It is the question raised by reason, but reason cannot answer it. Only revelation can answer it. And this answer is based on neither natural revelation nor natural theology, but on real revela-

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\* Tillich, ST, I, 65.

† Tillich, ST, I, 65.

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to man from beyond man’s existence. There is no vertical relationship whatsoever. Whatever is in man completely.”

13. Boozer, “Place of Reason,” p. 263: “To see everything in terms of the natural is as much an error as to see everything in terms of the supernatural.”

14. Boozer, “Place of Reason,” p. 263: “Each is partially right in what it affirms, each is partially wrong in what it denies.”

15. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 65: “The third method to be rejected can be called ‘dualistic,’ inasmuch as it builds a supranatural structure on a natural substructure. This method, more than others, is aware of the problem which the method of correlation tries to meet. It realizes that, in spite of the infinite gap between man’s spirit and God’s spirit, there must be a positive relation between them. It tries to express this relation by positing a body of theological truth which man can reach through his own efforts or, in terms of a self-contradictory expression, through ‘natural revelation.’”

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tion.<sup>16</sup> “Natural theology and, even more definitely, natural revelation are misnomers for the negative side of the revelation of the mystery, for an interpretation of the shock and stigma of nonbeing.”\*

Tillich is quite certain that the method of correlation solves the historical and systematic riddle that has been set forth by the method of dualism. It solves it by resolving so-called natural theology into the analysis of existence and by resolving so-called supranatural theology into the answers given to the questions implied in existence.<sup>17</sup>

## ii. The positive meaning of correlation

We now turn to a discussion of the positive meaning of the method of correlation. The term “correlation” can be used in three ways. It can designate the correspondence of data; it can designate the logical interdependence of concepts, as in polar relations; and it can designate the real interdependence of things or events in structural wholes. In theological construction all three meanings have important implications.<sup>18</sup> We shall discuss each of these meanings respectively. Then, in order to gain a clearer understanding of the method of correlation, we may go on to discuss how systematic theology proceeds in using the method of correlation, and how theology is related to philosophy.

### (1) The correspondence of data

Correlation means correspondence of data in the sense of a correspondence between religious symbols and that which is symbolized by them. It is

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\* Tillich, *ST*, I, 120.

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16. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, pp. 119–120: “‘Natural revelation,’ if distinguished from revelation through nature, is a contradiction in terms, for if it is natural knowledge it is not revelation, and if it is revelation it makes nature ecstatic and miraculous. Natural knowledge about self and world cannot lead to the revelation of the ground of being. It can lead to the question of the ground of being, and that is what so-called natural theology can do and must do. But this question is asked neither by natural revelation nor by natural theology. It is the question of reason about its own ground and abyss. It is asked by reason, but reason cannot answer it. Revelation can answer it. And this answer is based neither on a so-called natural revelation nor on a so-called natural theology. It is based on real revelation, on ecstasy and sign-events.”

17. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, pp. 65–66: “The method of correlation solves this historical and systematic riddle by resolving natural theology into the analysis of existence and by resolving supranatural theology into the answers given to the questions implied in existence.”

18. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 60: “The term ‘correlation’ may be used in three ways. It can designate the correspondence of different series of data, as in statistical charts; it can designate the logical interdependence of concepts, as in polar relations; and it can designate the real interdependence of things or events in structural wholes. If the term is used in theology, all three meanings have important applications.”

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upon the assumption of this correspondence that all utterances about God's nature are made. This correspondence is actual in the logos nature of God and the logos nature of man. There is an understandable contact between God and man because of this common logos nature.<sup>19</sup>

But one cannot stop here because God is always more than ground or reason; God is also abyss. This abyss-nature of God makes it impossible for man ever to speak about God except in symbolic terms.<sup>20</sup> Since this idea of the symbol is such a basic facet of Tillich's thought, we must briefly discuss its meaning.

Tillich regards every theological expression as being a symbolic utterance. Since the unconditional is "forever hidden, transcendent and unknowable, it follows that all religious ideas are symbolical."\* No finite word, form, person or deed can ever be identified with God. There is an infinite gap between man and God.†<sup>21</sup>

God, for Tillich, is not an object or being, not even the highest object or being; therefore, God cannot be approached directly as an object over against man as subject. The "really Real" grasps man into union with itself. Since for Tillich the really real transcends everything in the empirical order it is unconditionally beyond the conceptual sphere. Thus every form or word used to indicate this awareness must be in the form of myth or symbol. As Tillich succinctly states: "Offenbarung ist die Form, in welchem das religiöse Object dem religiösen Glauben theoretisch gegeben ist. Mythos ist die Ausdrucksform für den Offenbarungsinhalt."‡<sup>22</sup>

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\* Tillich, RS, X.

† Tillich, ST, I, 65.

‡ Tillich, Art. (1925), 820.

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19. Boozer, "Place of Reason," pp. 265–266: "(1) Correspondence of data. Correlation means correspondence of data in the sense of a correspondence between religious symbols and that which is symbolized by them. It is upon the assumption of this correspondence that all utterances about God's nature are made. This correspondence is actual in the logos-nature of God and the logos-nature of man. . . . The fact that God and man have a common logos-nature makes possible an understandable contact between God and man."

20. Boozer, "Place of Reason," p. 266: "There is a problem here because God is always more than ground or reason, God is also abyss. The abyss-nature of God makes it impossible for man ever to speak about God except in symbolic terms."

21. Boozer, "Place of Reason," pp. 123–124: "Tillich regards every theological expression as being a symbolic utterance. For since the unconditional is 'forever hidden, transcendent and unknowable, it follows that all religious ideas are symbolical.' The spirit of the Protestant protest is that no finite form, word, person, or deed shall be identified with God. There is an infinite gap between man and God."

22. Boozer, "Place of Reason," pp. 124–125: "God is not an object, not even the highest object. . . . The really real cannot be approached directly as an object over against man as subject. The really real grasps man into union with itself. . . . Since for Tillich the really real transcends everything in the empirical order it is unconditionally beyond the conceptual sphere. Thus every word or form man uses to indicate this awareness of the really real is in the nature of a symbol

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Tillich insists that a symbol is more than a merely technical sign.\* The basic characteristic of the symbol is its innate power. A symbol possesses a necessary character. It cannot be exchanged. A sign, on the contrary, is impotent and can be exchanged at will. A religious symbol is not the creation of a subjective desire or work. If the symbol loses its ontological grounding, it declines and becomes a mere "thing," a sign impotent in itself. "Genuine symbols are not interchangeable at all, and real symbols provide no objective knowledge, but yet a true awareness."†<sup>23</sup> The criterion of a symbol is that through it the unconditioned is clearly grasped in its unconditionedness.<sup>26</sup>

Correlation as the correspondence of data means in this particular case that there is correspondence between religious symbols and that reality which

\* Tillich, Art. (1940)<sup>1</sup>, 14 ff.

† Tillich, Art. (1940)<sup>1</sup>, 28. There seems to be a basic inconsistency in Tillich's thought at this point. The statements, "all knowledge of God has a symbolic character" and "symbols provide no objective knowledge, but yet true awareness" are difficult to reconcile with each other. This contradiction becomes even more pro-

nounced in Tillich's discussion of the analogia entis between the finite and infinite. On the one hand he says, "Without such an analogy nothing could be said about God." On the other hand he says, "It is not a method (analogia entis) of discovering truth about God."<sup>24</sup> It is very difficult for one to make much out of such contradictions. W. M. Urban has expressed the di-

lemma in his effort to understand Tillich (Art. (1940), 34-36). Urban's position is that "unless there is 'analogy of being' between the 'Creator' and the 'created', between being in itself and being for us, it is perfectly futile to talk of either religious symbolism or religious knowledge." (Art. (1940), 35)<sup>25</sup>

or myth. 'Offenbarung ist die Form, in welchem das religiöse Object dem religiösen Glauben theoretisch gegeben ist. Mythos ist die Ausdrucksform für den Offenbarungsinhalt.'

23. Boozer, "Place of Reason," p. 125: "A characteristic of the symbol is its innate power. A symbol possesses a necessary character. It cannot be exchanged. On the other hand a sign is impotent in itself and can be exchanged at will. . . . The religious symbol is not the creation of a subjective desire or work. If the symbol loses its ontological grounding, it declines and becomes a mere 'thing,' a sign impotent in itself. 'Genuine symbols are not interchangeable at all, and real symbols provide no objective knowledge, but yet a true awareness.'"

24. Boozer, "Place of Reason," p. 126: "Even though Tillich is saying essentially that the analogia entis is a power of expression rather than knowledge, the statements, 'without such an analogy nothing could be said about God,' and 'it is not a method of discovering truth about God,' are difficult to reconcile with each other." Schilling wrote on a draft of this chapter that King's footnote was a "sound criticism, I believe" (King, Draft of chapter 2, 1954-1955, MLKP-MBU: Box 96).

25. Boozer, "Place of Reason," p. 128: "W. M. Urban has expressed the same dilemma in his effort to understand Tillich. Urban mentions two of Tillich's statements—'all knowledge of God has a symbolic character;' 'symbols provide no objective knowledge but yet a true awareness'—confessing that he cannot 'make much' out of such contradictions. Urban's position is that 'unless there is "analogy of being" between the "Creator" and the "created," between being in itself and being for us, it is perfectly futile to talk of either religious symbolism or religious knowledge.'"

26. Boozer, "Place of Reason," p. 125: "The criterion of a symbol is that through it the unconditioned is clearly grasped in its unconditionedness."

these symbolize. Once a true religious symbol is discovered one can be sure that here is an implicit indication of the nature of God.<sup>27</sup>

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## (2) Logical interdependence of concepts

A second meaning of correlation is the logical interdependence of concepts. It is polar relationships that fall chiefly under this meaning of correlation. Correlation, as used here, determines the statements about God and the world. The world does not stand by itself. Particular being is in correlation with being-itself. In this second meaning of correlation, then, Tillich moves beyond epistemological considerations to ontological considerations.<sup>28</sup>

Tillich develops a very elaborate system of ontological elements. These elements are individualization and participation,\* dynamics and form,† and freedom and destiny.‡ Each of these stands in polar relationship with each other, neither pole existing apart from the other. This ontological polarity is seen further in being and nonbeing and the finite and infinite. In setting forth these polar relationships Tillich is attempting to overcome the basic weaknesses found in supranaturalism, humanism and dualism. He admits that dualism, more than either of the other methods, is aware of the two poles of reality, but dualism conceives these in a static complementary relationship. Tillich maintains that these poles are related in dynamic interaction, that one pole never exists out of relation to the other pole. Herein is one of Tillich's basic criticisms of Hegel. Hegel, according to Tillich, transcends the tension of existential involvement in the concept of a synthesis.§<sup>29</sup> He identifies exis-

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\* Tillich, ST, I, 174.

† Tillich, ST, I, 178.

‡ Tillich, ST, I, 182.

§ Tillich, IOH, 166.

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27. Boozer, "Place of Reason," p. 267: "Correlation as the correspondence of data means in this particular case that there is correspondence between religious symbols and that reality which these symbolize. Once a true religious symbol has been discovered one can be sure that here is an implicit indication of the nature of God."

28. Boozer, "Place of Reason," pp. 267-268: "(2) Logical interdependence of concepts. A second meaning of correlation is the logical interdependence of concepts. Tillich regards polar relationships as falling under this meaning of correlation. . . . The world does not stand by itself. Particular being is in correlation with being-itself. In the second meaning of correlation, then, Tillich moves beyond an epistemological consideration to an ontological consideration."

29. Boozer, "Place of Reason," p. 268: "These elements are individualization and participation, dynamics and form, and freedom and destiny. These stand in polar relationship with each other, neither pole existing completely apart from the other. The ontological polarity is shown further in being and non-being and the finite and the infinite. . . . Tillich is trying to develop positively what he finds lacking in supranaturalism, humanism and dualism. Dualism is aware of the two poles of reality, but dualism conceives these in a static complementary relationship. Tillich maintains that they are related in a dynamic interaction, that one pole never exists out of relation

15 Apr 1955 tential being with essential being. Tillich believes that no existing being can rise above ambiguity, tension, and angst.<sup>\*</sup> Synthesis is reserved for God. Correlation, then, in the sense of logical interdependence of concepts, implies a polar structure of all existential reality.<sup>30</sup>

### (3) Real interdependence of things or events

The third meaning of correlation designates the real interdependence of things or events in structural wholes. The particular relationship which Tillich is alluding to under this meaning of correlation is the relationship between God and man, the divine-human relationship. The implication of this view is clear, viz., that if there is a divine-human correlation God must be partly dependent upon man.<sup>31</sup> Such a view has evoked strong protest from theologians such as Karl Barth. Tillich, in defending his position at this point, has this significant statement to make:

But although God in his abysmal nature is in no way dependent on man, God in his self manifestation to man is dependent on the way man receives his manifestation.<sup>†</sup>

Here Tillich is apparently saying that God in his essence is to be distinguished from God revealing himself in existence.<sup>32</sup> God as abyss is unconditioned while God as self-manifesting is conditioned by man's receipt of the manifestation.

Tillich insists throughout that God and man are interdependent.

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\* Tillich, IOH, 137, 141.

† Tillich, ST, I, 61.

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to the other pole. One feels here again that it is upon this issue that Tillich criticizes Hegel. For, according to Tillich, Hegel transcends the tension of existential involvement in the concept of a synthesis."

30. Boozer, "Place of Reason," pp. 268-269: "Tillich believes that no existing spirit has the perspective of God, the perspective of synthesis. All existing life is lived in ambiguity, tension, and angst. Correlation in the sense of the logical interdependence of concepts, then, implies a polar-structure of all existential reality."

31. Boozer, "Place of Reason," p. 269: "(3) Real interdependence of things and events. The third meaning of correlation is the real interdependence of things and events. The particular relationship about which Tillich speaks under this meaning of correlation is the relationship between God and man, the divine-human relation. The implication here is clear, that if there is a divine-human correlation God must be to some extent dependent upon man." The following quotation from Tillich appears in Boozer (p. 269).

32. Boozer, "Place of Reason," p. 269: "Tillich is apparently saying here, that God in his essence is to be distinguished from God revealing himself in existence." Boozer also quoted the following passage from Tillich (p. 270).

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The divine-human relation, and therefore God as well as man within this relation, changes with the stages of the history of revelation and with the stages of every personal development. There is a mutual interdependence between "God for us" and "we for God". God's wrath and God's grace are not contrasts in the 'heart' of God (Luther), in the depth of his being; but they are contrasts in the divine-human relationship. The divine-human relation is a correlation. The "divine-human encounter" (Emil Brunner) means something real for both sides. It is an actual correlation, in the third sense of the term.\*

In a real sense, then, God manifests himself in history. This manifestation is never complete because God as abyss is inexhaustible. But God as logos is manifest in history and is in real interdependence with man. The method of correlation seeks to express this relationship.<sup>33</sup>

#### (4) Correlation as existential questions and theological answers in mutual interdependence

"The method of correlation," says Tillich, "explains the contents of the Christian faith through existential questions and theological answers in mutual interdependence."†<sup>34</sup> In using this method systematic theology first makes an analysis of the human situation out of which the existential questions arise, and then proceeds to demonstrate that the symbols used in the Christian message are the answers to these questions. The analysis of the human situation is done in terms of "existentialism." Here the individual becomes aware of the fact that he himself is the door to the deeper levels of reality, and that his own existence reveals something of the nature of existence generally. Whoever has immediately experienced his own finitude can find the traces of finitude in everything that exists.<sup>35</sup>

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\* Tillich, ST, I, 61.

† Tillich, ST, I, 97.

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33. Boozer, "Place of Reason," pp. 270–271: "In a real sense, then, God enters history, God manifests himself in history. This manifestation is never complete because God as abyss is inexhaustible. But God as logos is manifest in history and is in real interdependence with man and man's logos. . . . The method of correlation seeks to express this relationship."

34. Thomas, "Method and Structure," p. 98: "'The method of correlation,' says Tillich, 'explains the contents of the Christian faith through existential questions and theological answers in mutual interdependence' (60)." King's citation to page 97 is incorrect; Thomas correctly cited the quotation to Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 60.

35. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, pp. 62–63: "In using the method of correlation, systematic theology proceeds in the following way: it makes an analysis of the human situation out of which the existential questions arise, and it demonstrates that the symbols used in the Christian message are the answers to these questions. The analysis of the human situation is done in terms which

15 Apr 1955 The analysis of the human situation employs materials from all realms of culture. Philosophy, poetry, drama, the novel, therapeutic psychology, and sociology all contribute. The theologian organizes these materials in relation to the answers given by the Christian message. This analysis of existence may be more penetrating than that of most philosophers.<sup>36</sup> Nevertheless the analysis of the "situation" and the development of the "questions" constitute a "philosophical task." Though this task is carried out by the theologian, he does it as a philosopher, and what he sees is determined only by the object as it is given in his experience.<sup>37</sup>

After the questions have arisen from an analysis of the human situation, the Christian message provides the answers. These answers come from beyond existence and are taken by systematic theology "from the sources, through the medium, under the norm."\* Although the answers are spoken to human existence from beyond it, there is a mutual dependence between question and answer. "In respect to content the Christian answers are dependent on the revelatory events in which they appear; in respect to form they are dependent on the structure of the questions which they answer." †

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\* Tillich, *ST*, I, 64. A word might be said concerning Tillich's conception of the sources, medium and norm of systematic theology. Tillich sharply rejects the neo-orthodox claim that the Bible is the only source of theology, on the ground that the Biblical message could not have been understood and cannot be received without the preparation for it in religion and culture. However, the Bible is the

basic source, since "it is the original document about the events on which the Christian Church is founded" (*ST*, I, 35). In addition to the Bible, the sources are church history, including historical theology, and the history of religion and culture. Experience is the medium through which the sources come to us. On this point Tillich is closer to the Protestant Reformers than he is to the theological empiricists for whom

experience is the main source of systematic theology. He holds that "Christian theology is based on the unique event Jesus the Christ," and that "this event is given to experience and not derived from it" (*ST*, I, 46). The norm of theology is "the 'new Being' in Jesus as the Christ." Here Tillich transcends the norm of both Roman Catholicism and traditional Protestantism. † Tillich, *ST*, I, 64.

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today are called 'existential.' . . . And then he has become aware of the fact that he himself is the door to the deeper levels of reality, that in his own existence he has the only possible approach to existence itself. . . . Whoever has penetrated into the nature of his own finitude can find the traces of finitude in everything that exists."

36. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 63: "The analysis of the human situation employs materials made available by man's creative self-interpretation in all realms of culture. Philosophy contributes, but so do poetry, drama, the novel, therapeutic psychology, and sociology. The theologian organizes these materials in relation to the answer given by the Christian message. In the light of this message he may make an analysis of existence which is more penetrating than that of most philosophers."

37. Thomas, "Method and Structure," p. 98, quoting Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 64: "The analysis of the 'situation' and the development of the 'questions' constitute a 'philosophical task.'"

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We can better understand the method of correlation if we look at an example of its application: the “question” of Reason and the “answer” of Revelation.<sup>38</sup> After one analyzes man’s rationality, especially his cognitive rationality, it is revealed that under the conditions of existence reason falls into “self-destructive conflicts” with itself. The polarity of “structure” and “depth” within reason produces a conflict between “autonomous” and “heteronomous” tendencies, and this conflict leads to “the quest for theonomy.” The polarity between “static” and “dynamic” elements within reason leads to a conflict between “absolutism” and “relativism.” This leads to “the quest for the concrete-absolute.” The polarity between “formal” and “emotional” elements produces a conflict between “formalism” and “irrationalism,” and this conflict leads to the “quest for the union of form and mystery.” “In all three cases,” says Tillich, “reason is driven to the quest for revelation.”\* Also a dilemma arises between “controlling” knowledge and “receiving” knowledge. “Controlling knowledge is safe but not ultimately significant, while receiving knowledge can be ultimately significant, but it cannot give certainty.” † This dilemma leads to the quest for revelation which gives a truth which is both certain and of ultimate concern. The “final revelation” in Jesus Christ, Tillich argues, gives the answers to these questions implied in the existential conflicts of reason. It liberates and reintegrates reason and thus fulfills it.<sup>39</sup> It overcomes the conflict between autonomy and heteronomy by re-establishing their essential unity.<sup>40</sup> Says Tillich,

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\* Tillich, *ST*, I, 83.

† Tillich, *ST*, I, 105.

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Though this task is carried out by the theologian, he does it as a philosopher, and what he sees ‘is determined only by the object as it is given in his experience.’”

38. Thomas, “Method and Structure,” p. 98: “We can understand better the ‘method of correlation’ if we look briefly at an example of its application: the ‘question’ of Reason and the ‘answer’ of Revelation.”

39. Thomas, “Method and Structure,” pp. 98–99, quoting Tillich, *Systematic Theology*: “Under the conditions of existence, Tillich says, reason falls into ‘self-destructive conflicts’ with itself. The polarity of ‘structure’ and ‘depth’ within reason produces a conflict between ‘autonomous’ and ‘heteronomous’ tendencies, and this conflict leads to ‘the quest for theonomy.’ The polarity between ‘static’ and ‘dynamic’ elements within reason leads to a conflict between ‘absolutism’ and ‘relativism.’ This leads to ‘the quest for the concrete-absolute.’ The polarity between ‘formal’ and ‘emotional’ elements produces a conflict between ‘formalism’ and ‘irrationalism.’ This leads to ‘the quest for the union of form and mystery.’ ‘In all three cases,’ Tillich remarks, ‘reason is driven to the quest for revelation’ (83). Also a dilemma arises between ‘controlling’ knowledge and ‘receiving’ knowledge. ‘Controlling knowledge is safe but not ultimately significant, while receiving knowledge can be ultimately significant, but it cannot give certainty.’ This ‘dilemma’ leads to the quest for revelation which gives a truth which is both certain and of ultimate concern (105). The ‘final revelation’ in Jesus as the Christ, Tillich argues, gives the ‘answers’ to these ‘questions’ by overcoming the conflicts within reason. It liberates and reintegrates reason and thus fulfills it (150).”

40. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 147: “Revelation overcomes the conflict between autonomy and heteronomy by re-establishing their essential unity.”

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Final revelation includes two elements which are decisive for the reunion of autonomy and heteronomy, the complete transparency of the ground of being in him who is the bearer of the final revelation, and the complete self-sacrifice of the medium to the content of revelation.\*

Also the final revelation in Christ liberates reason from the conflict between absolutism and relativism by presenting a "concrete absolute." "In the New Being which is manifest in Jesus as the Christ," says Tillich, "the most concrete of all possible forms of concreteness, a personal life, is the bearer of that which is absolute, without condition and restriction."† Again, the final revelation in Christ overcomes the conflict between the formal and the emotional elements in reason through the participation of the whole of a person's life in it and the consequent bringing together of all the elements of reason.<sup>41</sup>

We have described the "method of correlation" and illustrated its application by reference to the correlation of the "question" of Reason with the "answer" of Revelation. This method determines the whole structure of Tillich's system.<sup>42</sup> He says,

The method of correlation requires that every part of my system should include one section in which the question is developed by an analysis of human existence and existence generally, and one section in which the theological answer is given on the basis of the sources, the medium, and the norm of systematic theology.‡

Since the form of the "answers" is determined by the philosophical analysis of the situation, the way in which that analysis is conceived is important for an adequate understanding of the "method of correlation." So we turn to a discussion of Tillich's view of philosophy and its relation to theology.<sup>43</sup>

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\* Tillich, ST, I, 147.

† Tillich, ST, I, 150.

‡ Tillich, ST, I, 66.

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41. Thomas, "Method and Structure," p. 99, quoting Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 150: "For example, it liberates reason from the conflict between absolutism and relativism by presenting a 'concrete absolute.' 'In the New Being which is manifest in Jesus as the Christ,' says Tillich, 'the most *concrete* of all possible forms of concreteness, a personal life, is the bearer of that which is *absolute*, without condition and restriction.' . . . Again, the final revelation in Christ overcomes the conflict between the formal and the emotional elements in reason through the participation of the whole of a person's life in it and the consequent bringing together of all the elements of reason."

42. Thomas, "Method and Structure," p. 99: "We have described the 'method of correlation' and illustrated its application by reference to the correlation of the 'question' of Reason with the 'answer' of Revelation. The *structure* of Tillich's whole system is determined by his use of this method." The following quotation from Tillich also appears in Thomas (p. 99).

43. Thomas, "Method and Structure," pp. 99–100: "Since the form of the 'answers' is determined by the philosophical analysis of the situation, the way in which that analysis is conceived is crucial for any evaluation of the 'method of correlation.' What is Tillich's *view of philosophy* and its relation to theology?"

(5) The meaning of philosophy and its  
relation to theology15 Apr  
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Tillich's conception of the nature of philosophy and its relation to theology is clearly set forth in the following paragraph:

Philosophy asks the ultimate question that can be asked, namely, the question as to what being, simply being, means. . . . It arises out of the philosophical shock, the tremendous impetus of the questions: What is the meaning of being? Why is there being and not not-being? What is the character in which every being participates? . . . Philosophy primarily does not ask about the special character of the beings, the things and events, the ideas and values, the souls and bodies which share being. Philosophy asks what about this being itself. Therefore, all philosophers have developed a "first philosophy", as Aristotle calls it, namely, an interpretation of being. . . . This makes the division between philosophy and theology impossible, for, whatever the relation of God, world, and man may be, it lies in the frame of being; and any interpretation of the meaning and structure of being as being unavoidably such has consequences for the interpretation of God, man, and the world in their interrelations.\*<sup>44</sup>

This rather lengthy quotation reveals that Tillich conceives of philosophy as basically ontology.† He affirms that the Kantians are wrong in making epistemology the true first philosophy, for as later Neo-Kantians like Nicolai Hartmann have recognized, epistemology demands an ontological basis.<sup>45</sup> Since knowing is an act which participates in being, every act of knowing refers at the same time to an interpretation of being.

The attempt of logical positivism and related schools to reduce philosophy to logical calculus has also been unsuccessful. Logical positivism cannot avoid the ontological question.

There is always at least one problem about which logical positivism, like all semantic philosophies, must make a decision. What is the relation of signs, symbols, or logical operations to reality? Every answer to this question says something about the structure of being. It is ontological.‡

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\* Tillich, PE, 85.

† Tillich regards the traditional term "metaphysics" as too abused and distorted to be longer of any service. This abuse came through a misuse of the

syllable "meta" in metaphysics, which in spite of the testimony of all textbooks on philosophy that it means the book after the physics in the collection of Aristotelian writ-

ings has received the meaning of something beyond human experience, open to arbitrary imagination.

‡ Tillich, ST, I, 20.

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44. This quotation also appears in Randall, "Ontology," p. 137.

45. Randall, "Ontology," p. 137: "The Kantians are wrong in making epistemology the true first philosophy, for as later Neo-Kantians like Nicolai Hartmann have recognized, epistemology demands an ontological basis."

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Philosophy necessarily asks the question of reality as a whole; it asks the question of the structure of being.<sup>46</sup> Theology also asks the question of the structure of being. In this sense, theology and philosophy converge. Neither the theologian nor the philosopher can avoid the ontological question.<sup>47</sup>

Though both philosophy and theology deal with the structure of being, they deal with it from different perspectives. Philosophy asks the question of the structure of being in itself; theology deals with the meaning of being for us.<sup>48</sup> "Theology deals with what concerns us inescapably, ultimately, unconditionally."\* There are two ways in which the ultimate concern can be considered. It can be looked at as an event beside other events to be described in detached objectivity; or it can be understood as an event in which he who considers it is existentially involved. In the first case the philosopher of religion is at work. In the second the theologian speaks. The philosopher of religion is only theoretically concerned with the ultimate concern, while the theologian's interpretation of the ultimate concern is itself a matter of ultimate concern.<sup>49</sup>

Theology at its best unites two elements, viz., the existential and the methodical. Theology is the existential and methodical interpretation of an ultimate concern. Theological propositions, therefore, are those which deal with an object in so far as it is related to an ultimate concern. On the basis of this criterion, no object is excluded from theology, not even a piece of stone; and no object is in itself a matter of theology, not even God.<sup>50</sup> Tillich is certain that this criterion "makes theology absolutely universal, on the one hand, and absolutely definite, on the other hand." †

So we can see that the first point of divergence between the philosopher and the theologian is found in their cognitive attitude. The philosopher seeks

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\* Tillich, PE, 87.

† Tillich, Art. (1947), 18.

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46. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 20: "Philosophy asks the question of reality as a whole; it asks the question of the structure of being."

47. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 21: "Neither of them can avoid the ontological question."

48. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 22: "Philosophy deals with the structure of being in itself; theology deals with the meaning of being for us."

49. Paul Tillich, "The Problem of the Theological Method," *Journal of Religion* 27 (January 1947): 17: "It can be looked at as an event beside other events, to be observed and described in theoretical detachment; or it can be understood as an event in which he who considers it is 'existentially' involved. In the first case the philosopher of religion is at work, in the second the theologian speaks. . . . For the theologian the interpretation of the ultimate concern is itself a matter of ultimate concern."

50. Tillich, "Problem of Theological Method," p. 18: "Theology is the existential and, at the same time, methodical interpretation of an ultimate concern. . . . Theological propositions, therefore, are propositions which deal with an object in so far as it is related to an ultimate concern. No object is excluded from theology if this criterion is applied, not even a piece of stone; and no object is in itself a matter of theology, not even God as an object of inference."

to maintain a detached objectivity toward being.<sup>51</sup> He seeks to exclude all personal and historical conditions which might destroy his longing for objectivity. So in this sense the philosopher is like the scientist. 15 Apr 1955

The theologian, quite differently, does not seek to be detached from his object. He is involved in it. He seeks a personal relationship with it. In other words, the attitude of the theologian is commitment to its object.<sup>52</sup>

He is involved—with the whole of his existence, with his finitude and his anxiety, with his self-contradiction and despair, with the healing forces in him and in his social situation. . . . Theology is necessarily existential, and no theology can escape the theological circle.\*

Another point of divergence between the philosopher and the theologian is the difference in their sources. The philosopher looks at the whole of reality and seeks to discover within it the structure of reality. He assumes that there is an identity between the logos of reality as a whole and the logos working in him, so he looks to no particular place to discover the structure of being. The place to look is all places.<sup>53</sup>

The theologian, on the other hand, finds the source of his knowledge not in the universal logos, but in the logos “who became flesh,” and the medium through which he receives knowledge of the logos is not common rationality, but the Church.

A third point of divergence which Tillich finds between philosophy and theology is a difference in their content. The philosopher deals with the categories of being in relation to the material which is structured by them, while the theologian relates the same categories to the quest for a “new being.” The philosopher deals with causality as it appears in physics, while the theologian discusses causality in relation to a first cause, i.e. the ground of the whole series of causes. The philosopher analyzes biological or historical time and discusses astronomical as well as microcosmic space, but the theologian deals with time in relation to eternity and space in relation to man’s existential

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\* Tillich, *ST*, I, 23.

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51. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 22: “The first point of divergence is a difference in the cognitive attitude of the philosopher and the theologian. Although driven by the philosophical *erös*, the philosopher tries to maintain a detached objectivity toward being and its structures.”

52. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, pp. 22–23: “The theologian, quite differently, is not detached from his object but is involved in it. . . . The basic attitude of the theologian is commitment to the content he expounds.”

53. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 23: “The second point of divergence between the theologian and the philosopher is the difference in their sources. The philosopher looks at the whole of reality to discover within it the structure of reality as a whole. . . . He assumes—and science continuously confirms this assumption—that there is an identity, or at least an analogy, between objective and subjective reason, between the *logos* of reality as a whole and the *logos* working in him. . . . There is no particular place to discover the structure of being; . . . The place to look is all places.”

15 Apr 1955 homelessness.<sup>54</sup> Tillich uses several such examples to prove that the content of theology is different from that of philosophy.\*

Just as there is a divergence between philosophy and theology, there is, insists Tillich, an equally obvious convergence. The philosopher like the theologian is caught in an existential situation and has an ultimate concern, whether he realizes it or not. Even the most scientific philosopher must admit this, for if an ultimate concern were lacking, his philosophy would be devoid of passion, seriousness, and creativity.<sup>55</sup> "Every creative philosopher," says Tillich, "is a hidden theologian."†

The theologian is also confronted with the same burden. In order to establish the universal validity of what concerns him ultimately, he like the philosopher must seek to be detached from his existential situation and seek obedience to the universal *logos*. He must take the risk of standing outside of the theological circle.‡

The conclusion that Tillich draws from the duality of divergence and convergence in the relation between theology and philosophy is that there is neither conflict nor synthesis between theology and philosophy.<sup>56</sup> A conflict presupposes a common basis on which to fight. But then there is no common basis between theology and philosophy.<sup>57</sup> When the theologian enters the philosophical arena, he must enter it as a philosopher; only as a philosopher can he be in conflict with another philosopher, that is, he must make his appeal to reason alone.§<sup>58</sup>

There can be no synthesis of philosophy and theology for the same reason: there is no "common basis" on which they can meet. Therefore, the ideal of

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\* See ST, I, 24.

† Tillich, ST, I, 25.

‡ Tillich, ST, I, 25.

§ Tillich, ST, I, 26.

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54. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 24: "The philosopher deals with the categories of being in relation to the material which is structured by them. He deals with causality as it appears in physics or psychology; he analyzes biological or historical time; he discusses astronomical as well as microcosmic space. . . . The theologian, on the other hand, relates the same categories and concepts to the quest for a 'new being.' . . . He discusses causality in relation to a *prima causa*, the ground of the whole series of causes and effects; he deals with time in relation to eternity, with space in relation to man's existential homelessness."

55. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, pp. 24–25: "There is no reason why even the most scientific philosopher should not admit it, for without an ultimate concern his philosophy would be lacking in passion, seriousness, and creativity."

56. Thomas, "Method and Structure," p. 100: "The conclusion Tillich draws from this divergence between philosophy and theology is that there can be neither conflict nor synthesis between them." Cf. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 26: "Neither is a conflict between theology and philosophy necessary, nor is a synthesis between them possible."

57. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 26: "A conflict presupposes a common basis on which to fight. But there is no common basis between theology and philosophy."

58. Thomas, "Method and Structure," p. 100: "When the theologian enters the philosophical arena, he must enter it as a philosopher; only as a philosopher can he be in conflict with another philosopher, that is, he must make his appeal to reason alone."

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the “Christian philosophy” is both futile and self-contradictory, because it denotes “a philosophy which does not look at the universal *logos* but at the assumed or actual demands of a Christian theology.”\* Of course, any Western thinker may be a “Christian philosopher” in the sense of one whose thinking has been in some measure shaped by the Christian tradition, but an “intentionally” Christian philosopher is a contradiction in terms because the philosopher must “subject himself” to nothing but being as he experiences it.<sup>59</sup>

## 2. Wieman’s scientific method

Throughout his writings Wieman contends that the only way to gain true knowledge is through the scientific method. He is convinced that all knowledge must depend ultimately upon science, since “science is nothing else than the refined process of knowing.”† The scientific method is the very center of Wieman’s thought. As Van Dusen puts it:

Scientific Method is more than a thread running through all Professor Wieman’s writings; it is not too much to say that it is the central pivot around which everything else must revolve and in relation to which it must take its reference and obtain its validity.‡

In accepting the scientific method as the only way to distinguish between truth and error, Wieman automatically rejects most traditional “ways of knowing.” In order to gain a clearer understanding of Wieman’s use of the scientific method we may briefly discuss some tests of truth he rejects.

### i. Tests of truth which Wieman rejects

It is often claimed that religious knowledge is peculiarly derived from revelation or faith or authority.<sup>60</sup> Wieman emphatically rejects each of these tests of truth. We may discuss Wieman’s view of them in order.

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\* Tillich, ST, I, 28.

† Wieman, RESM, 23.

‡ Van Dusen, Art. (1931), 711.

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59. Thomas, “Method and Structure,” pp. 100–101: “There can be no *synthesis* of philosophy and theology for the same reason: there is no ‘common basis’ on which they could meet. Therefore there can be no such thing as a ‘Christian philosophy.’ Indeed, the ideal of a ‘Christian philosophy’ is a self-contradictory one, because it denotes ‘a philosophy which does not look at the universal *logos* but at the assumed or actual demands of a Christian theology’ (28). Of course, any Western thinker may be a ‘Christian philosopher’ in the sense of one whose thinking has been in some measure shaped by the Christian tradition, but an ‘intentionally’ Christian philosopher is a contradiction in terms because the philosopher must ‘subject himself’ to nothing but being as he experiences it.”

60. Henry Nelson Wieman, *The Source of Human Good* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946), p. 214: “It is often claimed that religious knowledge is peculiarly derived from revelation

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## (1) Revelation

Some things are held to be true because it is claimed that they are revealed by God to man.<sup>61</sup> The Barthian theologians would insist, for instance, that the only avenue for religious truth is through revelation. Even Tillich, as we have seen, affirms that the final revelation in Jesus Christ gives answers to the questions implied in the existential conflicts of reason. Wieman, however, seeks to show that revelation provides no access to truth beyond the bounds of observation, agreement of observers, and coherence. Revelation in itself is not knowledge, notwithstanding the fact that revelation may be an avenue to knowledge.<sup>62</sup> Revelation for Wieman is "the lifting of the creative event to a place of domination in the devotion of a continuing fellowship to form one enduring strand of history."\* This lifting to a place of domination was not done by man, but by such events as the life and teaching of Jesus, the Crucifixion; the Resurrection; and the forming of the fellowship. The chief consequence of this revelation is not an unveiling of knowledge, but the release of creative power to transform the world into richness of value. The immediate consequence of revelation is faith and salvation, rather than knowledge. In time, however, the religious man gains a knowledge from revelation that he could never have gained without. But this knowledge of revelation, if and when it is attained, demands the same tests of truth as any other knowledge.<sup>63</sup>

Wieman finds revelation to be an inadequate test of truth because it ultimately has to throw us back to some further test. Even if it be affirmed that truth is what God reveals, one must still ascertain what is revelation and what not. One may claim that the Holy Spirit shows what is truly revelation. But how can one know he has the Holy Spirit? In other words, one cannot know what is revelation by further revelation from the Holy Spirit. He must then

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\* Wieman, SHG, 214.

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or faith or intuition or mystical experience or Bible or Jesus Christ or (more narrowly) the teachings of Jesus."

61. Henry Nelson Wieman and Regina Westcott-Wieman, *Normative Psychology of Religion* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1935), p. 118: "Some truths are held because it is claimed they were revealed by God to men."

62. Wieman, *Source of Human Good*, p. 214: "[Revelation] provides no access to truth beyond the bounds of observation, agreement of observers, and coherence. Revelation in itself is not knowledge at all, although it may open the way to knowledge."

63. Wieman, *Source of Human Good*, pp. 214-215: "This lifting to a place of domination was not done by man. It was accomplished by certain events which might be listed thus: the life and teachings of Jesus; the Crucifixion; the Resurrection; the forming of the fellowship. . . . The chief consequence of this revelation is not knowledge but the release of creative power to transform the world into richness of value and to save man from self-destruction and other evils which impoverish and break him. The first consequence of revelation for man is, therefore, faith and salvation. In time he gains knowledge from this revelation that he never could have gained without it. But this knowledge derived from revelation, when and if man attains it, demands the same tests of truth as any other knowledge."

prove not only the validity of the first revelation but also the second. Thus revelation demands some further test. It cannot itself be the test.<sup>64</sup>

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## (2) Faith

Faith is sometimes alleged to be a peculiar way of knowing that can cast off the ordinary tests of truth. For Wieman, however, faith is not knowledge primarily, but is a self-giving.<sup>65</sup> Faith is

the act of deciding to live in a 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 one's self for hidden disloyalties to this devotion, to confess and repudiate these disloyalties.\*

“Since faith is an act,” says Wieman, “it is neither a belief going beyond the evidence nor knowledge.”† It may be guided by the most thoroughly tested and accurate knowledge. But never does human knowledge plumb the full depths of the reality commanding religious commitment of faith. Even when the beliefs directing religious commitment become knowledge of the most precise and thoroughly tested sort, still the knowledge never exhausts the reality commanding faith.‡<sup>66</sup>

## (3) Authority

Another test of truth which Wieman rejects is that of authority. He is quite aware that “authority is indispensable for any extensive accumulation of knowledge.”§ Authority rightly used plays a large part in any form of knowl-

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\* Wieman, SHG, 46.

† Wieman, SHG, 47.

‡ Wieman, SHG, 47, 48.

§ Wieman, NPOR, 118.

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64. Wieman and Westcott-Wieman, *Normative Psychology of Religion*, p. 118: “One must ascertain what revelation is and what not. One may claim that the Holy Spirit shows him what is truly revelation. But how can one know he has the Holy Spirit? One cannot know what is revelation by further revelation from the Holy Spirit. . . . He must then prove not only the validity of the first revelation but also the second. Thus revelation throws us back to some further test. It cannot itself be the test.”

65. Wieman, *Source of Human Good*, p. 215: “Not only revelation but also faith is sometimes alleged to be a peculiar way of knowing that can cast off the ordinary tests of truth. We have tried to show that faith is not knowledge primarily but is a self-giving.”

66. Wieman, *Source of Human Good*, pp. 47–48: “But, still again, faith may be guided by the most thoroughly tested and accurate knowledge. . . . Never does human knowledge plumb the full depths of the reality commanding religious commitment of faith. . . . Even when the beliefs directing religious commitment become knowledge of the most precise and thoroughly tested sort, still the knowledge never exhausts the reality commanding the faith.”

15 Apr 1955 edge.<sup>67</sup> The great insights of science could have never appeared without individual scientists depending on their associates and predecessors by accepting their findings. If they had to test everything for themselves, they would never catch up with what is already known, not to mention going on beyond to some further discovery. Moreover, there are many fields in which we are not equipped to test for ourselves the body of accepted knowledge. Thus authority is an indispensable labor-saving device in the acquisition of knowledge.<sup>68</sup>

But reliable authority simply conserves and hands on to others what has been found to be true by some other test than that of authority.<sup>69</sup> In other words, the trustworthiness of what is found in an authority does not depend upon the authority.<sup>70</sup> Says Wieman, "an authority is reliable in so far as it states accurately what has been discovered, and sets forth fully and correctly the evidence on which this discovery rests."\* Thus authority like revelation depends on some further test of truth.<sup>71</sup>

We may now turn to a discussion of the positive meaning of the scientific method.

## ii. The positive meaning of the scientific method

Wieman defines scientific method as the method in which sensory observation, experimental behavior, and rational inference are working together.<sup>72</sup>

It becomes more fully scientific as (1) observation is made more accurate, selective, and refined; as (2) rational inference is made more pure and rigorous; as

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\* Wieman, NPOR, 119.

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67. Wieman and Westcott-Wieman, *Normative Psychology of Religion*, p. 118: "Authority rightly used plays a large part in any form of knowledge."

68. Wieman and Westcott-Wieman, *Normative Psychology of Religion*, p. 118: "The scientist, for example, could not advance the frontiers of knowledge if he did not stand on the shoulders of his associates and predecessors by accepting their findings. If he had to test everything for himself he would never catch up with what is already known, not to mention going on beyond to some further discovery. Thus authority is a great labor-saving device in the acquisition of knowledge. Also there are many fields in which we are not equipped to test for ourselves the body of accepted knowledge."

69. Wieman and Westcott-Wieman, *Normative Psychology of Religion*, p. 118: "But reliable authority simply conserves and hands on to others what has been found to be true by some other test than that of authority."

70. Wieman and Westcott-Wieman, *Normative Psychology of Religion*, p. 119: "But the trustworthiness of what is found in an authority does not depend upon the authority."

71. Wieman and Westcott-Wieman, *Normative Psychology of Religion*, p. 118: "Thus authority, like revelation, depends on some further test of truth."

72. Henry Nelson Wieman, "Authority and the Normative Approach," *Journal of Religion* 16, no. 2 (1936): 184: "Scientific method is the method of sensory observation, experimental behavior, and rational inference, these three working together."

- (3) experimental behavior is made to operate under controlled conditions and  
 (4) as these three are made to check one another more closely.\*

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This method repudiates pure rationalism, pure behaviorism and pure observation. It demands that all three enter into the forming, the correcting and the validating of any belief about any reality. These three tests of truth apply to every proposition alleged to be true, whether it is in the field of common sense, science, philosophy, or religion.

Wieman seeks to make it clear at every point that the scientific method is not to be confused with positivism, the view that we get our knowledge from sensation alone. Sensation alone can never give knowledge. Neither can abstract reason alone yield knowledge. First observation under the control of reason must discover some order in the field of sensuous experience. After discovering such an order, it becomes possible to follow it by pure reason beyond the reach of sensuous experience. But the starting point is what is sensible, and it is necessary to be able to come back to what is sensible for verification. So according to this method, knowledge is not limited to sensation, but neither can it dispense with sensation.

It might be well at this point to say a few words concerning Wieman's conception of observation, since it commands such a central position in Wieman's methodology. Observation is a series of perceptual events. The perceptual event is not merely sense data.<sup>73</sup> The perceptual event "includes everything within and without the biological organism, which experiment can demonstrate makes a difference to conscious awareness when the perceptual reaction occurs."† When the perceptual event is so interpreted it is clearly seen that it is only an infinitesimal part of the total universe. Innumerable happenings are constantly occurring in the wide reaches of the world which make no difference whatsoever to the conscious awareness accompanying the perceptual reaction of the organism.<sup>74</sup>

Many structures are present or ingredient in every perceptual event. Far fewer are common to a sequence of such events. From these that are common, selective attention picks out one, and that is what is perceived.<sup>75</sup>

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\* Wieman, Art. (1936)<sup>1</sup>, 184.

† Wieman, SHG, 182.

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73. Wieman, *Source of Human Good*, p. 181: "Observation, as here understood, is a series of perceptual events. The perceptual event is not merely sense data."

74. Wieman, *Source of Human Good*, p. 182: "Complex and intricate as the perceptual event is, when so interpreted, it is only an infinitesimal part of the total universe. Experiment easily shows that innumerable happenings can occur in the wide reaches of the world, and even in close proximity to the organism, perhaps also in it, which make no difference whatsoever to the conscious awareness accompanying the perceptual reaction of the organism."

75. Wieman, *Source of Human Good*, p. 182: "Innumerable structures are ingredient in every perceptual event. Far fewer are common to a sequence of such events. From these that are com-

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Wieman is convinced that all knowledge is achieved by perception, even metaphysical knowledge. The only difference between metaphysical knowledge and other forms of knowledge is that the former is achieved “by a more elaborate analysis of perceptual events to the end of discovering structures not merely common to a selected series but those essential to all perceptual events whatsoever.”\* Time and space, for example, are essential ingredients in every perceptual event. This is discovered by an analysis of perceptual events. Wieman thinks that all categories sought by metaphysical or other philosophical inquiry can be uncovered by proper analysis of the perceptual event.†<sup>76</sup> As we shall see subsequently, even God is known by way of perception. So we can say that, for Wieman, observation enters into all cases of getting genuine knowledge.<sup>77</sup> Not even reason can gain knowledge without observation. There must be a working together of the two. In the final analysis the scientific method means “observation under control of reason, and reason under the control of observation.”‡

Wieman also stresses the point that the scientific method requires the utmost use of imagination. Nothing of great importance can be discovered without the great power of imagination. The imagination is needed to construct a theoretical order. But all such imagination must be constantly under the control of reason and observation, else it will give us only the constructions of human fancy and build around us a wall of dreams to shut out objective reality.

In his book, The Issues of Life, Wieman analyzes the scientific method in 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

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\* Wieman, SHG, 182.

† Wieman, SHG, 183.

‡ Wieman, Art. (1932)<sup>2</sup>, 109.

§ Wieman feels that this is the most difficult step of all. It is here that the greatest genius is dis-

played, in religion and science, and in every other branch of life where discovery is demanded.

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<sup>76</sup> Wieman, *Source of Human Good*, pp. 182–183: “Time and space, for example, are essential ingredients in every perceptual event. This we discover by analysis of perceptual events. . . . all the categories sought by metaphysics or other philosophical inquiry can be uncovered by proper analysis of the perceptual event.”

<sup>77</sup> Wieman, *Source of Human Good*, p. 187: “We have tried to show that observation enters into all cases of getting genuine knowledge.”

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has been observed to happen and test these inferences, just as the original idea was tested, namely by steps one, two, and three just described.\*<sup>78</sup>

These, in short, are the steps of the scientific method. Here it is again made explicit that the only valid test of any belief is observation combined with reason. In order to gain a clearer understanding of Wieman's use of the scientific method, we turn to a discussion of the knowledge of God through the scientific method.

### iii. Knowledge of God through the scientific method

Wieman rejects the view that knowledge of God is a special kind of knowledge which comes through special faculties like feeling, intuition, faith, and moral will. It is true that all of these designate a kind of immediate experience which provides the data that may lead to the knowledge of God. But it is erroneous to identify knowledge with immediate experience. "Immediate experience never yields knowledge, although it is one indispensable ingredient in knowledge inasmuch as it provides the data from which knowledge may be derived."†

All of this leads Wieman to affirm emphatically that we know God just as we know any other object; that there are no other faculties of knowledge except those by which we know ordinary objects.

The method by which Wieman seeks to gain knowledge of God is the same as that used to gain knowledge of any other object, viz., the scientific method. As we have seen above, Wieman is quite certain that without this scientific method we have no accurate method of verifying our ideas or of distinguishing between truth and error.<sup>79</sup>

Wieman admits that because of the exceeding complexity of the data of

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\* Weiman, IOL, 187–188.

† Wieman, RESM, 22.

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78. Henry Nelson Wieman, *The Issues of Life* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1930), pp. 187–188: "(1) Forming an idea of what course of action will produce specified consequences by observing various consequences that have issued from specified conditions. This first step is the most difficult of all. It is here that the greatest genius is displayed, not only in religion, but in the sciences and in every branch of life where discovery is demanded. . . . (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 to happen and test these inferences just as the original idea was tested, namely, by steps one, two, and three just described."

79. Henry Nelson Wieman, *Religious Experience and Scientific Method* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1926), p. 46: "Without a science we have no accurate method of verifying our ideas and certainly distinguishing between truth and error."

15 Apr 1955 religious experience no method has yet been devised which can treat them scientifically. But all effort on the part of religious thinkers must be in that direction.

Only by developing a scientific technique which is fit and able to interpret correctly the significance of that which is given in immediate experience when immediate experience is at that flood-tide called mysticism can God be known. It is probable He can never be known completely; but we can increase our knowledge of Him by contemplation which draws on mysticism from one side and from scientific method on the other.\*

Wieman proceeds to formulate the requirements for a scientific knowledge of God in the following manner:

In moving toward a more adequate, i.e., a more scientific knowledge of God, even though we approach from afar off, three things are required: (1) a clarification of the type of experience which can be called distinctively religious; (2) an analysis or elucidation of that datum in this experience which signifies the object being experienced and (3) inference concerning the nature of this object.†

In order to assure the success of the scientific method in obtaining knowledge of God men will have to relinquish all claim to knowledge of God except that obtainable by the combination of observation and reason. Sense experience of God is the first indispensable step in acquisition of knowledge of God through the scientific method. But the element of sense experience is only one side of the pole. The data of sense must be subjected to the scrutiny of reflection.

For Wieman, the adequacy of one's concept of God must ultimately be tested by three questions: 1. Does the concept designate that something in all being upon which human life must depend and to which humans must adjust, in order to attain the greatest possibilities of good? 2. Does it deal adequately with the problem of evil? 3. Is it true to religious experience.‡

There can be no doubt, asserts Wieman, that men are persistently meeting a reality like this. This reality must be God. When men come to the point of living the contemplative life, they know more about this God.§

Wieman continually affirms that God is an object of perception. He is just as capable of being perceived as any other object in the physical world.¶ Per-

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\* Wieman, RESM, 84-85.

† Wieman, RESM, 33.

‡ Wieman, WRT, 198.

§ By the contemplative life Wieman does not mean a life of passive reflection, but a life which includes both maximum

awareness and appreciation of sense experience.

¶ Wieman admits that the perception by which God is known is "perception wherein the analysis and the search are carried much further than the automatic and habitual

analysis and selection made by automatic reactions of the organism." (SHG, 183) These are sufficient for perceiving hills and houses, but not for perceiving God, "the everlasting creative event."<sup>80</sup>

ception of God is possible because God reveals himself. Through revelation God provides the preliminary conditions for perception of himself.

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Revelation is the development in some strand of history and in some community, of those meanings, of those perceptual events, and of that structured interrelation of events whereby God can be known. The development of meanings and perceptual events pertaining to God is the work of that creativity which generated all meanings.\*

But even after these meanings, perceptual events, and structures have been provided, men do not necessarily perceive God.

There are special commitments, discipline, and practices, as well as the general procedures of all empirical inquiry, to which men must subject themselves to perceive God after revelation is accomplished, just as they must do this to attain knowledge of any other complex object of cognition.†

From this interpretation of revelation Wieman seeks to explain why God is hidden. He sets forth the following four explanations for God's hiddenness. (1) God is hidden where and when he has not revealed himself. (2) He is hidden where and when men will not follow the methods and submit to the disciplines necessary to achieve true perception. (3) He is hidden when men hold to myth and revelation as a kind of knowledge. (4) He is hidden when men's appreciations and evaluations are so formed and directed that they cannot appreciate the divine significance of that creativity which generates all real value.‡<sup>81</sup> When the idea of the hiddenness of God is so interpreted, Wieman is certain that a major stumbling block to the perception of God is removed.

Another misunderstanding which must be removed if God is to be perceived is that concerning the nature and function of myth. "Myth," says Wieman, "is a statement, rather complex as a rule by which conduct, attitude, and devotion are directed to deal religiously with important reality without intellectual understanding of what they really mean."§ Wieman admits that myth, while lacking cognitive proficiency, possesses pragmatic efficacy. It may even be indispensable in dealing with some of the most important and complex realities because of the limitations of man's intellectual understanding. The

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\* Wieman, Art. (1943)<sup>1</sup>, 28.

† Wieman, Art. (1943)<sup>1</sup>, 28.

‡ Wieman, Art. (1943)<sup>1</sup>, 29.

§ Wieman, Art. (1943)<sup>1</sup>, 30.

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81. Henry Nelson Wieman, "Can God Be Perceived?" *Journal of Religion* 23 (1943): 29: "This interpretation of revelation explains why God is hidden. God is hidden, first of all, where and when he has not revealed himself. He is hidden, in the second place, where and when men will not follow the methods, submit to the disciplines, and use the categories required to achieve true perception. He is hidden, in the third place, when men hold to myth and revelation as to a kind of knowledge. He is hidden, fourth (and this is the most tragic cause of his hiddenness), when men's appreciations and evaluations are so formed and directed that they cannot appreciate the divine significance of that creativity which generates all real value."

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central Christian myth of the crucified and yet living Christ, for instance, is a way of saying

that the reality with which we deal through the myth of Christ is so deep and so high, so intimate and so complex, that our intellectual understanding is inadequate.\*

Myths are not false; but neither are they true. The pragmatic efficacy of the myth in directing one to important reality is simply a fact. It simply happens when and if it does happen. These happenings either occur or do not. When they occur, they are neither true nor false. Only propositions about them can be true or false.<sup>82</sup>

The myth when rightly interpreted is seen to be a valuable way of directing conduct and devotion to important reality. But when myth is thought to be knowledge it confuses the mind and makes impossible perceptual knowledge of God.

A final confusion which Wieman seeks to dissipate in order to make perceptual knowledge of God possible pertains to the work of theology.<sup>83</sup> He thinks that the work of theology should be limited to the job of

criticizing and revising the myths so that they will continue to be efficacious and reliable guides to God within the changing context of the prevailing culture.†

Since myths will always be there, some field of expert scholarship must be devoted to the task. When theology goes beyond this and pursues the cognitive job of getting knowledge of God, it ends in a morass of confusion and futility.<sup>84</sup>

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\* Wieman, Art. (1943)<sup>1</sup>, 30.

† Wieman, Art. (1943)<sup>1</sup>, 31–32. It is difficult to follow Wieman at this point. In most instances

he contends that theology should give us knowledge of God. But here he is contending that theology should only criticize and revise religious myths so

as to nurture experience of creativity. It is hard to make much of this contradiction.

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82. Wieman, "Can God Be Perceived?" p. 30: "Myths are not false; neither are they true. . . . But the pragmatic efficacy of the myth in directing us to the uncomprehended reality of God is simply a fact. It happens, when and if it does happen, as thunder and winter and tides happen. These happenings either occur or do not. When they do not, they are not false, and when they do, they are not true. Only propositions about them can be false or true."

83. Wieman, "Can God Be Perceived?" p. 31: "But when myth is thought to be knowledge it confuses the mind and diverts it from those procedures by which alone knowledge can be achieved. . . . The last confusion that must be dissipated, if we are to have the perceptual knowledge of God that we need, pertains to the work of theology."

84. Wieman, "Can God Be Perceived?" p. 32: "Since we must always have myths, no matter how much more knowledge is now required to supplement them, some field of expert scholarship must be devoted to this task. . . . If we follow that trail with that intent, we end in a morass of confusion and futility."

Wieman is quite certain that once these misunderstandings concerning revelation, myth and theology are removed one can move toward perception of God. This point of the perception of God is so important to Wieman because he is seeking to be a thoroughgoing empiricist at every point. That which cannot be observed does not exist. 15 Apr 1955

### 3. A comparison and evaluation of the methodologies of Tillich and Wieman

The methodologies of Tillich and Wieman are quite divergent at many points. As we have seen, Wieman contends that one only gains true knowledge through the scientific method. All knowledge, whether it is knowledge of God or knowledge of a stick or stone, is obtained through the scientific method. With this contention, Tillich is in strong disagreement. He looks upon this "methodological imperialism" as being as dangerous as political imperialism, for, like the latter, "it breaks down when the independent elements of reality revolt against it."\* It is Tillich's conviction that the adequacy of a method cannot be decided *a priori*; rather it is continually being decided in the cognitive process itself. For Tillich, method and system determine each other, making it absolutely erroneous for any method to claim to be adequate for every subject.<sup>85</sup>

Another point of disagreement between Tillich and Wieman is on the question of existential participation. Wieman's attempt to be a thoroughgoing empiricist causes him to look askance upon anything that smacks of existentialism. He seeks to deal with the data of theology through detached objectivity. Tillich, on the other hand, is convinced that the existential factor cannot be eliminated from theology. And so he contends, contrary to Wieman, that theology can never be an "empirical science." The object of theology, asserts Tillich, is not an object within the whole of scientific experience. Theology does not deal with objects that can be "discovered by detached observation," or "tested by scientific methods of verification." In these methods the testing subject is always outside the test situation. But the object of theology, says Tillich, can be verified only by a participation in which the testing theologian risks himself in the ultimate sense of "to be or not to be."<sup>86</sup> Tillich contends

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\* Tillich, ST, I, 60.

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85. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 60: "Whether or not a method is adequate cannot be decided *a priori*; it is continually being decided in the cognitive process itself. Method and system determine each other. Therefore, no method can claim to be adequate for every subject."

86. Horton, "Tillich's Role in Contemporary Theology," p. 39: "Macintosh and Wieman have claimed that theology is an 'empirical science' in this sense; Tillich finds the claim entirely groundless. Theology does not deal with objects that can be 'discovered by detached observation' or 'tested by scientific methods of verification,' which always eliminate the personal equation. 'The

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that "this test is never finished not even in a complete life of experience. An element of risk remains and makes an experimental verification in time and space impossible."\*

Tillich thinks that the demand for existential participation is confirmed by the results of scientific-experiential theology itself. Without such an existential participation Wieman's "creative process," for instance, is a nonreligious concept: with it, it is no longer a scientific concept.<sup>87</sup> Tillich is certain that "in no case can scientific experience as such produce a foundation and source of systematic theology."<sup>†</sup><sup>88</sup>

Tillich does not totally eliminate the empirical factor from his theological method. Like Wieman, he sees the importance of the empirical factor in theology. But he is not willing to carry it as far as Wieman. Tillich prefers to stand "on the boundary" between Barth and Wieman on the issue of theological empiricism.<sup>89</sup>

When it comes to the question of the rational factor in theological methodology, both Tillich and Wieman concur on its importance. We have seen how Wieman applies rational inference to sensory observation and experimental behavior to achieve the proper results of the scientific method. We have also seen how Tillich employs semantic, logical, and methodological rationality in his theological system. Tillich insists that the dialectical character of his method of correlation does not mean that it is opposed to logic and rationality; for "dialectics follows the movement of thought or movement of reality through yes and no, but it describes it in logically correct terms."<sup>‡</sup> So for Tillich and Wieman reason plays an important part in methodological construction.

Tillich goes beyond Wieman, however, by insisting that reason needs revelation. Therefore revelation receives a very prominent place in the methodology of Tillich. He holds that the final revelation in Jesus Christ gives answers to the questions implied in the existential conflicts of reason. Wieman seeks to

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\* Tillich, ST, I, 44.

† Tillich, ST, I, 44.

‡ Tillich, ST, I, 56.

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object of theology can be verified only by a participation in which the testing theologian risks himself in the ultimate sense of "to be or not to be.""

87. Horton, "Tillich's Role in Contemporary Theology," p. 39: "Without such an existential participation Wieman's 'creative process' and Brightman's 'cosmic person' are nonreligious concepts; with it, they are no longer 'scientific' concepts."

88. King submitted a draft of this chapter that ended with this paragraph. Schilling commented: "Here you should go on to show what you think of W's criticism. I believe also that a brief Section 3 in Chap. II. summarizing the main points of similarity & difference betw. T. & W. would greatly increase the value of the chapter" (King, Draft of chapter 2).

89. Horton, "Tillich's Role in Contemporary Theology," p. 39: "Tillich's place in American Protestant theology might be briefly summarized by saying that he stands 'on the boundary' between Barth and Wieman on the issue of theological empiricism."

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show that revelation provides no access to truth beyond the bounds of observation and agreement of observers.<sup>90</sup> His theory of revelation abjures any attempt to make revelation a part of supernaturally mediated knowledge. Tillich would agree that revelation adds nothing to the totality of our ordinary knowledge, i.e., to our knowledge about the subject-object structure of reality.<sup>91</sup> But he would disagree with Wieman's assertion that revelation mediates no form of knowledge. Tillich affirms that revelation mediates knowledge about the mystery of being to us, not about beings and their relation to one another. There is one other qualification that Tillich makes concerning knowledge of revelation, namely, that it can be received only in the situation of revelation, and it can be communicated—in contrast to ordinary knowledge—only to those who participate in this situation. According to this view, revelation cannot interfere with knowledge that is ordinary. Likewise, ordinary knowledge cannot interfere with knowledge of revelation.<sup>92</sup>

Several points concerning Wieman's scientific method and Tillich's method of correlation require comment.

1. Wieman insists that the religious inquirer seeking knowledge of God must stick to what is immediately given within the fluid process of "sensory experience, experimental behavior and rational inference."<sup>93</sup> This is what Wieman means by the requirements of thoroughgoing empiricism. Such a method seeks to eliminate faith and analogical reference from the quest for knowledge of God.

But is it possible to eliminate faith and analogical reference from genuine knowledge of God, or from any knowledge for that matter? The outcome of such an elimination would be, as Santayana has shown, a "solipsism of the present moment."\* Without faith and recourse to analogy it is impossible to develop a working knowledge of the actual world.

Certainly Wieman is not consistent in his attempt to eliminate faith and analogical reference from the quest for knowledge of God. He says, for instance, that "the terms 'process' and 'interaction' apply to everything that ex-

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\* Santayana, SAF, 14–18.

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90. King used the previous two sentences earlier in this chapter; see p. 370 in this volume.

91. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 109: "Nor does [revelation] add anything directly to the totality of our ordinary knowledge, namely, to our knowledge about the subject-object structure of reality."

92. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, pp. 129–130: "Knowledge of revelation is knowledge about the revelation of the mystery of being to us, not information about the nature of beings and their relation to one another. Therefore, the knowledge of revelation can be received only in the situation of revelation, and it can be communicated—in contrast to ordinary knowledge—only to those who participate in this situation. . . . Knowledge of revelation cannot interfere with ordinary knowledge. Likewise, ordinary knowledge cannot interfere with knowledge of revelation."

93. This quotation is from Wieman, "Authority and the Normative Approach," p. 184.

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ists because everything in existence is a process and interacts with other things.”\* But how is this known? Certainly not by direct observation. In such affirmations one must assume that what lies beyond observation is analogous to what is observed. Since it is possible to observe only an infinitesimal portion of all that has been, is, and will be, it can be truly said that any assertion made about anything that exists will involve a bold use of analogy.

2. One of the weak points of the scientific method in religion is that this method omits so much valid experience. Science must inevitably be selective and exclusive. In a world of such infinite variety and richness, science by the nature of its instruments and procedures must limit itself to a few items or elements within that richness. Thus a vast wealth of potential experience is always deliberately ignored in any scientific endeavor. Whatever may be the merit of the foregoing, the surprising thing is that Wieman states categorically: “We do not yet have any knowledge of God that we can call scientific.” This would seem to mean that the purely scientific methodology is a hope and not a fact.

3. Even if the scientific method were a fact it would hardly be adequate for religion. The scientific method requires that the investigator maintain a detached objectivity toward his object. He must seek to exclude all personal and historical conditions which might destroy his longing for objectivity. The theologian, on the other hand, does not seek to be detached from his object. He seeks a personal relationship with it. In other words, the attitude of the theologian is commitment to his object. Tillich’s criticism of Wieman’s method at this point is quite sound.

4. It seems that Tillich begs the question as to the relation between philosophy and theology in his contention that the philosopher seeks the truth only in the whole of reality, and never looks for it in any particular place. There is nothing to prevent a philosopher from finding the key to the nature of reality in a particular part of reality. Indeed this is what the creative philosopher has done all along. He takes as his starting point some particular aspect of reality which seems to him to provide the clue to an understanding of reality as a whole.<sup>94</sup>

Now the philosopher who is a Christian does not differ from other philosophers in starting with a belief which he takes as the key to reality. He finds the key to reality in the event of God’s revelation in Jesus the Christ. This does

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\* Wieman, Art. (1936)<sup>2</sup>, 430.

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94. Thomas, “Method and Structure,” p. 101: “But Tillich begs the question as to the relation between philosophy and theology when he asserts that the philosopher seeks the truth only in ‘the whole of reality,’ ‘the universal *logos* of being,’ and never looks for it in any particular place. For there is nothing to prevent a philosopher from finding the key to the nature of reality in a concrete manifestation, a particular part of reality. Indeed, every creative philosopher must take as his starting point some part or aspect of reality which seems to him to provide the clue to an understanding of reality as a whole.”

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not mean that having found the key in a particular event, he should cease to look at the universal structure of being. The fact that he has found the key enables him to look at the structure of being with a clearer understanding of it.<sup>95</sup>

So it seems that Tillich's contention that there can be no Christian philosophy is somewhat exaggerated. He thinks that the ideal of a Christian philosophy is impossible because philosophy must approach the structure of being with detachment and without reference to its meaning for us. Yet Tillich himself, admits that every great philosopher has an ultimate concern, and has been in a sense a theologian. If this is so the distinction between philosophy and theology is relative, not absolute. Therefore Tillich's effort to distinguish between theology and philosophy in the last analysis breaks down.\*<sup>96</sup>

5. In seeking to distinguish between philosophy and theology it seems that Tillich leaves a too sharp dualism between the theoretical and existentialism or "practical." This is one of the things that both existentialism and American instrumentalism have sought to break down. As J. H. Randall, Jr. puts it, "The theoretical interest or 'pure reason,' . . . is not something opposed to the practical and existential. Rather, theory and detached objectivity are moments or stages in a broader context or matrix of 'practice'."† Tillich is quite aware of this, but he still does not entirely free himself of the old Kantian dualism in which "pure reason" is set over against "practical reason." Tillich fails to take the existential character of theory seriously enough.<sup>97</sup>

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\* For a further elaboration of this criticism see G. F. Thomas, Art. (1952), 101-104.

† Randall, Art. (1952), 141.

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95. Thomas, "Method and Structure," p. 101: "Now the philosopher who is a Christian does not differ from other philosophers in starting with a belief which he takes as the key to reality. . . . This does not mean that, having found the key in a *particular* place, he should cease to look at the *universal* structure of being. . . . But the fact that he has found the key enables him to look at the structure of being with a clearer understanding of it."

96. Thomas, "Method and Structure," p. 102: "The main reason Tillich rejects the possibility of such a Christian philosophy is that he thinks philosophy must approach the structure of being with detachment and without existential concern. For it is only on this supposition that philosophy has to be restricted to the purely 'critical' task of analyzing the structure of being without reference to its meaning for us. Yet Tillich himself admits that the creative philosophers have been moved by an ultimate concern, and hence have been in a sense theologians. If so, the distinction between philosophy and theology is relative, not absolute." In the margin on a draft of this chapter Schilling wrote that King's "criticism [was] well-grounded & developed." He asked next to the last sentence: "What about his 3rd point of divergence?" (King, Draft of chapter 2).

97. Randall, "Ontology," p. 141: "It clearly does not take the 'existential' character of theory seriously enough."

## Chapter III

## TILlich'S CONCEPTION OF GOD

## 1. The question of being

It is impossible to understand Tillich's conception of God without a prior knowledge of his ontology as a whole, since it is his ultimate position that "God is being-itself." To attempt to understand Tillich's conception of God without an understanding of his conception of being is like trying to understand the humanistic conception of God without understanding its conception of man. So we may well begin our study with a discussion of Tillich's ontological position.

Tillich insists that the core of philosophy is the ontological question, and this ontological question is logically prior to every other. Thought must start with being; it cannot go behind it. Ontology is possible because there are concepts less universal than "being," but more universal than the concepts that designate a particular realm of beings. Such ontological concepts have been called "principles," "categories" or ultimate notions.\* Tillich's analysis of these concepts is the very heart of his philosophy.<sup>1</sup>

These concepts, he holds, are strictly *a priori*. They are necessary conditions for experience itself. They are present whenever something is experienced, and hence constitute the very structure of experience. Tillich makes it emphatically clear that this does not mean that the concepts are known prior to experience; on the contrary, "they are products of a critical analysis of experience."<sup>†2</sup>

Taken seriously this Kantian language implies that the "being" to be analyzed is to be found only in the knower, and not, except derivatively, in the known.<sup>3</sup> But this is exactly what Tillich seems to be denying, for he says that

\* Tillich, ST, I, 166.

† Tillich, ST, I, 165.

1. Randall, "Ontology," p. 151: "Ontology is the core of philosophy, and the ontological question of the nature of being is logically prior to all others. Ontology is possible because there are concepts less universal than 'being,' but more universal than the concepts that designate a particular realm of beings. Such ontological concepts have been called 'principles,' 'categories,' or 'ultimate notions.' Tillich's analysis of these concepts is the heart of his philosophy."

2. Randall, "Ontology," p. 151: "Such concepts, he holds, are strictly '*a priori*': they are present whenever something is experienced, and determine the nature of experience itself. . . . This does not mean that they can be known prior to experience: they are known rather through the critical analysis of actual instances of experience."

3. Randall, "Ontology," p. 151: "Taken seriously, such language implies that the 'being' to be analyzed is to be found only in the knower, and not, except derivatively, in the known; and this is the essence of an idealistic epistemology."

the structure of experience is discovered in experience, by analysis. In other words Tillich's language implies the Kantian critical philosophy, while his analysis implies an epistemological realism.\* 15 Apr 1955

Tillich distinguishes four levels of ontological concepts: (1) the basic ontological structure; (2) the "elements" constituting that structure; (3) the characteristics or being which are the conditions of existence, or "existential being;" and (4) the categories of being and knowing.<sup>4</sup> We shall discuss each of these in order.

### i. The basic ontological structure

The basic starting point for ontology, in Tillich's thought, is the self-world correlation. The ontological question, "what is being?" presupposes an asking "subject" and an object about which the question is asked; it presupposes the subject-object structure of being. This in turn presupposes the self-world structure as the basic articulation of being; being is man encountering the world. This logically and experientially precedes all other structure.<sup>5</sup>

#### (1) Man, self and world

Man experiences himself as having a world to which he belongs, and it is from the analysis of this polar relationship between man and the world that the basic ontological structure is derived. Since man is estranged from nature, and is unable to understand it in the way he understands man—he does not know what men's behavior means to men—the principles which constitute the universe must be sought in man himself. Following Heidegger's Sein und Zeit, Tillich finds "being there" (Dasein)—the place where the structure of being is manifest—given to man within himself. "Man is able to answer the ontological

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\* In criticizing Tillich at this point Randall has said: "The Kantian language hardly seems essential to Tillich's position, or even indeed, ultimately

compatible with it. The structure of experience is discovered in experience, by analysis; it is recognized within the process of experiencing. Why

then call it a presupposition, which suggests that it is brought to experience from elsewhere?" (Randall, Art. (1952), 151).

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4. Randall, "Ontology," p. 152: "Tillich distinguishes four levels of ontological concepts: (1) the basic ontological structure; (2) the 'elements' constituting that structure; (3) the characteristics of being which are the conditions of existence, or 'existential being'; and (4) the categories of being and knowing."

5. Randall, "Ontology," p. 152: "The ontological question, 'What is being?' presupposes an asking 'subject' and an 'object' about which the question is asked; it presupposes the subject-object structure of being. This in turn presupposes the self-world structure as the basic articulation of being: being is man encountering the world. This logically and experientially precedes all other structures."

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question himself because he experiences directly and immediately the structure of being and its elements.”\* Tillich makes it palpably clear that this approach does not mean that it is easier to get a knowledge of man “sufficient for our purposes” than a knowledge of nonhuman objects. It means rather that man is aware of the structures which make cognition possible. Being is revealed not in objects, but in “the conditions necessary for knowing.” “The truth of all ontological concepts is their power of expressing that which makes the subject-object structure possible. They constitute this structure.” †<sup>6</sup>

Being a self means that man is both subject and object. He is a subject in the sense that he is so separated from everything as to be able to look at it and act upon it. He is object in the sense that he so belongs to the world, that he is an intimate part of the process. But each factor determines the other. It is wrong to assume that the environment wholly explains behavior.<sup>7</sup>

The mistake of all theories which explain the behavior of a being in terms of environment alone is that they fail to explain the special character of the environment in terms of the special character of the being which has such an environment. Self and environment determine each other.‡

Moreover, because man has an ego-self,§ he transcends every possible spatio-temporal environment. His “world” cannot be thought of simply as an aggre-

\* Tillich, ST, I, 169.

† Tillich, ST, I, 169.

‡ Tillich, ST, I, 170.

§ In speaking of man as an ego-self Tillich means that man possesses self-consciousness, in contrast to other beings who are

not fully developed selves.

He writes, “selfhood or self-centeredness must be attributed in some measure to all living beings, and in terms of analogy, to all individual Gestalten even in the inorganic

realm. . . . Man is a fully developed and completely centered self. He ‘possesses’ himself in the form of self-consciousness. He has an ego-self.” (ST, I, 169, 170).

6. Randall, “Ontology,” p. 152: “Man experiences himself as having a world to which he belongs, and it is from the analysis of this polar relationship between man and the world that the basic ontological structure is derived. Since man is estranged from nature, and is unable to understand it in the way he understands man—he does not know what the behavior of things means to them, as he does know what men’s behavior means to men—the principles which constitute the universe must be sought in man himself. Following Heidegger’s *Sein und Zeit*, Tillich finds ‘being there’ (*Dasein*)—the place where the structure of being is manifest—given to man within himself. ‘Man is able to answer the ontological question himself because he experiences directly and immediately the structure of being and its elements’ within himself. This does not mean that it is easier to get a knowledge of man ‘sufficient for our purposes’ than a knowledge of nonhuman objects. . . . It means that man is aware of ‘the structure that makes cognition possible,’ the conditions of knowing. Being is revealed, not in objects, but in ‘the conditions necessary for knowing.’ ‘The truth of all ontological concepts is their power of expressing that which makes the subject-object structure possible. They constitute this structure’ (169).”

7. Roberts, “Tillich’s Doctrine of Man,” p. 115: “Being a self means that man is both over against the world, as a subject, and in the world, as an object. He is so separated from everything as to be able to look at it and act upon it; he so belongs to the world that he is an episode in the process. But each factor determines the other. It is wrong to assume that the environment wholly explains behavior.”

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gate containing everything that exists; it is an organized structure, and the organizing reflects the self. In short the self-world correlation includes not only the environment in which man lives, but the universal norms and ideas by means of which man apprehends and interprets. Every content, psychic as well as bodily, is within the world, otherwise the self would be an empty form. But man is so differentiated from the world that he can look at it as an organized whole; otherwise he would be completely immersed in the flux.\*<sup>8</sup>

Tillich is convinced that this starting point avoids the notorious pitfalls of those philosophical systems which attempt to generate the world from the ego, or the ego from the world; it also avoids, he contends, the dilemma of Cartesian dualism which has to try to unite an empty *res cogitans* with a mechanistically conceived *res extensa*. In so far as it is thought about, everything (including even God) is an object; but in so far as everything involves individual self-relatedness, nothing (not even an atom) is merely an object.†<sup>9</sup>

## (2) The logical and the ontological object

Within the self-world polarity are to be found the derivative polarities of objective and subjective reason, of logical object and subject. Pure objects, "things," are completely conditioned or *bedingt* by the scheme of knowing. But man himself is not a "thing" or merely an object. He is a self and therefore a bearer of subjectivity. He is never bound completely to an environment.<sup>10</sup>

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\* Tillich, ST, I, 170.

† Tillich, ST, I, 170,  
173-174.

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8. Roberts, "Tillich's Doctrine of Man," pp. 115-116: "Moreover, because of self-consciousness man transcends every possible spatiotemporal environment. His 'world' cannot be thought of simply as an aggregate containing everything that exists; it is an organized structure, and the organizing reflects the self. In short, the self-world correlation includes not only the environment in which man lives, but the universal norms and ideas by means of which man apprehends and interprets. Every content, psychic as well as bodily, is within the world; otherwise the self would be an empty form. But man is so differentiated from the world that he can look at it as an organized whole, otherwise he would be completely immersed in the flux."

9. Roberts, "Tillich's Doctrine of Man," p. 116: "This starting-point avoids the notorious pitfalls involved in trying to generate the world from the *ego*, or the *ego* from the world; it also avoids the dilemma of Cartesian dualism which has to try to unite an empty *res cogitans* with a mechanistically conceived *res extensa*. In so far as it is thought about, everything (including even God) is an object; but in so far as everything involves individual self-relatedness, nothing (not even an atom) is *merely* an object."

10. Randall, "Ontology," p. 153: "It is within this polarity that are to be found the derivative polarities of objective and subjective reason, of logical object and subject. Pure objects, 'things,' are completely conditioned or *bedingt* by the scheme of knowing. But man himself is not a 'thing' or object: he is never bound completely to an environment." The following quotation appears verbatim in Randall, "Ontology," p. 153.

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He always transcends it by grasping and shaping it according to universal norms and ideas. . . . This is the reason why ontology cannot begin with things and try to derive the structure of reality from them. That which is completely conditioned, which has no selfhood and subjectivity, cannot explain self and subject. . . . It is just as impossible to derive the subject from the object. . . . This trick of deductive idealism is the precise counterpart of the trick of reductive naturalism. . . . The relation is one of polarity. The basic ontological structure cannot be derived. It must be accepted.\*

This analysis of the “basic ontological structure,” in which Tillich is following Heidegger, assumes without question that the epistemological “subject-object distinction” is absolutely ultimate, not only for knowledge, but for being: It is not only “prior to us,” but also “prior in nature,” as Aristotle puts it.†<sup>11</sup>

## ii. The ontological elements

The second level of ontological analysis deals with those “ontological elements” which constitute the basic structure of being. Unlike the categories, these elements are polar: each is meaningful only in relation to its opposite pole.<sup>13</sup> “One can imagine a realm of nature beside or outside the realm of history, but there is no realm of dynamics without form or of individuality without universality.”‡ There are three outstanding pairs which constitute the basic ontological structure; individuality and universality, dynamics and form, freedom and destiny. Each of these distinctions is discovered in the self’s ex-

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\* Tillich, ST, I, 170, 173–174.

† Randall has made a very sound criticism of Tillich’s analysis of the basic ontological structure. He argues that there are two conflicting strands running through Tillich’s thought at this point. At times, Randall affirms,

Tillich follows Heidegger’s idealistic ontology in looking for the structure of being in man. At other times he holds that the structure of being is found by man in his encounters with the world.<sup>12</sup> This, Randall contends, is a quite different ontology from that of idealism it is

something of an empirical naturalism. And so Randall concludes that “it would be clarifying to have Tillich decide which position he is really maintaining—idealism; or an experiential and functional realism.”

‡ Tillich, ST, I, 165.

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11. Randall, “Ontology,” p. 153: “This analysis of ‘the basic ontological structure,’ in which Tillich is following Heidegger, assumes without question that the epistemological ‘subject-object distinction’ is absolutely ultimate, not only for knowledge, but for all being: It is not only ‘prior for us,’ but also ‘prior in nature,’ as Aristotle puts it.”

12. Randall, “Ontology,” p. 154: “At times he follows Heidegger in looking for the structure of being ‘in man.’ . . . But at other times Tillich, following his own insights rather than another’s thought, holds that the structure of being is found *by* man *in* his encounters with the world.”

13. Randall, “Ontology,” p. 154: “The second level of ontological analysis deals with those ‘ontological elements’ which constitute the basic structure of being. Unlike the categories, these elements are polar: each is meaningful only in relation to its opposite pole.”

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perience of the world, and then generalized for all interactions within being.<sup>14</sup> The first element in each of these polarities expresses the “self-relatedness of being,” i.e., its power of being something for itself. The second element expresses the “belongingness of being,” i.e., its character of being a part of a universe of being.\*<sup>15</sup>

### (1) Individuality and participation

Individualization is a quality of everything that exists; “it is implied in and constitutive of every self, which means that at least in an analogous way it is implied in and constitutive of every being.”†<sup>16</sup> To be a self is to be an individual. Selfhood and individualization may be different conceptually, but they are inseparable actually.‡<sup>17</sup> To be is to be an individual. But man’s individualization is not absolute or complete. It gains meaning only in its polar relation with participation. Leibniz emphasizes this point when he speaks of the microcosmic structure of the monad.§ Whitehead sets it forth when he speaks of the “prehension” of the whole by the actual occasion.|| Martin Buber emphasizes this role of participation in the process of individualization when he sets forth the role of the “thou” in the development of the “I”.<sup>18</sup> Each of these thinkers gives backing to what Tillich is attempting to say, namely, that individuation implies participation. Man participates in the universe through the rational structure of mind and reality. When individualization reaches the perfect form we call a “person,” participation reaches the perfect form we call

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\* Tillich, *ST*, I, 165.                    par. 62.  
 † Tillich, *ST*, I, 175.                    || Whitehead, *AOI*, 300.  
 ‡ Tillich, *ST*, I, 175.  
 § Leibniz, *Monadology*,

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14. Randall, “Ontology,” p. 154: “There are three outstanding pairs: individuality and universality or participation, dynamics and form, and freedom and destiny. These distinctions are discovered in the self’s experience of the world, and then generalized for all interactions within being.”

15. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 165: “In these three polarities the first element expresses the self-relatedness of being, its power of being something for itself, while the second element expresses the belongingness of being, its character of being a part of a universe of being.”

16. Randall, “Ontology,” p. 154: “Individualization is a quality of everything: ‘it is implied in and constitutive of every self, which means that at least in an analogous way it is implied in and constitutive of every being.’”

17. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 175: “Selfhood and individualization are different conceptually, but actually they are inseparable.”

18. Boozer, “Place of Reason,” p. 244: “But man’s individualization is not absolute or complete. The element of participation is in polar relation with individualization. Leibniz speaks of the microcosmic structure of the monad. Whitehead speaks of the ‘prehension’ of the whole by the actual occasion. Both indicate the element of participation. Martin Buber emphasizes the role of the ‘thou’ in the development of the ‘I.’”

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1955 "communion." Persons become persons only by participating in society. It is only in the communion of personal encounter that persons can grow. Participation is essential for the individual.<sup>19</sup> "Without individualization nothing would exist to be related. Without participation the category of relation would have no basis in reality."\*<sup>20</sup>

It is clear from the foregoing that Tillich is not interested in slanting such statements either in the idealistic or in the naturalistic direction. But it is especially important to recognize that he does not regard them as being derived from empirical observation concerning contingent facts. Rather, he conceives of individualization and participation as ontological elements which, in the course of a critical analysis of experience, reveal themselves to be a priori in the sense that experience could not be what it is unless it occurred within them. The reciprocal relationship between "personal" and "communal"—for example, one cannot become fully a self except in relation with other selves—is a structural characteristic of being. In the polarity of individualization and participation Tillich finds a solution to the endless problem of nominalism and realism.<sup>21</sup> Individuals are real, but they participate in the universal structure, which, however, is not some sort of second reality lying behind empirical reality.†

## (2) Dynamics and form

Being something means having a form. Whatever loses its form loses its being. But every form forms something, and this something Tillich calls "dynamics." The concept of dynamics is a very complex one with many connotations. Its complexity is due to the fact that it cannot be thought of as something that is; and yet it cannot be thought of as something that is not.

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\* Tillich, ST, I, 177.

† Tillich, ST, I, 178.

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19. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, pp. 176–177: "Man participates in the universe through the rational structure of mind and reality. . . . When individualization reaches the perfect form which we call a 'person,' participation reaches the perfect form which we call 'communion.' . . . Participation is essential for the individual, not accidental. . . . Persons can grow only in the communion of personal encounter."

20. Boozer quoted this passage from Tillich ("Place of Reason," p. 244).

21. Roberts, "Tillich's Doctrine of Man," p. 116: "It is clear from the foregoing that Tillich is not interested in slanting such statements either in an idealistic or in a naturalistic direction. But it is especially important to recognize that he does not regard them as deriving from empirical observation concerning contingent facts. Rather, he conceives of individualization and participation as ontological elements which, in the course of a critical analysis of experience, reveal themselves to be a priori in the sense that experience could not be what it is unless it occurred within them. The reciprocal relationship between 'personal' and 'communal'—for example, one cannot become fully a self except in relation with other selves—is a structural characteristic of *being*. The polarity between individualization and participation also solves the problem of nominalism and realism."

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Dynamics is the “me on,” the potentiality of being, which is nonbeing in contrast to pure nonbeing.\* This polar element to form appears as the Urgrund of Böhme, the will of Schopenhauer, the “will to power” of Nietzsche, the “unconscious” of Hartmann and Freud, the elan vital of Bergson. Each of these concepts points symbolically to what cannot be named literally. “If it could be named properly it would be a formed being beside others instead of an ontological element in contrast with the element of pure form.”†<sup>22</sup>

The polarity of dynamics and form appears in man as vitality and intentionality. “Vitality is the power which keeps a living being alive and growing.”‡ It is not an existing something such as “will” or the “unconscious;” it is rather the power of being. By intentionality, on the other hand, Tillich does not necessarily mean consciously conceived purpose; but he does mean structures that can be grasped as universals. In other words, when vitality becomes human it cannot be thought of as operating by necessity, or chaotically, or without reference to objective structures.§<sup>23</sup>

The inclusion of dynamism within the ontological structure of human nature is Tillich’s answer to historical relativism, which denies the possibility of an ontological or a theological doctrine of man because “human nature” connotes to them something static. Tillich willingly admits with process philosophy that human nature changes in history, but he insists that one structural characteristic underlies all these changes; namely, “being one who has a history.”<sup>24</sup>

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\* Tillich, ST, I, 179.

† Tillich, ST, I, 179.

‡ Tillich, ST, I, 180.

§ Tillich, ST, I, 181.

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22. Randall, “Ontology,” pp. 154–155: “Being something means having a form. But every form forms something, and this something Tillich calls ‘dynamics’—a rather unfortunate term. ‘Dynamics’ is the *me on*, the potentiality of being, which is nonbeing in contrast to things that have a form, and the power of being in contrast to pure nonbeing’ (179). This element polar to form appears as the *Urgrund* of Böhme, the ‘will’ of Schopenhauer, the ‘will to power’ of Nietzsche, the ‘unconscious’ of Hartmann and Freud, the *elan vital* of Bergson. Each of these concepts points symbolically to what cannot be named literally. ‘If it could be named properly, it would be a formed being beside others instead of an ontological element in contrast with the element of pure form’ (179).”

23. Roberts, “Tillich’s Doctrine of Man,” p. 117: “Another polarity, that of dynamics and form, appears in man as vitality and intentionality. . . . ‘Potentiality,’ in this sense, is not an existing something, such as ‘will’ or ‘the unconscious’; it is rather the *power* of being. By ‘intentionality,’ on the other hand, Tillich does not necessarily mean consciously conceived purpose; but he does mean structures that can be grasped as universals. In other words, when vitality becomes human it cannot be thought of as operating by necessity, or chaotically, or without reference to objective structures.”

24. Roberts, “Tillich’s Doctrine of Man,” p. 117: “The inclusion of dynamism within the ontological structure of human nature is Tillich’s answer to those who eschew all talk about human ‘nature’ because it connotes to them something static. He willingly admits that human nature changes in history, but he insists that one structural characteristic underlies all these changes; namely, ‘being one who has a history.’”

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1955            This structure is the subject of an ontological and theological doctrine of man. Historical man is a descendant of beings who had no history, and perhaps there will be beings who are descendants of historical man who have no history, But neither animals nor supermen are the objects of a doctrine of man.\*<sup>25</sup>

Change is just as real as structure; but it is absurd to regard the latter as process, because this would mean that there could be no continuity, within the life of man, between antecedent and subsequent conditions. Consequently, man can develop indefinitely beyond any given physical and biological situation, transforming both nature and himself through applied science and cultural growth; but he cannot slough off the structure which makes intentionality and historicity possible.†<sup>26</sup>

### (3) Freedom and destiny

The third ontological polarity which Tillich discusses is that of freedom and destiny. Here the description of the basic ontological structure and its elements reaches both its fulfilment and its turning point. Ordinarily one thinks of necessity as the correlate of freedom. However, necessity is a category and not an element. Its contrast is possibility, not freedom.<sup>27</sup>

Whenever freedom and necessity are set over against each other, necessity is understood in terms of mechanistic determinacy and freedom is thought of in terms of indeterministic contingency. Neither of these interpretations grasps the structure of being as it is experienced immediately in the one being who has the possibility of experiencing because he is free, that is, in man.‡

The problem of freedom is traditionally posed in terms of mechanistic determinism versus indeterminism. But Tillich asserts that neither of these theo-

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\* Tillich, ST, I, 181, 182.

† Tillich, ST, I, 181, 182.

‡ Tillich, ST, I, 182.

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25. The citation and text are inaccurate. The last sentence begins, "This simply means that neither animals nor supermen" (Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 167). The inaccurate quotation appears verbatim in Randall ("Ontology," p. 151).

26. Roberts, "Tillich's Doctrine of Man," p. 117: "Change is just as real as structure; but it is absurd to regard the latter as process, because this would mean that there could be no continuity, within the life of a man, between antecedent and subsequent conditions. Consequently, man can develop indefinitely beyond any given physical and biological situation, transforming both nature and himself through applied science and cultural growth; but he cannot slough off the structure which makes intentionality and historicity possible."

27. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 182: "The third ontological polarity is that of freedom and destiny, in which the description of the basic ontological structure and its elements reaches both its fulfilment and its turning point. . . . Ordinarily one speaks of freedom and necessity. However, necessity is a category and not an element. Its contrast is possibility, not freedom."

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ries does justice to the way in which man grasps his own ontological structure. Both of these conflicting parties presuppose that there is a thing called "will" which possesses a certain quality, namely freedom. So long as the problem is posed in this manner, determinism always wins; for by definition a thing is always completely determined.<sup>28</sup> "The freedom of a thing is a contradiction in terms."\* Thus indeterminism, in a blundering attempt to defend man's moral and cognitive capacities, is forced to postulate decision without motivation; for at the level of things a break in the causal nexus can occur only as something uncaused. Needless to say, when the indeterminist holds out for the latter his defense of man's moral and cognitive capacities is not convincing; for he rests his case upon the occurrence of unintelligible accident, which is at the opposite pole from the "responsibility" he is trying to characterize. However, both theories fall into contradiction when they claim to be true, for the grasping of truth presupposes an intelligible decision against the false as a possibility. Mechanistic determinism cannot make room for decision, and indeterminism cannot make room for intelligibility.†<sup>29</sup>

Freedom must be approached, therefore, not as a quality of a faculty called the will, but as an element in man's ontological structure.<sup>30</sup> We must not speak of the freedom of a function (the "will"), but of man.<sup>31</sup> This means that every part and every function which constitutes man a personal self participates in his freedom.<sup>32</sup>

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\* Tillich, ST, I, 183.

† Tillich, ST, I, 183.

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28. Roberts, "Tillich's Doctrine of Man," p. 117: "The problem of freedom is often posed in terms of mechanistic determinism versus indeterminism. But Tillich asserts that neither of these theories does justice to the way in which man grasps his own ontological structure. Both of them treat the will as though it were a thing, and then disagree about whether it possesses a certain quality; namely, freedom. So long as the problem is posed in this manner, determinism always wins; by definition, a thing is completely determined."

29. Roberts, "Tillich's Doctrine of Man," pp. 117-118: "Thus indeterminism, in a blundering attempt to defend man's moral and cognitive capacities, is forced to postulate decision without motivation; for at the level of things a break in the causal nexus can occur only as something uncaused. Needless to say, when the indeterminist holds out for the latter his defense of man's moral and cognitive capacities is not convincing; for he rests his case upon the occurrence of unintelligible accident, which is at the opposite pole from the 'responsibility' he is trying to characterize. However, both theories fall into contradiction when they claim to be true, for the grasping of truth presupposes an intelligible decision against the false as a possibility. Mechanistic determinism cannot make room for decision, and indeterminism cannot make room for intelligibility."

30. Roberts, "Tillich's Doctrine of Man," p. 118: "Freedom should be approached, therefore, not as the quality of a faculty (the will), but as an element in man's ontological structure."

31. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 183: "Freedom is not the freedom of a function (the 'will') but of man."

32. Roberts, "Tillich's Doctrine of Man," p. 118: "This means that every function which plays a part in constituting man as personal also participates in his freedom."

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Freedom is experienced as deliberation, decision, and responsibility. Deliberation points to an act of weighing motives. The person doing the weighing is always above the motives that are weighed.<sup>33</sup> "To say that the stronger motive always prevails is an empty tautology, since the test by which a motive is proved stronger is simply that it prevails."\* The self-centered person does the weighting and then reacts with his whole self. This reaction is called decision. Etymologically the word "decision" like the word "incision" involves the image of cutting. In this context decision means cutting off possibilities. The person who does the cutting is always beyond what he cuts off.<sup>34</sup> Responsibility is the obligation that every individual has to give an answer for the decision he has made. Hence the self is responsible in so far as its acts are determined, not by something external or by some dissociated segment or function, but by the centered totality of the person's being.

Freedom, as thus defined, goes hand and hand with destiny.<sup>35</sup> Destiny is the basis of freedom and freedom participates in destiny.† The concrete self out of which decisions arise must not be thought of merely as a center of self-consciousness. Decisions issue from a self which has been formed by nature and history; the self includes bodily structures, psychic strivings, moral and spiritual character, communal relations, past experiences, (both remembered and forgotten), and the total impact of environment. Yet having a destiny does not contradict freedom, as "fate" does, because persons can realize their destinies. If man were subject to fate, there would be no point in talking about accepting or rejecting it, inasmuch as the alternative would disappear.‡

The polarity between freedom and destiny distinguishes man from all other levels of existence, yet this distinction arises within continuity.<sup>37</sup>

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* Tillich, <i>ST</i> , I, 184.	myself as given, formed
† Destiny for Tillich is not some strange power that determines us. "It is	by nature, history and myself." ( <i>ST</i> , I, 195). <sup>36</sup>
	‡ Tillich, <i>ST</i> , I, 185.

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33. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 184: "Freedom is experienced as deliberation, decision, and responsibility. . . . Deliberation points to an act of weighing (*librare*) arguments and motives. The person who does the weighing is above the motives."

34. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 184: "The self-centered person does the weighing and reacts as a whole, through his personal center, to the struggle of the motives. This reaction is called 'decision.' The word 'decision,' like the word 'incision,' involves the image of cutting. A decision cuts off possibilities. . . . The person who does the 'cutting' or the 'excluding' must be beyond what he cuts off or excludes."

35. Roberts, "Tillich's Doctrine of Man," p. 118: "Hence the self is responsible in so far as its acts are determined, not by something external or by some dissociated segment or function, but by the centered totality of the person's being. Freedom, as thus defined, goes hand in hand with destiny."

36. The correct citation is Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 185.

37. Roberts, "Tillich's Doctrine of Man," pp. 118–119: "The concrete self out of which decisions arise must not be thought of merely as a center of self-consciousness. Decisions issue from a self which has been formed by nature and history; the self includes bodily structure, psychic

Since freedom and destiny constitute an ontological polarity, everything that participates in being must participate in this polarity. But man, who has a complete self and a world, is the only being who is free in the sense of deliberation, and decision, and responsibility. Therefore, freedom and destiny can be applied to subhuman nature only by way of analogy; this parallels the situation with respect to the basic ontological structure and the other ontological polarities.\*<sup>38</sup>

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### iii. Being and finitude

The third level of ontological concepts expresses the characteristics of being which are conditions of existence, and the difference between “existential being” and “essential being.” This duality of essential and existential being is found both in experience and in analysis.<sup>39</sup>

There is no ontology which can disregard these two aspects, whether they are hypostasized into two realms (Plato), or combined in the polar relation of potentiality and actuality (Aristotle), or contrasted with each other (Schelling II, Kierkegaard, Heidegger), or derived from each other, either existence from essence (Spinoza, Hegel), or essence from existence (Dewey, Sartre).†<sup>40</sup>

Freedom as such is not the basis of existence, but rather freedom is unity with finitude. “Finite freedom is the turning point from being to existence.”‡ Finitude is hence the center of Tillich’s analysis, for it is the finitude of existent being which drives men to the question of God.<sup>41</sup>

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\* Tillich, *ST*, I, 185.

† Tillich, *ST*, I, 165.

‡ Tillich, *ST*, I, 165.

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strivings, moral and spiritual character, communal relations, past experiences (both remembered and forgotten), and the total impact of the environment. Yet having a destiny does not contradict freedom, as ‘fate’ does, because persons can realize their destinies. If man were subject to fate, there would be no point in talking about accepting or rejecting it, inasmuch as the *alternative* would disappear. The polarity between freedom and destiny distinguishes man from all other levels of existence, yet this distinction arises within continuity.”

38. On a draft of this chapter, Schilling noted: “Inaccurately quoted. This passage varies considerably from the actual text” (King, Draft of chapter 3, 1954–1955, MLKP-MBU: Box 96A; see Calendar of Documents, no. 550000-096). King corrected the quotation.

39. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 165: “The third level of ontological concepts expresses the power of being to exist and the difference between essential and existential being. Both in experience and in analysis being manifests the duality of essential and existential being.”

40. Randall quoted this passage from Tillich (“Ontology,” p. 156).

41. Randall, “Ontology,” p. 156: “Freedom as such is not the basis of existence, but rather freedom in unity with finitude. Finite freedom is the turning point from being to existence. Finitude is hence the center of Tillich’s analysis, for it is the finitude of existent being which drives men to the question of God.”

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(1) Being and nonbeing

The problem of nonbeing brings us face to face with one of the most difficult aspects of Tillich's thought. He agrees with Heidegger that the logical act of negating presupposes an ontological basis.<sup>42</sup> Man

must be separated from his being in a way which enables him to look at it as something strange and questionable. And such a separation is actual because man participates not only in being but also in nonbeing. . . . It is not by chance that historically the recent discovery on the ontological question has been guided by pre-Socratic philosophy and that systematically there has been an overwhelming emphasis on the problem of nonbeing.\*

The problem cannot be solved simply by excluding nonbeing. For, as Parmenides' efforts show, this means that not only "nothing," but also the totality of finite existence, is excluded, leaving only static Being.<sup>†</sup><sup>43</sup> The Platonists distinguished between the οὐκ ὄν which means "nothing at all," and the μη ὄν which meant for them that which does not yet have being but can become being if united with ideas.<sup>‡</sup><sup>44</sup> The mystery of nonbeing was not, however, removed, for in spite of its nothingness it had a positive power of resisting the ideas.<sup>‡</sup><sup>45</sup> The Christian doctrine of creatio ex nihilo attempts to solve the problem by denying that there is a second principle coeternal with God; but it affirms that there is an element of nonbeing in all finite existence. Tillich denies that when Augustine attributes sin to nonbeing he is following a purely privative theory; rather Augustine is asserting that although sin has no positive ontological status it nevertheless actively resists and perverts being. Indeed, since anything created originated out of nothing, it must return to nothing. This is why any view which regards the Son as a creature (Arianism) had to be rejected by the church on the ground that a creature cannot bring eter-

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\* Tillich, ST, I, 187.

† Tillich, ST, I, 186.

‡ Tillich, ST, I, 188.

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42. Roberts, "Tillich's Doctrine of Man," p. 119: "He agrees with Heidegger that the logical act of negating presupposes an ontological basis."

43. Roberts, "Tillich's Doctrine of Man," p. 119: "The problem cannot be solved simply by excluding nonbeing. For, as Parmenides' efforts show, this means that not only 'nothing,' but also the totality of finite existence, is excluded, leaving only static Being."

44. Randall, "Ontology," p. 156: "The Platonists distinguished between the *οὐκ ὄν* which means 'nothing at all,' and the *μη ὄν* which meant for them that which does not yet have being but can become being if united with ideas."

45. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 188: "The mystery of nonbeing was not, however, removed, for in spite of its 'nothingness' nonbeing was credited with having the power of resisting a complete union with the ideas."

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nal life. And this is why Christianity rejects the doctrine of natural immortality in favor of the belief that eternal life is given by God alone.\*<sup>46</sup>

Tillich concludes that the dialectical problem of nonbeing is inescapable. It is a problem of finitude. Finitude involves a mixture of being and nonbeing.<sup>47</sup> "Man's finitude, or creatureliness, is unintelligible without the concept of dialectical nonbeing."†

## (2) The finite and the infinite

Now, being when limited by nonbeing is finitude. Finitude is "the 'not yet' and 'no more' of being."‡ Everything which participates in the power of being is mixed with nonbeing. It is finite. The basic ontological structure and the elements constituting that structure all imply finitude.<sup>48</sup> "To be something is not to be something else. To be here and now in the process of becoming is not to be there and then. . . . To be something is to be finite."§ Experienced on the human level, finitude is nonbeing as the threat to being, ultimately the threat of death.<sup>49</sup> Yet in order to experience his finitude, man must look at himself as a potential infinity.<sup>50</sup> In grasping his life as a whole as moving toward death, he transcends temporal immediacy. He sees his world in the setting of potential infinity, his participation in the setting of potential univer-

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\* Tillich, *ST*, I, 188.

† Tillich, *ST*, I, 189.

‡ Tillich, *ST*, I, 189.

§ Tillich, *ST*, I, 190.

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46. Roberts, "Tillich's Doctrine of Man," pp. 119–120: "The Christian doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* attempts to solve the problem by denying that there is a second principle co-eternal with God; but it affirms that there is an element of nonbeing in all finite existence. Tillich denies that when Augustine attributes sin to nonbeing he is following a purely privative theory; rather, Augustine is asserting that although sin has no positive ontological status it nevertheless *actively* resists and perverts being. Indeed, since anything created originates out of nothing, it must return to nothing. This is why any view which regards the Son as a creature (Arianism) had to be rejected by the Church on the ground that a creature cannot bring eternal life. And this is why Christianity rejects the doctrine of natural immortality in favor of the belief that eternal life is given by God alone."

47. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 189: "The dialectical problem of nonbeing is inescapable. It is the problem of finitude. Finitude unites being with dialectical nonbeing."

48. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, pp. 189–190: "Being, limited by nonbeing, is finitude. Nonbeing appears as the 'not yet' of being and as the 'no more' of being. . . . However, everything which participates in the power of being is 'mixed' with nonbeing. . . . It is finite. Both the basic ontological structure and the ontological elements imply finitude."

49. Randall, "Ontology," p. 157: "Experienced on the human level, finitude is nonbeing as the threat to being, ultimately the threat of death."

50. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 190: "In order to experience his finitude, man must look at himself from the point of view of a potential infinity."

15 Apr sality, his destiny in the setting of potential all-inclusiveness. This power of  
 1955 transcending makes man aware of his own finitude, and at the same time  
 - marks him as belonging to Being itself. The latter kinship is shown by the fact  
 that man is never satisfied with any stage of his development; nothing finite  
 can hold him.\*<sup>51</sup>

From the foregoing it is clearly seen that infinity is related to finitude in a  
 different way than the other polar elements are related to one another. In-  
 finitude is defined by the dynamic and free self-transcendence of finite be-  
 ing.<sup>52</sup> "Infinity is a directing concept, not a constituting concept. It directs the  
 mind to experience its own unlimited potentialities, but it does not establish  
 the existence of an infinite being." †

Finitude is the ontological basis of human anxiety. Therefore anxiety is as  
 omnipresent as is finitude. As such it must be distinguished from fear which  
 is directed toward definite objects and can be removed by action. ‡<sup>53</sup> Anxiety  
 cannot be overcome by action, for no finite being can conquer its finitude.  
 Anxiety is ontological; fear is psychological.<sup>55</sup> Like Kierkegaard and Heideg-  
 ger, Tillich regards anxiety as directed toward "nothingness." Though in-  
 eradicable, it can be accepted and used creatively as a part of what it means to  
 be human.<sup>56</sup>

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* Tillich, ST, I, 191.	ing compulsory forms of	anxiety, because it cannot
† Tillich, ST, I, 190.	anxiety and can reduce	change the structure of
‡ Tillich stresses the point that psychotherapy has the power of remov-	the frequency and inten- sity of fears, but never can it remove ontological	finitude. <sup>54</sup>

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51. Roberts, "Tillich's Doctrine of Man," p. 120: "In grasping his life as a whole as moving toward death, he transcends temporal immediacy. He sees his world in the setting of potential infinity, his participation in the setting of potential universality, his destiny in the setting of potential all-inclusiveness. This power of transcending makes man aware of his own finitude, and at the same time marks him as belonging to Being itself. The latter kinship is shown by the fact that man is never satisfied with any stage of his development; nothing finite can hold him."

52. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 190: "According to this analysis, infinity is related to finitude in a different way than the other polar elements are related to one another. As the negative character of the word indicates, it is defined by the dynamic and free self-transcendence of finite being."

53. Roberts, "Tillich's Doctrine of Man," p. 120: "Finitude is the ontological basis of human anxiety. . . . As such it must be distinguished, of course, from fear, which is directed toward definite objects and can be overcome by action."

54. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 191n.7: "Psychotherapy cannot remove ontological anxiety, because it cannot change the structure of finitude. But it can remove compulsory forms of anxiety and can reduce the frequency and intensity of fears."

55. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 191: "Fear can be conquered by action. Anxiety cannot, for no finite being can conquer its finitude. . . . Anxiety is ontological; fear, psychological."

56. Roberts, "Tillich's Doctrine of Man," pp. 120-121: "Like Kierkegaard and Heidegger, Tillich regards *Uranst* as directed toward 'nothingness.' Though ineradicable, it can be accepted and used creatively as a part of what it means to be human."

## iv. The categories of being and knowing

The fourth level of ontological concepts consists of the categories. They “are the forms in which the mind grasps and shapes reality.”\* But they are not mere logical forms, related only indirectly to reality; they are ontological, and therefore present in everything.<sup>57</sup> “They appear implicitly or explicitly in every thought concerning God and the world, man and nature. They are omnipresent, even in the realm from which they are excluded by definition, that is, in the realm of the ‘unconditional.’”†

For theological purposes Tillich finds four main categories that must be analyzed: time, space, causality, and substance. The traditional categories of quantity and quality have no direct theological significance, and therefore are not discussed. Categories (or rather concepts which have been called categories) like movement and rest or unity and manifoldness were treated implicitly in connection with the ontological elements, movement and rest in connection with dynamics and form, unity and manifoldness in connection with individuality and universality.‡<sup>58</sup>

The four categories are analyzed in the light of human finitude. Externally regarded, these categories express the union of being and nonbeing. Internally regarded, they express the union of anxiety and courage.§ The latter aspect of the interpretation must not be misunderstood as psychological. In accordance with the self-world correlation, the subjective side of the analysis is just as much a piece of ontology as is the objective.<sup>60</sup>

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\* Tillich, *ST*, I, 192.

† Tillich, *ST*, I, 191.

‡ Tillich argues that it is inaccurate to speak of concepts like unity and manifoldness, movement and rest as categories. Their polar character, he contends, puts them on

the level of the elements of the basic ontological

structure and not on the level of the categories.<sup>59</sup>

§ Anxiety, as we have seen, has no object, or rather, in a paradoxical phrase, its object is the negation of every object.

“Anxiety is the existential awareness of nonbeing.” (*CTB*, 33). Courage, for Tillich, is self-affirmation in spite of that which tends to hinder the self from affirming itself.

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57. Randall, “Ontology,” p. 157: “The fourth level of ontological concepts consists of the categories. They are ‘the forms in which the mind grasps and shapes reality.’ But they are not mere logical forms, only indirectly related to reality itself; they are ontological, present in everything.”

58. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, pp. 165–166: “From the theological point of view four main categories must be analyzed: time, space, causality, and substance. Categories like quantity and quality have no direct theological significance and are not especially discussed. Other concepts which often have been called ‘categories,’ like movement and rest, or unity and manifoldness, are treated implicitly on the second level of analysis, movement and rest in connection with dynamics and form, unity and manifoldness in connection with individuality and universality.”

59. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 166: “The polar character of these concepts puts them on the level of the elements of the basic ontological structure and not on the level of the categories.”

60. Roberts, “Tillich’s Doctrine of Man,” p. 121: “Externally regarded, these categories express the union of being and nonbeing. Internally regarded, they express the union of anxiety

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The discussion of each category leads to an antinomy where a decision concerning the meaning involved cannot be derived from an analysis of the category itself. This method has obvious similarities to Kant's, and it leads to a point at which, since metaphysics cannot solve the problem, an existential attitude (positive or negative) is unavoidable.<sup>61</sup>

### (1) Time

Time is the central category of finitude. Like other categories time unites an affirmative and a negative element. Those philosophers who emphasize the negative element

point to the movement of time from a past that is no more toward a future that is not yet through a present which is nothing more than the moving boundary line between past and present.\*

Those who emphasize the positive element in time "have pointed to the creative character of the temporal process, to its directness and irreversibility, to the new produced within it."† Yet neither side of the analysis is entirely satisfactory. Time cannot be illusory because only if the present is real can past and future be linked together. But neither is it simply creative, inasmuch as it carries all things toward disintegration and obliteration.<sup>62</sup>

To this objective antinomy there corresponds an inward polarity between anxiety and courage. Temporality means, for man, the anxiety of having to die; this anxiety is potentially present in every moment and permeates the whole of man's being. Yet anxiety of this sort comes from the structure of being and is not due to sin. The anxieties due to sin are, in principle, remediable; but as we have already seen, the anxiety of finitude is ineradicable. It

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\* Tillich, ST, I, 193.

† Tillich, ST, I, 193.

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and courage. The latter aspect of the interpretation must not be misunderstood as psychological. In accordance with the self-world correlation, the subjective side of the analysis is just as much a piece of ontology as is the objective."

61. Roberts, "Tillich's Doctrine of Man," p. 121: "The discussion of each category leads to an antinomy where a decision concerning the meaning involved cannot be derived from an analysis of the category itself. This method has obvious similarities to Kant's, and it leads to a point at which, since metaphysics cannot solve the problem, an existential attitude (positive or negative) is unavoidable."

62. Roberts, "Tillich's Doctrine of Man," p. 121: "Yet neither side of the analysis is entirely satisfactory. Time cannot be illusory because only if the present is real can past and future be linked together. But neither is it simply creative, inasmuch as it carries all things toward disintegration and obliteration."

is balanced, however, by a courage which affirms temporality.<sup>63</sup> “Without this courage man would surrender to the annihilating character of time; he would resign from having a present.”\*

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## (2) Space

The present implies space; time creates the present through its union with space. Space like time is subject to contradictory valuations, being a category of finitude. Moreover, space like time unites being with nonbeing, anxiety with courage. To be means to have space.<sup>64</sup> Space is interpreted, on the positive side, in terms of the fact that every being strives to maintain a “place” for himself.<sup>65</sup>

This means above all a physical location—the body, a piece of soil, a home, a city, a country, the world. It also means a social “space”—a vocation, a sphere of influence, a group, a historical period, a place in remembrance and anticipation, a place within a structure of values and meanings.†

Not to have a place is not to be. Thus the continual striving for spatiality is an ontological necessity.<sup>66</sup>

On the negative side, however, it must be observed that no place is definitely one’s own.<sup>67</sup> “No finite being can rely on space, for not only must it face losing this or that space because it is a ‘pilgrim on earth,’ but eventually it must face losing every place it has had or might have had.”‡ This awareness of

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\* Tillich, *ST*, I, 194.

† Tillich, *ST*, I, 194.

‡ Tillich, *ST*, I, 195.

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63. Roberts, “Tillich’s Doctrine of Man,” p. 121: “To this objective antinomy there corresponds an inward polarity between anxiety and courage. Temporality means, for man, the anxiety of having to die; this hangs over every moment and characterizes the whole of human existence. Yet anxiety of this sort comes from the structure of being and is not due to sin. . . . The anxieties due to sin are, in principle, remediable; but as we have already seen, the anxiety of finitude is ineradicable. It is balanced, however, by a courage which affirms temporality.”

64. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 194: “The present implies space. Time creates the present through its union with space. . . . Like time, space unites being with nonbeing, anxiety with courage. Like time, space is subject to contradictory valuations, for it is a category of finitude. To be means to have space.”

65. Roberts, “Tillich’s Doctrine of Man,” p. 122: “Space is interpreted, on the positive side, in terms of the fact that every being strives to maintain a ‘place’ for itself.”

66. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 194: “Not to have space is not to be. Thus in all realms of life striving for space is an ontological necessity.” Cf. Randall, “Ontology,” p. 157.

67. Roberts, “Tillich’s Doctrine of Man,” p. 122: “But on the negative side it must be observed that no place is definitely one’s own.”

15 Apr 1955 ultimate loss of spatiality means insecurity which goes hand and hand with finitude.<sup>68</sup> However this anxiety is balanced by the courage which affirms the present and space.<sup>69</sup> "Everything affirms the space which it has within the universe. . . . It accepts its ontological insecurity and reaches a security in this acceptance.\*

### (3) Causality

The affirmative interpretation of causality points to the power from which things proceed, the power which can produce and maintain realities despite the resistance of nonbeing. The negative interpretation notes, however, that finite things do not possess their own power of coming into being. They are contingent: as Heidegger says, they have been "thrown" into being.<sup>70</sup>

The question, "Where from?" is universal. Children as well as philosophers ask it. But it cannot be answered, for every answer, every statement, about the cause of something is open to the same question in infinite regression. It cannot be stopped even by a god who is supposed to be the answer to the entire series. For this god must ask himself, "Where have I come from?"†

So it turns out that causality and contingent being are the same thing.<sup>71</sup> The anxiety in which man is aware of this situation is anxiety about his lack of aseity (the self-sufficiency possessed by God alone). Tillich's discussion of causality supports the thesis that human existence is not necessitated. If the latter were the case, man would be incapable of anxiety, and he could not ask questions based upon awareness of the fact that he "might not" be. So far as the present category is concerned, the answer to anxiety is a kind of courage

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\* Tillich, *ST*, I, 195.

† Tillich, *ST*, I, 196. Note that at this point Tillich is

anticipating his main argument that God must be considered as Being-itself.

If God is considered as a being then infinite regress cannot be avoided.

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68. Roberts, "Tillich's Doctrine of Man," p. 122: "This means insecurity which goes hand in hand with finitude."

69. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 195: "On the other hand, man's anxiety about having to lose his space is balanced by the courage with which he affirms the present and, with it, space."

70. Roberts, "Tillich's Doctrine of Man," p. 122: "The affirmative interpretation of causality points to the power from which things proceed, the power which can produce and maintain realities despite the resistance of nonbeing. The negative interpretation notes, however, that finite things do not possess their own power of coming into being; they are 'thrown' into existence."

71. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 196: "In this respect causality and contingent being are the same thing."

which achieves self-reliance despite the inescapable facts of contingency and dependence.\*<sup>72</sup>

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#### (4) Substance

The category of substance, in its connection with human nature, has to do mainly with self-identity.<sup>73</sup> It points to something underlying the flux, something relatively static and self-contained. But it is nothing beyond the accidents in which it expresses itself—it is no “I-Know-not-what.”<sup>74</sup>

The problem of substance is not avoided by philosophers of function or process, because questions about that which has functions or about that which is in process cannot be silenced. The replacement of static notions by dynamic ones does not remove the question of that which makes change possible by not (relatively) changing itself.<sup>†</sup>

Therefore all change threatens the ground on which one stands, and the radical change from life to death threatens an ultimate loss of self-identity. We cannot solve the problem by trying to attribute permanence to a creative work, a love relationship, and the like. Courage can match anxiety only by being able to affirm the significance of the finite despite the fact that it can lose its substance.<sup>75</sup>

Thus all four categories express the union of being (the positive) and nonbeing (the negative) in everything finite. But the ontological analysis can-

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\* Tillich, *ST*, I, 196, 197.

† Tillich, *ST*, I, 197.

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72. Roberts, “Tillich’s Doctrine of Man,” pp. 122–123: “For our purposes the most important point is that human anxiety is here associated with lack of aseity (the self-sufficiency possessed by God alone). We should also note that Tillich’s discussion of causality supports the thesis that human existence is not necessitated. If the latter were the case, man would be incapable of anxiety, and he could not ask questions based upon awareness of the fact that he ‘might not’ be. So far as the present category is concerned, the answer to anxiety means a kind of courage which achieves self-reliance despite the inescapable facts of contingency and dependence.”

73. Roberts, “Tillich’s Doctrine of Man,” p. 123: “The category of substance, in its connection with human nature, has to do mainly with self-identity.”

74. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 197: “In contrast to causality, substance points to something underlying the flux of appearances, something which is relatively static and self-contained. . . . But the substance is nothing beyond the accidents in which it expresses itself.”

75. Roberts, “Tillich’s Doctrine of Man,” p. 123: “Therefore all change threatens the ground on which one stands, and the radical change from life to death threatens an ultimate loss of self-identity. We cannot solve the problem by trying to attribute permanence to creative work, a love relationship, and the like. Courage can match anxiety only by being able to affirm the significance of the finite despite the fact that it *can* lose its substance.”

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not answer the question as to how courage is possible in the face of ineradicable anxiety. The answer to this question is furnished by revelation and by the existential decision which enters into faith in God.<sup>76</sup>

## 2. God as being itself

Tillich defines God in diverse ways. God is spoken of as “the name of this infinite and inexhaustible depth and ground of all being,”\* as the name of the ground of history,† as “the answer to the question implied in being,”‡ as “the power of being in which every-being participates,”§ as “the power in everything that has power,”|| as “the name for that which concerns us ultimately,”# and as “being itself.”\*\*<sup>77</sup> Out of all of these definitions, it seems that Tillich’s most persistent definition of God is “being-itself,” esse ipsum. Let us therefore turn to a discussion of Tillich’s meaning of being-itself.

### i. God’s transcendence of finite being

In affirming that God is being-itself, Tillich is denying that God is a being besides other beings. He is also denying that God is a “highest being” in the sense of the “most perfect” and “most powerful” being. If God were a being He would be subject to the categories of finitude, especially to the categories of space and substance. Therefore if such confusions are to be avoided, says Tillich, God must be understood as being-itself or as the ground of being.<sup>78</sup>

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\* Tillich, SOF, 57.

† Tillich, SOF, 59.

‡ Tillich, ST, I, 163.

§ Tillich, Art. (1946)<sup>2</sup>,

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|| Tillich, Art. (1946)<sup>2</sup>,

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# Tillich, ST, I, 211.

\*\* Tillich, ST, I, 189,

205, 230, 235, 237, 243;

PE, 63.

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76. Roberts, “Tillich’s Doctrine of Man,” p. 123: “Thus all four categories express the union of being (the positive) and nonbeing (the negative) in everything finite. But the ontological analysis cannot answer the question as to how courage is possible in the face of ineradicable anxiety. The answer to this question is furnished by revelation and by the existential decision which enters into faith in God.”

77. Boozer, “Place of Reason,” p. 151: “Though [Tillich] speaks of God in such diverse ways as ‘the answer to the question implied in being,’ ‘the name of this infinite and inexhaustible depth and ground of all being,’ as ‘the name of the ground of history,’ ‘the basis and abyss of all meaning which surpasses all that is conceivable,’ ‘the power of being in which every being participates,’ ‘the power in everything that has power,’ ‘the name for that which concerns man ultimately,’ as ‘being itself,’ and as ‘Lord’ and ‘Father,’ he is jealous to safeguard the non-existential status of God.” King’s footnotes are similar to Boozer’s. In another section of his dissertation Boozer also wrote about God as being-itself (p. 256) and included a footnote listing the additional page numbers from *Systematic Theology* and *The Protestant Era* that King cites here.

78. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 235: “If God is a being, he is subject to the categories of finitude, especially to space and substance. Even if he is called the ‘highest being’ in the sense of

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Tillich often speaks as though “absolute,” “unconditional,” “infinite,” “eternal” were synonyms for “being-itself”; but he insists that being-itself, or God, is “beyond finitude and infinity,” “relative” and “absolute,”\* “temporal” and “eternal,” and even “spatial” and “spaceless.” †<sup>79</sup>

In saying that God is being-itself Tillich intends to convey the idea of power of being. God is the power of being in everything and above everything. ‡ Tillich is convinced that any theology which does not dare to identify God and the power of being as the first step in its doctrine of God relapses into monarchic monotheism.<sup>80</sup>

The traditional category of omnipotence is included in the concept of God as being-itself. God as power of being resists and conquers nonbeing. § In the Christian belief of an “almighty God,” there is the assurance of the inexhaustible power of being to resist nonbeing. This is why God warrants man’s ultimate concern. The omnipotence of God does not mean that God has the power to do anything he wishes.<sup>81</sup> Nor does it mean omni-activity in terms of physical causality. Such conceptions of omnipotence, asserts Tillich, are absurd and irreligious. Tillich uses the symbol of omnipotence to express the religious experience “that no structure in reality and no event in nature and history has the power of preventing us from communion with the infinite and inexhaustible ground of meaning and being.” || This idea of omnipotence is expressed in the Pauline assertion that neither natural nor political powers, neither heavenly nor earthly forces can separate us from the love of God.<sup>82</sup>

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\* Tillich, ST, I, 144.                      sonal monism of power.  
 † Tillich, ST, I, 138.                      § Tillich, ST, I, 272.  
 ‡ Tillich, ST, I, 236. This                || Tillich, Art. (1940)<sup>2</sup>, 8.  
 passage suggest an imper-

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the ‘most perfect’ and the ‘most powerful’ being, this situation is not changed. . . . Many confusions in the doctrine of God and many apologetic weaknesses could be avoided if God were understood first of all as being-itself or as the ground of being.”

79. Charles Hartshorne, “Tillich’s Doctrine of God,” in Kegley and Bretall, eds., *Theology of Paul Tillich*, pp. 164–165: “Professor Tillich often speaks, indeed, almost as though ‘absolute,’ ‘unconditioned,’ ‘infinite,’ ‘eternal,’ were synonyms for ‘being-itself,’ and equally literal in application to deity; but he also insists that being-itself, or God, is ‘beyond finitude and infinity’ (144), and implies the same with respect to ‘relative’ and ‘absolute’ (cf. 138), ‘temporal’ and ‘eternal,’ and even ‘spatial’ and ‘spaceless’ (184, 186).”

80. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 236: “He is the power of being in everything and above everything, the infinite power of being. A theology which does not dare to identify God and the power of being as the first step toward a doctrine of God relapses into monarchic monotheism.”

81. Boozer, “Place of Reason,” p. 189: “The traditional category of omnipotence is included in the concept of God as being-itself. God as power of being resists and conquers non-being. In the Christian belief in an ‘almighty God,’ Tillich sees a confidence in the inexhaustible power of being to resist nonbeing. Only the ‘almighty’ God can warrant man’s ultimate concern. . . . The omnipotence of God does not mean that God is able to do whatever he wishes.”

82. Paul Tillich, “The Idea of the Personal God,” *Union Review* 2 (1940): 9: “Or what ‘omnipotence’ means must be found in the words Paul (Rom. 8) speaks to the few Christians in the slums

15 Apr 1955 All of this leads Tillich to the conclusion that omnipotence means “the power of being which resists nonbeing in all its expressions.”\*

In this conception of God as being-itself or power of being, Tillich seeks to solve the problems of the immanence and the transcendence of God. God is transcendent in the sense that he, as the power of being, transcends every being and also the totality of beings—the world. God is beyond finitude and infinity; otherwise he would be conditioned by something other than himself.<sup>83</sup> Tillich makes it palpably clear that “being itself infinitely transcends every finite being. There is no proportion or gradation between the finite and the infinite. There is an absolute break, an infinite ‘jump’.”†

On the other hand God’s immanence is expressed in the fact that everything finite participates in being itself and in infinity. If this were not the case everything finite would be swallowed by nonbeing, or it never would have emerged out of nonbeing.‡<sup>84</sup>

So we can see that all beings have a double relation to being-itself. This double relation that all beings have to being-itself gives being-itself a double characteristic.<sup>85</sup> Being-itself is both creative and abysmal. Its creative character is found in the fact that all beings participate in the infinite power of being. Its abysmal character is found in the fact that all beings are infinitely transcended by their creative ground.§

## ii. God’s transcendence of the contrast of essential and existential being

As being-itself God is beyond the contrast of essential and existential being. The transition of being into existence which involves the possibility that being will contradict and lose itself, is excluded from being-itself.|| Logically being-itself is prior to the split which characterizes finite being.<sup>86</sup>

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\* Tillich, *ST*, I, 273.

† Tillich, *ST*, I, 237. This reminds one of the Barthian “Wholly Other.”

‡ Tillich, *ST*, I, 237.

§ Tillich, *ST*, I, 237.  
|| Tillich makes one exception to this statement,

viz., the christological paradox.

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of the big cities when he pronounces that neither natural nor political powers, neither earthly nor heavenly forces can separate us from the ‘Love of God.’”

83. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 237: “As the power of being, God transcends every being and also the totality of beings—the world. Being-itself is beyond finitude and infinity; otherwise it would be conditioned by something other than itself, and the real power of being would lie beyond both it and that which conditioned it.”

84. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 237: “On the other hand, everything finite participates in being-itself and in its infinity. . . . It would be swallowed by nonbeing, or it never would have emerged out of nonbeing.”

85. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 237: “This double relation of all beings to being-itself gives being-itself a double characteristic.”

86. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 236: “As being-itself God is beyond the contrast of essential and existential being. We have spoken of the transition of being into existence, which involves

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The ground of being cannot be found within the totality of beings, nor can the ground of essence and existence participate in the tensions and disruptions characteristic of the transition from essence to existence.\*

Therefore it is wrong to speak of God as universal essence, for if God is so understood, he is identified with the unity and totality of finite potentialities, thereby ceasing to be the power of the ground in all of them. "He has poured all his creative power into a system of forms, and he is bound to these forms. This is what pantheism means."†

On the other hand, it is a grave error to speak of God as existing.<sup>87</sup> Tillich affirms that the Scholastics were right in their claim that in God there is no difference between essence and existence. But they perverted this whole truth by proceeding to talk of the existence of God and even attempting to prove such existence.<sup>88</sup> "It is as atheistic to affirm the existence of God," asserts Tillich, "as it is to deny it. God is being-itself, not a being."‡ Again Tillich writes:

It would be a great victory for Christian apologetics if the words "God" and "existence" were very definitely separated except in the paradox of God becoming manifest under the conditions of existence, that is in the Christological paradox. God does not exist. He is being-itself, beyond essence and existence. Therefore, to argue that God exists is to deny him.§

Tillich is convinced that the usual discussions of the existence of God completely miss the essential nature of God. Such discussions start out with the assumption that God is something or someone.<sup>89</sup> But God is not a being, not even the most powerful or the most perfect being. The objectification or the "thingification" (to use J. L. Adams' term) of God is blasphemy.<sup>90</sup> Whenever God is made an object besides other objects, the existence of which is a matter

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\* Tillich, *ST*, I, 205.

† Tillich, *ST*, I, 236.

‡ Tillich, *ST*, I, 237.

§ Tillich, *ST*, I, 205.

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the possibility that being will contradict and lose itself. This transition is excluded from being-itself (except in terms of the christological paradox), for being-itself does not participate in nonbeing. . . . Logically, being-itself is 'before,' 'prior to,' the split which characterizes finite being."

87. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 236: "On the other hand, grave difficulties attend the attempt to speak of God as existing."

88. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 205: "The scholastics were right when they asserted that in God there is no difference between essence and existence. But they perverted their insight when in spite of this assertion they spoke of the existence of God and tried to argue in favor of it."

89. Boozer, "Place of Reason," p. 151: "Therefore the usual discussion of the existence of God, as if God were something or someone completely misses the essential nature of God."

90. Boozer, "Place of Reason," p. 159: "The objectification, or the 'thingification' (to use J. L. Adams' term) of God is demony."

15 Apr of argument, theology becomes the greatest supporter of atheism.<sup>91</sup> "The first  
1955 step to atheism is always a theology which drags God down to the level of  
doubtful things."\*

### iii. The invalidity of all arguments for the existence of God

Since God does not exist, Tillich finds the various arguments for the existence of God both futile and invalid. Theologians and philosophers, contends Tillich, should have said something about the ontological implications of finitude rather than present elaborate arguments for the existence of God. The analysis of finitude shows that finitude witnesses to something beyond the finite.<sup>92</sup> "The arguments for the existence of God neither are arguments nor are they proof of the existence of God. They are expressions of the question of God which is implied in human finitude."† It is in this sense that Tillich seeks to interpret the traditional arguments for the existence of God.

The so-called ontological argument points to the ontological structure of finitude.<sup>93</sup> The marks of man's existence are separation, self-contradiction and estrangement. Man is aware of that from which he is separated, else he could not feel separated at all. He is aware of what he ought to be as well as what he actually is. "Man knows that he is finite, that he is excluded from an infinity which nevertheless belongs to him. He is aware of his potential infinity while being aware of his actual finitude."‡ It is in the light of this religious a priori that Tillich would have us understand the ontological argument; not as a proposition which gives the result of God, but as an indication of the ontological structure of finitude.<sup>94</sup>

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\* Tillich, SOF, 45.

† Tillich, ST, I, 205.

‡ Tillich, ST, I, 206.

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91. Paul Tillich, *The Shaking of the Foundations* (New York: Scribner, 1948), p. 45: "In making God an object besides other objects, the existence and nature of which are matters of argument, theology supports the escape to atheism."

92. Boozer, "Place of Reason," p. 152: "What the theologians and philosophers should have said rather than arguments for the existence of God was something about the ontological implications of finitude. The analysis of finitude shows that finitude witnesses to something beyond the finite."

93. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 206: "The so-called ontological argument points to the ontological structure of finitude."

94. Boozer, "Place of Reason," pp. 27–28: "The marks of man's existence are separation, self-contradiction and estrangement. . . . Man is aware of that from which he is separated as well as his actual state, else he could not feel separated at all. He is aware of the essence of what he is (what he ought to be) as well as what he actually is. . . . 'Man knows that he is finite, that he is excluded from an infinity which nevertheless belongs to him. He is aware of his potential infinity

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The Anselmic statement that God is a necessary thought and that therefore this idea must have objective as well as subjective reality is valid in so far as thinking implies an unconditional element which transcends subjectivity and objectivity. However, the statement is not valid if this unconditional element is considered as a highest being called God.\*<sup>95</sup>

The so-called cosmological and teleological arguments for the existence of God are valid in so far as they give an analysis of reality which indicates that the cosmological question of God is unavoidable. But they are not valid when they claim that the existence of a highest being is the logical conclusion of their analysis.†<sup>96</sup>

The cosmological argument moves from the finitude of being to an infinite being. From the endless chain of causes and effects it arrives at the conclusion that there is a first cause. But cause, affirms Tillich, is a category of finitude.<sup>97</sup> “The ‘first cause’ is a hypostasized question, not a statement about a being which initiates the causal chain. Such a being would itself be a part of the causal chain and would again raise the question of cause.”‡ First cause is a symbol which expresses the question implied in finite being, the question of God.<sup>98</sup>

The teleological argument in the traditional sense moves from the finitude of meaning to a bearer of infinite meaning. It arrives at the conclusion that finite *teloi* imply an infinite cause of teleology. But this conclusion, contends Tillich, is just as invalid as the other cosmological arguments. As the statement of a question, however, this conclusion is not only valid but inescapable.<sup>99</sup>

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\* Tillich, *ST*, I, 207.

† Tillich, *ST*, I, 208.

‡ Tillich, *ST*, I, 209.

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while being aware of his actual finitude.’ It is in the light of this religious a priori that Tillich would have us understand the ontological argument for God, not as a proposition which gives the result as God, but as an indication of the ontological structure of finitude.”

95. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 207: “The Anselmian statement that God is a necessary thought and that therefore this idea must have objective as well as subjective reality is valid in so far as thinking, by its very nature, implies an unconditional element which transcends subjectivity and objectivity, that is, a point of identity which makes the idea of truth possible.” In the margins of King’s draft Schilling noted that this sentence was “almost exactly quoted” (King, draft of chapter 3).

96. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 208: “The so-called cosmological and teleological arguments for the existence of God are the traditional and inadequate form of this question. . . . They are valid in so far as they give an analysis of reality which indicates that the cosmological question of God is unavoidable. They are not valid in so far as they claim that the existence of a highest being is the logical conclusion of their analysis.”

97. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 209: “[The cosmological argument] has moved from the finitude of being to an infinite being. . . . From the endless chain of causes and effects it arrives at the conclusion that there is a first cause. . . . But cause and substance are categories of finitude.”

98. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 209: “First cause and necessary substance are symbols which express the question implied in finite being, . . . the question of God.”

99. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 210: “This structure is used as a springboard to the conclusion that finite *teloi* imply an infinite cause of teleology. . . . In terms of logical argument this

15 Apr 1955 Tillich concludes that the task of a theological treatment of the traditional arguments is "to develop the question of God which they express and to expose the impotency of their 'arguments,' their inability to answer the question of God."\*

Tillich's rejection of all arguments for the existence of God should not leave the impression that he is an irrationalist. What Tillich is really seeking to say is that God is presupposed in the question of God. Even to deny God is to affirm him. Says Tillich:

Die Frage nach der Wahrheit der Religion ist beantwortet durch die metalogisch Erfassung des Wesens der Religion als Richtung auf den unbedingten Sinn. Es ist sinnlos, ausserdem zu fragen, ob das Unbedingte "ist," ob also der religiöse Akt sich auf Wirkliches richtet und insofern wahr ist oder nicht. †<sup>100</sup>

Tillich, like Augustine, is convinced that God neither needs nor can receive "proof." He is that ultimate—Tillich's term is das Unbedingte—which is a certain quality of the world man encounters and which analysis reveals as "presupposed" in all his encountering. Whereas Augustine's Platonism led him to an intellectual emphasis on the truth or Logos implied in all knowledge, Tillich has expanded it to the "power of being" implied in all men's varied participation in the world in which they are grasped by an ultimate concern.

God as the "power of being," as Seinsmachigkeit, is the source of all power. Thus the power of thought is derived from the Ground of power, yet that Ground is not accessible to thought.<sup>101</sup>

So far as one has power he cannot escape God. To doubt, to feel, to think, to know, indeed to exist affirms God. For God as "power of being" is that power by which one doubts, feels, thinks, knows, exists.

Being itself, as present in the ontological awareness, is power of Being but not the most powerful being: it is neither ens realissimum nor ens singularissimum. It is the power in everything that has power, be it a universal or an individual, a thing or an experience. ‡<sup>102</sup>

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\* Tillich, ST, I, 210. ‡ Tillich, Art. (1946)<sup>2</sup>,  
 † Tillich, Art. (1925), 11.  
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conclusion is as invalid as the other cosmological 'arguments.' As the statement of a question it is not only valid but inescapable and, as history shows, most impressive."

100. Boozer quoted this passage from Tillich ("Place of Reason," pp. 73-74).

101. Boozer, "Place of Reason," p. 74: "God as the 'power of being,' as ousia, as Seinsmächtigkeit, is the source of all power. . . . The power of thought is derived from the Ground of power, yet that Ground is not accessible to thought."

102. Boozer, "Place of Reason," p. 105: "To doubt, to feel, to think, to know; indeed, to exist affirms God. For God as 'power of Being' is the power by which one doubts, feels, thinks, knows, exists. 'Being itself, as present in the ontological awareness, is power of Being but not the most

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knowledge of God15 Apr  
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As we have already seen, God as being-itself is the ground of the ontological structure of being, without being subject to the structure himself. Therefore, if anything beyond this bare assertion is said about God, it no longer is a direct and proper statement. It is indirect and points to something beyond itself. The statement that God is being-itself is the only literal statement that can be made concerning God. It does not point beyond itself. It means what it says directly and properly. God is not God if he is not being-itself.

However after this has been said, nothing else can be said about God which is not symbolic.<sup>103</sup> All knowledge of God is expressed in terms of symbols.

Glaube ist Richtung auf das Unbedingte als solchen Gegenstand sein, sondern nur das Symbol, in dem das Unbedingte anschaut und gewallt wird. Glaube ist Richtung auf das Unbedingte durch Symbole aus den Bedingten hindurch.\*

He continues,

Aber das Unbedingte ist kein gegenständlicher objekt. Es kann durch objekts nur symbolisiert, nicht erfasst werden.†

God as being-itself cannot be an object of thought or language.<sup>104</sup> All references to God must be expressed in terms of symbols. These symbols indicate something about the nature of God, but that indication is never precise, unambiguous, literal.‡

The general character of the symbol has been described.§ We must reiterate the fact that symbol and sign are different. The distinct characteristic of a

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* Tillich, Art. (1925), 802.	that God is love and God is spirit. "But God is love.	is the most embracing, di- rect and unrestricted sym- bol for the divine life."
† Tillich, Art. (1925), 804.	And since God is being- itself, one must say that	(ST, I, 249).
‡ With the possible ex- ception of the affirmation	being-itself is love." (ST, I, 279). "God is spirit. That	§ See Chapter II, ii, (1).

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powerful being. . . . It is the power in everything that has power, be it a universal or an individual, a thing or an experience."

103. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, pp. 238–239: "The statement that God is being-itself is a nonsymbolic statement. It does not point beyond itself. It means what it says directly and properly. . . . However, after this has been said, nothing else can be said about God as God which is not symbolic. As we already have seen, God as being-itself is the ground of the ontological structure of being without being subject to this structure himself. . . . Therefore, if anything beyond this bare assertion is said about God, it no longer is a direct and proper statement, no longer a concept. It is indirect, and it points to something beyond itself."

104. Boozer also quoted the previous two passages from Tillich. He introduced them with the sentence, "God as ground and abyss cannot be an object of thought or language" ("Place of Reason," p. 160).

15 Apr 1955 symbol is its innate power. A sign is impotent in itself. Because the sign has no inner power, it does not arise from necessity. It is interchangeable at will. The symbol, however, does possess a necessary character. It cannot be exchanged.\*<sup>105</sup>

But the question arises, can a segment of finite reality become the basis for an assertion about that which is infinite? Tillich's answer is that it can, because that which is infinite is being-itself, and because everything participates in being-itself.

Religious symbols use a finite reality in order to express our relation to the infinite. But the finite reality they use is not an arbitrary means for an end, something strange to it; it participates in the power of the ultimate for which it stands.†

This leads Tillich to affirm that religious symbols are doubled-edged. They express not only what is symbolized but also that through which it is symbolized.<sup>106</sup> They are directed toward the infinite which they symbolize and toward the finite through which they symbolize it. They open the finite and the human for the infinite and divine, and the infinite and divine for the finite and human. The symbol "Father," for instance, when applied to God, brings God down to the human relationship of father and child. But at the same time it lifts the human relationship up to its theonomous sacramental depth. If God is called king, something is said not only about God but also about the sacredness of kingship. If the work of God is spoken of as "making whole" or "healing," something is said not only about God but about the holiness of all healing. Any segment of reality that is used as a symbol for God is at that moment elevated to the realm of the sacred. It becomes theonomous.‡<sup>107</sup>

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\* Tillich, Art. (1940), 14.

† Tillich, PE, 61.

‡ Tillich, ST, I, 240, 241.

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105. Paul Tillich, "The Religious Symbol," *Journal of Liberal Religion* 2 (1940): 13-14: "The third characteristic of the symbol is its innate power. This implies that the symbol has a power inherent within it that distinguishes it from the mere sign which is impotent in itself. This characteristic is decisive for the distinction between a sign and a symbol. The sign is interchangeable at will. It does not arise from necessity, for it has no inner power. The symbol, however, does possess a necessary character. It cannot be exchanged."

106. Tillich, *Protestant Era*, p. 61: "A religious symbol is double edged. It expresses not only what is symbolized but also that through which it is symbolized."

107. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, pp. 240-241: "Religious symbols are double-edged. They are directed toward the infinite which they symbolize *and* toward the finite through which they symbolize it. . . . They open the divine for the human and the human for the divine. For instance, if God is symbolized as 'Father,' he is brought down to the human relationship of father and child. But at the same time this human relationship is consecrated into a pattern of the divine-human relationship. If 'Father' is employed as a symbol for God, fatherhood is seen in its theonomous, sacramental depth. . . . If a segment of reality is used as a symbol for God, the realm of reality from which it is taken is, so to speak, elevated into the realm of the holy. . . . It is theonomous. If

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Tillich asserts that theology has neither the duty nor the power to confirm or to negate religious symbols. Its task is to interpret the symbols according to theological principles and methods. But in the process of interpretation at least two things may happen: on the one hand, theology may discover contradictions between symbols within the theological circle; on the other hand, theology may speak not only as theology but also as religion. In the first case, theology can point out the religious and theological errors embedded in certain symbols; in the second case, theology can become prophecy, contributing to a change in the revelatory situation.\*<sup>108</sup>

Tillich revolts vehemently against the idea that the symbol is nonreal. He contends that this erroneous idea stems partly from the confusion between sign and symbol, and partly from the identification of reality with empirical reality. He sees an even greater source of the confusion stemming from the tendency of some theological movements, such as Protestant Hegelianism and Catholic modernism, to interpret religious language symbolically in order to dissolve its realistic meaning and to weaken its seriousness, its power, and its spiritual impact. Such a view fails to see that the intention of most theologians who have spoken of God in symbolic terms has been to give to God more reality and power than a nonsymbolic and therefore easily superstitious interpretation could give them.† In this sense, asserts Tillich, symbolic interpretation is proper and necessary.<sup>109</sup>

### 3. God as the Unconditional

We have seen that Tillich is insistent on the point that God is not an object for us as subjects. He is not any particular meaning to be placed besides other

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\* Tillich, *ST*, I, 240.

† Tillich, *ST*, I, 241.

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God is called the 'king,' something is said not only about God but also about the holy character of kingship. If God's work is called 'making whole' or 'healing,' this not only says something about God but also emphasizes the theonomous character of all healing."

108. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 240: "Theology as such has neither the duty nor the power to confirm or to negate religious symbols. Its task is to interpret them according to theological principles and methods. In the process of interpretation, however, two things may happen: theology may discover contradictions between symbols within the theological circle and theology may speak not only as theology but also as religion. In the first case, theology can point out the religious dangers and the theological errors which follow from the use of certain symbols; in the second case, theology can become prophecy, and in this role it may contribute to a change in the revelatory situation."

109. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 241: "This is partially the result of confusion between sign and symbol and partially due to the identification of reality with empirical reality, with the entire realm of objective things and events. . . . But one reason remains, namely, the fact that some theological movements, such as Protestant Hegelianism and Catholic modernism, have interpreted religious language symbolically in order to dissolve its realistic meaning and to weaken its

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meanings, not even the highest meaning.\* He is not any particular value beside other values, not even the highest value.† He is not any particular being beside other beings, not even the highest being.‡ This complete lack of particularity in God is expressed in Tillich's idea of God as das Unbedingte, the Unconditioned or the Unconditional.§ Since Tillich has written at length about the unconditioned the idea may profitably be considered.<sup>110</sup>

Tillich's thought concerning the Unconditioned is not at all clearly stated. At times Tillich speaks of the unconditional as a quality; at other times he speaks as if the unconditioned were being-itself, i.e. God.<sup>111</sup>

In a very interesting lecture on "Kairos," Tillich speaks of the unconditional as a quality.<sup>112</sup>

In every symbol of the divine an unconditional claim is expressed, most powerfully in the command: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul and with all thy mind." No partial, restricted, conditioned love of God is admitted. The term "unconditioned" or the adjective made into the substantive, "the unconditional," is an abstraction from such sayings which abound in the Bible and in great religious literature. The unconditional is a quality, not a being. It characterizes that which is our ultimate and, consequently unconditional concern, whether we call it "God" or "Being as such," or the "God as such" or the "true as such," or whether we give it any other name. It would be a complete mistake to understand the unconditional as a being the existence of which can be discussed. He who speaks of the "existence of the unconditional" has thoroughly misunderstood the meaning of the term. Unconditional is a quality which we experi-

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\* Tillich, IOH, 222; PE, 163.

† Tillich, IOH, 223.

‡ Tillich, PE, 163.

§ J. L. Adams, one of the leading interpreters of

Tillich's thought, says that das Unbedingte should be translated "the unconditional" and never "the unconditioned." (Adams, Art. (1949),

300). But Tillich himself speaks of God as being "the unconditioned." (Art. (1946), 11).

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seriousness, its power, and its spiritual impact. . . . Their intention and their result was to give to God and to all his relations to man more reality and power than a nonsymbolic and therefore easily superstitious interpretation could give them. In this sense symbolic interpretation is proper and necessary."

110. Boozer, "Place of Reason," pp. 154-155: "A persistent idea in Tillich's writing about God is that God is not an object for us as subjects. God is not any particular meaning to be placed beside other meanings, not even the highest meaning. God is not any particular value beside other values, not even the highest value. God is not any particular being beside other beings, not even the highest being. The complete lack of particularity in God led Dr. Harkness to write: 'The one element in our knowledge of God which is literal fact, and not symbol, is God's character as the Unconditioned.' As Tillich has written at length about the unconditioned, though without consistent clarity, the idea may profitably be considered." The quotation is from Georgia Harkness, "The Abyss and the Given," *Christendom* 3 (1938): 512.

111. Boozer, "Place of Reason," p. 155: "At times Tillich speaks of the unconditional as a quality of the encounter; at other times he speaks of the unconditional as if it were being-itself; indeed, as if it were God."

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112. Boozer, "Place of Reason," p. 155: "In a footnote to a lecture on 'Kairos' Tillich speaks of the unconditional as a quality."

ence in encountering reality, for instance, in the unconditional character of the voice of the conscience, the logical as well as the moral.\*<sup>113</sup>

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In this lengthy passage Tillich is explicit in asserting that the unconditional is not a being but a quality. But even here the issue is clouded when Tillich says that the unconditional “characterizes that which is our ultimate and, consequently, unconditional concern, whether we call it ‘God’ or ‘Being as such.’”<sup>114</sup> This seems to contradict the insistence in the immediately preceding passage that the unconditional is a quality.

There are passages in which Tillich seems to identify the unconditional with being-itself. For instance, Tillich writes:

The unconditional meaning . . . toward which every act of meaning is directed is implicit faith, and which supports the whole, which protects it from a plunge into a nothingness void of meaning, itself has two aspects: it bears the meaning of each single meaning as well as the meaning of the whole. That is, it is the basis of meaning.†<sup>115</sup>

Tillich goes on in the same book to speak of the unconditional simultaneously as basis of meaning and abyss of meaning.‡<sup>116</sup> Both of these passages seem to set forth the unconditional as identical with being-itself. Again Tillich writes: “But the really real is not reached until the unconditional ground of everything real, or the unconditioned power in every power of being, is reached.” Here again, unconditional seems to refer to the ground of being or being-itself. Other passages could be added to these to indicate Tillich’s tendency to speak of the unconditional as being-itself, in spite of his insistence that the unconditional is a quality of being-itself.<sup>117</sup> However despite these ambiguities it seems to be consistent with Tillich’s intention to say that the unconditional is a quality of being-itself; which quality man experiences in the encounter

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\* Tillich, PE, 32n. Italics mine.

† Tillich, IOH, 222.

‡ Tillich, IOH, 222.

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113. Boozer quoted this passage from Tillich (“Place of Reason,” p. 155).

114. Boozer, “Place of Reason,” p. 156: “Tillich is clear in asserting that the unconditional is not a being but a quality. Yet the issue is clouded in the next sentence when he says that the unconditional characterizes that which is our ultimate concern, whether we call that God or Being as such.” King’s quotation is from Tillich, *Protestant Era*, p. 32n.

115. Boozer quoted this passage from Tillich (“Place of Reason,” p. 157).

116. Boozer, “Place of Reason,” p. 157: “Again in the Interpretation of History Tillich says that we can speak of the unconditional simultaneously as basis of meaning and abyss of meaning.”

117. Boozer, “Place of Reason,” p. 158: “Again Tillich writes: ‘But the really real is not reached until the unconditional ground of everything real, or the unconditioned power in every power of being, is reached.’ Here again, unconditional refers to the ground of being or being-itself. Other passages could be added to these to indicate that in spite of Tillich’s assertion that the unconditional is a quality and not a being.” The quotation is from Paul Tillich, *The Protestant Era*, trans. J. L. Adams (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), p. 76.

15 Apr with being-itself.<sup>118</sup> J. L. Adams also interprets Tillich's idea of the unconditional as a quality of being-itself. Of Tillich's unconditional he writes:

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Hence, as the depth or the infinity of things, it is both the ground and abyss of being. It is that quality in being and truth, in goodness and beauty, that elicits man's ultimate concern; thus it is the absolute quality of all being and meaning and value, the power and vitality of the real as it fulfills itself in meaningful creativity.\*<sup>119</sup>

In his idea of God as the unconditional, Tillich is attempting to impress the point that God is not an object which we as subjects perceive or think about.<sup>120</sup> He insists that the term unconditional is not to be confused with the Absolute of German idealism, with the eternal essence of Platonism, with the superessential One of mysticism, with the Supreme Being of rational deduction, or with the "Wholly Other" of Barthian theology.† In all these terms that which should be thought of as Being itself tends to be looked upon as a particular being about whose existence there might be an argument. One can argue neither for nor against the existence of the unconditional. To argue about it is to presuppose it, for the very argument presupposes some unconditional demand and reality. The unconditional is not a section of reality; it is not an object among objects, not even the highest "object." The unconditional transcends the distinction between subject and object. The unconditional is not a being.<sup>121</sup> "Neither 'the Unconditioned' nor 'something unconditioned,' is meant as a being, not even the highest being, not even God. God is unconditional, that makes him God: but the 'unconditional' is not God."‡ To draw God down into the world of objects and beings is to indulge in the basest idolatry. And atheism is justified when it protests against the existence of a being.

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\* Adams, Art. (1948), 300, 301. ‡ Tillich, Art. (1946)<sup>2</sup>, 11.  
Italics mine.

† Tillich, Art. (1946), 2, 10.

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118. Boozer, "Place of Reason," p. 156: "It seems to be quite consistent with Tillich's intention to say that unconditionality is a quality of being itself; not of a being, but of being itself, which quality man experiences in the encounter with being itself."

119. Boozer, "Place of Reason," p. 158: "J. L. Adams also interprets Tillich's idea of the unconditional as a quality of being-itself. Of Tillich's unconditional he writes: 'Hence, as the depth or the infinity of things, it is both the ground and abyss of being. It is that quality in being and truth, in goodness and beauty, that elicits man's ultimate concern; thus it is the absolute quality of all being and meaning and value, the power and vitality of the real as it fulfills itself in meaningful creativity.'"

120. Boozer, "Place of Reason," p. 102: "God is not an object which we as subjects perceive or think about."

121. James Luther Adams, "Tillich's Concept of the Protestant Era," in Tillich, *Protestant Era*, p. 300: "One misunderstands the term 'the unconditional' if one confuses it with the Absolute of German idealism, with the eternal essences of Platonism, with the superessential One of mysticism, with the mathematically calculated laws of nature, with the Supreme Being of rational deduction, or with the 'Wholly Other' (as characterized by Rudolph Otto or Karl Barth). . . . In all these terms that which should be thought of as Being itself tends to be conceived as a particular

So for Tillich, "God is no object for us as subjects."\* God is rather the prius of the separation into subject and object, that which precedes this division. As we shall see later in the discussion, this prius of separation is not a person. It is power, power of being. Tillich is greatly influenced by existential philosophy at this point. He interprets existential philosophy as an attempt to find a level which precedes the contrast between subject and object. "It aims to cut under the 'subject-object distinction' and to reach that stratum of Being which Jaspers, for instance, calls the 'Ursprung' or Source," †<sup>122</sup>

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Tillich's existential leaning leads him to affirm that one has awareness of the unconditional. The term "awareness" is used because it is a neutral term and may be distinguished from knowledge and experience. The term "experience" should not be used because it ordinarily describes the observed presence of one reality to another reality, and because the unconditioned is not a matter of experiential observation. The term "knowledge" presupposes the separation of subject and object, and implies a discrete theoretical act, which is just the opposite of awareness of the unconditioned.<sup>123</sup> Schleiermacher recognized the inappropriateness of "knowledge" as the basis of religious consciousness, but he conditioned the awareness by assigning it to "feeling." The awareness of the unconditional involves the whole being. "Man, not his cognitive function alone, is aware of the Unconditioned." ‡ It is therefore possible to call this awareness existential in the sense that man as a whole participates in the cognitive act.<sup>124</sup>

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\* Tillich, Art. (1946)<sup>2</sup>, 11.

† Tillich, Art. (1944)<sup>2</sup>, 56.

‡ Tillich, Art. (1946)<sup>2</sup>, 10.

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being about whose 'existence' there might be an argument. . . . To argue about it is to presuppose it, for the very argument must itself presuppose some unconditional demand and reality. . . . The unconditional is not a section of reality; it is not a thing or an 'existing' entity; it is not an object among objects, not even the highest 'object.' . . . The unconditional transcends the distinction between subject and object. . . . The unconditional is not *a* being."

122. Boozer, "Place of Reason," pp. 102–104: "Believing that God 'is no object for us as subjects,' Tillich moves behind the separation to the prius of the separation into subject and object, to that which precedes this division. . . . But Tillich does not think of God as a person. . . . The prius of separation, then, is power, power of being. Tillich follows existential philosophy at this point. For he interprets existential philosophy as an attempt to find a level which precedes the contrast between subject and object. 'It aims to cut under the "subject-object distinction" and to reach that stratum of Being which Jaspers, for instance, calls the "Ursprung" or "Source."'"

123. Paul Tillich, "The Two Types of Philosophy of Religion," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 1, no. 4 (May 1946): 10: "Neither should the word 'experience' be used, because it ordinarily describes the observed presence of one reality to another reality, and because the Unconditioned is not a matter of experiential observation. 'Knowledge' finally presupposes the separation of subject and object, and implies an isolated theoretical act, which is just the opposite of awareness of the Unconditioned."

124. Tillich, "Two Types of Philosophy," p. 10: "It would, therefore, be possible to call this awareness 'existential' in the sense in which the Existential philosophy has used the word, namely the participation of man as a whole in the cognitive act."

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From the above we can see that there is a close relationship between the unconditional and man's ultimate concern. This passage, in which Tillich defines "ultimate concern," clearly expresses the similarity:

Ultimate concern is the abstract translation of the great commandment: "The Lord, our God, the Lord is one; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your mind, and with all your strength." The religious concern is ultimate; it excludes all other concerns from ultimate significance; it makes them preliminary. The ultimate concern is unconditional, independent of any conditions of character, desire, or circumstance. The unconditional concern is total: no part of ourselves or of our world is excluded from it; there is no "place" to flee from it. The total concern is infinite: no moment of relaxation and rest is possible in the face of a religious concern which is ultimate, unconditional, total, and infinite.\*

In an even clearer analysis of the nature of the ultimate concern, Tillich says: "Our ultimate concern is that which determines our being or not-being."† That which does not have the power of threatening or saving our being‡ cannot be of ultimate concern for us. Man is ultimately concerned about his being and meaning, about that which conditions his being beyond all the conditions in him and around him, about that which determines his ultimate destiny beyond all preliminary necessities and accidents.§<sup>126</sup>

So in Tillich's usage the unconditional is a philosophical symbol for the ultimate concern of man. God is the name for that which concerns man unconditionally or ultimately.

#### 4. God as ground and abyss of power and meaning

We have seen that, according to Tillich, all beings have a double relation to being-itself. This double relation of all beings to being-itself gives being-itself

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<p>* Tillich, <i>ST</i>, I, 11, 12.          † Tillich, <i>ST</i>, I, 14.          ‡ Tillich does not use being in this context to designate existence in time and space. He is aware of</p>	<p>the fact that existence is continuously threatened and saved by things and events which have no ultimate concern for us. The term "being" means the</p>	<p>whole of human reality, the structure, the meaning, and aim of existence.<sup>125</sup>          § Tillich, <i>ST</i>, I, 14.</p>
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<sup>125</sup>. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 14: "The term 'being' in this context does not designate existence in time and space. Existence is continuously threatened and saved by things and events which have no ultimate concern for us. But the term 'being' means the whole of human reality, the structure, the meaning, and the aim of existence."

<sup>126</sup>. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 14: "Nothing can be of ultimate concern for us which does not have the power of threatening and saving our being. . . . Man is ultimately concerned about his being and meaning. . . . Man is unconditionally concerned about that which conditions his being beyond all the conditions in him and around him. Man is ultimately concerned about that which determines his ultimate destiny beyond all preliminary necessities and accidents."

a double characteristic. It is creative in the sense that everything participates in the infinite power of being. It is abysmal in the sense that all beings are infinitely transcended by their creative ground.\*<sup>127</sup> This conception finds powerful expression in Tillich's assertion that God is ground and abyss of power and meaning.† In this definition Tillich is seeking to establish two polar concepts ontologically. "The divine life," says Tillich, "is the dynamic unity of depth and form."‡<sup>128</sup>

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In a passage in his Interpretation of History, Tillich writes:

The unconditional meaning . . . is the basis of meaning. Yet it is never to be grasped as such in any one act of meaning. It is transcendent in regard to every individual meaning. We can therefore speak of the unconditional simultaneously as basis of meaning and abyss of meaning (Sinngrund und abgrund). We call this object of the silent belief in the ultimate meaninglessness, this basis and abyss of all meaning which surpasses all that is conceivable, God. . . . Unconditional meaning has the quality of inexhaustibility. . . . The concept "meaning" is supposed to express all aspects of the human mind and therefore is just as valid in application to the practical as to the theoretical. The basis of meaning is just as much the basis of personality and community as of being and significance; and it is simultaneously the abyss of all. . . . The unconditioned appears as that which does not admit any conditioned fulfillment of its commandments, as that which is able to destroy every personality and community which tries to escape the unconditioned demand. We miss the quality of the unconditioned meaning, of being basis and abyss, if we interpret it either from an intellectual point of view or from a moral point of view alone. Only in the duality of both does the unconditioned meaning manifest itself.§<sup>129</sup>

This rather lengthy passage sets forth the two ideas that God is basis (ground) of being and meaning, and that God is the depth (abyss) of being and meaning. Here we see correlation lifted to the very nature of God. Moreover, we see that the tensions in existence between form and formlessness find their basis in the nature of God.<sup>130</sup> In order to get a clearer conception of these two aspects of the divine life, we shall discuss them separately.

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\* Tillich, ST, I, 237.

‡ Tillich, ST, I, 156.

† Tillich, ST, I, 21, 250;  
IOH, 222.

§ Tillich, IOH, 222, 223,  
224.

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127. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 237: "This double relation of all beings to being-itself gives being-itself a double characteristic. In calling it creative, we point to the fact that everything participates in the infinite power of being. In calling it abysmal, we point to the fact that . . . all beings are infinitely transcended by their creative ground."

128. Boozer, "Place of Reason," pp. 168, 170: "Tillich's basic definition of God is that God is ground and abyss of power and meaning. . . . Tillich here wishes to establish two polar concepts ontologically." In his footnote to the last sentence Boozer quoted page 156 of *Systematic Theology*: "The divine life is the dynamic unity of depth and form."

129. This quotation appears verbatim in Boozer, "Place of Reason," p. 169.

130. Boozer, "Place of Reason," pp. 170–171: "The two persistent ideas here are that God is basis (ground) of being and meaning, and that God is the depth (abyss) of being and mean-

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i. God as ground

Tillich has a twofold purpose for emphasizing God as the ground of all being and reality. On the one hand, the concept establishes the dependence of "being" upon the source of being, all meaning upon the source of meaning. This emphasis saves man from the arrogance of thinking he is an autonomous being with no dependence on God, the source of being. On the other hand, the concept of ground is a basis of continuity between God and the world, of man and nature. This is the creativity of God.<sup>131</sup>

In the idea of ground, Tillich seems to be setting forth the idea of the rationality of God. Concerning the ground, Tillich writes:

The ground is not only an abyss in which every form disappears; it also is the source from which every form emerges. The ground of being has the character of self-manifestation; it has logos character. This is not something added to the divine life; it is the divine life itself. In spite of its abysmal character the ground of being is "logical"; it includes its own logos.<sup>\*132</sup>

In this passage Tillich seems to be saying that the ground of being has a logos character. Tillich's usual assertion is that God is ground of being and meaning. But here he says that ground has a logos character. In other words the ground is logical and rational. Here it seems that the ground takes on character and meaning, and God becomes more than the amorphous "being-itself" which is the ground of everything, without itself being anything. The nature of God as ground implies the rationality of God.<sup>133</sup>

But the issue is not totally clear. As one continues to read Tillich he discovers that it is difficult to determine whether Tillich's God is logos or the ground of logos. In the paragraph following the difficulty is set forth clearly:

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\* Tillich, ST, I, 157, 158.

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ing. . . . The tensions in existence between form and the formless, good and evil, the sacred and the secular, find their basis in the nature of God."

131. Boozer, "Place of Reason," p. 171: "In emphasizing God as the ground of all being and meaning, Tillich wishes to establish the dependence of all 'beings' upon the source of being, all meanings upon the source of meaning. . . . But the major idea which Tillich strives to express in the concept of 'Ground' is a basis of continuity between God and the world of man and nature. This is the creativity of God."

132. Boozer quoted this passage from Tillich ("Place of Reason," p. 172).

133. Boozer, "Place of Reason," p. 174: "Tillich's basic and usual assertion is that God is the ground of being and meaning. But here he says that the ground has a logos character, that the ground is therefore logical and rational. . . . In this case the ground itself takes on character and meaning, and it supersedes the amorphous 'being itself' which is the ground of everything that is, without itself being anything. If this statement of Tillich's may be taken seriously the nature of God as ground seems to mean the rationality of God."

Since God is the ground of being, he is the ground of the structure of being. He is not subject to this structure; the structure is grounded in him. He is this structure, and it is impossible to speak about him except in terms of this structure.\*<sup>134</sup> 15 Apr 1955

Here Tillich inconsistently maintains that God is the ground of the structure, of logos, and that God is the structure. This is one of the difficulties that the interpreter of Tillich continually confronts. Is God a ground somehow behind every form and structure or is he a ground which has a form?<sup>135</sup>

It seems that Tillich comes to realize the difficulties of his indeterminant "being itself" which is the ground of everything, without itself being anything. And so he emerges to the point of emphasizing God as not only the ground of structure, but as structure; not only as the ground of reason, but as reason.<sup>136</sup> God is no longer merely that from which reason proceeds, but he himself is rational.

But this is not all of God. God is not only the source from which every form emerges, but also the abyss in which every form disappears.†<sup>137</sup> If one says that God is rational he must also say that God is abysmal.‡

## ii. God as abyss

In the concept of the abyss Tillich is endeavoring to protect the inexhaustibility of God. God as ground forms creation. But God as abyss connotes the fact that no creation can fully express the richness of God. Abyss means for Tillich the depth of the divine life, its inexhaustible and ineffable character.

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\* Tillich, *ST*, I, 238.

† *ST*, I, 157.

‡ "Human intuition of the divine always has dis-

tinguished between the abyss of the divine (the element of power) and the fullness of its content (the

element of meaning), between the divine depth and the divine logos." (*ST*, I, 250).<sup>138</sup>

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134. Boozer, "Place of Reason," pp. 183–184: "The inconsistency about whether God is logos or ground of logos is still a point at issue. . . . In the concise paragraph following the difficulty is clearly put." Boozer then quoted a long passage from Tillich that includes the three sentences King quoted.

135. Boozer, "Place of Reason," p. 184: "Here Tillich maintains both that God is the ground of structure, of logos, and that God is the structure. . . . Is God a ground somehow behind and under every form and structure, or is God a ground which has a form and structure?"

136. Boozer, "Place of Reason," p. 185: "He emphasizes God not only as ground of reason, but as reason; not only as ground of structure, but as structure."

137. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, pp. 157–158: "The ground is not only an abyss in which every form disappears; it also is the source from which every form emerges."

138. Boozer quoted this passage from Tillich in a footnote ("Place of Reason," p. 186).

15 Apr 1955 The abysmal aspect of God represents the depth in God which man's reason cannot fathom. "That depth is what the word God means."\*<sup>139</sup>

The holiness of God is included in the concept of God as abyss. The holiness of God expresses the unapproachable character of God, or the impossibility of having a relation with him in the proper sense of the word. God cannot become an object of knowledge or a partner in action. To speak of God as we do of objects whose existence or non-existence can be discussed is to insult the divine holiness. God's holiness makes it impossible to draw him into the context of the ego-world and subject-object correlation. He is the ground of this correlation, not an element in it.† The holiness of God requires that in relation to him we leave behind all finite relations and enter into a relation which is not a relation at all.<sup>140</sup> "God is essentially holy, and every relation with him involves the consciousness that it is paradoxical to be related to that which is holy."‡

In his conception of abyss, Tillich is seeking to maintain the uniqueness of God; that God cannot be exhausted by any creation or by any totality of creation. In a word, Tillich is seeking to protect the majesty of God.<sup>141</sup>

### iii. Is the abyss irrational?

In discussing the abyss one is almost inevitably led to ask whether the abyss of being-itself is an abyss of inexhaustible meanings with which man's "meanings" are analogous? Or whether the abyss of being-itself is an irrational abyss which swallows up all finite meaning? Although Tillich does not set forth a series of unambiguous passages at this point, it seems that the abyss is not

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\* Tillich, *SOF*, 57.

† Tillich, *ST*, I, 272.

‡ Tillich, *ST*, I, 271.

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139. Boozer, "Place of Reason," p. 187: "Through the concept of the abyss Tillich wants to protect the inexhaustibility of God. God as ground of *logos* forms creation. But no creation can express fully the richness of God. . . . Abyss means for Tillich the 'depth of the divine life, its inexhaustible and ineffable character.' . . . There is always a depth in God which man's reason cannot fathom. 'That depth is what the word *God* means.'"

140. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, pp. 271–272: "The unapproachable character of God, or the impossibility of having a relation with him in the proper sense of the word, is expressed in the word 'holiness.' . . . God cannot become an object of knowledge or a partner in action. . . . Ultimately, it is an insult to the divine holiness to talk about God as we do of objects whose existence or nonexistence can be discussed. . . . The holiness of God makes it impossible to draw him into the context of the ego-world and the subject-object correlation. . . . The holiness of God requires that in relation to him we leave behind the totality of finite relations and enter into a relation which, in the categorical sense of the word, is not a relation at all."

141. Boozer, "Place of Reason," p. 191: "What Tillich is trying to maintain through the concepts of abyss and being-itself is the infinity, the uniqueness of God; that God cannot be exhausted by any creation or by any totality of them. The majesty of God is the issue here for Tillich."

irrational.\*<sup>145</sup> Tillich explicitly states that the abyss manifests itself in logical forms. "The depth of reason is the expression of something that is not reason but which precedes reason and is manifest through it." †<sup>146</sup>

Now it is clear that the depth is non-rational, but it is equally clear that the depth must be manifest through reason. In spite of Tillich's assertion that the abyss is what makes God God, he finds it difficult to rest with merely an abysmal God. He must stress more and more the rational nature of God as "ground." The abyss is not irrational; rather it is non-rational. Its irrationality is denied by the fact that in manifesting itself it must do so through reason.<sup>147</sup>

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\* There is quite a similarity between Tillich's abyss and E. S. Brightman's "Given" in God. The abyss for Tillich is inexhaustible power, infinite vitality.<sup>142</sup> The "Given" of Brightman consists of the eternal uncreated laws of reason, including logic, mathematical relations, and Platonic Ideas, and also of equally eternal uncreated nonrational aspects, "which exhibit all the ultimate qualities of sense objects, disorderly

impulses and desires, such experiences as pain and suffering, the forms of space and time, and whatever in God is the source of surd evil." (POR, 337).<sup>143</sup> For Brightman God not only eternally finds "the Given" in his experience, but he also eternally controls it. Tillich asserts that God as form is always in control of the abyss so far as God's relation with existential man is concerned. Yet he nevertheless em-

phasizes the abyss as the primary essence of God. The abyss is "that which makes God God" (ST, I, 250). For Brightman God's essence is meaning, will, value and rationality. God's reason controls the "given" at every point.<sup>144</sup> There is a very interesting comparison of Brightman's "Given" with Tillich's "abyss" written by Georgia Harkness (Harkness, Art. (1938)). † Tillich, ST, I, 79.

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142. Boozer, "Place of Reason," pp. 193-194: "There are similarities between Tillich's 'abyss' and E. S. Brightman's 'given' in God. . . . The abyss for Tillich is inexhaustible power, infinite vitality."

143. Brightman, *Philosophy of Religion*, p. 337: "The Given consists of the eternal, uncreated laws of reason including logic, mathematical relations, and Platonic ideas, and also of equally eternal and uncreated processes of nonrational consciousness which exhibit all the ultimate qualities of sense objects . . ." The rest of the quotation from Brightman is accurate.

144. Boozer, "Place of Reason," pp. 193-194: "So far as God's revealing activity is concerned, that is God's relation with existential man, God as form is always in control of the abyss. As there are similarities between Tillich's 'abyss' and E. S. Brightman's 'given' in God, there is also a similarity between Tillich's idea that God's form controls his power and Brightman's idea that God's reason controls the given. . . . For Brightman God in his essence is meaning, will, purpose, value and rationality."

145. Boozer, "Place of Reason," p. 192: "Is the abyss of being-itself an abyss of inexhaustible meaning (the richness of God's personality) with which man's 'meanings' are analogous? Or is the abyss of being-itself an irrational abyss which swallows up all finite meanings? It seems that in spite of contrary passages, the abyss is not irrational."

146. Boozer, "Place of Reason," p. 192: "The abyss manifests itself in logical forms, meaningful structures. 'The depth of reason is the expression of something that is not reason but which precedes reason and is manifest through it.'"

147. Boozer, "Place of Reason," p. 192: "One cannot deny the non-rationality of the depth here, but neither can one deny the reason through which the depth is manifest. . . . But Tillich himself cannot rest with an abysmal God. He must emphasize more and more the rational nature

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So we may conclude that by abyss Tillich means the mysterium tremendum, the inexhaustible depth of God's nature.<sup>148</sup> God as abyss is negative in content and form. In so far as God is Sinnabgrund he is unapproachably holy, infinitely distant from man.\* The abyss is not irrational. "It is more a non-rational, unformed dimension of incalculable power."†

By the ground Tillich means the logical, orderly, knowable side of God.<sup>150</sup> The ground of meaning is that in God which supports the rational logos type of manifestation. This manifestation is positive in content and form. In so far as God is Sinngrund man can approach God through his own rational nature.<sup>151</sup> In a word, Tillich is saying something positive about the nature of God in the concept of God as "ground," viz., that God is rational. It is true that Tillich looks upon the abyss as the primary essence of God.‡ But he is confident that the "abysmal quality cannot swallow the rational quality of the divine life."§<sup>152</sup>

### 5. God as creator

Tillich sees creation as the proper activity of God; it is God's nature to create. Creation is identical with God's life.||<sup>153</sup> For this reason it is meaningless to ask whether creation is a necessary or a contingent act of God. God's aseity implies that nothing is necessary for him in the sense that he is dependent on a necessity above him. Paradoxically speaking, he eternally "creates himself."

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* Tillich, ST, I, 287.	abyss is what makes God
† Boozer, PRTCCG, 209. <sup>149</sup>	God. (ST, I, 250).
‡ Tillich asserts that the	§ Tillich, ST, I, 252.
	Tillich, ST, I, 279.

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of God as 'ground.' The abyss is non-rational; but it is not irrational. And in manifesting itself it must do so through reason."

148. Boozer, "Place of Reason," p. 193: "Tillich means by the abyss the mysterium tremendum, the inexhaustible depth of God's nature."

149. King's source is Boozer, "Place of Reason," p. 193, not p. 209: "This abysmal nature of God is not irrational."

150. Boozer, "Place of Reason," p. 193: "Tillich means by the ground, on the other hand, the logical, orderly, calculable, revealing, knowable side of God."

151. Boozer, "Place of Reason," p. 153: "In general the ground of meaning is that in God which supports the rational, logos type of manifestation. This manifestation is positive in content and form. In so far as God is Sinngrund man can approach God through his own rational nature."

152. Boozer, "Place of Reason," p. 193: "For Tillich says that the abyss is what makes God God. Yet Tillich is confident that 'the abysmal quality cannot swallow the rational quality of the divine life.'"

153. Boozer, "Place of Reason," p. 45: "Creation is the proper activity of God; it is God's nature to create. Creation is identical with God's life."

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This is the meaning of God's freedom.<sup>154</sup> But it must be affirmed with equal force that creation is not a contingent act of God. "It does not 'happen' to God, for it is identical with his life. Creation is not only God's freedom but also his destiny."\*

But Tillich does not mean by creation an event which took place "once upon a time." Creation does not refer to an event, it rather indicates a condition, a relationship between God and the world. "It is the correlate to the analysis of man's finitude, it answers the question implied in man's finitude and infinitude generally."† Man asks a question which, in existence, he cannot answer. But the question is answered by man's essential nature, his unity with God. Creation is the word given to the process which actualizes man in existence. To indicate the gap between his essential nature and his existential nature man speaks of creation.‡<sup>155</sup>

Since the divine life is essentially creative, avers Tillich, it is necessary to use all three modes of time in symbolizing it. God has created the world. God is creative in the present moment. And God will creatively fulfill his telos. Therefore Tillich speaks of originating creation, sustaining creation, and directing creation.<sup>156</sup>

### i. God's originating creativity

Classical Christian doctrine expresses God's originating creativity in the phrase creation ex nihilo. The obvious meaning of the words of this phrase is

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\* Tillich, *ST*, I, 252.

† Tillich, *ST*, I, 252.

‡ Tillich, *ST*, I, 253.

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154. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 252: "Therefore, it is meaningless to ask whether creation is a necessary or a contingent act of God. Nothing is necessary for God in the sense that he is dependent on a necessity above him. . . . He eternally 'creates himself,' a paradoxical phrase which states God's freedom."

155. Boozer, "Place of Reason," pp. 45-46: "But Tillich does not mean by creation an event which took place 'once upon a time.' Creation does not describe an event, it rather indicates a condition, a relationship between God and the world. 'It is the correlate to the analysis of man's finitude, it answers the question implied in man's finitude and in finitude generally.' Man asks a question which, in existence, he cannot answer. But the question is answered by man's essential nature, his unity with God. Creation is the word given to the process which actualizes man in existence. To indicate the gap between his essential nature and his existential nature man speaks of 'creation.'" The quotation that Boozer and King attributed to Tillich is inaccurate. It should read: "It is the correlate to the analysis of man's finitude. It answers the question implied in man's finitude and in finitude generally" (Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 252).

156. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 253: "Since the divine life is essentially creative, all three modes of time must be used in symbolizing it. God *has* created the world, he *is* creative in the present moment, and he *will* creatively fulfil his *telos*. Therefore, we must speak of originating creation, sustaining creation, and directing creation."

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a critical negation. They express the fact that God finds nothing “given” to him which influences him in his creativity or resist his creative *telos*.<sup>\*</sup> This doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* protects Christianity from any type of ultimate dualism. Tillich is convinced that this negative meaning of *creatio ex nihilo* is decisive for every Christian experience and assertion.<sup>157</sup>

However the term *ex nihilo* seems to denote more than the rejection of dualism. The *ex* seems to refer to the origin of the creature. “Nothing” is what it comes from.<sup>†</sup> Now nothing can have two meanings. It can mean “nothing at all,” i.e. the absolute negation of being (*ouk on*), or it can mean the relative negation of being (*me on*). If it means *me on*, it cannot be the origin of the creature. The term *ex nihilo*, nevertheless says something fundamentally important about the creature, namely, that it must take over “the heritage of nonbeing.”<sup>‡</sup> Creatureliness implies both the heritage of nonbeing and the heritage of being.<sup>158</sup> Its heritage of being stems from its participation in being-itself, in the creative ground of being.<sup>§</sup>

God’s originating creativity is also expressed in the Nicene Creed which states that God is creator of “everything visible and invisible.” Like the formula just discussed, this phrase also has a protective function. It is directed against the Platonic view that the Creator-God is dependent on the eternal essences or ideas. The essences are not independent of God, standing in some transcendent realm as models for his creative activity. They are, as Neo-Platonism taught, in the divine mind. They are themselves dependent on God’s eternal creativity.<sup>159</sup> “The essential powers of being,” affirms Tillich,

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\* Tillich, I, 252.

† Tillich, I, 252.

‡ Tillich, ST, I, 254.

§ Tillich, ST, I, 254.

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157. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 253: “The classical Christian doctrine of creation uses the phrase *creatio ex nihilo*. . . . Their obvious meaning is a critical negation. God finds nothing ‘given’ to him which influences him in his creativity or which resists his creative *telos*. The doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* is Christianity’s protection against any type of ultimate dualism. . . . This negative meaning of *creatio ex nihilo* is clear and decisive for every Christian experience and assertion.”

158. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 253: “The question arises, however, whether the term *ex nihilo* points to more than the rejection of dualism. The word *ex* seems to refer to the origin of the creature. ‘Nothing’ is what (or where) it comes from. Now ‘nothing’ can mean two things. It can mean the absolute negation of being (*ouk on*), or it can mean the relative negation of being (*me on*). . . . If *ex nihilo* meant the absolute negation of being, it could not be the origin of the creature. Nevertheless, the term *ex nihilo* says something fundamentally important about the creature, namely, that it must take over what might be called ‘the heritage of nonbeing.’ . . . [Creatureliness] includes both the heritage of nonbeing (anxiety) and the heritage of being (courage).”

159. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 254: “In the Nicene Creed, God is called the creator of ‘everything visible and invisible.’ Like the formula just discussed, this phrase also has, first of all, a protective function. It is directed against the Platonic doctrine that the creator-god is dependent on the eternal essences or ideas, the powers of being which make a thing what it is. . . . Neo-Platonism, and with it much Christian theology, taught that the essences are ideas in the divine

“belong to the divine life in which they are rooted, created by him who is everything he is ‘through himself.’”\*

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Tillich goes on to affirm that originating creativity means that the creature is rooted in the creative ground of the divine life. But it also means that “man has left the ground in order to ‘stand upon’ himself, to actualize what he essentially is in order to be finite freedom.”† This is the point at which creation and the fall join.‡ Tillich admits that this is the most difficult and the most dialectical point in the doctrine of creation. It says that fully developed creatureliness is fallen creatureliness. Man is not only “inside” the divine life, but also “outside” it. Being outside the divine life means to stand in actualized freedom, in an existence which is no longer united with essence. Seen from one side, this is creation. Seen from the other side, this is the fall.§<sup>161</sup> Creation is fulfilled in the creaturely self-realization which simultaneously is freedom and destiny.||<sup>162</sup>

From this background we gain the meaning of what is called “human creativity.” Man is creative in the sense of “bringing the new into being.” But this human creativity differs sharply from God’s creativity which consists of “bringing into being that which had no being.” Man creates new syntheses out of given material.# But God creates the material out of which the new syntheses

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\* Tillich, ST, I, 254.

† Tillich, ST, I, 255.

‡ In identifying creation with the fall, Tillich seems to be implying, against his own intentions, that there is a destructive principle within God. He contends that creation has no ulterior purpose (ST, I, 263);

it occurs as the exercise of divine creativity. In other words, God creates because he must, because that is how he is. (Tillich alludes to both freedom and destiny in this connection). Now, if creation is inevitable, and if the result is inevitably bad (a

“fall”), then it follows that God contains a destructive principle.<sup>160</sup>

§ Tillich, ST, I, 255.

|| Tillich, ST, I, 256.

# Tillich says that man’s creativity is really transformation.

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mind. . . . They are themselves dependent on God’s eternal creativity; they are not independent of him, standing in some heavenly niche as models for his creative activity.”

160. Demos, Review of *Systematic Theology*, p. 701: “The author identifies creation (of finite being) with the fall (p. 257) and here the thoughtful reader is perplexed. Creation, says the author, has no ulterior purpose; it occurs as the exercise of divine creativity. In other words, God creates because he must, because that is how he is. (The author alludes to both destiny and freedom in this connection.) Now, if creation is inevitable, and if the result is inevitably bad (a ‘fall’), then it follows that God contains a destructive principle.”

161. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 255: “This is the point at which the doctrine of creation and the doctrine of the fall join. It is the most difficult and the most dialectical point in the doctrine of creation. . . . Fully developed creatureliness is fallen creatureliness. . . . To be outside the divine life means to stand in actualized freedom, in an existence which is no longer united with essence. Seen from one side, this is the end of creation. Seen from the other side, it is the beginning of the fall.”

162. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 256: “Creation is fulfilled in the creaturely self-realization which simultaneously is freedom and destiny.”

15 Apr 1955 can be developed. God creates man, giving him the power of transforming himself and the world. Man can only transform that which is given.\*<sup>163</sup> "God is primarily and essentially creative; man is secondarily and existentially creative."†

## ii. God's sustaining creativity

We have seen that man has left the ground of his being in order to stand upon himself, to actualize what he essentially is.<sup>164</sup> But this actualized freedom remains continuously dependent on its creative ground. It is only in the power of being-itself that the creature is able to resist nonbeing. Creaturely existence includes a double resistance, that is, resistance against nonbeing as well as resistance against the ground of being upon which it is dependent.‡ This relation of God to the creature is called in traditional terms the preservation of the world.<sup>165</sup>

Tillich rejects those theories of preservation which affirm that after God created the world he either does not interfere at all (consistent deism) or interferes occasionally through miracles and revelation (theistic deism), or he acts in a continual interrelationship (consistent theism). In none of these cases, asserts Tillich, would it be proper to speak of sustaining creation.§ Tillich finds a more adequate interpretation of preservation in the Augustinian Theory that preservation is continuous creativity, in that God out of eternity creates things and time together. Tillich contends that since God is essentially creative, he is creative in every moment of temporal existence,<sup>166</sup> "giving the

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\* Tillich, *ST*, I, 256.

† Tillich, *ST*, I, 256.

‡ Tillich, *ST*, I, 261.

§ Tillich, *ST*, I, 262.

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163. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 256: "Man creates new syntheses out of given material. This creation really is transformation. God creates the material out of which the new syntheses can be developed. God creates man; he gives man the power of transforming himself and his world. Man can transform only what is given to him."

164. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 255: "Man has left the ground in order to 'stand upon' himself, to actualize what he essentially is."

165. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 261: "At the same time, actualized freedom remains continuously dependent on its creative ground. Only in the power of being-itself is the creature able to resist nonbeing. Creaturely existence includes a double resistance, that is, resistance against nonbeing as well as resistance against the ground of being in which it is rooted and upon which it is dependent. Traditionally the relation of God to the creature in its actualized freedom is called the preservation of the world."

166. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 262: "But after its beginning he either does not interfere at all (consistent deism) or only occasionally through miracles and revelation (theistic deism), or he acts in a continual interrelationship (consistent theism). In these three cases, it would not be proper to speak of sustaining creation. . . . Preservation is continuous creativity, in that God out

power of being to everything that has being out of the creative ground of life.”\*

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Sustaining creativity differs from originating creativity in that the former refers to the given structures of reality, to that which continues in change, to the regular and calculable in things. Without this static element neither action for the future nor a place to stand upon would be possible; and therefore being would not be possible. So Tillich concludes that faith in God’s sustaining creativity is faith in the continuity of the structure of reality as the basis for being and acting.†<sup>167</sup>

### iii. God’s directing creativity

When one thinks of God’s directing creativity, he usually thinks of the purpose of creation. But Tillich finds that the concept of “the purpose of creation” is at best an ambiguous concept. Creation, contends Tillich, has no purpose beyond itself. Looked at from the point of view of the creature, the purpose of creation is the creature itself, the actualization of its potentialities.<sup>168</sup> Looked at from the point of view of the creator, “the purpose of creation is the exercise of his creativity, which has no purpose beyond itself because the divine life is essentially creative.”‡ Tillich rejects both the Calvinistic doctrine, which designates the purpose of creation as “the glory of God,” and the Lutheran doctrine, which affirms that God creates the world in order to have a communion of love with his creatures. In both of these theologies God needs something that he could not have without creation.§ Such an idea Tillich rejects as pagan.

So the ambiguity of the concept “the purpose of creation” leads Tillich to replace the concept by “the telos of creativity”—the inner aim of fulfilling in actuality what is beyond potentiality and actuality in the divine life. One of

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\* Tillich, *ST*, I, 262.

† Tillich, *ST*, I, 262.

‡ Tillich, *ST*, 263, 264.

§ Tillich, *ST*, I, 264.

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of eternity creates things and time together. . . . God is essentially creative, and therefore he is creative in every moment of temporal existence.”

167. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 262: “The latter refers to the given structures of reality, to that which continues within the change, to the regular and calculable in things. Without the static element, finite being would not be able to identify itself with itself or anything with anything. Without it, neither expectation, nor action for the future, nor a place to stand upon would be possible; and therefore being would not be possible. The faith in God’s sustaining creativity is the faith in the continuity of the structure of reality as the basis for being and acting.”

168. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 263: “Creation has no purpose beyond itself. From the point of view of the creature, the purpose of creation is the creature itself and the actualization of its potentialities.”

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the basic functions of the divine creativity is to drive every creature toward such a fulfillment. This is the directing creativity of God in addition to his originating and sustaining creativity. This is the side of the divine life which is directed toward the future. The traditional term for God's directing creativity is "providence."<sup>\*169</sup>

The term providence means a fore-seeing (*pro-videre*) which is a fore-ordering ("seeing to it"). Different interpretations of the concept of providence have resulted from this definition. There are those who have emphasized the element of foreseeing, making God an omniscient spectator who knows what will happen but who does not interfere with the freedom of his creatures. On the other hand there are those who have emphasized fore-ordering, making God a planner who has ordered everything that will happen "before the foundation of the world." In the first interpretation the creatures make their world, while God is a distant spectator. In the second interpretation, God is the only active agent, making the creatures mere cogs in a universal mechanism.<sup>†170</sup>

Tillich is emphatic in affirming that both of these interpretations of providence must be rejected. He sees providence as a permanent activity of God. God is never a spectator; he is forever directing everything toward its fulfillment.<sup>‡171</sup> "Yet God's directing creativity always creates through the freedom of man and through the spontaneity and structural wholeness of all creatures." § Providence works through the polar elements of being, through conditions of individual, social and universal existence, and through finitude, nonbeing, and anxiety. All existential conditions are included in God's directing creativity.<sup>172</sup> "Providence," says Tillich, "is not interference; it is creation. It uses all factors, both those given by freedom and those given by destiny, in cre-

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\* Tillich, *ST*, I, 264.

† Tillich, *ST*, I, 266.

‡ Tillich, *ST*, I, 266.

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169. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 264: "The concept 'the purpose of creation' should be replaced by 'the *telos* of creativity'—the inner aim of fulfilling in actuality what is beyond potentiality and actuality in the divine life. One function of the divine creativity is to drive every creature toward such a fulfillment. Thus directing creativity must be added to originating and sustaining creation. It is the side of the divine creativity which is related to the future. The traditional term for directing creativity is 'providence.'"

170. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 266: "Providence means a fore-seeing (*pro-videre*) which is a fore-ordering ('seeing to it'). . . . If the element of foreseeing is emphasized, God becomes the omniscient spectator who knows what will happen but who does not interfere with the freedom of his creatures. If the element of foreordering is emphasized, God becomes a planner who has ordered everything that will happen 'before the foundations of the world.' . . . In the first interpretation the creatures make their world, and God remains a spectator; in the second interpretation the creatures are cogs in a universal mechanism, and God is the only active agent."

171. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 266: "Both interpretations of providence must be rejected. Providence is a permanent activity of God. He never is a spectator; he always directs everything toward its fulfillment."

172. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 266: "Providence works through the polar elements of being. It works through the conditions of individual, social, and universal existence, through fini-

actively directing everything toward its fulfillment.”\* The man who believes in providence does not believe that a special divine activity will alter man’s existential conditions. He believes with the courage of faith that no condition whatsoever can frustrate the fulfillment of his ultimate destiny.† In Pauline terms it means that nothing can separate him from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus.‡<sup>173</sup>

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Tillich discusses the question of theodicy under the concept of the directing creativity of God. Faith in God’s directing creativity is continually challenged by the presence of meaninglessness and futility in the universe. The question forever arises, how can an almighty God be justified (*theos-dike*) in view of realities in which no meaning whatsoever can be discovered?<sup>174</sup>

In his discussion of the question of theodicy, Tillich divides evil into three classes. First there is physical evil, pain and death—which, according to him, offer no real problem because they are natural implications of creaturely finitude.§ Secondly, there is moral evil which is the tragic implication of creaturely freedom. Tillich contends that as creator, God cannot create what is opposite to himself; he must create creative beings, beings which are free, and in so far as they are free, independent and therefore estranged from the ground of being.|| Finally, there is the (apparent) fact of meaninglessness and futility. This, according to Tillich, is the sort of evil which offers genuine difficulties for theological belief. Examples cited by Tillich are “early death, destructive social conditions, feeble-mindedness and insanity, the undiminished horrors of historical existence”—all of these being cases of entities which “are excluded from any kind of fulfillment, even from free resistance against their fulfillment.”# Tillich’s solution of the problem of evil of this third sort is very difficult to understand, partly because of its excessive conciseness. Such evils are described as “the negativities of creaturely existence.” But God himself may be said to participate in the negativities of creaturely existence. God includes within himself “the finite and, with it, non-being.” “Nonbeing is eternally conquered and the finite is eternally reunited within the infinity of the

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\* Tillich, ST, I, 267.

† Tillich, ST, I, 267.

‡ Romans, 8:38–39.

§ Here again it is very difficult to follow Tillich, Surely physical evil, pain,

and death are evils, and the fact that they are implicated in the finitude of all creaturely being does not help at all. For if creation is of finitude, and fi-

nitude is evil, then God is the creator of evil.

|| Tillich, ST, I, 269.

# Tillich, ST, I, 269.

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tude, nonbeing, and anxiety. . . . All existential conditions are included in God’s directing creativity.”

173. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 267: “The man who believes in providence does not believe that a special divine activity will alter the conditions of finitude and estrangement. He believes, and asserts with the courage of faith, that no situation whatsoever can frustrate the fulfilment of his ultimate destiny, that nothing can separate him from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus (Romans, chap. 8).”

174. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 269: “How can an almighty God be justified (*theos-dikē*) in view of realities in which no meaning whatsoever can be discovered?”

15 Apr 1955 divine life.”\*<sup>175</sup> This is the ultimate answer to the question of theodicy.<sup>176</sup> “The certainty of God’s directing creativity is based on the certainty of God as the ground of being and meaning. The confidence of every creature, its courage to be, is rooted in faith in God as its creative ground.”†

## 6. The ontological elements applied to God

How are the polar elements of everything that has being related in being-itself? Tillich answers this question by asserting that the proper sense of the concepts must be distinguished from their symbolic sense. The symbols taken from finite relationships must be qualified when applied to God. In order to symbolize divine life, the concepts must be stripped of certain existential connotations.<sup>177</sup> This is what Tillich proceeds to do in applying each of the ontological elements to God.

### i. Individualization and participation

Individualization is that self-centered character of everything in the light of which a thing is a definite thing. In the case of man individualization means

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\* Tillich, *ST*, I, 270.

† Tillich, *ST*, I, 270.

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175. Demos, Review of *Systematic Theology*, p. 702: “In these two pages the author divides evil into three classes: (a) Physical evil, pain, and death—which, according to him, offer no real problem because they are natural implications of creaturely finitude. Yet surely they are evils, and the fact that they are implicated in the finitude of all creaturely being does not help at all. For if creation is of finitude, and finitude be evil, then God is the creator of evil. (b) Then there is *moral* evil which is the tragic implication of creaturely freedom. Professor Tillich makes what seems to me a wholly valid point, that, as a creator, God cannot create what is opposite to himself; he must create creative beings, beings which are free, and in so far as they are free, independent and therefore estranged from the ground of being. . . . (c) Finally, there is the (apparent) fact of meaninglessness and futility—and this, according to the author, is the only sort of evil which offers genuine difficulties for theological belief. Examples cited by the author are ‘early death, destructive social conditions, feeble-mindedness and insanity, the undiminished horrors of historical existence’—all of these being cases of entities which ‘are excluded from any kind of fulfilment, even from free resistance against their fulfilment.’ The author’s solution of the problem of evil of this third sort is very difficult to understand, partly because of its excessive conciseness. Such evils are described as ‘the negativities of creaturely existence.’ . . . God himself may be said to participate in the negativities of creaturely existence. God includes within himself ‘the finite and, with it, non-being.’ . . . ‘Non-being is eternally conquered and the finite is eternally reunited within the infinity of the divine life.’”

176. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 270: “This is the ultimate answer to the question of theodicy.”

177. Boozer, “Place of Reason,” pp. 244, 246: “But how are these polar elements of everything that has being related in being-itself? . . . The proper sense of the concepts must be distinguished

unity of consciousness, selfhood. But man's individualization is not complete or absolute. The element of participation is in polar relation with individualization.<sup>178</sup>

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When applied to God, these elements must be qualified. God is the "principle" of individualization and participation; God as being-itself is the ground of both. This does not mean that there is something alongside God in which he participates. God's participation and individualization are symbolical. God is not subject to the polarities of the ontological elements.<sup>179</sup>

If one asks the question, in what sense can God be called an individual, Tillich would answer that this question is only meaningful in the sense that God be called the "absolute participant."<sup>180</sup> And, according to Tillich, "this can only mean that both individualization and participation are rooted in the ground of the divine life and that God is equally "near" to each of them while transcending them both."\*

## ii. Dynamics and form

The dynamic-form polarity gives rise to several symbols which are central for any present day doctrine of God. Terms such as potentiality, vitality, and self-transcendence are indicated in the term "dynamics," while the term "form" embraces actuality, intentionality, and self-preservation.<sup>181</sup>

Potentiality and actuality appear in the famous Aristotelian-Thomistic formula that God is actus-purus. Tillich rejects this formula as inadequate because it allows the dynamic side in the dynamics-form polarity to be swallowed

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\* Tillich, ST, I, 245.

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from their symbolic sense, Tillich maintains. The symbols taken from finite relationships must be qualified when applied to God. . . . But to symbolize the divine life, they must be stripped of certain existential connotations."

178. Boozer, "Place of Reason," pp. 243-244: "Individualization is that self-centered character of everything in the light of which a thing is a definite thing. In the case of man individualization means the indivisible unity of consciousness, selfhood. But man's individualization is not absolute or complete. The element of participation is in polar relation with individualization."

179. Boozer, "Place of Reason," p. 245: "God is the 'principle' of individualization and participation; God as being-itself is the ground of both. This does not mean that there is something alongside God in which God participates. . . . God's participation and his individualization are symbolical. . . . God is not subject to the polarity of the ontological elements."

180. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 244: "The question arises in what sense God can be called an individual. Is it meaningful to call him the 'absolute individual'? The answer must be that it is meaningful only in the sense that he can be called the 'absolute participant.'"

181. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, pp. 245-246: "The polarity of dynamics and form supplies the material basis for a group of symbols which are central for any present-day doctrine of God. Potentiality, vitality, and self-transcendence are indicated in the term 'dynamics,' while the term 'form' embraces actuality, intentionality, and self-preservation."

15 Apr by the form side. Actuality free from any element of potentiality is not alive.  
1955 The God who is *actus-purus*, affirms Tillich, is not the living God.\*<sup>182</sup>

This situation has induced many thinkers to emphasize the dynamics in God “and to depreciate the stabilization of dynamics in pure actuality.” This first element is called the *Ungrund* by Böhme, the first potency by Schelling, the “given” in God by Brightman, *me-onic* freedom in Berdyaev, and the contingent in Hartshorne.† Each of these cases points symbolically to a quality of the divine life which is analogous to what appears as dynamics in the ontological structure.<sup>183</sup>

Tillich’s symbolic application of the dynamics-form polarity to the divine life causes him to reject a nonsymbolic, ontological doctrine of God as becoming. Being, contends Tillich, is not in balance with becoming.<sup>184</sup>

Being comprises becoming and rest, becoming as an implication of dynamics and rest as an implication of form. If we say that God is being-itself, this includes both rest and becoming, both the static and the dynamic elements. However, to speak of a “becoming” God disrupts the balance between dynamics and form and subjects God to a process which has the character of a fate or which is completely open to the future and has the character of an absolute accident.‡

What Tillich is getting at is now clear. In man there is a tension between dynamics and form. Vitality or dynamics is the power of life, open in all directions toward channels of expression. But man’s vitality is conditioned by his form.<sup>185</sup>

The dynamics-form polarity, when applied to God, takes on a different

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\* Tillich, *ST*, I, 246.

† Tillich, *ST*, I, 246.

‡ Tillich, *ST*, I, 247.

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182. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 246: “Potentiality and actuality appear in classical theology in the famous formula that God is *actus purus*. . . . In this formula the dynamic side in the dynamics-form polarity is swallowed by the form side. Pure actuality, that is, actuality free from any element of potentiality, is a fixed result; it is not alive. . . . The God who is *actus purus* is not the living God.”

183. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 246: “This situation has induced some thinkers . . . to emphasize the dynamics in God and to depreciate the stabilization of dynamics in pure actuality. . . . The first element is called the *Ungrund* or the ‘nature in God’ (Böhme), or the first potency (Schelling), or the will (Schopenhauer), or the ‘given’ in God (Brightman), or *me-onic* freedom (Berdyaev), or the contingent (Hartshorne). . . . They point symbolically to a quality of the divine life which is analogous to what appears as dynamics in the ontological structure.”

184. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 247: “These assertions include a rejection of a nonsymbolic, ontological doctrine of God as becoming. . . . Being is not in balance with becoming.”

185. Boozer, “Place of Reason,” pp. 246–247: “In man there is a tension between dynamics and form as well as between dynamic form and being-itself. Vitality or dynamics is the power of life, open in all directions toward channels of expression. But man’s vitality is conditioned by his form.”

meaning. It does not mean that there is tension in the divine life. The dynamics-form polarity applied to God means rather that in God possibility is united with fulfillment. "Neither side threatens the other, nor is there a threat of disruption."\* God is dynamic in absolute unity with form.†<sup>186</sup>

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### iii. Freedom and destiny

In finite life freedom and destiny are in a polar relation of interdependence. In finite life destiny is the basis of freedom and freedom participates in shaping destiny. But when the elements of freedom and destiny are applied to divine life their meaning is altered.<sup>187</sup> Tillich affirms that if we speak of God as free in a non-symbolic sense, we are confronted with the unanswerable question of whether the structure of freedom is not itself something given in relation to which God has no freedom. Because of this difficulty, Tillich asserts that freedom in God, like the other ontological concepts must be understood symbolically.<sup>188</sup> When it is so understood,

freedom means that that which is man's ultimate concern is in no way dependent on man or on any finite concern. Only that which is unconditional can be the expression of unconditional concern. A conditional God is no God.‡

Likewise, the term destiny cannot be applied to God if the connotation of a "destiny-determining" power above God is given. But both freedom and destiny can be applied symbolically to the divine life if one affirms that in God freedom and destiny are identical. God is his destiny. God's freedom does not shape his destiny. There is an absolute unity and identity of freedom and destiny in God.§

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\* Tillich, ST, I, 247.

† Tillich, ST, I, 244.

‡ Tillich, ST, I, 248.

§ Tillich, ST, I, 248.

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186. Boozer, "Place of Reason," p. 247: "If one applies the dynamics-form polarity to God, he does not mean thereby that there is tension within the divine life. He rather means that in God possibility is united with fulfillment. 'Neither side threatens the other, nor is there a threat of disruption.' . . . God is dynamic in absolute unity with form."

187. Boozer, "Place of Reason," pp. 247–248: "In finite life freedom and destiny are in a polar relation of interdependence. In finite life destiny is the basis of freedom and freedom participates in shaping destiny. . . . But when the elements of freedom and destiny are applied to the divine life their meaning is altered somewhat."

188. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 248: "If taken nonsymbolically, this naturally leads to an unanswerable question, whether the structure of freedom, because it constitutes his freedom, is

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## 7. The traditional attributes of God

One of the most illuminating sections in Tillich's discussion of the question of God is his analysis of the traditional attributes of God. Tillich feels that theologians have too long interpreted the attributes of God quantitatively. This type of interpretation has led to both illogical and irrational ideas about the nature of God. So Tillich proceeds to give a qualitative interpretation to the attributes of God rather than a quantitative one. We have already discussed Tillich's interpretation of the omnipotence of God. Now we may turn to a discussion of the eternity, the omnipresence, and the omniscience of God.

### i. God is eternal

The concept of eternity is a genuine religious concept. It takes the place of something like omnitemporality, which would be the analogy to omnipotence and omnipresence. In his interpretation of the concept of eternity, Tillich contends that the concept must be protected against two misinterpretations. The first misinterpretation is the tendency to look upon eternity as timelessness. The meaning of *olim* in Hebrew and of *aiones* in Greek does not indicate timelessness. Rather than meaning timelessness, eternity means "the power of embracing all periods of time."\* If God is a living God, asserts Tillich, he must include temporality and with this a relation to the modes of time. Philosophers throughout the ages have realized that eternity includes temporality. Plato, for instance, called time the moving image of eternity. For Plato eternity included time, even though it was the time of circular movement. Hegel pointed to a temporality within the absolute. These theories, says Tillich, point to the fact that eternity is not timelessness.<sup>189</sup>

Another misinterpretation that Tillich finds surrounding the concept of eternity is the tendency to look upon it as the endlessness of time. The concept of endless time, called "bad infinity" by Hegel, means the endless reiteration of temporality. Tillich looks upon this tendency to elevate the dissected mo-

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\* Tillich, ST, I, 274.

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not itself something given in relation to which God has no freedom. The answer can only be that freedom, like the other ontological concepts, must be understood symbolically."

189. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, pp. 274–275: "'Eternity' is a genuine religious word. It takes the place of something like omni- or all-temporality, which would be the analogy to omnipotence, omnipresence, etc. . . . The concept of eternity must be protected against two misinterpretations. Eternity is neither timelessness nor the endlessness of time. The meaning of *olim* in Hebrew and of *aiones* in Greek does not indicate timelessness. . . . If we call God a living God, we affirm that he includes temporality and with this a relation to the modes of time. Even Plato could not exclude temporality from eternity; he called time the moving image of eternity. . . . For Plato eternity included time, even though it was the time of circular movement. . . . Hegel pointed to a temporality within the Absolute. . . . Eternity is not timelessness."

ments of time to infinite significance as idolatry in the most refined sense. Eternity in this sense would mean that God is subjected to a superior power, namely, to the structure of dissected temporality.<sup>190</sup> "It would deprive him of his eternity and make him an everliving entity of subdivine character."\*

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So, for Tillich, eternity is neither timelessness nor the endlessness of time. Now the question arises: "What is the relation of eternity to the modes of time?" Tillich answers this question in terms of an analogy which is found in human experience, that is, the unity of remembered past and anticipated future in an experienced present. This analogy implies a symbolic approach to the meaning of eternity. Eternity is symbolized as an eternal present (nunc eternum).† But this nunc eternum is not simultaneity. Simultaneity would erase the different modes of time. The eternal present is moving from past to future but without ceasing to be present.<sup>191</sup>

It is through faith in the eternity of God that one finds the courage to conquer the negativities of the temporal process. Both the anxiety of the past and that of the future pass away. The dissected moments of time are united in eternity. Here, and not in the doctrine of the human soul, Tillich finds the certainty of man's participation in eternal life.<sup>192</sup> "The hope of eternal life," asserts Tillich, "is based not on a substantial quality of man's soul but on his participation in the eternity of the divine life."‡

## ii. God is omnipresent

God's relation to space, as his relation to time, is interpreted by Tillich in qualitative terms. God, avers Tillich, is neither endlessly extended in space, as

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\* Tillich, *ST*, I, 275.

† Tillich, *ST*, I, 275.

‡ Tillich, *ST*, I, 276.

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190. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 275: "Endless time, correctly called 'bad infinity' by Hegel, is the endless reiteration of temporality. To elevate the dissected moments of time to infinite significance by demanding their endless reduplication is idolatry in the most refined sense. . . . For God it would mean his subjection to a superior power, namely, to the structure of dissected temporality."

191. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 275: "'What is the relation of eternity to the modes of time?' An answer demands use of the only analogy to eternity found in human experience, that is, the unity of remembered past and anticipated future in an experienced present. Such an analogy implies a symbolic approach to the meaning of eternity. . . . Eternity must first be symbolized as an eternal present (*nunc eternum*). But this *nunc eternum* is not simultaneity or the negation of an independent meaning of past and future. The eternal present is moving from past to future but without ceasing to be present."

192. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 276: "Faith in the eternal God is the basis for a courage which conquers the negativities of the temporal process. Neither the anxiety of the past nor that of the future remains. . . . The dissected moments of time are united in eternity. Here, and not in a doctrine of the human soul, is rooted the certainty of man's participation in eternal life."

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a theology inclined toward pantheist formulation would assert, nor limited to a definite space, as a theology of deistic tendencies would assert. The tendency to interpret omnipresence as an extension of the divine substance through all space subjects God to dissected spatiality and puts him alongside himself sacrificing the personal centers of the divine life.\* The tendency to interpret omnipresence as meaning that God is present “personally” in a circumscribed place is equally inadequate. The spatial symbols of above and below should never be taken literally. The statement “God is in heaven,” for instance, does not mean that he “lives in” or “descends from” a special place; it means, rather, that his life is qualitatively different from creaturely existence.†<sup>193</sup>

It is also improper to interpret omnipresence as spacelessness. Tillich holds that punctuality in the divine life must be rejected as much as simultaneity and timelessness. Extension is found in the ground of the divine life in which everything spatial is rooted. But God is not subject to this spatial existence; he transcends it and participates in it.<sup>194</sup> “God’s omnipresence is his creative participation in the spatial existence of his creatures.”‡

The religious value of God’s omnipresence is immense. It overcomes the anxiety of not having a space for one’s self. It means that wherever man is he is “at home” in the ground of God. One is always “in the sanctuary” when he experiences God’s omnipresence. In such a presence of God every place is a “holy place.” There is in that situation no difference between the sacred and the secular.§<sup>195</sup>

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\* Tillich, *ST*, I, 277.

† Tillich, *ST*, I, 277.

‡ Tillich, *ST*, I, 277.

§ Tillich, *ST*, I, 278.

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193. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, pp. 276–277: “God’s relation to space, as his relation to time, must be interpreted in qualitative terms. God is neither endlessly extended in space nor limited to a definite space; nor is he spaceless. A theology inclined toward pantheist formulation prefers the first alternative, while a theology with deistic tendencies chooses the second alternative. Omnipresence can be interpreted as an extension of the divine substance through all spaces. This, however, subjects God to dissected spatiality and puts him, so to speak, alongside himself sacrificing the personal center of the divine life. . . . Further, omnipresence can be interpreted to mean that God is present ‘personally’ in a circumscribed place (in heaven above) but also simultaneously present with his power every place (in the earth beneath). But this is equally inadequate. The spatial symbols of above and below should not be taken literally in any respect. . . . ‘God is in heaven’; this means that his life is qualitatively different from creaturely existence. But it does not mean that he ‘lives in’ or ‘descends from’ a special place.”

194. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 277: “We must reject punctuality in the divine life as much as simultaneity and timelessness. God creates extension in the ground of his life, in which everything spatial is rooted. But God is not subject to it; he transcends it and participates in it.”

195. Boozer, “Place of Reason,” p. 198: “The religious value of the concept is immense. Wherever man is he is ‘at home’ in the ground of God. One is always ‘in his sanctuary’ when he experiences God’s omnipresence. When the sacramental presence of God is felt, every place is a ‘holy place.’ There is in that situation no difference between the sacred and the secular.”

## iii. God is omniscient

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In traditional theology omniscience is the faculty of a highest being who is supposed to know all objects, past, present, and future, and beyond this, everything that might have happened if what has happened had not happened. But Tillich looks upon this interpretation of omniscience as illogical and absurd. The absurdity of such an interpretation is due to the impossibility of subsuming God under the subject-object scheme. If one speaks of the unconditional character of divine knowledge, therefore, one must speak symbolically, indicating that God is not present in an all-permeating manner but that he is present spiritually.<sup>196</sup> It means that

nothing is outside the centered unity of his life; nothing is strange, dark, hidden, isolated, unapproachable. Nothing falls outside the logos structure of being. The dynamic element cannot break the unity of the form; the abysmal quality cannot swallow the rational quality of the divine life.\*

This has tremendous implications for man's personal and cultural existence. In personal life it means that there is no absolute darkness in one's being. Faith in God's omniscience overcomes the anxiety of the dark and the hidden. The divine omniscience is ultimately the logical foundation of the belief in the openness of reality to human knowledge. We are able to gain knowledge because we participate in divine knowledge. We are able to reach truth because the divine life in which we are rooted embodies all truth.<sup>197</sup>

## 8. Divine love and divine justice

Love and justice have often been looked upon as two distinct attributes of God. But Tillich feels that such a position is due to a misconception of the

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\* Tillich, ST, I, 279.

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196. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, pp. 278–279: "Omniscience is not the faculty of a highest being who is supposed to know all objects, past, present, and future, and, beyond this, everything that might have happened if what has happened had not happened. The absurdity of such an image is due to the impossibility of subsuming God under the subject-object scheme, although this structure is grounded in the divine life. If one speaks, therefore, of divine knowledge and of the unconditional character of the divine knowledge, one speaks symbolically, indicating that God is not present in an all-permeating manner but that he is present spiritually."

197. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 279: "This certainty has implications for man's personal and cultural existence. In personal life it means that there is no absolute darkness in one's being. . . . And, on the other hand, the anxiety of the dark and the hidden is overcome in the faith of the divine omniscience. . . . Therefore, the divine omniscience is the logical (though not always conscious) foundation of the belief in the openness of reality to human knowledge. We *know* because we participate in the divine knowledge. Truth is not absolutely removed from the outreach of our finite minds, since the divine life in which we are rooted embodies all truth."

15 Apr 1955 nature of love and justice. Justice, contends Tillich, is a part of love. Love is the ontological concept. Justice has no independent ontological standing. Justice is dependent on love. It is a part of love's activity. With this statement of the complementary nature of love and justice we may examine them separately.<sup>198</sup>

i. The divine love

Love, for Tillich, is an ontological concept. He finds the ontological nature of love expressed in the tendency of every life-process to unite a trend toward separation with a trend toward reunion. Such a tendency is based on the polarity of individualization and participation. Love is absent where there is no individualization, and love can be fully realized only where there is full individualization, in man. But the individual also longs to return to the unity to which he belongs, in which he participates by his ontological nature.\*<sup>199</sup> This is what Tillich means when he says that love is not the union of the strange but the reunion of the estranged.†

To say that God is love literally is to apply the experience of separation and reunion to the divine life. This, however, is impossible since God is not subject to the ontological elements. Therefore one must speak symbolically of God as love. When God is spoken of as love, the meaning is that the divine life has the character of love but beyond the distinction between potentiality and actuality.‡<sup>200</sup>

In order to gain a clearer meaning of the divine love, Tillich distinguishes between several different types of love.§ In each type of love there is a quest

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<p>* Tillich, ST, I, 279.          † Tillich, LPJ, 25.          ‡ Tillich, ST, I, 280.          § In his <u>Systematic Theology</u> Tillich refers to types of love. But in a</p>	<p>more recent work Tillich affirms that it is improper to speak of types of love. There are not types of love, but qualities of love. "But I have learned, while</p>	<p>elaborating these lectures, that there are not types but qualifications of love." (LPJ, 5).</p>
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198. Boozer, "Place of Reason," pp. 201–202: "iii. Divine love and divine justice. . . . Justice is part of love. Love is the ontological concept. Justice has no independent ontological standing. It is in a sense parasitic, a part of love's activity. . . . Recognizing the complementary nature of [love and justice] we may examine them separately."

199. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, pp. 279–280: "Love is an ontological concept. . . . According to the ontological polarity of individualization and participation, every life-process unites a trend toward separation with a trend toward reunion. . . . Love is absent where there is no individualization, and love can be fully realized only where there is full individualization, in man. But the individual also longs to return to the unity to which he belongs, in which he participates by his ontological nature."

200. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 280: "If we say that God is love, we apply the experience of separation and reunion to the divine life. As in the case of life and spirit, one speaks symbolically of God as love. He is love; this means that the divine life has the character of love but beyond the distinction between potentiality and actuality."

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for reunion. There is love as libido which is the movement of the needy toward that which fulfills the need. There is love as philia which is movement of the equal toward union with the equal. There is love as eros which is the movement of that which is lower in power and meaning to that which is higher. In all three of these forms of love the element of desire is present. But there is a form of love which transcends these, namely, the desire to fulfill the longing of the other being. This is love as agape. All love, except agape, is dependent on contingent characteristics which change and are partial, such as repulsion and attraction, passion and sympathy.\* Agape is independent of these states. It affirms the other unconditionally. It is agape that suffers and forgives. It seeks the personal fulfillment of the other.

It is this type of love that is the basis for the assertion that God is love.<sup>201</sup> "God works toward the fulfillment of every creature and toward the bringing-together into the unity of his life all who are separated and disrupted."† It is in this sense, and in this sense only that God is called love. None of the other types of love can be applied to God. Certainly not libido, because God is not in need of anything. Philia cannot properly symbolize God's love, because there is no equality between man and God. Moreover, eros cannot properly symbolize God's love, because God in his eternity transcends the fulfillment and non-fulfillment of reality. The basic and only adequate symbol for God's love is agape.‡

We may raise the question of the possibility of divine self love at this point. Tillich is reluctant to speak of self-love on the human level, since he sees love as the drive towards the reunion of the separated. He contends that within the unity of self-consciousness there is no real separation, comparable to the separation of self-centered being from all other being.§ But although Tillich is reluctant to speak of self-love on the human level, he is quite willing to speak of divine self-love. He says in one instance that "man's love of God is the love with which God loves himself."|| This is an expression of the truth that God is a subject even when he seems to be an object. It is a statement

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\* Tillich, ST, I, 280.

† Tillich, ST, I, 281.

‡ Tillich, ST, I, 281.

§ Tillich, LPJ, 33.

|| Tillich, ST, I, 282. This

passage is definitely sug-

gestive of absolute quanti-

tative monism.

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201. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, pp. 280–281: "Love as *libido* is the movement of the needy toward that which fulfills the need. Love as *philia* is the movement of the equal toward union with the equal. Love as *erōs* is the movement of that which is lower in power and meaning to that which is higher. It is obvious that in all three the element of desire is present. . . . But there is a form of love which transcends these, namely, the desire for the fulfillment of the longing of the other being, the longing for *his* ultimate fulfillment. All love, except *agapē*, is dependent on contingent characteristics which change and are partial. It is dependent on repulsion and attraction, on passion and sympathy. *Agapē* is independent of these states. It affirms the other unconditionally. . . . It suffers and forgives. It seeks the personal fulfillment of the other. . . . This type of love is the basis for the assertion that God is love."

15 Apr about God loving himself. As we shall see subsequently, the trinitarian distinc-  
1955 tions (separation and reunion) make it possible to speak of divine self-love.<sup>202</sup>

Without separation from one's self, self-love is impossible. . . . Through the separation within himself God loves himself and through separation from himself (in creaturely freedom) God fulfills his love of himself—primarily because he loves that which is estranged from himself.\*

## ii. The divine justice

As we have seen, justice has no independent ontological standing. Justice is dependent on love. Justice is really an act of love protesting against that which violates love. Whenever an individual violates the structure of love, judgment and condemnation follow. But they do not follow by an act of divine retribution; they follow by the reaction of God's loving power against that which violates love.<sup>203</sup> "Condemnation is not the negation of love but the negation of the negation of love."† It is the way in which that which resists love, i.e. that which resists being reunited to that from which it is separated, is left to separation, with an implied and inescapable self-destruction.<sup>204</sup>

Tillich feels that the ontological character of love not only solves the problem of the relation of love and retributive justice, but also provides theology with the possibility of using the symbol "the wrath of God." The wrath of God is not an affect alongside God's love nor is it a motive for action alongside his providence;<sup>205</sup> "it is the emotional symbol for the work of love which rejects and leaves to self-destruction what resists it."‡ In this sense the metaphorical symbol "the wrath of God" is necessary and unavoidable.<sup>206</sup>

Tillich finds the final expression of the unity of love and justice in the sym-

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\* Tillich, *ST*, I, 282.  
Here again we can see  
Tillich's absolute monism.  
† Tillich, *ST*, I, 284.  
‡ Tillich, *ST*, I, 284.

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202. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 282: "This is an expression of the truth that God is a subject even where he seems to be an object. . . . The trinitarian distinctions (separation and reunion) make it possible to speak of divine self-love."

203. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 283: "But they do not follow by a special act of divine wrath or retribution; they follow by the reaction of God's loving power against that which violates love."

204. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 283: "It is the way in which that which resists love, namely, the reunion of the separated in the divine life, is left to separation, with an implied and inescapable self-destruction."

205. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, pp. 283–284: "The ontological character of love solves the problem of the relation of love and retributive justice. . . . This again provides theology with the possibility of using the symbol 'the wrath of God.' . . . The wrath of God is neither a divine affect alongside his love nor a motive for action alongside providence."

bol of justification. Justification points to the divine act in which love conquers the immanent consequences of the violation of justice. This divine love in relation to the unjust creature is grace.\*<sup>207</sup>

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### 9. The trinity

For Tillich the trinity is not the illogical and irrational assertion that three are one and one is three. It is a qualitative rather than a quantitative characterization of God. It is an attempt to express the richness and complexity of the divine life.<sup>208</sup>

The first person of the trinity is abyss. It is the abysmal character of God, the element of power which is the basis of the Godhead, "which makes God God."†<sup>209</sup> As we have seen, this first principle is the root of God's majesty, the unapproachable intensity of his being. It is the power of being infinitely resisting nonbeing.<sup>210</sup> God as Father is power.

The second person‡ of the Trinity is the logos, the element of meaning, the element of structure.<sup>211</sup> "The logos opens the divine ground, its infinity and its darkness, and it makes its fullness distinguishable, definite, finite."§ Without this second principle the first principle would be chaos, and God would be demonic.<sup>212</sup>

As we have seen in the earlier part of the discussion, these two poles in God's nature are indicated in the definition of God as abyss and ground of

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\* Tillich, *ST*, I, 285. principle instead of  
 † Tillich, *ST*, I, 250; *ST*, person.  
 I, 156. § Tillich, *ST*, I, 251.  
 ‡ Tillich prefers to say

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206. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 284: "The metaphorical symbol 'the wrath of God' is unavoidable."

207. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, pp. 284–285: "The final expression of the unity of love and justice in God is the symbol of justification. It points to the unconditional validity of the structures of justice but at the same time to the divine act in which love conquers the immanent consequences of the violation of justice. . . . The divine love in relation to the unjust creature is grace."

208. Boozer, "Place of Reason," p. 214: "The doctrine of the trinity is not the illogical assertion that three are one. Rather it is a qualitative characterization of God. It is an effort to express the richness of the divine life."

209. Boozer, "Place of Reason," p. 214: "It is the abysmal character of God, the element of power, which is the basis of the Godhead, 'which makes God God.'"

210. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, pp. 250–251: "It is the root of his majesty, the unapproachable intensity of his being, the inexhaustible ground of being in which everything has its origin. It is the power of being infinitely resisting nonbeing."

211. Boozer, "Place of Reason," p. 215: "The second person (or principle, as Tillich prefers) is the logos, the element of meaning, the element of structure, fullness, content."

212. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 251: "Without the second principle the first principle would be chaos. . . . Without the second principle God is demonic."

15 Apr being and meaning. But Tillich does not stop with this polar concept of God's  
1955 nature. There is a third principle, that of spirit.<sup>213</sup>

Spirit is that principle in which power and meaning, abyss and ground are united. Spirit stands for the unity of all the polar opposites: of power with meaning, of the static with the dynamic, even of mind with body.\* God is no nearer one "part" of being than he is to another. He is as near the creative darkness of the unconscious as he is to the critical light of cognitive reason.<sup>215</sup> "Spirit is the power through which meaning lives, and it is the meaning which gives direction to power."†

It is through the concept of the Spirit that Tillich explains the self-separating and self-returning activity of God. Through the Spirit God goes out of himself, the Spirit proceeds from the divine ground. He gives actuality to that which is potential in the divine ground.<sup>216</sup> "Through the Spirit the divine fullness is posited in the divine life as something definite, and at the same time it is reunited in the divine ground."‡

Tillich emphasizes the point that a consideration of the trinitarian principles is not the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. It is preparation for it. The doctrinal formulation of the Trinity can be discussed only after the Christological dogma has been elaborated.§ But in order to speak meaningfully of the living God it is necessary to discuss the trinitarian principles.<sup>217</sup>

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\* Tillich seems to be abusing language here, for if religious common sense means anything in saying that God is a spirit, it means that God is immaterial. Probably the responsibility for such un-

natural changes of meaning must be charged to the dialectical principle, which necessitates that a given meaning should embrace its opposite. Certainly no precision of meaning is possible under

such conditions.<sup>214</sup>

† Tillich, *ST*, I, 250.

‡ Tillich, *ST*, I, 251.

§ Tillich's Christology will be presented in the second volume of his Systematic Theology.

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213. Boozer, "Place of Reason," p. 215: "These poles within God's nature have been indicated in the basic definition of God as abyss and ground of being and meaning. But Tillich is not at ease in this polar concept of the nature of God. There is a third principle, that of spirit."

214. Demos, *Review of Systematic Theology*, p. 700: "Spirit, he says, stands for the unity of all the polar opposites: of power with meaning, of the static with the dynamic, even of mind with *body* (pp. 249–251). Surely he is abusing language here, for if religious common sense means anything in saying that God is a spirit, it means that God is *immaterial*. I think that the responsibility for such unnatural changes of meaning must be charged to the dialectical principle, which necessitates that a given meaning should embrace its opposite. I doubt that any precision of meaning—indeed any meaning—is possible under such conditions."

215. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 250: "God is not nearer to one 'part' of being or to a special function of being than he is to another. As Spirit he is as near to the creative darkness of the unconscious as he is to the critical light of cognitive reason."

216. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 251: "It is the Spirit in whom God 'goes out from' himself, the Spirit proceeds from the divine ground. He gives actuality to that which is potential in the divine ground and 'outspoken' in the divine *logos*."

217. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 251: "The consideration of the trinitarian principles is not the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. It is a preparation for it, nothing more. The dogma of the

10. The question of the  
personality of God15 Apr  
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We have seen throughout the discussion that Tillich continually talks of God in terms of power. Now the question arises whether Tillich's God is an unconscious reservoir of power or whether he is a conscious person. An answer to this question is crucial for any adequate interpretation of Tillich's God-concept.

We have seen that Tillich considers all statements about God as being of a symbolic nature, except the statement that God is being-itself. We cannot say, for instance, that God is living in the literal sense of the word because life is literally "the process in which potential being becomes actual being," and God "transcends" the distinction between potential and actual. But God does live in the sense that He is the ground of life. Tillich carries this same method of thinking over into the question of the personality of God. He insists that the symbol, "personal God," does not mean that God is a person. "It means that God is the ground of everything personal and that he carries within himself the ontological power of personality."\*<sup>218</sup> Tillich thinks that the tendency to speak of God as "a person" was a nineteenth century creation, brought into being through the Kantian separation of nature ruled by physical law from personality ruled by moral law.<sup>219</sup> Under this influence theism made God "a heavenly, completely perfect person who resides above the world and mankind."† But there is no evidence for the existence of such a highest person. At best Tillich finds the symbol "personal God" quite confusing.

In answering a criticism which Einstein raised against the idea of a personal God, Tillich admitted that most concepts of a personal God contradicted the scientific interpretation of nature. He writes:

The concept of a "Personal God," interfering with natural events or being an independent cause of natural events makes God a natural object besides others, an object amongst objects, a being amongst beings, maybe the highest, but anyhow a being. This, indeed, is the destruction, not only of the physical system, but even more the destruction of any meaningful ideas of God.‡

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\* Tillich, ST, I, 245.

† Tillich, ST, I, 245.

‡ Tillich, Art. (1940)<sup>2</sup>, 9.

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Trinity can be discussed only after the christological dogma has been elaborated. But the trinitarian principles appear whenever one speaks meaningfully of the living God."

218. Schilling wrote on an early draft of this chapter: "On this basis, might we not just as well speak of a material, animal, or impersonal God, since G. for T. is the ground of all being?" (King, Draft of chapter 3).

219. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 245: "God became 'a person' only in the nineteenth century, in connection with the Kantian separation of nature ruled by physical law from personality ruled by moral law."

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1955 Yet in spite of the confusing nature of the idea of a "personal God," Tillich finds it indispensable for living religion, if for no other reason than, as the philosopher Schelling says, "only a person can heal a person."<sup>220</sup> God cannot be considered less than personal, although he can and must be more than personality.

In a sense God is the supra-personal.

The supra-personal is not an "It," or more exactly, it is a "He" as much as it is an "It," and it is above both of them. But if the "He" element is left out, the "It" element transforms the alleged supra-personal into sub-personal, as it usually happens in monism and pantheism.\*

Now we can clearly see that there is a basic inconsistency in Tillich's thought at this point. On the one hand Tillich's thought suggests the sub-personalism of Oriental Vedantism. On the other hand Tillich recognizes personality as a precious symbol denoting the unconditional, the ground and abyss of all being. He contends that this kind of symbolism is indispensable and must be maintained against pantheistic and naturalistic criticism, lest religion fall back to the level of a primitive-demonic pre-personalism.<sup>†221</sup> Certainly this is a flagrant contradiction. It seems that Tillich both wants a personal God and does not want a personal God.<sup>222</sup>

At any rate, all of Tillich's conclusions tend to point to an impersonal God. Despite his warning that God is not less than personal, we see traits throughout Tillich's thinking that point to a God that is less than personal. Even those things which Tillich says about God with personalistic implications are finally given impersonal explanations. For instance, Tillich speaks of God as love. But on closer scrutiny we discover that love, for Tillich, is just the dialectical principle of the union of opposites. Tillich's use of the word love inevitably reminds one of the love (and strife) of Empedocles, who meant by "love" no more than the attraction of the elements for one another.<sup>223</sup> At one point

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\* Tillich, Art. (1940)<sup>2</sup>,  
10.

† Tillich, PE, 119.

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220. Tillich, "Idea of the Personal God," p. 10: "For as the philosopher Schelling says: 'Only a person can heal a person.' This is the reason that the symbol of the Personal God is indispensable for living religion."

221. Tillich, *Protestant Era*, p. 119: "This kind of symbolism is indispensable and must be maintained against pantheistic, mystical, or naturalistic criticism, lest religion and with it our attitude toward nature, man, and society fall back to the level of a primitive-demonic pre-personalism."

222. DeWolf wrote "Good" next to this sentence on a draft of this chapter (King, Draft of chapter 3).

223. Demos, Review of *Systematic Theology*, p. 701: "Love is just the dialectical principle of the union of opposites. . . . The author's use of the word love in this connection inevitably reminds one of the love (and strife) of Empedocles, who meant by 'love' no more than the attraction of the elements for one another."

Tillich stresses the logos character of God, which would certainly give personalistic tones. But even this is distorted through Tillich's insistence that the abyss is what makes God God.

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So Tillich ends with a God who is a sub-personal reservoir of power, somewhat akin to the impersonalism of Hindu Vedantism. He chooses the less than personal to explain personality, purpose, and meaning.

### 11. Is Tillich an absolute quantitative monist?

We come to a question at this point which has been cropping up throughout our discussion of Tillich's God-concept, viz., the question of whether Tillich holds to an absolute quantitative monism. Certainly there is much in Tillich's conception of God which suggest that he does. For instance, his emphasis on God's participation in every life as its ground and aim is monistic.\* Also he can talk of God's going out of himself and resting in himself. "The finite is posited as finite within the process of divine life, but it is reunited with the infinite within the same process."† Again he says: "God is infinite because he has the finite within himself united with his infinity."‡ Still again he says: "The divine life is creative, actualizing itself in inexhaustible abundance."§ The similarity of Tillich's view at this point to Hegel's philosophy of spirit and Plotinus' philosophy of the One inclines one to interpret Tillich as an absolute monist.<sup>224</sup>

Perhaps Tillich's most explicit statement of monism is his contention that "man's love of God is the love with which God loves himself. . . . The divine life is the divine self-love."|| Tillich makes the same assertion about divine knowledge. "If there is knowledge of God, it is God who knows himself through man."# Passages such as these cited indicate an absolute monism.<sup>225</sup>

There are some passages, on the other hand, which imply a quantitative

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\* Tillich, ST, I, 245.

† Tillich, ST, I, 251.

‡ Tillich, ST, I, 282.

§ Tillich, ST, I, 282.

|| Tillich, ST, I, 282.

# Tillich, ST, I, 172.

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224. Boozer, "Place of Reason," p. 61: "The similarity of Tillich's theology with Hegel's philosophy of spirit and Plotinus' philosophy of the One inclines one to interpret Tillich as an absolute monist. God goes out from himself. He rests in himself. The finite is posited as finite within the process of the divine life, but it is reunited with the infinite within the same process.' 'God is infinite because he has the finite within himself united with his infinity.' 'The divine life is creative, actualizing itself in inexhaustible abundance.'"

225. Boozer, "Place of Reason," p. 62: "But perhaps the most convincing statement of monism is in terms of love, that 'man's love of God is the love with which God loves himself. . . . The divine life is the divine self-love.' . . . Passages such as these certainly indicate an absolute monism." Ellipsis in quotation from Tillich is in the original text of Boozer's dissertation. Boozer's footnote to the quotation reads: "Actually Tillich makes the same assertion about divine knowledge. 'If there is a knowledge of God, it is God who knows himself through man.'"

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pluralism. Tillich insists, for instance, that man is free. In fact he defines the nature of man as "finite freedom."\* Tillich affirms that there would be no history unless man were to some degree free; that is, to some extent, independent from God. Tillich goes on to insist that one of the basic characteristics of existence is a separation of man and God. Man in existence is conscious of being separated from what he ought to be. He is to some extent "outside" the divine life.<sup>226</sup> This means that he stands "in actualized freedom, in an existence which is no longer united with essence."†<sup>227</sup>

It is obvious that this represents a basic contradiction in Tillich's thought, and he nowhere seeks explicitly to resolve the contradiction. Is any resolution of these seeming contradictions possible?<sup>228</sup> Boozer, in interpreting Tillich's thought at this point, thinks that the contradiction can be resolved on the basis of Tillich's distinction between essence and existence. Boozer writes:

Essentially God is all in all; God is one, and man is not actual as a separate being. Man is a part of God. But in existence, in the realm of God's creation there is a partial separation of man from God through the actualization of man's finite freedom. The sustaining structure of existence is still unity with God. But the unity is not complete in existence. In existence, then, God and man are separate to an extent, and there is pluralism.‡

It is probably an oversimplification to say that this resolves the contradiction completely, for a contradiction cannot be resolved merely by denying one term of it (in this case pluralism). Moreover, even if it is granted that Tillich holds to an ultimate ontological monism there is the further contradiction of how man can be free in such a monistic system. Freedom implies metaphysical otherness, and it is hardly possible to hold to an ultimate ontological monism and the freedom of man simultaneously. This is a contradiction that Tillich never seems to resolve.

In spite of the foregoing, however, Boozer is basically sound in his interpretation of Tillich's God as the only metaphysical reality; a God who goes out of himself into existence and returns to himself. At least three quotations from Tillich give weight to this conclusion.

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\* Tillich, *Art.* (1939),

202.

† Tillich, *ST*, I, 255.

‡ Boozer, *PRTCG*, 62.

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226. Boozer, "Place of Reason," p. 62: "There would be no history unless man were to some degree free; that is, to some degree independent from God. . . . The basic characteristic of existence is a separation of man from God. . . . Man in existence is conscious of an absolute demand, an unconditional demand to become what he is not. . . . He is to some extent 'outside' the divine life."

227. Boozer quoted this passage from Tillich ("Place of Reason," pp. 62-63).

228. Boozer, "Place of Reason," p. 63: "What sort of resolution of these seeming contradictions is possible?"

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The dialectical method attempts to mirror the movement of reality. It is the logical expression of a philosophy of life, for life moves through self-affirmation, going out of itself and returning to itself.\*<sup>229</sup>

Speaking of God, Tillich writes: "We assert that he is the eternal process in which separation is posited and is overcome by reunion."†<sup>230</sup> Again he writes:

The ground of Being of which every being takes its power of being has the character of selfseparating and selfreturning life. Selfseparating is the abbreviation for separating itself from itself towards the complete individualization of the self having itself. Selfreturning is the abbreviation of the return of life to itself in the power of returning love.‡<sup>231</sup>

In a very informative article on the nature of man, Tillich asserts that man has a threefold nature, viz., an essential nature, an existential nature, and an eschatological nature. It becomes clear now that Tillich applies this same threefold nature to God. It is through such an interpretation that we can understand Tillich's statement that God "is the eternal process in which separation is posited and is overcome by reunion." When one considers the fullness of God in the three natures, many contradictions are reconciled.

The conclusion is that Tillich holds to an ultimate ontological monism both qualitative and quantitative. God is ultimately the only metaphysical reality. The life of man is a phase of the actualization of God and not a separate metaphysical reality.<sup>232</sup>

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\* Tillich, ST, I, 234.

† Tillich, ST, I, 242.

‡ Tillich, Art. (1949)<sup>2</sup>,

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229. Boozer quoted this passage from Tillich ("Place of Reason," pp. 63-64).

230. Boozer, "Place of Reason," p. 64: "Speaking of God, Tillich writes: 'We assert that he is the eternal process in which separation is posited and is overcome by reunion.'"

231. Boozer quoted this passage from Tillich ("Place of Reason," p. 64).

232. Boozer, "Place of Reason," pp. 44, 45, 64: "Man for Tillich is not real as an individual metaphysical entity, the creation of God. Man is a phase of the objectification of God, the actualization of God. . . . The basic position around which Tillich's thought is oriented is that of an ultimate ontological monism, both quantitative and qualitative. . . . For Tillich, then, there is ultimately only one metaphysical reality, God." On a draft of this chapter, Schilling wrote: "A sound conclusion. But does this resolve the contradiction? It does, if a contradiction can be resolved, denying one term of it, in this case, personalism! Should you not point this out?" (King, Draft of chapter 3).

## Chapter IV

### WIEMAN'S CONCEPTION OF GOD

One of the most important phases of Wieman's thought is his concept of God. His emphasis is theocentric throughout. He never wearies of pointing out that God (creative good) must be dominant over all created good in the devotion of man. Wieman plainly states that his purpose in the field of religion is to promote a theocentric religion over against the prevalent anthropocentrism. In this endeavor he stresses the fact that men must worship the actuality of God and not their ideas about God. Further, it is imperative that men not allow their wishes and needs to shape their ideas of God but rather that the ideas of God be shaped solely in the light of objective evidence.

It is the success of this approach that constitutes the significance of Wieman. "One of the most persuasive reconstructed forms of theism that has appeared in this country," says Bernard Meland, "is the philosophy of religion developed by Henry Nelson Wieman."\* D. C. Macintosh in a more definite but no less laudatory statement says:

No one has gone as far as Professor Henry N. Wieman in suggesting a variety of ways in which the divinely functioning reality may be characterized and defined and at the same time known, strictly speaking, to exist. His definitions of God, insofar as God may be undeniably affirmed to exist, have a more curious interest, aiming to formulate the irreducible minimum of religious knowledge, they generally succeed sufficiently to have positive value for reasonable reassurance in religion.†

As we shall see throughout this chapter, Wieman's conception of God is quite different from that of traditional theism. He has classified his view as "theistic naturalism." This means that he would avoid any ultimate separation of God from nature; that he views God as one natural process or structure of processes among others which can be apprehended in clearly defined ways with predictable results. Such a process or structure of processes may be superhuman but cannot be "supernatural," because nature is defined by him as "what we know through the interaction between the physiological organism and its environment," while the supernatural is unknowable by definition.<sup>1</sup>

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\* Meland, MMW, 139.

† Macintosh, PRK, 165.

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1. James Alfred Martin, Jr., *Empirical Philosophies of Religion: With Special Reference to Boodin, Brightman, Hocking, Macintosh, and Wieman* (Morningside Heights, N.Y.: King's Crown Press, 1945), pp. 87-88: "Wieman has classified his view as 'theistic naturalism'. This means that he

With these introductory remarks we turn now to a discussion of the nature of God.

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## 1. The nature of God

Wieman contends that it has been his purpose "so to formulate the idea of God that the question of God's existence becomes a dead issue."\* To accomplish this he has offered as a "minimal" definition of God the following: "God is that something upon which human life is most dependent for its security, welfare, and increasing abundance . . . that something of supreme value which constitutes the most important condition."†<sup>2</sup> But Wieman has developed this minimal definition in various ways. At one point in his intellectual pilgrimage he suggested that God as so defined is "that interaction between individuals, groups, and ages which generates and promotes the greatest mutuality of good . . . the richest possible body of shared experience."‡ In another volume he speaks of God as "that interaction which sustains and magnifies personality . . . the process of progressive integration";§ while in another place he undertakes to defend Whitehead's view of God as "the principle of concretion."||<sup>3</sup> In his most mature work, *The Source of Human Good*, Wieman defines God as the "creative event." He feels that this latter definition most adequately expresses the nature of God.

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\* Wieman, *Art.* (1932)<sup>3</sup>, 276.

† Wieman, *RESM*, 9

‡ This definition suggests

Dewey's "religion of shared experience."

§ Wieman, *Art.* (1932)<sup>1</sup>,

351.

|| Wieman, *WTR*, 179-212.

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would avoid any ultimate separation of God from nature; that he views God as one natural process or structure of processes among others which can be apprehended in clearly defined ways with predictable results. . . . Such a process or structure of processes may be superhuman but cannot be 'supernatural', because nature is defined by him as 'what we know through the interaction between the physiological organism and its environment' and the supernatural is unknowable by definition."

2. Martin, *Empirical Philosophies of Religion*, p. 87: "It has been his purpose, he says, 'so to formulate the idea of God that the question of God's existence becomes a dead issue'. To accomplish this he has offered as a 'minimal' definition of God the following: 'God is that something upon which human life is most dependent for its security, welfare, and increasing abundance . . . that something of supreme value which constitutes the most important conditions'."

3. Martin, *Empirical Philosophies of Religion*, p. 102: "But he has developed these 'minimal' definitions in various ways. At one point in his intellectual pilgrimage he suggested that God as so defined is 'that interaction between individuals, groups, and ages which generates and promotes the greatest mutuality of good . . . the richest possible body of shared experience', a definition suggesting Dewey's 'religion of shared experience'. In another volume he speaks of God as 'that interaction which sustains and magnifies personality . . . the process of progressive integration'; while in another place he undertook to defend Whitehead's view of God as 'the principle of concretion'."

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i. God as the creative event

True to his naturalistic predilections Wieman defines God as the “creative event.”<sup>4</sup> God as creative event is that process of reorganization which generates new meanings, integrates them with the old, and endows each event as it occurs with a wider range of reference.\* God as creative event is actually creative good, standing in contrast to both kinds of created good, one of which is instrumental and the other intrinsic. It is by means of this creative good that systems of meaning having intrinsic value, previously so disconnected that the qualities of the one could not get across to the other, become so united that each is enriched by qualities derived from the other.<sup>6</sup>

The total creative event is made up of four subevents. This does not mean that there are four distinct subevents working apart from each other which constitutes the creative event. Wieman makes it clear that the distinctions are made only for the purpose of analysis, and must never obscure the unitary character of the creative event.<sup>7</sup>

The four subevents are: emerging awareness of qualitative meaning through communication with other persons; integrating new meanings with ones previously acquired; expanding and enriching the appreciable world by a new structure of interrelatedness; a widening and deepening of community.<sup>8</sup> We shall examine each of these separately.

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\* This is quite reminiscent of the thought of a long line of naturalistic thinkers. Some call it “the progression of emergents” (Morgan, Alexander); “holistic evolution” (Smuts); “a thrust toward concentration, organization, and life” (Montague); “the value-actualizing function of human imagination within the total cosmic-social matrix that sustains it.” (Dewey).<sup>5</sup>

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4. On a draft of the dissertation Schilling suggested that King “avoid repetition” of Wieman’s definition of God as the creative event (King, Draft of chapter 4, 1954–1955, MLKP-MBU: Box 97).

5. Wieman, “Authority and the Normative Approach,” p. 190: “Some call it the ‘principle of concretion’ (Whitehead); ‘the progression of emergents’ (Morgan, Alexander, Calhoun); ‘holistic evolution’ (Smuts); . . . ‘a thrust toward concentration, organization, and life’ (Montague); . . . ‘the value-actualizing function of human imagination within the total cosmic-social matrix that sustains it’ (Dewey).”

6. Wieman, *Source of Human Good*, p. 56: “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. . . . It is creative good, standing in contrast to both kinds of created good we have been considering. By means of this creative good, systems of meaning having intrinsic value, previously disconnected so that the qualities of the one could not get across to the other, are so unified that each is enriched by qualities derived from the other.”

7. Wieman, *Source of Human Good*, p. 58: “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. . . . 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.”

8. Wieman, *Source of Human Good*, p. 58: “The four subevents are: emerging awareness of qualitative meaning derived from other persons through communication; integrating these new

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## (1) The first subevent

The first subevent is emerging awareness of qualitative meaning derived from other persons through communication. Qualitative meaning consists of actual events so related that each acquires qualities from the other. Every living organism so reacts as to break the passage of existence into units called "events" and to relate these to one another in the manner called "qualitative meaning."\* This may be done by the organism without the aid of linguistic communication. In such a case the range and richness of qualitative meaning is very limited. But the world of meaning and quality expands to its greatest compass when the single organism is able to acquire the qualitative meanings developed by other organisms and add them to its own. Therefore the first subevent in the total creative event is this emerging awareness in the individual of qualitative meaning communicated to it from some other organism. Wieman admits that interaction between the organism and its surroundings, by which new qualitative meaning is created without communication, is certainly creative.<sup>9</sup> But it is the creative event as it works through intercommunication in human society and history that the miracle happens and "creativity breaks free from obstacles which elsewhere imprison its power."†<sup>10</sup>

## (2) The second subevent

One of the chief sources of the growth of personality appears when these new meanings derived from others are integrated with meanings previously

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\* Wieman, SHG, 58

† Wieman, SHG, 59.

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meanings with others previously acquired; expanding the richness of quality in the appreciable world by enlarging its meaning; deepening the community among those who participate in this total creative event of intercommunication."

9. Wieman, *Source of Human Good*, p. 58: "Let us remember that qualitative meaning consists of actual events so related that each acquires qualities from the others. Every living organism so reacts as to break the passage of existence into units or intervals called 'events' and to relate these to one another in the manner here called 'qualitative meaning.' 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. Therefore the first subevent in the total creative event producing value distinctively human is this emerging awareness in the individual of qualitative meaning communicated to it from some other organism. Interaction between the organism and its surroundings, by which new qualitative meaning is created without communication or prior to communication, is certainly creative."

10. On a draft of the dissertation Schilling underlined "it is the creative event" and "that the miracle happens" and wrote in the margin, "Revise faulty construction" (King, Draft of chapter 4). King did not correct the error.

15 Apr 1955 acquired. These new meanings integrated with the old both deepen and enrich the thoughts and feelings of the individual. Wieman emphasizes the point that this integration does not occur in every case of communicated meaning, since there is much noncreative communication in our modern world by way of radio, newspapers, and casual interchange between individuals.<sup>11</sup> “The mere passage through the mind of innumerable meanings,” says Wieman, “is not the creative event.”\* Before the creative event can occur the newly communicated meanings must be integrated with meanings previously acquired. To make sure that this integrating is not the work of the individual, Wieman contends that it is largely subconscious, unplanned and uncontrolled by the individual, save only as he may provide conditions favorable to its occurrence.<sup>13</sup>

The supreme achievement of this second subevent seems to occur in solitude, sometimes quite prolonged. After the many meanings have been acquired through communication, there must be time for them to be assimilated. If one does not for a time withdraw himself from the material world and cease to communicate with others, the constant stream of new meanings will prevent the deeper integration.<sup>14</sup> “A period of loneliness and quiet provides for incubation and creative transformation by novel unification. If new meanings are coming in all the time, the integration is hindered by the new impressions.†

Examples of creative integration in solitude are Jesus in the wilderness of temptation and in Gethsemane, Buddha alone under the Bo tree, Paul in the desert on the way to Damascus, and Augustine at the time of his conversion. It seems that the individuals through whom the creative event has done most to transform and enrich the world with meaning have spent more time in lonely struggles.<sup>15</sup>

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\* Wieman, SHG, 50.<sup>12</sup>

† Wieman, SHG, 60.

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11. Wieman, *Source of Human Good*, p. 59: “This integrating does not occur in every case of communicated meaning, since there is much noncreative communication in our modern world by way of radio, television, movies, newspapers, and casual interchange between individuals.”

12. The citation should read Wieman, *Source of Human Good*, p. 59.

13. Wieman, *Source of Human Good*, p. 59: “These newly communicated meanings must be integrated with meanings previously acquired or natively developed if the creative event is to occur. This integrating is largely subconscious, unplanned and uncontrolled by the individual, save only as he may provide conditions favorable to its occurrence.”

14. Wieman, *Source of Human Good*, p. 60: “The supreme achievements of this internally creative integration seem to occur in solitude, sometimes quite prolonged. When many meanings have been acquired through communication and through much action on the material world, there must be time for these to be assimilated. If one does not for a time draw apart and cease to act on the material world and communicate with others, the constant stream of new meanings will prevent the deeper integration.”

15. Wieman, *Source of Human Good*, p. 60: “Jesus in the wilderness of ‘temptation’ and in Gethsemane, Buddha alone under the Bo tree, Paul in the desert on the way to Damascus, Au-

In spite of this emphasis on solitude, however, Wieman makes it clear that mere solitude is not enough. Nothing can be more dangerous to the human spirit than solitude. Solitude ceases to be creative if the mind degenerates into a state of torpor in its moments of being isolated from communication with others. One of the major problems confronting man is to learn how to make solitude creative instead of degenerative.\*<sup>16</sup>

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### (3) The third subevent

The expanding and enriching of the appreciable world by a new structure of interrelatedness is the third subevent. This subevent necessarily follows from the first two subevents. After there has been intercommunication of meanings and after these meanings have been creatively integrated, the individual sees what he could not see before. Events as they happen to him now are so connected with other events that his appreciable world takes on an expanded meaning unimaginable before. There is now a richness of quality and a reach of ideal possibility which were not there prior to this transformation.†<sup>17</sup>

Wieman asserts that this expanding of the appreciable world may actually make a man more lonely than he was before; for now he knows that there is a greatness of good which might be the possession of man but is not actually achieved. Such a profound sense of loneliness is difficult for any man to bear, and yet it is the hope of the world.<sup>18</sup>

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\* Wieman, SHG, 61.

† Wieman, SHG, 62.

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gustine at the time of his conversion—all these exemplify creative integration in solitude. . . . It seems that the individuals through whom the creative event has done most to transform and enrich the world with meaning have been more lonely than other men and have spent more time in lonely struggles.”

16. Wieman, *Source of Human Good*, pp. 60–61: “But mere solitude is not enough. Nothing can be more deadening and dangerous to the human spirit than solitude. If the mind degenerates into a state of torpor, as it generally does when isolated from communication with others, solitude is not creative. . . . One of the major unsolved problems of our existence is to learn how to make solitude creative instead of degenerative.”

17. Wieman, *Source of Human Good*, pp. 61–62: “The expanding and enriching of the appreciable world by a new structure of interrelatedness pertaining to events necessarily follow from the first two subevents. It is the consequence of both the first two, not of either one by itself. If there has been intercommunication of meanings and if they have been creatively integrated, the individual sees what he could not see before; he feels what he could not feel. Events as they happen to him are now so connected with other events that his appreciable world has an amplitude unimaginable before. There is a range and variety of events, a richness of quality, and a reach of ideal possibility which were not there prior to this transformation.”

18. Wieman, *Source of Human Good*, pp. 62–63: “One important thing to note is that this expanding of the appreciable world may make a man more unhappy and more lonely than he was before; for now he knows that there is a greatness of good which might be the possession of

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This expanding of the appreciable world is not only the actual achievement of an increase of value in this world; it is also an expansion of the individual's capacity to appreciate and his apprehension of a good that might be, but is not fulfilled.\*<sup>19</sup>

#### (4) The fourth subevent

The fourth subevent is a widening and deepening community between those who participate in the creative event. This new structure of interrelatedness, brought about by 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.<sup>20</sup> "Since the meanings communicated to him from them have now become integrated into his own mentality, he feels something of what they feel, sees something of what they see, thinks some of their thoughts." †

This deepening community includes intellectual understanding of one another. This means having the ability to correct and criticize one another understandingly and constructively. ‡<sup>21</sup>

So for Wieman, these are the four subevents which together compose the creative event. They are so intertwined as to make a single, total event continuously recurrent in human existence.<sup>22</sup>

A vivid example of the fourfold nature of the creative event is found in the

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\* Wieman, SHG, 63.

† Wieman, SHG, 64.

‡ Wieman, SHG, 65.

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man but is not actually achieved. . . . Such a profound sense of loneliness is difficult for any man to bear, and yet it is the hope of the world."

19. Wieman, *Source of Human Good*, p. 63: "This expanding of the appreciable world, accomplished by the third subevent, is not, then, in its entirety the actual achievement of an increase of value in this world, although it will include that. But it is also, perhaps even more, an expansion of the individual's capacity to appreciate and his apprehension of a good that might be, but is not, fulfilled."

20. Wieman, *Source of Human Good*, p. 64: "Widening and deepening community between those who participate in the total creative event is the final stage in creative good. 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."

21. Wieman, *Source of Human Good*, p. 64: "This community includes both intellectual understanding of one another and the feeling of one another's feelings, the ability to correct and criticize one another understandingly and constructively."

22. Wieman, *Source of Human Good*, p. 65: "These are the four subevents which together compose the creative event. They are locked together in such an intimate manner as to make a single, total event continuously recurrent in human existence."

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originating events of the Christian faith. It began with Jesus engaging in intercommunication with a little group of disciples. This intercommunication took place with such depth and potency that the organization of the disciples' personalities were broken down and they were remade.<sup>23</sup> "They became new men, and the thoughts and feelings of each got across to the other. . . . There arose in this group of disciples a miraculous awareness and responsiveness toward the needs and interests of one another.\*

But this intercommunication was not all; something else followed. The meanings that each disciple derived from the other were integrated with meanings that each had previously acquired. This led to a new transformation and each disciple was lifted to a higher level of human fulfillment.<sup>24</sup>

A third consequence that followed necessarily from these first two was the expansion of the appreciable world round about these men. They could now see through the eyes of others and feel through their sensitivities. The world was now more ample with meaning and quality.<sup>†</sup><sup>25</sup>

Finally there was more depth and breadth of community between them as individuals with one another and between them and all other men. This followed from their enlarged capacity to get the perspectives of one another.<sup>‡</sup><sup>26</sup>

So we can see that the creative event is one that brings forth in the human mind, in society and history, and in the appreciable world a new structure of interrelatedness, whereby events are discriminated and related in a manner not possible before. It is a structure whereby some events derive from other events, through meaningful connection with them, and abundance of quality that events could not have had without this connection.<sup>§</sup><sup>27</sup>

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\* Wieman, SHG, 39, 40.

† Wieman, SHG, 40.

‡ Wieman, SHG, 41.

§ Wieman, SHG, 65.

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23. Wieman, *Source of Human Good*, p. 39: "Jesus engaged in intercommunication with a little group of disciples with such depth and potency that the organization of their several personalities was broken down and they were remade."

24. Wieman, *Source of Human Good*, p. 40: "But this was not all; something else followed from it. The thought and feeling, let us say the meanings, thus derived by each from the other, were integrated with what each had previously acquired. Thus each was transformed, lifted to a higher level of human fulfillment."

25. Wieman, *Source of Human Good*, p. 40: "A third consequence followed necessarily from these first two. The appreciable world expanded round about these men, thus interacting in this fellowship. Since they could now see through the eyes of others, feel through their sensitivities, and discern the secrets of many hearts, the world was more rich and ample with meaning and quality."

26. Wieman, *Source of Human Good*, pp. 40-41: "There was more depth and breadth of community between them as individuals with one another and between them and all other men. This followed from their enlarged capacity to get the perspectives of one another."

27. Wieman, *Source of Human Good*, p. 65: "The creative event is one that brings forth in the human mind, in society and history, and in the appreciable world a new structure of interrelat-

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## ii. God as growth

In his earlier works Wieman sought to define the nature of God under the concept of growth. He says:

God is the growth of meaning and value in the world. This growth consists of increase in those connections between activities which make the activities mutually sustaining, mutually enhancing, and mutually meaningful.\*

He goes on to affirm that "growth is creative synthesis. It is the union of diverse elements in such a way that the new relation transforms them into a whole that is very different from the mere sum of the original factors."† Chemical elements unite in this way. Flowers grow by absorbing such elements as sunshine, air, water, and minerals, however, these are transformed in the new synthesis so that the original elements are no longer recognizable. The human mind grows by absorbing ideas and sentiments from the social environment, which are in turn transformed in the new synthesis. The culture of a community grows by absorbing the ideas, techniques, sentiments of the past and adding to these the newer developments of the present, but the gifts from the past and the present transform one another into a new kind of whole.‡<sup>28</sup> This is what Wieman means by growth.

Wieman makes it clear that this process of growth is not evolution as science uses the term. Growth is only one form of evolution. Much of the decomposition, conflict, and mutual destruction going on throughout nature science would call evolution. But through it all we also find the formation of connections of mutual support, mutual control, and mutual fulfillment between diverse activities forming new systems in which each part supports the whole and the whole operated to conserve the parts.§<sup>29</sup> This is growth.

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\* Wieman, NPOR, 137. Wieman's definition of God as "growth of meaning and value" is generalized after the manners of

"experience" in Dewey's familiar use of the word. (see Dewey's Experiences and Nature, p. 8.)  
† Wieman, GOR, 325.

‡ Wieman, GOR, 325, 326.  
§ Wieman, GOR, 367.

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edness, whereby events are discriminated and related in a manner not before possible. It is a structure whereby some events derive from other events, through meaningful connection with them, an abundance of quality that events could not have had without this new creation."

28. Henry Nelson Wieman and Walter Marshall Horton, *The Growth of Religion* (Chicago: Willett, Clark, 1938), pp. 325–326: "Chemical elements unite in this way and it may be that all growth is a chemical process. A flower grows by absorbing such elements as sunshine, air, water, and minerals, but these are transformed in the new synthesis so that the original elements are no longer recognizable. The mind of a human being grows by absorbing ideas, sentiments, attitudes from the social environment, but these are transformed in the new synthesis. The culture of a community grows by absorbing the ideas, techniques, skills, sentiments of the past and adding to these the newer developments of the present. But the gifts from the past and the present . . . transform one another into a new kind of whole."

29. Wieman, *Growth of Religion*, pp. 326–327: "What we have described is not evolution as science uses that term. Growth is only one form of evolution. A great deal of decomposition,

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We can see now that in the concept of growth Wieman is saying essentially the same thing he is saying in the concept of "creative event." In both cases God is an actual, existing operative reality in our midst bringing forth all that is highest and best in existence. He is the creative synthesis at work in the immediate concrete situation. In both cases God is that something that brings about a new structure of interrelatedness whereby events are related in a manner not possible before.

### iii. God as supra-human

One of the persistent notes that runs the whole gamut of Wieman's writing is the affirmation that God is supra-human. Wieman is adverse to anything that smacks of humanism. His emphasis is theocentric through and through. He never wearies of pointing out that it is not the intelligence and purpose of man that is responsible for the creation and increase of good. "God," he contends, "is that which sustains, promotes and constitutes the greatest good, operating with men and in men, but also over and above the conscious and intelligent purpose of men."\* Again he says:

When men try to construct an order of good and superimpose it upon existence, they will fail. But when they seek out in existence the growing good with all its possibilities, near and remote, so far as they can, and minister to it with every ability, love it, give their lives to it, their living will be effective. But when they do this they are depending upon God, living for God and with God.†

Still again Wieman writes:

We feel there is no more dangerous misinterpretation of religious experience than to represent it as "subjective." Our whole point has been to show that it is an experience of something not ourselves.‡

Wieman is convinced that the chief tragedies that befall man and his historic existence stem from man's tendency to elevate created good to the rank of creative good (God). The best in Christianity, contends Wieman, is the reversing of the order of domination in the life of man from domination of human concern by created good over to domination by creative good (God).§<sup>30</sup>

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\* Wieman, Art. (1932)<sup>3</sup>, Art. (1932)<sup>3</sup>, 324.  
320. ‡ Wieman, RESM, 209.  
† Wieman, ITG, 324. § Wieman, SHG, 269.

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conflict, and mutual destruction is going on throughout nature. Much of this would be called evolution by science. But through it all we also find the formation of connections of mutual support, mutual control, and mutual fulfillment between diverse activities forming new systems in which each part supports the whole and the whole operates to conserve the parts."

30. Wieman, *Source of Human Good*, pp. 268-269: "The best in Christianity . . . is revelation of God, forgiveness of sin, and salvation of man. . . . These three are different strands woven

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(1) God and man

Wieman's aversion to humanism is clearly expressed in his affirmation that the work of God is totally different from the work of man. The difference is not merely of degree or magnitude. It is a difference of kind.<sup>31</sup> For Wieman there is a qualitative difference between God and man.

Wieman contends that the work of God is the growth of organism, while the work of man is the construction of mechanism.<sup>32</sup> In setting forth an example of this distinction, Wieman says:

God rears a tree by growth of organic connections. Man constructs a house by putting the parts together mechanically. Man can choose the place for the tree to grow. But the actual growing he cannot do.\*

The same applies to all growth, of flowers, friendships, cultures, self-development, and meanings.

Wieman looks upon mechanisms and organisms as two different kinds of systems which enter into the existence of almost everything.<sup>34</sup> "A mechanism is a system of external relations. An organism is a system of internal relations or, as I prefer to say, of organic connection." † Internal relations are creative. Therefore, when things are internally related, they undergo transformation and mutually control one another. All through the world is found organism, that is, systems of internal relations. But we also find mechanism. Organism cannot develop without mechanism to support it.

God's work is the growth of organic connections, that is, "the growth of meaning and value." This is not and can never be the work of man. However,

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\* Wieman, Art. (1932)<sup>2</sup>, 441.<sup>33</sup>

† Wieman, Art. (1936)<sup>2</sup>, 442.

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together into a single complex event, the character of which can be simply stated: the reversing of the order of domination in the life of man *from* domination of human concern by created good *over to* domination by creative good."

31. Henry Nelson Wieman, "God Is More than We Can Think," *Christendom* 1 (1936): 441: "Man's work can be clearly distinguished from that of God. . . . The difference is not merely a matter of magnitude and power. It is a difference in kind."

32. Wieman, "God Is More," p. 441: "The work of God, which man never does, is the growth of organism. The work of man is the construction of mechanism."

33. The correct citation should read Wieman, Art. (1936)<sup>2</sup>, 441. There are two additional sentences in the original before "Man can choose the place for the tree to grow" (Wieman, "God Is More," p. 441).

34. Wieman, "God Is More," pp. 441-442: "The same applies to all growth, to growth of flowers, friendships, cultures, self-development, meanings. Mechanisms and organisms are not two different kinds of things. Rather, they are two different kinds of systems which enter into the existence of almost everything."

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man can serve it devotedly.<sup>35</sup> Man can provide some of the needed mechanism which enables the organism to develop.<sup>36</sup> Man can do innumerable things to remove obstacles and provide sustaining conditions which release the power of God to produce value. But it is only God that produces a structure which could not be intended by the human mind before it emerges, either in imagination or in the order of actual events. The structure of value produced by the creative event (God) cannot be caused by human intention and effort, because it can be produced only by a transformation of human intention and effort.\*<sup>37</sup>

So God is superhuman because he operates without the conscious intent of man. God is superhuman, furthermore, because he generates personality. Wieman seeks to explain how this takes place. He begins with the theory of social psychology that personality can exist only in society. Personality is something that develops only when there is some interaction between individuals. Therefore, human personality does not create this kind of interaction. Rather this interaction creates personality.<sup>38</sup> This interaction is the God of the universe.†

Even God's purpose is different from purpose as found in man. Wieman writes:

But we must understand purpose in two different senses. First, the kind of purpose which we see in minds, namely, the purpose involved in constructing mechanisms. Secondly, the kind of purpose we see in God, namely, the purpose in-

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\* Wieman, SHG, 42.

† Wieman, Art. (1931)<sup>2</sup>, 1209.

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35. Wieman, "God Is More," p. 442: "Internal relations are peculiar. They are creative. That means that when things or parts of things are internally related, they undergo transformation and mutually control one another. . . . All through the world . . . we find organism, that is, systems of internal relations. But we also find mechanism. . . . The work of God is the growth of organic connections, that is, the growth of all meaning and value. Man cannot do that. But he can serve it devotedly."

36. Wieman, "God Is More," p. 441: "The work of man is to provide some of the needed mechanism which enables the organism to develop."

37. Wieman, *Source of Human Good*, pp. 74-75: "Innumerable things can be done by men to remove obstacles and provide sustaining conditions which release the power of creative good to produce value. . . . The creative event produces a structure which could not be intended by the human mind before it emerges, either in imagination or in the order of actual events. . . . The structure of value produced by the creative event cannot be caused by human intention and effort, because it can be produced only by a transformation of human intention and effort."

38. Henry Nelson Wieman, "God, the Inescapable, Part II," *Christian Century* 48 (30 September 1931): 1209: "It is superhuman because it operates without the conscious intent of man. . . . It is superhuman, furthermore, because it generates personality. It is a commonplace of social psychology that personality can exist only in a society. Personality is something that develops only when there is some intereaction of the sort we have described. Therefore, human personality does not create this kind of interaction. Rather this interaction creates personality."

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volved in generating and promoting the growth of organic connections directly. This last we call simply by the name of growth.\*

In an even more emphatic passage, Wieman declares:

God, I have come to see with increasing clarity, is not merely man lifted to the nth dimension of perfection, any more than he is horse or any other animal so glorified. God is different from man. God works concretely. Man cannot possibly do that. Man must work abstractly . . . That is to say, man's plans, his ideals, his purposes, are necessarily abstractions by reason of the very nature of the human mind. God alone is concrete in his workings. God is creator. Man cannot be creator. The production of unpredictable consequences through the forming of "internal relations" is creation. A common word for it is growth. It is God's working not man's.†

These rather lengthy passages are rich in ideas. They express in no uncertain terms Wieman's strong conviction that there is a qualitative difference between God and man. God operates in ways over and above the plans and purposes of man, and often develops connections of mutual support and mutual meaning in spite of, or contrary to, the efforts of men.

In stressing the fact that God is supra-human, Wieman does not mean that God works outside of human life. Rather he means that God creates the good of the world in a way that man can never do. Man cannot even approximate the work of the creative event.‡<sup>39</sup>

## (2) God not supernatural

Wieman's persistent affirmation that God is supra-human might easily give the impression that he also holds that God is supernatural. But nothing is farther from Wieman's intention. He is as opposed to supernaturalism as he is to humanism. Both humanism and supernaturalism fail to get at the true nature of the universe.

As we have seen, Wieman's position is naturalistic. This means that he sees nothing in reality accessible to the human mind more basic than events and their qualities and relations.§<sup>40</sup> The basic things in the world are events, hap-

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\* Wieman, Art. (1937),  
212.  
† Wieman, Art. (1939),  
118.

‡ Wieman, SHG, 76.  
§ Relations is another  
word for "structure."

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39. Wieman, *Source of Human Good*, p. 76: "The creative event is supra-human, not in the sense that it works outside of human life, but in the sense that it creates the good of the world in a way that man cannot do. Man cannot even approximate the work of the creative event."

40. Wieman, *Source of Human Good*, p. 6: "There is nothing in reality accessible to the human mind more basic than events and their qualities and relations. ('Relations' is another word for 'structure.')

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penings, or processes. They are the “stuff” or substance of experience. There is nothing more fundamental or elemental than events. There is nothing transcending or undergirding events. Events do not happen to something which or someone who is not an event. Everything that exists is either an event, an aspect of an event, or a relation between or within events. Therefore, Wieman’s naturalistic philosophy is opposed to substance philosophy. All philosophical categories are descriptive of events, and events of various kinds are the primary data for all inquiry.\*

Wieman’s naturalistic position also leads him to affirm that all things are “somewhere,” and “somewhere” refers to events. There are no events without structures, and there are no structures or forms existing or subsisting apart from events.† There is no disembodied or nonincarnate order as Logos.

This principle also means that the world of our experience is self-explanatory. There are no floating transcendental principles which explain the world in terms of something outside the world. As we shall see subsequently, Wieman totally denies the traditional doctrine of creation. Principles, descriptions, and explanations refer to events and their relations (structures). Therefore, the ultimate in explanation is simply the most general concrete description possible.‡

Wieman is quite emphatic on the point that the limits of knowledge are defined by the limits of the experienceable, and the limits of the experienceable are defined by the limits of relationships. What we are not related to we cannot experience. What is unrelated to us is unknowable, and the unknowable is unknown. “Nature” comprises the experienceable. Therefore, in this case by definition, a purely transcendental or noumenal realm is regarded as unknown and superfluous. Everything that exists has the power either to affect other things or to be affected by them.§

All of this leads to the principle that God must be found within the natural order. Like everything else that exists, God is a material being, a process with an enduring structure which distinguishes his character from that of other processes. Whatever may be his several other attributes, his transcendence is not of the noumenal or completely independent variety. Whatever transcendence he has will be seen to arise out of his very immanence in the world of events.||

Wieman contends further that God is directly experienceable, and experienceable in the same basic way that other processes are directly perceivable. Contrary to most schools of thought, Wieman holds that the God he is talking about is observable, and observable in a fundamentally physical manner. From this point of view the meaning of “revelation” is to be understood as a disclosure of one process to another resulting from their relationship or confrontation. So all theology is natural theology for Wieman.

Although God is not supernatural for Wieman, he insists that God is hidden. God’s hiddenness derives from three factors: (a) man’s sin makes him

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\* Wieman, SHG, 6.

† Whitehead calls this the “ontological principle.”

‡ Wieman, SHG, 7.

§ Wieman is following Whitehead at this point.

In Whitehead’s system, every event is first of all af-

ected by past events and then, subsequently, affects other future events.

|| Wieman, SHG, 33, 35.

15 Apr 1955 blind to that upon which he is most dependent; (b) God's inexhaustible richness of creative power and goodness is such that man's appreciative awareness is only dimly alive to the creative and dynamic depth that confronts him; (3) man's consciousness appears to be such that it does not easily perceive those elements of our experience which are always present. We more easily observe those factors which are sometimes absent. Thus it is exceedingly difficult to analyze and describe what we mean by "time." At a deeper level it is still more difficult to perceive God because it is by the working of that very process in us that our minds are recreated.

However, in spite of God's "hiddenness," Wieman insists that God's standard of value is compatible with ours. So when Wieman says that God is the creative source of all value, he means that the source of all value must have a structure or character that is compatible with, or supportive of, the structure which characterizes values in general. The notion that God is the "wholly other" needs to be qualified by this general consideration.

So for Wieman, nature includes all that is knowable, actually or potentially, by normal processes of knowing. Nature includes mind, personality, and value. According to this view, the "supernatural" is the semantically meaningless. Wieman sees the idea of the "supernatural" as not only unnecessary to religion but confusing and frustrating in any genuine attempt to achieve adjustment to the word of God in the world.

So Wieman would answer the question, Where is God found? by saying that God is within the cosmic whole. He is one aspect of it. He is here in nature, present, potent, and widely operative. Wieman says further that God is not the pervading purpose of the cosmic whole, as Protestant liberalism would say. God is not to be identified with the cosmic whole in any way. Neither is he the creator of the cosmic whole as the supernaturalists say. God is found in nature all about us; he must be known by the same cognitive procedure by which other realities in nature are known.

### (3) The functional transcendence of God

Wieman's naturalistic position leads him to the conclusion that nothing can make the slightest difference in our lives unless it be an event or some possibility carried by an event. This means that that which is considered metaphysically transcendent literally has nothing to do, since all value, all meaning, and all causal efficacy are to be found in the world of events and their possibilities. So Wieman finds it necessary to deny the metaphysical transcendence of God as set forth by traditional Christianity. But there is a sense in which God is transcendent, viz., functionally. Concerning God's transcendence Wieman says:

Since creativity is not readily accessible to awareness, we can speak of creativity as transcendent. But it is not transcendent in the sense of being nontemporal, non-spatial, and immaterial. It can be discovered in the world by proper analysis.\*

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464 \* Wieman, SHG, 77.

Although Wieman rejects the metaphysical transcendence of God, he is quite certain that God's functional transcendence serves all of the vital and saving functions performed by the "myth" of a metaphysically transcendental reality.<sup>41</sup> He lists six saving functions of the metaphysical myth of transcendence and seeks to demonstrate how a functionally transcendent God meets all these conditions.

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The six saving functions of the "metaphysical myth of supernaturalism" are as follows: (1) The Christian myth has directed the absolute commitment of faith away from all created good and thus delivered man from bondage to any relative value. (2) It has established a demand for righteousness far beyond the socially accepted standards of a given time and place. (3) It has established a bond between men vastly deeper and more important than personal affection, mutual interest, and racial identity. (4) It has revealed that evil is deeper than any wrong done to society, or to any person, because in the last analysis evil is against the transcendental reality. (5) It has revealed any obligation laid upon man which overrides an obligation derived from society, tradition, ideal, or loyalty to persons. (6) It has opened the possibility for creative transformation beyond anything that could be accomplished by human effort.\*<sup>42</sup>

God as creative event fulfills every one of these functions. However, the creative event (God) cannot accomplish these services unless men by faith give themselves to its control and transforming power.<sup>43</sup> Wieman also contends that God is functionally transcendent in the sense that he is the uncomprehended totality of all that is best. "God is both immanent and transcendent. Consider first the transcendence, meaning by transcendence not necessarily what is far away but what is too loftily good to be comprehended by us."†

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\* Wieman, SHG, 264, 265.

† Wieman, Art. (1932)<sup>3</sup>, 237.

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41. Wieman, *Source of Human Good*, p. 264: "This source is not metaphysically transcendental, but it is functionally transcendental. It serves everyone of the vital and saving functions performed by the myth of a metaphysically transcendental reality."

42. Wieman, *Source of Human Good*, pp. 264-265: "The Christian myth has directed the absolute commitment of faith away from all created good and thus delivered man from bondage to any relative value and has thus saved him from good become demonic. It has established a demand for righteousness far beyond the socially accepted standards of a given time and place. . . . It has established a bond between men vastly deeper and more important than personal affection or kinship, mutual interest or shared ideal, institution or race. Moreover, it has shown evil to be deeper and darker than any wrong done to society, to any group, or to any person, because in the last analysis evil is against the transcendental reality. It has revealed an obligation laid upon man which overrides any obligation derived from society, tradition, ideal, or loyalty to persons. Finally, it has opened possibilities of creative transformation beyond anything that could be expected from human effort, idealism, or any other such power."

43. Wieman, *Source of Human Good*, p. 265: "But [the creative event] can accomplish these services only when men by faith give themselves to its control and transforming power."

15 Apr 1955 Wieman further asserts that God is transcendent, "not in the sense of being wholly unknown, but in the sense of being unknown with respect to his detailed and specific nature."\* At times Wieman comes close to saying that we can know that God is, but not what he is. What else can be inferred from the following passages?

We are inert and unresponsive to the specific forms of God's presence. We cannot know save to an infinitesimal degree, these specific forms. But we can know that the reality is there, even when the specific forms of that reality are unknown.†

But the fullness of God's being, and the richness of value in God, are immeasurable beyond the weak little fluttering attempts of human imagination to comprehend.‡

Here Wieman is saying that God can never be known in his fullness and richness. In this sense God is transcendent. He is more than we can think.

#### iv. God as absolute good

Wieman contends that creative good (God) is the only absolute good. He seeks to defend this claim by defining absolute in a fivefold sense. First of all, absolute good refers to that which is good under all circumstances and conditions. It is a good that is not relative to time or place or race or class or need or desire. It is good that remains changelessly and identically the same. It is good that remains even if it runs counter to human desire. It is a good that continues to be identically the same good even when it works with microscopic cells prior to the emergence of any higher organism.<sup>44</sup>

Creative good meets all these requirements. Its goodness is not relative to time or place or desire or even human existence.<sup>45</sup> It is good that would continue even if human existence ceased to be.

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\* Wieman, Art. (1936)<sup>2</sup>, 437.

† Wieman, Art. (1937), 206, 207. This passage seems to contradict Wieman's assertion that God is

the unknown rather than the unknowable. This statement implies that we can never know certain aspects of God.

‡ Wieman, Art. (1937),

207. Here again Wieman is saying that the fullness of God's being can never be known.

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44. Wieman, *Source of Human Good*, p. 79: "When we speak of 'absolute good' we shall mean, first of all, what is good under all conditions and circumstances. It is a good that is not relative to time or place or person or race or class or need or hope or desire or belief. It is a good that remains changelessly and identically the same. . . . It is a good that retains its character even when it runs counter to all human desire. It is good that continues to be identically the same good even when it works with microscopic cells prior to the emergence of any higher organism."

466 45. Wieman, *Source of Human Good*, p. 79: "Creative good meets all these requirements pertaining to absolute good. Its goodness is not relative to human desire, or even to human existence."

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This is what distinguished God's goodness from all types of created good. Created good is relative in all the senses that stand in contrast to the absolute as just described. Created good does not retain the same character of goodness under all circumstances and conditions. The creative good, however, does retain its character of goodness under all circumstances and is therefore the only absolute good.\*<sup>46</sup>

A second mark of absolute good is that its demands are unlimited. A good is absolute if it is always good to give oneself, all that one is, possesses, and desires into its control to be transformed in any way that it may require.<sup>47</sup> Creative good is absolute in this sense because it demands wholehearted surrender.†

A third mark of absolute good is its infinite value. This mark is somewhat inseparable from the second. Absolute good is unlimited in its demands because it is infinite in value.<sup>48</sup>

Its worth is incommensurable by any finite quantity of created good. No additive sum of good produced in the past can be any compensation for the blockage of that creativity which is our only hope for the future.‡

Fourth, absolute good is unqualified good. There must be no perspective from which its goodness can be modified. Always and from every standpoint its good must remain unchanged and self-identical, whether under the aspect of eternity or under the aspect of time, whether viewed as means or an end.§<sup>49</sup>

Finally, creative good is absolute because it is entirely trustworthy. Wieman is certain that the outcome of the working of the creative event will always be

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* Wieman rejects the view that absolute means out of relation. "Instead of being out of all relations, it is rather the one	kind of goodness that, without losing its identity, can enter into all relations. It is good always and everywhere, there-	fore relative to everything." (SHG, 80 n.) † Wieman, SHG, 80. ‡ Wieman, SHG, 80. § Wieman, SHG, 81.
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46. Wieman, *Source of Human Good*, pp. 79–80: "On the other hand, created good—the structure of meaning connecting past and future that we feel and appreciate—is relative value in all the senses that stand in contrast to the absolute as just described. . . . Thus created good does not retain the same character of goodness under all circumstances and conditions. . . . The creative good which does retain its character of goodness under all these changing conditions is, then, the only absolute good."

47. Wieman, *Source of Human Good*, p. 80: "A second mark of absolute good is that its demands are unlimited. A good is absolute if it is always good to give myself, all that I am and all that I desire, all that I possess and all that is dear to me, into its control to be transformed in any way that it may require."

48. Wieman, *Source of Human Good*, p. 80: "Thus in a third way, inseparable from the second, creative good is absolute. It is unlimited in its demands because it is infinite in value."

49. Wieman, *Source of Human Good*, pp. 80–81: "Fourth, absolute good is unqualified good. There must be no perspective from which its goodness can be modified in any way. Always, from every standpoint, its good must remain unchanged and self-identical, whether from the worm's view or the man's view, whether under the aspect of eternity or under the aspect of time, . . . whether viewed as means or as end."

15 Apr the best possible under the conditions, even when it may seem to be other-  
1955 wise.<sup>50</sup> Concerning the trustworthiness of the creative event, Wieman says:

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.\*

Creative good will always be with us, even when other good is destroyed. So in this dual sense creative good is absolutely trustworthy: it always produces good; it never fails.†<sup>51</sup>

Wieman makes it clear that his claim that God is absolute good does not imply that absolute good means all powerful good. Such a view would conflict with Wieman's empiricistic position. He insists that the claim that any kind of good is almighty cannot be defended.‡<sup>52</sup>

We see here an emphasis in Wieman's thought concerning God which is found throughout his writings. Most thinkers are impressed with the power of God. Wieman, on the contrary, is more impressed with the goodness of God. His interest concerning God is axiological rather than ontological. The ever-recurring words in Wieman's concept of God are goodness and value. He says: "I maintain . . . that the basic category for God must be goodness or value."§

## 2. God and value

The one word that appears throughout Wieman's discussion of God is the word value. Indeed he defines God as "growth of living connections of value in the universe,"|| and as "the growth of meaning and value in the world." He feels that values are the "primary data for religious inquiry," including inquiry concerning God. So we can see that his theory of value is all-important for an understanding of his conception of God. A summary of his value-theory is thus in order at this point.

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* Wieman, SHG, 81.	§ Wieman, Art. (1943) <sup>3</sup> ,
† Wieman, SHG, 81.	267.
‡ Wieman, SHG, 82.	Wieman, GOR, 363.

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50. Wieman, *Source of Human Good*, p. 81: "Finally, 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."

51. Wieman, *Source of Human Good*, p. 81: "We can also be sure that creative good will always be with us. When all other good is destroyed, it springs anew; it will keep going when all else fails. In this dual sense creative good is absolutely trustworthy: it always produces good; it never fails."

52. Wieman, *Source of Human Good*, p. 82: "The claim that any kind of good is almighty cannot be defended."

## i. Wieman's theory of value

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Wieman holds that values are perceptible facts and that they constitute the primary data for religious inquiry, since religion is concerned with loyalty to supreme value.\* Any distinction between value and fact in this realm is confusing. He says:

We believe a great deal of confusion in religious thought may go back to the assumption that values are not facts. If value is a fact, just as truly as anything else, then many of the difficulties in the search for God would fade away as dreams. If values are in nature and are facts, God can be found as readily and naturally as other persistent and pervasive realities.†<sup>53</sup>

Wieman gratefully recognizes his indebtedness to Dewey in his theory of value. His refusal to separate values from nature is clearly in line with Dewey's position. And this refusal to make a sharp ontological distinction between the realms of value and of fact leads him also to reject the preferential treatment given to "ideals" in metaphysics by Brightman and other ethical idealists.‡ If one defies conceptual ideals, he says, then all concepts must share this status indiscriminately, and the resulting chaos can only be overcome through a further appeal to experience; ideals, in other words, are functional guides in the interpretation of experience but are not "transcendental."§<sup>54</sup>

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\* Wieman, NPOR, 137. For similar statements cf. RR, 155; Art. (1932)<sup>3</sup>, 13, 158-163.

† Wieman, Art. (1934), 117-118.

‡ Brightman defines value as "whatever is actually liked, prized, es-

teemed, desired, approved, or enjoyed by anyone at any time. It is the actual experience of enjoying a desired object or activity. Hence, value is an existing realization of desire." (POR, 88). Concerning ideals Brightman

writes: "Ideals constitute a special class of instrumental values. An ideal is a general concept of a type of experience which we value." (POR, 90).

§ Wieman, RESM, 272-278.

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53. Martin, *Empirical Philosophies of Religion*, p. 95: "For he, like Macintosh, holds that values are perceptible facts and that they constitute the primary data for religious inquiry, since religion is concerned with loyalty to supreme value. Any distinction between value and fact in this realm is confusing, he says: 'We believe a great deal of confusion in religious thought may go back to the [assumption] that values are not facts. If value is a fact, just as truly as anything else, then many of the difficulties in the search for God would fade away as dreams. If values are in nature and are facts, God can be found as readily and naturally as other persistent and pervasive realities.'"

54. Martin, *Empirical Philosophies of Religion*, p. 96: "Wieman's indebtedness to Dewey in this theory is gratefully recognized by him. . . . His refusal to separate values from nature is clearly in line with Dewey's position. And this refusal to make a sharp ontological distinction between the realms of value and of fact leads him also to reject the preferential treatment given to 'ideals' in metaphysics by Brightman and other ethical idealists. If one reifies conceptual ideals, he says, then all concepts must share this status indiscriminately, and the resulting chaos can only be overcome through a further appeal to experience; ideals, in other words, are functional guides in the interpretation of experience but are not 'transcendental'."

15 Apr 1955 In order to get a clearer understanding of Wieman's value-theory we shall discuss it both in its negative and positive aspects. We shall begin by glancing at some of the value-theories that he rejects. Then we will turn to a discussion of Wieman's positive theory of value.

### (1) Value theories rejected by Wieman

Wieman holds that any substantial theory of value must be based on something that transcends the subjective. He finds that most value-theories are lacking at this very point. Thus he finds it necessary to reject most theories of value. Most of these theories that Wieman rejects are quite familiar.

Emotion or feeling has been selected by some as giving the essence of value. Also specific emotions like love, satisfaction, liking, pleasure and happiness have been taken as guiding threads. But no amount of observation and analysis and interrelating of subjective emotions, cut off from the personalities having them and from the situation calling them forth, can be made to yield a rational structure or principle helpful in solving the important practical problems of life. Emotions are certainly involved in all experiences. But one could scarcely bring all values into the category of either of the above-mentioned emotions.<sup>55</sup>

Love, for instance, is a very vague term. It must be analyzed into forms that can give us some guidance. Satisfaction of desire, or liking, does enter into any direct experience of value, but it is precisely when we mistrust our own likings and satisfactions that we need and want a guiding theory. Happiness has in it all the ambiguities of liking and satisfaction.<sup>56</sup>

A second theory that Wieman rejects is the contention that intelligence is the substance of all value. Such a contention seems to overlook the fact that there are flagrant cases of evil intelligence. If it is admitted that evil is negative value, that is the criterion which distinguishes the positive from the negative value of intelligence.<sup>57</sup>

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55. Henry Nelson Wieman, "Values: Primary Data for Religious Inquiry," *Journal of Religion* 16, no. 4 (October 1936): 381: "Emotion, or that more general term, feeling, has been selected by some as giving us the essence of value. Emotions and feelings are certainly involved in all experiences of value. But no amount of observation and analysis and interrelating of feelings, cut off from the personalities having them and from the situations calling them forth, can be made to yield a rational structure or principle helpful in solving the important practical problems of life. . . . Love is certainly one kind of value, but one could scarcely bring all values into this category."

56. Wieman, "Values," p. 382: "Love is a very vague term. It must be analyzed into forms or relations that can give us some guidance and light. . . . Satisfaction of desire, or liking, does enter into any direct and appreciative experience of value. But it is precisely when we mistrust our own likings and satisfactions that we need and want a guiding theory. . . . Happiness has in it all the ambiguity of liking and satisfaction."

57. Wieman, "Values," p. 382: "Intelligence has sometimes been honored as the substance of all value. . . . Apparently that is meant, and yet there seem to be flagrant cases of evil intelligence. If one says evil is negative value, then what is the criterion which distinguishes the positive from the negative value of intelligence?"

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A third theory that Wieman rejects is the assertion that biological patterns, such as survival or adjustment or life, determine the mark of value. It is easy, says Wieman, to find instances of evil that has survived and good that has perished. The same general principle applies to adjustment and life. There is good adjustment and bad, and good life and bad. Hence these terms give us no guidance.<sup>58</sup>

A fourth theory that Wieman dismisses as false is the contention that personality is the distinctive mark of value. Sheer observation reveals that personalities are good and bad to the extreme. Hence it is not mere personality, but something about personality which is the value.<sup>59</sup>

A fifth theory that Wieman rejects is the assertion that the criterion of value is found in patterns in the physical world, such as order and purpose. It is true that value implies order of a kind. But what kind of order is better and what kind worse? More order is not necessarily more value unless it is the right kind of order. The same is true of purpose. Neither order nor purpose in itself gives us a clear distinction between better and worse.<sup>60</sup>

All of these theories are emphatically rejected by Wieman. They are not rejected because they are alien to value, for he quite readily admits that all of these elements enter into any experience of value. They are rejected as constructive theories of value. For such a theory one must go to something else.

## (2) Value as appreciable activity

Wieman thinks that the factor in value which lends itself most readily to a guiding pattern by which to formulate a value theory is appreciable activity. He is determined to base his theory of value on something that transcends the shaky foundations of subjectivity. So it is in activity that he find something objective. It can be observed, computed, foreseen. Activities can be connected in meaningful and supporting ways.<sup>61</sup>

Since the words, activity and meaning, are of first importance in Wieman's

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58. Wieman, "Values," p. 383: "Biological patterns have been said to be the determining mark of value, such as survival or adjustment or life. But it is easy to find instances of evil that have survived and good that has perished. . . . The same general principle applies to adjustment and life. There is good adjustment and bad, and good life and bad. Hence these terms give us no guidance at all."

59. Wieman, "Values," p. 383: "Personalities are good and bad to all extremes. Hence it is not mere personality, but something about personality which is the value."

60. Wieman, "Values," p. 384: "Patterns in the physical world, such as order and purpose, have been selected as criteria of value. Doubtless value implies order of a kind, but what kind of order is better and what kind worse? More order is not necessarily more value unless it is the right kind of order. The same is true of purpose. . . . At any rate, purpose of itself does not give us a clear distinction between better and worse."

61. Wieman, "Values," p. 385: "We believe the factor in value which lends itself most readily to a guiding pattern or principle by which to discover, appraise, and appreciate values is appreciable activity. Activity is objective. It can be observed, computed, foreseen. . . . Activities can be connected in meaningful and supporting ways."

15 Apr theory of value, we may profitably pursue their meaning. An activity is first  
1955 of all a change. But not all changes are activities. A change is an activity only  
when it is so related to other changes that they mutually modify one another  
in such a way as to meet the requirements of a system to which they belong.  
For instance, many of the changes that transpire in a cell are so related to  
many other changes of the physiological organism that they all mutually  
modify one another to the end of meeting the requirements of the living  
system. Or, again, gravitational changes mutually modify one another in such  
a way as to meet the requirements of the gravitational system.\*<sup>62</sup>

It is possible for a change to be an activity with respect to one system and  
not in relation to another. As was stated above, gravitational changes are ac-  
tivities with respect to the gravitational system, but they are not necessarily  
activities with respect to the system of a living organism. Actually changes  
which sustain one system may be destructive of others.<sup>63</sup>

Wieman stresses the fact that an activity is a value only when it is appre-  
ciable. If it is not appreciable activity, it is not the datum in which value can  
be found.<sup>64</sup> "Activity may be a mechanical routine or a spasmodic impulse or  
a dizzy whirl."† To be appreciable means that some living consciousness may  
be affected by it with joy or suffering. But this does not mean that the con-  
sciousness must have some knowledge of this activity. Many activities qualify  
consciousness without being objects of consciousness. Oxidation of the blood  
in one's lungs, for instance, qualifies one's consciousness when one is not at all  
conscious of what is going on. These changes pertain, however, if their re-  
moval or cessation would destroy the system which yields the experience of  
value.‡<sup>65</sup>

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\* Wieman, Art. (1936)<sup>4</sup>, 388.

† Wieman, Art. (1936)<sup>4</sup>, 386.

‡ Wieman, Art. (1936)<sup>4</sup>, 387.

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62. Wieman, "Values," p. 387: "Since these two, activity and meaning, are of first importance  
in our interpretation of value, we must try to make plain the idea we wish to express by each. An  
activity is, first of all, a change. But it is not every change. A change is an activity when it is so  
related to other changes that they mutually modify one another to the end of meeting the re-  
quirements of a system to which they belong. For example, gravitational changes mutually modify  
one another in such a way as to meet the requirements of the gravitational system. . . . Or, again,  
many of the changes that transpire in a cell are so related to many other changes in the physio-  
logical organism that they all mutually modify one another to the end of meeting the require-  
ments of the living system."

63. Wieman, "Values," p. 388: "We have shown that gravitational changes are activities with  
respect to the gravitational system. But they are not activities, necessarily, with respect to the  
system of a living organism. . . . It is plain that a change may be an activity with respect to one  
system and not in relation to another. . . . Changes which sustain one system are often destructive  
of others."

64. Wieman, "Values," pp. 386, 388: "The activity must be appreciable. Otherwise it is not the  
datum in which value can be found. . . . An activity is a value only when it is appreciable."

65. Wieman, "Values," pp. 388–389: "To be appreciable means that some living consciousness  
sometime, somewhere, some way, may be affected by it with joy or suffering. This does not re-

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With this explanation of activity let us now turn to a discussion of Wieman's view of meaning. He affirms that activity and meaning are closely related but not identical.<sup>66</sup>

One change means another change when the first represents the second to an actual or possible experiencing mind. One change can mean another most effectively if the two changes so connected that, when certain modification occur in the one, certain other correlative modifications occur in the other.\*

So the connection between changes which makes them to be activities within a system in a connection which is best fitted to make them carriers of meaning by virtue of the fact that they can represent one another to a mind that understands the connection between them. A throbbing pulse, for instance, means the presence of life to a mind that is able to understand the connection between these throbs and that system of co-ordinated changes in the organism which makes it a living thing. Rising smoke in the distance means the presence of fire to the mind that understands the connection between smoky changes in the atmosphere and correlative changes called combustion.<sup>†67</sup> This leads Wieman to say:

Meaning is that connection between the here-and-now and the far-away which enables a mind that understands the connection to experience the far-away through the mediation of the here-and-now. This ability to transmit the far-away to the experience of a mind by way of representation is what we call meaning. This ability depends on two things: (1) The right connections and (2) the mind's understanding of these connections.‡

Wieman insists that meaning as set forth in his philosophy is not subjective. The experience of the meaning is subjective, but the meaning which is expe-

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\* Wieman, Art. (1936)<sup>4</sup>, 389.

† Wieman, Art. (1936)<sup>4</sup>, 390.

‡ Wieman, Art. (1936)<sup>4</sup>, 391.

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quire that the consciousness have any knowledge of this activity. . . . They qualify consciousness without being objects of consciousness. Oxidation of the blood in my lungs qualifies my consciousness when I am not at all conscious of what is going on. These changes pertain to value, however, if their removal or cessation would destroy the system which yields the experience of value."

66. Wieman, "Values," p. 389: "With this understanding of activity let us now turn to the interpretation of meaning. Activity and meaning are closely related but not identical."

67. Wieman, "Values," pp. 389–390: "So we see that the connection between changes which makes them to be activities within a system is a connection which is best fitted to make them carriers of meaning by virtue of the fact that they can represent one another to a mind that understands the connection between them. A throbbing pulse means the presence of life to a mind that is able to understand the connection between these throbs and that system of co-ordinated changes in the organism which makes it a living thing. Rising smoke in the distance means the presence of fire to a mind that understands the connection between smoky changes in the atmosphere and correlative changes called combustion."

15 Apr rienced, namely, the connection of mutual control or correlation between  
1955 changes is not subjective. It is true, moreover, that meaning is dependent on understanding and appreciation which are themselves subjective, but that which is understood and appreciated is no more subjective than a mountain or a city.\*<sup>68</sup> Now that we have discussed Wieman's "meaning of meaning" we can move on to his contention that value is a kind of connection.

It was stated above that value is not enjoyment. Enjoyment is too subjective to constitute the essence of value. What is enjoyable for one person may not be for another. What one person enjoys at one time is something loathsome to him under other conditions. But no matter how diverse may be the enjoyments of different people, one thing seems plain.<sup>69</sup> "The enjoyable activities, utterly different though they may be, can be had only when they are so connected that they do not destroy one another."† Therefore, when we have any enjoyment, what we are actually experiencing is a great system of activities all connected in such a way as to yield that sort of enjoyment.<sup>70</sup>

Now since value is what makes an experience enjoyable, this analysis seems to indicate that value consists of the way activities are connected with one another.

All of this leads Wieman to the conclusion that value is not enjoyment, but it is that connection between activities which makes them enjoyable. In moments when we experience enjoyment, it is not merely our enjoyment that we enjoy; rather it is a certain connection between activities that we enjoy.<sup>71</sup> Out of this grows Wieman's definition of value. He says:

Value is that connection between appreciable activities which makes them mutually sustaining, mutually enhancing, mutually diversifying, and mutually meaningful.‡

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\* Wieman, Art. (1936)<sup>4</sup>, 392.

† Wieman, Art. (1934)<sup>4</sup>, 392.

‡ Wieman, Art. (1936)<sup>4</sup>, 394; For a similar definition see Wieman's NPOR, 48.

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68. Wieman, "Values," pp. 391–392: "Meaning, as here set forth, is not subjective. The experience of the meaning is subjective if you equate experience with subjectivity. But the meaning which is experienced, namely, the connection of mutual control or correlation between changes, is no more subjective than a mountain or a city. . . . Meaning is dependent on understanding and appreciation, but that which is understood and appreciated is not subjective."

69. Wieman, "Values," p. 392: "What is enjoyable for one person is not for another. . . . What one person enjoys at one time is sometimes loathsome to him under other conditions. . . . But no matter how diverse may be the enjoyments of different people, or of the same person at different times in his development, one thing seems to be plain."

70. Wieman, "Values," p. 393: "Therefore, when we have any enjoyment, what we are actually experiencing is a great system of activities all connected in such way as to yield that sort of enjoyment."

71. Wieman, "Values," pp. 393–394: "If value is what makes an experience enjoyable, then our analysis would seem to indicate that value consists of the way activities are connected with

Wieman prefers the term appreciable over the terms enjoyed and enjoyable because the latter may blind us to the fact that there are high austere values which can be experienced at times only through great pain and suffering.<sup>72</sup>

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Wieman makes it clear that his doctrine of value is not a hedonism which identifies value with any sort of enjoyment.<sup>73</sup> Increase of value is not the mere "additive sum of disconnected enjoyment."\* Rather it is connection between activities which makes them enjoyable by reason of their mutual support, mutual enhancement and mutual meaning.<sup>74</sup>

The first principle of value is mutual support. Eating wholesome food is more valuable than eating unwholesome food because it is an activity which supports many other appreciable activities. The same is true of honesty over against dishonesty, good music over against bad, and the like.<sup>75</sup>

The second principle of value is mutual enhancement. Wholesome food not only supports other enjoyable activities, but it makes those others more appreciable. Honesty not only supports but may enhance the value of many other activities.<sup>76</sup>

Mutual diversification is a third characteristic of that connection between activities which makes them appreciable and gives them value. "Activities must be connected in such a way as to permit increase in their diversification and number without permanently destroying their mutual support."† It is quite possible, for instance, to have a system of mutual support which is achieved and maintained by excluding all other activities and fixating the sys-

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\* Wieman, NPOR, 48.

† Wieman, Art. (1936)<sup>4</sup>, 396.

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one another. . . . All this points to the conclusion that value is not enjoyment, but it is that connection between activities which makes them enjoyable. When we experience enjoyment, it is not merely our enjoyment that we enjoy; what we enjoy is a certain connection between activities."

72. Wieman, "Values," pp. 394–395: "There is a further reason for speaking of appreciable rather than of enjoyed or even enjoyable connections. . . . Such terms as enjoyed, enjoyment, and enjoyable may blind us to the fact that there are high austere values which can be experienced at times only through great pain and suffering."

73. Wieman and Westcott-Wieman, *Normative Psychology of Religion*, p. 48: "Thus the doctrine of value we are here presenting is not a hedonism which identifies value with any sort of enjoyment."

74. Wieman and Westcott-Wieman, *Normative Psychology of Religion*, p. 48: "Rather it represents value as that connection between activities which makes them enjoyable by reason of their mutual support, mutual enhancement and mutual meaning."

75. Wieman, "Values," p. 395: "Thus eating wholesome food is an activity which supports many other appreciable activities, while eating unwholesome food is an activity which does not. . . . The same is true of honesty as over against dishonesty, good music as over against bad."

76. Wieman, "Values," p. 395: "Thus wholesome food not only supports other enjoyable activities, but it makes those others more appreciable. . . . Honesty not only supports but may enhance the value of many other activities."

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tem, as is found in political dictatorships in contrast with democracy.<sup>77</sup> "Connections of value must provide for increasing diversification on the part of the activities which are connected."\*

A fifth characteristic of this connection between enjoyable activities deals with that activity which is exceedingly painful in itself, and yet is enjoyable by virtue of the meaning it carries. One chooses this painful but meaningful activity because of the enjoyableness of its meaning, not because of the enjoyableness of its pain.<sup>†</sup><sup>78</sup>

We can now summarize the fivefold principle which Wieman sets forth as a way of distinguishing activities which are better from those that are worse. It is the principle of mutual support, mutual enhancement, mutual diversification, mutual meaning, and transformation of suffering into an experience which is positively appreciated. This fivefold principle is the principle of value, lifting it above the immediate subjective feeling of enjoyment. One activity is better when it is more appreciable by virtue of its connection with other activities. The connection is that of support, enhancement, diversification, meaning, and transmutation.<sup>79</sup>

## ii. God as supreme value

In one of his writings Wieman defines God as "that structure which sustains, promotes and constitutes supreme value."<sup>‡</sup> This structure of supreme value enters into existence, and it also extends far beyond existence into the realm of possibility. The terrible magnitude of evil makes it plain that the whole of existence is by no means conformant to this structure of God.<sup>80</sup>

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\* Wieman, Art. (1936)<sup>4</sup>, 396.

† Wieman, Art. (1936)<sup>4</sup>, 397.

‡ Wieman, Art. (1931)<sup>3</sup>, 155.

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77. Wieman, "Values," p. 396: "It is quite possible to have a system of mutual support which is achieved and maintained by excluding all other activities and fixating the system. In political order this is dictatorship as contrasted with democracy."

78. Wieman, "Values," p. 397: "There is still a fifth characteristic of this connection between enjoyable activities. . . . An activity may even be exceedingly painful, and yet be enjoyable by virtue of the meaning it carries. . . . We choose this painful but meaningful activity because of the enjoyableness of its meaning, not because of the enjoyableness of its pain."

79. Wieman, "Values," pp. 398–399: "We can now summarize the fivefold principle by which to distinguish activities which are better from those which are worse. It is the principle of mutual support, mutual enhancement, mutual diversification, mutual meaning, and transformation of suffering into an experience which is positively appreciated. This fivefold principle is the principle of value. . . . But one activity is better when it is more appreciable by virtue of its connection with other activities. This connection is that of support, enhancement, diversification, meaning, and transmutation."

80. Henry Nelson Wieman, "God and Value," in *Religious Realism*, ed. D. C. Macintosh (New York: Macmillan, 1931), p. 155: "In so far as this structure of supreme value enters into existence,

Supreme value is defined as that “system or structure which brings lesser values into relations of maximum mutual support and mutual enhancement.”\* This mutual support and enhancement is not only between contemporaries but also between successive generations, ages and culture.<sup>81</sup> This system or process which constitutes supreme value is variously called by Wieman “progressive integration,”† “creative event,”‡ and “principle of concretion.”§ All of these are names for what we traditionally call God.

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### (1) God as more than possibility

One of Wieman’s important contentions is that that to which all human life should be dedicated by reason of its supreme value is not merely some possibility or system of possibilities, but is rather the process which carries these possibilities. God is not merely the possibility of highest value, but he is actuality which carries those possibilities.<sup>82</sup> “He is present, potent, operative, existing actuality.”|| In this claim Wieman is seeking to refute outright the theory that the most important reality which can concern human life is not anything that exists, but rather some non-existent possibility. Wieman emphatically states:

When we cut off the possibility from the process which makes it a possibility, and prize the possibility as more important than the process that carries it, we are assuming a self-defeating and self-contradictory attitude . . . To say that the process is mere means and therefore of less value than the possibility which is the end, is to set up a wholly vicious dichotomy between means and ends. The highest possibilities of value can never be attained except by way of process which leads to them.#

Again he writes:

God is not merely possibility to be achieved. That is the ideal. But God is that order of existence and possibility by virtue of which the greatest possible good is truly a possibility and can be achieved by human effort.\*\*

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\* Wieman, Art. (1931), 156.      § Wieman, WRT, 179–212.  
 † Wieman, IOL, Art. (1931), 156.      || Wieman, Art. (1932)<sup>2</sup>, 110.  
 ‡ Wieman, SHG, 56.              # Wieman, Art. (1931), 158.  
    \*\* Wieman, IOL, 162.

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we can speak of God as a process. But it extends far beyond existence, into the realm of possibility. And the whole of existence is by no means conformant to this structure of God. The terrible magnitude of evil makes this plain.”

81. Wieman, “God and Value,” p. 156: “This mutual support and enhancement must be not only between contemporaries but also between successive generations, ages, and cultures.”

82. Henry Nelson Wieman, “Theocentric Religion,” *Religion in Life* 1 (1932): 110: “God must be conceived not merely as the possibilities of highest value. God is the actuality which carries those possibilities.”

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Wieman also rejects the theory that the best is an impossibility. Such men as R. B. Perry, Bertrand Russell, Herman Randall, and George Santayana have affirmed that if men are to be faithful to the best, they must not supinely yield to the vulgarity of existence, either actual or possible, but must give their highest devotion to that nonexistent impossibility that never can be. But for one to adore the impossible, affirms Wieman, implies that his adoring of it is of great value. This adoring is itself a process of existence because he who adores is an existing personality. Therefore, if the value be a value, even when impossible of existence, that process of existence which enables one to value it as such, cannot be ignored or excluded from the high esteem we give to the impossibility of itself. Thus, some process of existence must be combined with some possibility (or impossibility) to make up the object of one's supreme devotion.\* Since God is the name given to such an object, God must be identified with that process of existence which carries the possibilities of greatest value.<sup>83</sup>

Now we can see that, for Wieman, supreme value is always a combination of actuality and possibility. When these two are combined we have what is called growth. Growth is a kind of change which increases what is, so as to approximate what might be.

From this Wieman is led to affirm that supreme value is growth of meaning in the world. Why is this growth supreme value? It is supreme value for the following reasons:<sup>84</sup>

- (1) In it the greatest value that can ever be experienced at any time is always to be found.
- (2) It carries the highest possibilities of value, possibilities reaching far beyond the specific meanings we now know.
- (3) All increase of value is found in it.

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\* Wieman, Art. (1931),  
159.

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83. Wieman, "God and Value," pp. 158–159: "Some hold that the best is not a possibility at all, but an impossibility. Therefore, if we are to be faithful to the best, we must not supinely yield to the vulgarity of existence, either actual or possible, but must give our highest devotion to that non-existent impossibility that never can be. R. B. Perry, Bertrand Russell, Herman Randall, Joseph Wood Krutch, George Santayana, . . . have been eloquent on this point. But he who adores the impossible, implies that his adoring of it is of great value. . . . But this adoring is itself a process of existence because he who adores is an existing personality. . . . Second, if the value be a value even when impossible of existence, then that process of existence which enables us to value it as such, cannot be ignored or excluded from the high esteem we give to the impossibility itself. Thus in any case some process of existence must be combined with some possibility (or impossibility) to make up the object of our supreme devotion. Since God is the name we give to such an object, God must be identified with that process of existence which carries the possibilities of greatest value."

84. Wieman and Westcott-Wieman, *Normative Psychology of Religion*, p. 51: "[Supreme value] is always a combination of actuality and possibility. When these two are combined we have what is called growth. Growth . . . is that kind of change which increases what is, so as to approximate what might be. . . . [Supreme value] is growth of meaning in the world. This is the supreme value for the following reasons."

- (4) The best conceivable world can be approximated in existence to some degree through this growth, and in no other way.\* 15 Apr 1955

As we have seen above, this growth of meaning and value in the world is God.<sup>85</sup> Wieman seeks to justify the claim that this supreme value is God on five grounds:

- (1) Growth of meaning commands our supreme devotion and highest loyalty by right of its worthfulness.
- (2) It creates and sustains human personality.
- (3) It carries human personality to whatsoever highest fulfillments are possible to it.
- (4) It has more worth than personality, hence human personality finds its highest destiny in giving itself to this growth to be mastered, used, and transformed by it into the fabric of emerging values.
- (5) The greatest value can be poured into human life only as we yield ourselves to the domination and control of this growth. When we try to dominate and use it, we lose these values.†

All of this gives weight to Wieman's basic contention that God is the supreme value of the universe. He is certain that God is that order of structures of value, actual and possible, which will ultimately issue in the realization of the greatest value when we rightly conform to its requirements.‡<sup>86</sup>

## (2) God as the unlimited growth of the connection of value

One of the main bases of Wieman's interpretation of God as supreme value is God's work as the unlimited growth of the connection of value. Every specific system of value is definitely limited, whether it be a living organism or a society of organisms, or a community of minds with the institutional structure called a culture. Each of these must perish. They are capable of carrying the growth of connections of value only to a certain limit, and then must stop. In order for values and meanings to grow indefinitely, it is necessary for each of these limited systems of value to pass away in time and give place to some

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\* Wieman, NPOR, 50.      ‡ Wieman, IOL, 221,  
 † Wieman, NPOR, 51,      222.  
 52.

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85. Wieman and Westcott-Wieman, *Normative Psychology of Religion*, pp. 51–52: "This growth of meaning and value in the world is God."

86. Wieman, *Issues of Life*, pp. 221–222: "It is that order of structures of value, actual and possible, which will ultimately issue in the realization of the greatest value when we rightly conform to its requirements." 479

15 Apr other orders of existence and value.<sup>87</sup> Therefore, God cannot be identified  
1955 with any of these limited systems of value. God is the growth which has no  
limit.

God is the growth which goes on through the successions of these limited systems of value. God is the growth which exfoliates in all manner of value . . . God is the growth which springs anew when old forms perish. When one organism dies, others spring up. When one society perishes, others arise. When one epoch of culture declines, others in time come forth. This unlimited growth of connections is God.\*

### iii. God as creative source of value

Wieman defines God not only in terms of the maximum achievement of value, analogous to an ideal of perfection, but also in terms of those natural conditions which underlie the achievement of value. God, in other words, is not simply the greatest possible value or the process by which such value is achieved; he is also the sum-total of all the natural conditions of such value-achievement. Thus in a very interesting article Wieman says that "the value of God . . . is that of creative source . . . that particular sort which pertains to creator of all created values. The value of god is the value of creativity."<sup>†88</sup> Again he says:

The value of God is the value not of the gifts but of the giver. Not the goal but the source, not the golden eggs but the goose that lays them, not the grains and fruit but the creative earth, not the products of love but the loving, not beauty but the generator of beauty, not truth but the source of truth, not moral righteousness but the creator and transformer of righteousness, not the profits of industry but the ultimate producer, not the goods but the creativity, must be given priority over all else if we would escape destruction, have salvation, and know the true and living God.‡

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\* Wieman, Art. (1936)<sup>4</sup>, 404.

† Wieman, Art. (1943)<sup>1</sup>, 25.

‡ Wieman, Art. (1943)<sup>1</sup>, 25.

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87. Wieman, "Values," pp. 403-404: "The most important reality which can command the loyalties of men is the unlimited growth of the connections of value. . . . Every specific system of activities having value is definitely limited, whether it be a living organism with its sustaining environment, or a society of organisms, or a community of minds with all their meanings and with a historic development and institutional structure called a culture. Each of these must perish. . . . If values and meanings are to grow indefinitely, each of these limited systems of value must pass away in time and give place to some other order of existence and value."

88. Martin, *Empirical Philosophies of Religion*, p. 104: "But we have noted that Wieman defines God not simply in terms of the maximum achievement of value, analagous to an ideal of perfection, but also in terms of those natural conditions which underlie the achievement of value. God, in other words, in not simply the greatest possible value or the process by which such value is achieved; he is also the sum-total of all the natural *conditions* of such value-achievement. Thus in

This rather lengthy passage is an eloquent expression of Wieman's conviction that God is underlying "ground" or the "power" behind the creation of value.

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Now it must be emphasized that when Wieman uses the term "create" he does not mean what traditional Christianity means by the term. Historically creation first referred to the act whereby the underived self-existent God brought into being what had no form of independent existence hitherto. This Christian notion contrasted radically with the Greek concept of "creation" as an "informing" or reshaping of pre-existent entity. So strong was the Christian, theistic belief in an absolute, transcendent God who worked under no external limitations, that creation was said to be *ex nihilo*, i.e. generation out of nothing. With this concept, however, Wieman is in total disagreement. He contends that the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo* is self-contradictory. Moreover, it would be impossible for Wieman on the basis of his method to get any knowledge of such an initial generation, supposing it ever occurred. By "create" Wieman means to produce what never was before, either in existence or in the imagination of man, to produce that which exposes to appreciative awareness more of the qualities of reality, or builds in that direction.\*<sup>89</sup>

Another point that Wieman emphasizes is that God as creative source is not "the source of everything". He is only "the generative source of all other value." Wieman writes:

God is not the creator, meaning the mysterious source of everything; he is only the source of the good, or rather is himself the good. The source of all good is simply the cosmic growing roots of all good, and these roots are themselves good.†

It is clear that Wieman is seeking to avoid pantheism by identifying God with only the good in the universe. Wieman is emphatic in affirming that "all is not God and God is not all. All is not good and good is not all." There are many disintegrating processes at work. There is death, futility and ruin. There is evil in the world vast and devastating. These facts Wieman never overlooks. What he is anxious to make plain is that there is also good, and that this good is derived from the process of integration.<sup>90</sup> "It is derived from God, the integrating behavior of the universe."‡

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\* Wieman, DIH, 61.

† Wieman, GOR, 267.

‡ Wieman, MPRL, 58.

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a recent article he says that 'the value of God . . . is that of creative source . . . that peculiar sort which pertains to the creator of all created values. The value of God is the value of creativity.'

89. Henry Nelson Wieman, *The Directive in History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1949), p. 61: "It would be impossible for us to get any knowledge of such an initial generation, supposing it ever occurred. . . . By *create* we mean to produce what never was before, either in existence or in the imagination of man, to produce that which exposes to appreciative awareness more of the qualities of reality, or builds in that direction."

90. Henry Nelson Wieman, *Methods of Private Religious Living* (New York: Macmillan, 1929), pp. 57-58: "There are many disintegrating processes at work. . . . All is not God and God is not

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It is now clear what Wieman is seeking to say concerning the creative activity of God. God is not only supreme fulfillment or ideal perfection, but also creative source of value. This does not mean that God creates and sustains the universe as a whole. As we shall see in the discussion of "God and evil," such an assumption generates the "false problem" of evil. It is a flagrant contradiction to affirm the goodness of God's unlimited power in the face of the evil in the world of which he is creator.\* So in order to escape this contradiction Wieman denies that God is author of the universe. Instead of being the creator and sustainer of the universe, God is the creator and sustainer of all that is good in the universe. Such a creator and sustainer is not of the universe as a whole, but only of the good that is in it.<sup>91</sup>

We may ask at this point whether it is justifiable for Wieman, on the basis of his empirical point of view, to speak of a creative source of value. If he means to refer to the natural conditions or forces which underlie value achievement, than it must be pointed out that empirically there is a plurality of such conditions, and the notion of a "creative source" is at best figurative and imaginative.

It is interesting to note that Dewey has discovered the same ambiguity in Wieman's concept of God.<sup>92</sup> Dewey grants "that there are in existence conditions and forces which, apart from human desire and intent, bring about enjoyed and enjoyable goods, and that the security and extension of goods are promoted by attention to and service of these conditions."† But these conditions and forces, contends Dewey, do not have enough unity to constitute a unitary object of devotion and so cannot be considered God. So Dewey concludes that Wieman reaches his view of God through the hypostatization of

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\* Wieman, GOR, 353,  
354.  
† Dewey, Rev. (1933),  
196.

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all. All is not good and good is not all. . . . There is death, disintegration, futility and ruin. . . . There is evil in the world vast and devastating. But there is also good. . . . All good is derived from the process of integration."

91. Wieman and Horton, *Growth of Religion*, pp. 353–354: "The assumption which generates the false problem of evil is this: A perfectly good God creates and sustains the universe and all that is in it. . . . The contradiction is between the goodness of God's unlimited power and the evil in the world of which he is creator and sustainer. . . . One who denies that God is the creator and sustainer of the universe, simply does not have the contradiction on his hands. . . . There is a creator and sustainer of all that is good in the universe. . . . Such a creator and sustainer, however, is not of the universe as a whole, but only of the good that is in it."

92. Martin, *Empirical Philosophies of Religion*, pp. 104–105: "If he means to refer to the natural conditions which may be utilized in the achievement of value, then once again we must point out that empirically there is a *plurality* of such conditions, and the notion of 'a' creative 'source' is at most imaginative and figurative. . . . It is interesting to note, in this connection, that Dewey has pointed to some of these ambiguities in objecting to Wieman's claim that his idea of God is a faithful theistic formulation of the religious faith implicit in Dewey's philosophy."

an undeniable fact, experience of things, persons, causes, found to be good and worth cherishing, into a single objective existence, a God.\*<sup>93</sup>

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From a more consistent empirical point of view, Dewey's criticisms seem justified; indeed he has pointed out a difficulty that appears over and over again in Wieman's whole system. When Wieman speaks of God there seem to be at least three different meanings. When he characterizes God as "supreme value" he seems to mean the ideal of perfection or of the achievement of maximum value. When he speaks of God as the "the unlimited connective growth of value-connections" he seems to mean the human and social processes which aim at the achievement of value. When he described God as the process of progressive integration and as the creative event he seems to mean the natural forces underlying the achievement of value. Certainly these three meanings cannot be viewed as constituting a unity except in a highly figurative and imaginative sense, and positively not for a religious philosophy which would be consistently empirical. We must conclude that at this point Wieman has failed to be consistently empirical.<sup>94</sup>

### 3. God and evil

Wieman holds that from a consistently empirical point of view the problem of evil, which has troubled so many thinkers, is a false problem. It arises only when one departs from the empirical evidence for God as "the good" or the chief factor for good in nature, and begins to speculate about God as somehow being the creator and sustainer of the universe. As we have seen, Wieman totally denies the view that God is creator of the universe. God is only the creator and sustainer of the good in the universe, namely the power of

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\* Dewey, Rev. (1933),  
196, 196.

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93. John Dewey, Review of *Is There a God?* ed. C. C. Morrison, *Christian Century* 40 (8 February 1933): 196: "I can but think that Mr. Wieman's God rests upon hypostatization of an undeniable fact, experience of things, persons, causes, found to be good and worth cherishing, into a single objective existence, a God."

94. Martin, *Empirical Philosophies of Religion*, p. 105: "Now it seems to us that, from a more consistently empirical point of view, Dewey's criticisms are justified; indeed, it seems that he has pointed clearly to the chief sources of difficulty in Wieman's total view. When Wieman speaks of God there seem to be at least three different meanings. He seems to mean the ideal of perfection or of the achievement of maximum value; the human and social processes which aim at the achievement of value; and the natural forces underlying or utilized in these processes. He does not realize that these three meanings may be viewed as constituting a unity (or a Trinity!) only in a highly imaginative and figurative sense, a sense appropriate to the life of faith and devotion, perhaps, but not to a religious philosophy which would be consistently empirical in this connection. We believe that it is his failure to be consistently empirical in this connection which is largely responsible for the confusions which we have found in his views of religious perception and method."

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growth. Wieman feels that one must either deny the reality of evil, which is clearly unempirical, or give up the idea of God as Creator of all.\* He chooses the latter. Wieman contends that the more empirical problem is to define the actual nature and scope of evil, and not indulge in unempirical speculation concerning its origin.<sup>95</sup> At this point we turn to a discussion of his view of the nature and scope of evil.

### i. Evil as destructive of good

We have seen that Wieman follows Whitehead in defining God as “the principle of concretion.”† On the basis of this definition evil is that which is destructive of concrete existence. It is anything that hinders the prehensive‡ capacity of any particular thing.<sup>96</sup>

The more fully any object prehends the rest of being, the more it is subject to the destructive works of evil. The higher we rise in the levels of prehension, the greater place there is for the destructive works of evil.<sup>97</sup>

Since evil is destructive of good there can be no evil unless there is first good. Evil is thus parasitic.§ It is dependent on the good. It cannot stand on its own feet. Evil can thrive and develop only when there is good to sustain it.<sup>98</sup> “The world is based on the good. The concrete world would have no

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\* Wieman feels that Brightman's idea of a finite deity only reformulates the false problem, which is stated as truly

“insoluble.”

† Wieman, WRT, 182.

‡ In the terminology of A. N. Whitehead, prehension is the process of feel-

ing whereby data are grasped or prehended by a subject. See *Process and Reality*, Part III.

§ Wieman, WRT, 201.

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95. Martin, *Empirical Philosophies of Religion*, p. 108: “From a consistently empirical point of view, he holds, [the problem of evil] is really a false problem; it arises only when one departs from the empirical evidence for God as ‘the good’, or the chief factor for good in nature, and begins to speculate about God as also somehow the creator of all existence. That is, one must either deny the reality of evil, which is clearly empirical, or give up the idea of God as Creator of all. . . . Brightman's idea of a finite deity only reformulates the false problem, which as stated is truly ‘insoluble’. The more empirical problem is to define the actual nature and scope of evil, and not to indulge in unempirical speculation as to its ‘origin’.”

96. Henry Nelson Wieman, *The Wrestle of Religion with Truth* (New York: Macmillan, 1927), p. 200: “Evil is anything which hinders the prehensive capacity of any particular thing. . . . It is destructive of concrete existence.”

97. Wieman, *Wrestle of Religion with Truth*, pp. 200–201: “The more fully any object prehends the rest of being, the more complicated and delicately balanced must all its adjustments be. . . . The higher we rise in the levels of prehension, the greater place there is for the destructive works of evil.”

98. Wieman, *Wrestle of Religion with Truth*, p. 201: “Since evil is the destruction of good there can be no evil unless there is first the good. . . . Evil, then, is parasitic. It cannot stand on its own feet. It can thrive and flourish only when there is good to sustain it.”

existence were it not for the principle of concretion which constitutes the good. Good and concrete existence are identical.”\* The concrete order of the world is good. Evil tends to destroy the order of concreteness,† and therefore the whole order of existence. 15 Apr 1955

Evil is not merely a principle of nonbeing or an absence of something. It is both positive and aggressive.‡ But God is not evil, nor can evil and good be confused. Insofar as the existing world is concrete, it is due to the work of God, the principle of concretion and order.<sup>99</sup> But evil is destructive of all levels of concreteness. So Wieman concludes:

God excludes evil, evil excludes God. God does not create evil nor sustain evil, except as a parasite is sustained. Evil could not exist without God’s good to provide a standing ground; but the good alone is of God.§

## ii. Kinds of evil

Wieman distinguishes between those evils rooted in the nature of things not caused by man and those that originate in human life. Evils rooted in the nature of things are called “inertias” and “protective hierarchies.” Evils that originate in human life are called sin and demonry.<sup>100</sup>

By inertia Wieman means more than simply the opposite of change. It is first “lack of the sensitivity and responsiveness necessary to get the thought and feeling of another or to participate appreciatively in a more complex community.”|| Secondly, it is resistance to that kind of transformation whereby the individual organism, the world relative to that organism, and the associated community are all re-created so as to increase qualitative meaning.# In short, inertia is insensitivity and resistance to creativity. This kind of inertia is due

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\* Wieman, WRT, 201.

† The meaning of “concreteness”, for Wieman, is contrasted with the meaning of “abstraction.” By “concrete” he has reference to events in their

wholeness, their individualized totality, their unique and full particularity. Anything less than this concrete wholeness or unique particularity is an abstraction. The being

and therefore the power of causal efficacy of events refers to their concreteness.

‡ Wieman, GR, 358.

§ Wieman, WRT, 202.

|| Wieman, SHG, 105.

# Wieman, SHG, 105.

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99. Wieman, *Wrestle of Religion with Truth*, p. 202: “Evil is something positive and aggressive, not merely the lack or absence of something. But God is not evil and there is no confusion of good and evil. Insofar as the concrete world exists at all, it is due to God, the principle of concretion and order.” Cf. Wieman and Horton, *Growth of Religion*, p. 358: “We do not mean to say that evil is negative in the sense of being merely the absence of something. Particular evils are destructive and positive.”

100. Wieman, *Source of Human Good*, p. 105: “The most general classification of evils distinguishes between those rooted in the nature of things not caused by man and those that originate in human life. . . . Evils that originate in human life we shall call ‘sin,’ ‘immorality,’ and ‘demonry.’”

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to at least three things: the lack of vital energy, the running down of energy, and the cancelling-out of conflicting energies.\*<sup>101</sup> This threat of inertia and loss of meaning is not peculiar to human life. It hangs over all the world. It seems to be a cosmic drift and threat. But Wieman is certain that it can be conquered. He contends that there is a power more than human which works against it.† Wieman sees several times since this planet cooled when it seemed that power reached a level when defeat was imminent.<sup>102</sup> But this threatening defeat was avoided. “The transition from inanimate matter to the living cell may have been such a time. The transition from lower animal existence to man may have been another such dangerous and difficult passage.”‡

Another evil, derivative from this of inertia, is the evil of protective hierarchy. Wieman contends that there are many kinds of hierarchy, but his concern is only with what he calls the “hierarchy of sensitivity.” When he speaks of the “hierarchy of sensitivity,” Wieman means that the graded capacity to undergo creative transformation and the graduated levels of sensitivity impose a hierarchy on existence in which only the few at the top can be the medium through which the creative event works most fully. This order of life is a hard necessity, contends Wieman, but it is evil because not all forms of life, not even all human organisms, can share equally the supreme fulfillments of qualitative meaning;<sup>103</sup> moreover “it is evil because some forms of life must support other forms by enduring hardships or other stultifying effects that

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\* Wieman, SHG, 105.

† When Wieman contends that there is a power more than human which works against inertia, one is reminded of Bright-

man’s view that God eternally controls the “given”. However there is one distinct difference. For Brightman the “given” is

within God. For Wieman inertia is outside of God.

‡ Wieman, SHG, 117.

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101. Wieman, *Source of Human Good*, p. 105: “By ‘inertia’ we mean . . . resistance to that kind of transformation whereby the individual organism, the world relative to that organism, and the associated community are all re-created so as to increase qualitative meaning. . . . We shall discuss this kind of inertia—insensitivity and resistance to creativity—in three rough categories, according to its causes: inertia due to lack of vital energy, inertia due to the running-down of energy, and inertia due to the canceling-out of conflicting energies.”

102. Wieman, *Source of Human Good*, pp. 116–117: “This threat of inertia and loss of meaning is not peculiar to human life. It hangs over all the world. It seems to be a cosmic drift and threat, but it can be conquered. There is a power more than human which works against it. Several times since this planet cooled, it seems, this power reached a level where further advance was precarious, where defeat was imminent.”

103. Wieman, *Source of Human Good*, pp. 117–118: “Another evil, derivative from this of inertia, is the evil of protective hierarchy. There are many kinds of hierarchy, but here we are concerned only with what could be called the ‘hierarchy of sensitivity.’ The graduated levels of sensitivity and the graded capacity to undergo creative transformation impose a hierarchy on existence in which only the few at the top can be the medium through which the creative event works most fully. This ordering of life is a hard necessity, but it is evil. It is evil because not all forms of life, not even all human organisms, can share equally the supreme fulfillments of qualitative meaning.”

render them less responsive and less sensitive.”\* Concerning the necessity and evil of the hierarchy, Wieman says:

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The hierarchy is both necessity and an evil: It is necessary to enable the creative event to produce the richest fulfillment of value with those most capable of engaging in that kind of communication. It is evil because it imposes upon many an undue protection from pain and discomfort; upon some an undue fatigue from hard labor; upon others impoverished organisms; upon still others the irresponsible existence which puts on the throne of life what they happen to like, without demonstrating by any reliable method that it is truly most important.†

Wieman concludes that the high peak of creative transformation will continue to soar far above the mass of people, with only a very few finding a place there. This is a hard necessity, an evil inherent in the cosmic situation. But it is a fact that we must face, ordering our lives accordingly.‡<sup>104</sup>

The evils thus far treated are thrust upon man from sources outside of human living, and are somewhat inherent in the nature of things. Wieman admits that there are times when these evils pass over from the external source to the internal affairs of man, making it hard to draw the line precisely determining the place where human responsibility begins. Moreover, we unquestionably have responsibility for many of the inertias and hierarchies. Nevertheless, they are, by and large, thrust upon us from sources external to human life.§<sup>105</sup>

Sin and demonry are the two kinds of evil originating with man. Sin is any resistance to creativity for which man is responsible. Man's responsibility is not limited to instances in which he is consciously aware of obstructing creativity or deliberately intending to do so. Unintended and unconscious resistance is sin, too, because it is the consequence of many past decisions for which the man is responsible.|| Most sin is unconscious and unintended. To be uncon-

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\* Wieman, SHG, 118.

‡ Wieman, SHG, 124.

† Wieman, SHG, 119,  
120.

§ Wieman, SHG, 125.  
|| Wieman, SHG, 126.

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104. Wieman, *Source of Human Good*, p. 124: “The high peak of creative transformation will continue to soar far above the mass of people, with only a very few finding a place there. This a hard necessity, an evil inherent in the cosmic situation, so it seems. If this claim should be mistaken, none would be more happy than we; but if it is true, we must face the fact and order our lives accordingly.”

105. Wieman, *Source of Human Good*, pp. 125–126: “The evils thus far treated are thrust upon man from sources outside of human living, and they seem to reside in the nature of things. . . . It is true that these evils pass over from the external source to the internal affairs of man, and it is hard to draw the line precisely determining the place where human responsibility begins. We unquestionably do have responsibility for many of the inertias. . . . Nevertheless, the inertias and the hierarchies are, primarily and in the large, thrust upon us from sources external to human life.”

15 Apr 1955 conscious of one's sin when he could be conscious of it is itself a darker sin. Man can, if he will, be far more fully conscious of his sin than he generally is.<sup>106</sup> "To be conscious of one's sin is to be that far in the direction of deliverance from it; for the deeper enslavement to sin is the state in which one is not conscious of it."\*

When Wieman says that sin is man's resistance to the creative event, he refers to what was meant by the theological statement: "Sin is man's rebellion against the will of God."<sup>107</sup> Another way that Wieman describes sin is to say that it is the creature turning against the creator—it is created good turning against creativity.† Man's personality, for instance, is a created good, and so also are his society, his culture, and his ideals. He, with his society and ideals, is forever refusing to surrender himself to the transforming power of the creative event. This is sin. He refuses to provide the conditions which he could provide and which are necessary for the freer working of creativity. This is rebellion against God. The "will of God is the demand of creative power that man provide conditions most favorable to its working."‡<sup>108</sup> When man fails to remove or fight the conditions obstructing creativity he is failing to do the will of God, and is thereby sinning.

The evil of demonry is another evil which Wieman refers to as originating within human nature. Demonry is the evil of resisting creative transformation

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\* Wieman, SHG, 127.  
 † For Wieman the terms "creativity" and "creative event" are inseparable, but the two words carry

an important distinction in meaning. "Creativity is the character, the structure, or form which the event must have to be cre-

ative. Creativity is therefore an abstraction. The concrete reality is the creative event." (SHG, 299).  
 ‡ Wieman, SHG, 127.

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106. Wieman, *Source of Human Good*, pp. 126, 127: "Sin is any resistance to creativity for which man is responsible. . . . What is important, however, is that man recognize that his responsibility is not limited to instances in which he is consciously aware of obstructing creativity or deliberately intending to do so. Unintended and unconscious resistance is sin, too, because it is the consequence of many past decisions for which the man is responsible. . . . Most sin is unconscious and unintended. To be unconscious of one's sin when he could be conscious of it is itself a darker sin. . . . We here point only to the fact that man can, if he will, be far more fully conscious of his sin than he generally is."

107. Wieman, *Source of Human Good*, p. 126: "When we say that sin is man's resistance to the creative event, we refer to what was meant by the theological statement: 'Sin is man's rebellion against the will of God.'"

108. Wieman, *Source of Human Good*, p. 127: "Another way of describing sin is to say that it is the creature turning against the creator—it is created good turning against creativity. Man's personality is a created good, and so also are his society, his culture, his ideals. He, with his society, culture, and ideals, is forever refusing to meet the demands which must be met if the creative event is to rule in his life. This is sin. He refuses to provide the conditions which he could provide and which are necessary to release the freer working of creativity. . . . All this is rebellion against God. The 'will of God,' so far as it prescribes what man should do, is the demand of creative power that man provide conditions most favorable to its working."

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for the sake of a vision of human good. In traditional usage the term devil means the archtempter. The devil is what tempts man to sin in the most dangerous and evil way; and the devil is also one of the most glorious sons of God.<sup>109</sup> The devil is, symbolically speaking, "the most glorious vision of good that our minds can achieve at any one time when that vision refuses to hold itself subject to creativity."\* Wieman contends that this is the most subtle and dangerous sin that man can commit. No vision of any race or culture at any time may be listed up and made supreme against the creative event.<sup>110</sup>

In the midst of the tremendous increase of power, due to the intensive industrialization of the planet, some group will surely rise to the height of power that no men ever before enjoyed. Such a group will be tempted to use its power to achieve what seems to it good and refuse to use it to serve the creative event.<sup>111</sup> To yield to such a temptation would mean that one is yielding to the worse form of demonry.†

So we now see the distinction which Wieman makes between evils rooted in the nature of things and those that originate in human life. Both types are mutually destructive. However, it is those evils rooted in the nature of things that we can do least about.

Traditional views have affirmed that evil will ultimately be overcome by the workings of an almighty God. Wieman's naturalism prevents him from accepting such a view. However, he does find some ground of hope from empirical sources. First, there are the empirical facts of the increase of good through millions of centuries. No one can doubt that qualitative meaning has increased over the years. The second ground of hope is the fact that evil cannot destroy creativity. It can only obstruct it.

Wieman finds an ultimate dualism more empirical than either a monistic idealism which would deny the existence of evil, or a quasi-monistic idealism which would seem to equivocate the issue.<sup>112</sup>

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\* Wieman, SHG, 128.

† Wieman, SHG, 129.

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109. Wieman, *Source of Human Good*, p. 128: "The evil of resisting creative transformation for the sake of a vision of human good remains. . . . The devil is what tempts man to sin in the most dangerous and evil way; also the devil is the most glorious of the sons of God."

110. Wieman, *Source of Human Good*, p. 129: "This is the most subtle and dangerous and obstructive sin that man can sin. No vision of any man, race, or culture at any time can be lifted up and made supreme against creativity."

111. Wieman, *Source of Human Good*, p. 129: "When the power of man increases by leaps and bounds, as it is doing today with the intensive industrialization of the planet, . . . some group will surely rise to a height of power that no men ever before enjoyed. It will be tempted to use its power to achieve what seems to it good and refuse to use it to serve the creative event."

112. Martin, *Empirical Philosophies of Religion*, p. 108: "Thus Wieman, like Boodin, finds an ultimate dualism more empirical than either a monistic idealism which would deny the existence of evil, [or] a quasi-monistic idealism which would seem to equivocate the issue."

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### iii. God's finiteness

Wieman's conclusions on the whole problem of evil reveal that he is a theistic finitist. A theistic finitist is one who holds that the eternal will of God faces given conditions which that will did not create, whether those conditions are ultimately within the personality of God or external to God. All theistic finitists agree that there is something in the universe not created by God and not a result of voluntary divine self-limitation, which God finds as either obstacle or instrument to his will. Now it is clear that Wieman fits into this category. He does not hesitate to affirm that God's power is limited by evil. As we have already seen, "inertias" and "hierarchies," which are basic evils, originate in sources external to God, the creative event. Wieman's idea of a finite God clearly comes out in his affirmation that "the problem of evil arises only when you claim there is an almighty and perfectly good power that controls everything. I make no such claim."\* God is only the source of the good and not of the universe as a whole. Wieman is thus content with an ultimate dualism.†

He is confident, however, that although God is finite his purpose and work cannot be defeated. In fact God tends to gain ground over the forces of evils as time goes on. Wieman writes:

Our point is that the universe seems to be so constituted that this movement toward higher integration springs up again and again under all manner of conditions, places and times. Sometimes it mounts high, sometimes not so high. Again and again it may be beaten back or overwhelmed. But on the whole it seems to gain ground as ages pass.‡

There is a striking parallel between Wieman's thought at this point and Brightman's idea of God as "Controller of the Given." Brightman contends that God controls the Given in the sense that he never allows The Given to run wild. "God's control means that no defeat or frustration is final; that the will of God, partially thwarted by obstacles in the chaotic Given, finds new avenues of advance, and forever moves on in the cosmic creation of new values."§

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\* Wieman, *Art.* (1932)<sup>3</sup>, 201.

† Wieman's finite God may be compared with Brightman's finite God at many points. Brightman holds to the idea of a personal finite God whose finiteness consists in his own internal structure: An eternal unitary personal consciousness whose creative will is limited both by external necessities of reason and by eter-

nal experiences of brute fact. These limits Brightman calls "the Given." The Given is an aspect of God's consciousness which eternally enters into every moment of the divine experience and into everything that is, either as obstacle or as instrument to the will of God. Wieman denies that God is a person. Also Wieman insists that that which limits God is outside of his nature. In

a word, Wieman's finite God is a "process of integration" which is continually confronted with external conditions working against integration. Brightman's finite God is a personal being who is continually confronted with obstacles inside his own nature.  
‡ Wieman, *MPRL*, 55.  
§ Brightman, *POR*, 338.

## 4. The question of the existence of God

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As we have seen, one of Wieman's chief aims is that of making the question of God's existence a dead issue. To this end he sets forth the following definitions of God: "God is that actuality which sustains, promotes and constitutes the supreme good."\* "God is that something upon which human life is most dependent for its security, welfare, and increasing abundance. . . . , that something of supreme value which constitutes the most important conditions."† "God is that structure of existence and possibility which is supremely worthwhile."‡ If God be defined as supreme value or as that process which underlies and makes possible the maximum achievement of value, then the fact of his existence, if not full knowledge of his specific nature, is "inescapable." "The best there is and can be. . . is a self-proving proposition."§<sup>113</sup>

Wieman's interest in seeing a curtailment to the debate on the question of God's existence stems from his broader theocentric concern. He is deeply concerned in seeing men turn all their energies to living for God and seeking better knowledge about God. "Dispute about the existence of God," says Wieman, "is blocking and diverting that outpouring of constructive energy which religious devotion ought properly to release for the tasks that confront us.¶

So Wieman looks upon all arguments for the existence of God as futile and invalid. Just as it is folly to attempt to prove the existence of nature to natural creatures, or the United States to its citizens, it is equal folly to try to prove to humans, whose essential nature consists in seeking, adoring, and serving whatever has greatest value, that there is something which has greatest value.¶<sup>114</sup> So Wieman is led to say:

All the traditional arguments to prove the existence of God are as much out of place in religion as arguments to prove the existence of nature would be in science. Never in any of my writings have I tried to prove the existence of God except by "definition," which means to state the problem in such a way as to lift it out of the arena of debate.\*\*

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\* Wieman, Art. (1932)<sup>3</sup>,  
276.

† Wieman, RESM, 9.

‡ Wieman, Art. (1932)<sup>3</sup>,  
276.

§ Wieman, Art. (1931)<sup>2</sup>,  
1171.

¶ Wieman, Art. (1932)<sup>3</sup>,

283.

# Wieman, Art. (1932)<sup>3</sup>,

82.

\*\* Wieman, Art. (1932)<sup>3</sup>,

284.

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113. Martin, *Empirical Philosophies of Religion*, p. 87: "If God be defined as supreme value or as that process which underlies and makes possible the maximum achievement of value then the fact of his existence, if not full knowledge of his specific nature, is 'inescapable,' he feels. 'The best there is and can be . . . is a self-proving proposition.'"

114. Henry Nelson Wieman, "Is There a God?" in *Is There a God?* ed. C. C. Morrison (Chicago: Willett, Clark, 1932), p. 82: "In fact, anyone who started out to prove the existence of nature to natural creatures like ourselves, or of United States to its citizens, would be a fool. It is equal folly to try to prove to animals like ourselves, whose essential nature consists in seeking, adoring, and serving whatever has greatest value, that there is something which has greatest value."

15 Apr Again he writes: "No one has less interest than I in trying to prove the existence of God. As already stated, I hold such procedure folly."\*

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Despite his insistence that he has made the existence of God so certain that all arguments for his existence are unnecessary, Wieman at times uses the argument of the gradation of being, an argument quite prevalent in Thomistic thinking. Wieman says, for example:

There are a number of general truths about reality which we know with a very high degree of certainty, and these general truths are of utmost importance. We have mentioned a few of them, such as the truth that I exists, that other people exist, that there is better and worse and that, therefore, there is the inevitable implication of better and worse, which is the Best, or God.†

In a more concise passage he says:

Since I know there is better and worse, I know there is the Best; for the best is the inevitable implication of the reality of better and worse. When I say 'God', I mean the best there is. Therefore I know God is.‡

In both of these passages Wieman is explicitly seeking to prove the existence of God through the argument of the gradation of being. This certainly conflicts with his persistent claim that all arguments for God's existence are invalid. We must conclude, therefore, that Wieman fails to achieve one of his basic objectives, viz., making the question of God's existence a dead issue. Against his fundamental intentions, he ends up seeking to prove (whether consciously or unconsciously) the existence of God.

## 5. The question of the personality in God

One of the most controversial phases of Wieman's thought hinges around the question of personality of God. In his earlier works Wieman granted the possibility that God might be mental or personal. "Nature," he says, "may very well be moved and sustained by the operation of a supreme mind or personality."§ Again he says: "It may be that what gives the character and creative advance to the whole of nature and every part of nature is that there is operative throughout the whole of nature a mind."||

Despite this earlier willingness to grant the possibility of personality in God, Wieman, in his later works, emphatically denies that God can be a person. He is convinced that "God towers in unique majesty infinitely above the little hills which we call minds and personalities."# In order to get a better understanding of Wieman's thought at this point, we turn to a discussion of the objections

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\* Wieman, Art. (1932)<sup>3</sup>,  
84.

† Wieman, Art. (1937),  
207. Italics mine.

‡ Wieman, Art. (1937),  
204.

§ Wieman, RESM, 180.  
|| Wieman, RESM, 181.

# Wieman, Art. (1936)<sup>2</sup>,  
432.

which he raises to the idea of a personal God, and then to a consideration of his view that God is process.

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### i. Objections to the idea of a personal God

One of the basic reasons why Wieman objects to the idea of a personal God is his contention that personality is inconceivable apart from a society of persons. Personality is generated by interaction between individuals. If this is the case then God cannot be a personality. The only ground on which the theory can be defended is on the basis of the doctrine of the trinity. But there is not the slightest empirical evidence, contends Wieman, of such an ontological trinity.\*

Another reason why Wieman denies that God is mental or personal is found in the essential limitations of personality. Something infinitely richer and more pervasive and precious than personality produces and constitutes the value of the world. Indeed it is this something which generates personality. Wieman turns to the sciences of personality, psychology, social psychology, and anthropology to gain validation for his contention that it is something more than a personality which generates personality, sustains and promotes its growth, and brings it to highest fulfillment. The reality which does all this, according to these disciplines, is a very complex and delicate system of connections of mutual control which grows up between the individual psycho-physical organism and its physical and social environment.<sup>115</sup>

For similar reasons Wieman cannot conceive of God as "mind." Mind and personality are "summit characters" in nature, but they are not universal features of nature as are process and interaction. To possess mind would automatically limit God. In discussing God in relation to prayer, Wieman says:

To be conscious as we know consciousness is to have focus of attention. But to have focus of attention is to be able to attend to a few things in a certain area and not to attend to anything beyond. Can God function as God must, if he is so limited? . . . To have human mentality God must see things from a viewpoint that is localized at a certain time and place.†

As we have seen, Wieman holds that the work of God is clearly distinguished from that of man. The difference is not merely of degree or magnitude. It is a difference of kind. An understanding of this distinction is all-

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\* Wieman, SHG, 266.

† Wieman, NPOR, 133.

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115. Wieman and Horton, *Growth of Religion*, p. 361: "What generates personality, sustains and promotes its growth, and brings it to highest fulfillment? The reality which does all this is a very complex and delicate system of connections of mutual control which grows up between the individual psycho-physical organism and its physical and social environment."

15 Apr 1955 important for an understanding of Wieman's view that God is more than mind.

Wieman contends that the work of God is the growth of organism, while the work of man is the construction of mechanism. He looks upon mechanisms and organisms as two different kinds of systems which enter into the existence of almost everything.<sup>116</sup> "A mechanism is a system of external relations. An organism is a system of internal relations or, as I prefer to say, of organic connections."\* Therefore when things are internally related, they undergo transformation and mutually control one another.<sup>117</sup>

So God's work is the growth of organic connections, i.e., "the growth of meaning and value." This is not and can never be the work of man. Since God's way of working is so different from that of mind as seen in man, Wieman concludes that God is more than mind.<sup>118</sup> "Mind," Wieman writes, "is just exactly what God is not. God is not intelligence, for what God does is. . . . exactly the opposite of what intelligence does."†

Another basic reason why Wieman rejects the claim of a personal God is to be found in his general naturalistic and empiricistic positions. As we have seen, he is determined to confine God to nature. God is the "creative event" within nature rather than the "creative event" above nature. There is not the slightest empirical evidence that God as the creative event within nature is personal in character. Empirical observation points more to process and interaction than to personality as the basic character of the "creative event."

Although Wieman denies the personality of God, he is quite certain that he preserves in God those things which the religious man is demanding when he asserts that God must be a person. God does respond to the intimate needs and attitudes of the individual personality.‡ Moreover, human personality and fellowship find in God the source of their origin, the continuous source of their enrichment, and the condition of their most abundant flowering.§<sup>119</sup>

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* Wieman, Art. (1936) <sup>2</sup> , 442.	reverent, appealing attitude toward the process of interaction which makes for greatest mutuality." (Art. (1932) <sup>3</sup> , 89).	action producing precious blessings of mutuality which were only possibilities prior to one's taking this attitude.
† Wieman, Art. (1936) <sup>2</sup> , 441.	The answer to prayer comes through this inter-	§ Wieman, GOR, 363.
‡ Wieman insists that God answers prayer. "Prayer," he says, "is a		

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<sup>116</sup>. Wieman, "God Is More," p. 442: "Mechanisms and organisms are not two different kinds of things. Rather, they are two different kinds of systems which enter into the existence of almost everything."

<sup>117</sup>. Wieman, "God Is More," p. 442: "That means that when things or parts of things are internally related, they undergo transformation and mutually control one another."

<sup>118</sup>. Wieman, "God Is More," p. 442: "The work of God is the growth of organic connections, that is, the growth of all meaning and value. Man cannot do that. . . . Since God's way of working is so different from that of mind, as we see it in man, we feel that God is not only more than mind, he is more than we can think."

494 <sup>119</sup>. Wieman and Horton, *Growth of Religion*, p. 361: "Do human personality and fellowship find in God the source of their origin, the continuous source of their enrichment, and the con-

Wieman also quite readily sees the value of personality applied to God as a symbol for religious purposes:

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From all this we conclude that the mythical symbol of person or personality may be indispensable for the practice of worship and personal devotion to the creative power, this need arising out of the very nature of creative interaction and so demonstrating that the creative event is the actual reality when this symbol is used most effectively in personal commitment of faith. This symbol may be required even by those who know through intellectual analysis that a person is always a creature and that therefore personality cannot characterize the nature of the creator.\*

However, this need of religious devotion to think of God as a person must not blind our minds to the fact that God cannot be a person.

The fact that God is not personal does not mean that he is impersonal. Wieman insists that God responds to personal adjustments in a "personal" manner, and that his nature must be so conceived that it accounts for the existence of personality. Because of this God cannot be impersonal. Actually, God is not sub-personal but supra-personal. Therefore, Wieman uses the personal pronoun in referring to God, though at the same time conscious of its inadequacy.†<sup>120</sup>

## ii. God as process

One of the first things that the interpreter of Wieman discovers is his persistent affirmation that God belongs to the category of process. This appears throughout all his definitions of God. In one book Wieman refers to God as

that integrating process which works through all the world not only to bring human lives into fellowship with one another but also to maintain and develop organic interdependence and mutual support between all parts and aspects of the cosmos.‡

Again he says:

God is that integrating process at work in the universe. It is that which makes for increasing interdependence and cooperation in the world.§

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\* Wieman, SHG, 267–268.  
† Wieman, IOL, 219–230; GOR, 359–362.

‡ Wieman, MPRL, 22. Italics mine.  
§ Wieman, MPRL, 46, 47. Italics mine

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dition of their most abundant flowering? . . . Now the religious naturalist says that God does respond to the intimate needs and attitudes of each individual personality."

120. Martin, *Empirical Philosophies of Religion*, p. 107: "It is true that God responds to personal adjustments in a 'personal' manner, and that his nature must be so conceived that it accounts for the existence of personality; that, in brief, God is not *impersonal*. Therefore Wieman uses the personal pronoun in referring to God, being at the same time conscious of its inadequacy."

15 Apr 1955      Elsewhere he declares: "God is that interaction between things which generates and magnifies personality and all its highest values."\* Now an interaction is not a thing or a concrete object; † it is a process in which concrete objects affect one another; it is an event, not a continuing entity. Interactions are not "persistent realities." ‡

When Wieman speaks of God as integrating process at the level of human society he means the process by which men are made increasingly interdependent and their behavior is so changed as to make them more cooperative and mutually helpful one to the other. Because this process goes on independently of human purpose Wieman calls it superhuman. But while it is more than human it will not lift humanity to the great goods of life unless men make right adaptation to it. "The process goes on whether we will or no, but we must 'get right with it' if we would escape catastrophe." §<sup>121</sup>

Wieman makes it clear that this process of progressive integration which is seen at work in human society is cosmic in scope. It can be seen in electrons interacting in such a way as to make atoms, atoms to make molecules, molecules to make cells, cells to make living organisms, living organisms to make individual minds and human society. This process of progressive integration is quite similar to what Smuts calls Holism, Whitehead the principle of concretion, S. Alexander and Loyd Morgan the nisus toward ever higher creative syntheses, and Hocking the Whole Idea.<sup>122</sup>

Another way in which Wieman expresses the idea that God belongs to the category of process is that of referring to God as the pattern of behavior. He notices that the universe is not a passive state of being; it is rather a total event which is continually transpiring. It is a total event made up of an infinite number of subordinate events. In other words, the universe is continually behaving.

Now this behavior of the universe, which is infinitely complex and varied,

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\* Wieman, ITG, 13.

45.

† Wieman, WRT, 193.

§ Wieman, WRT, 62.

‡ Wieman, Art. (1932)<sup>3</sup>.

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121. Wieman, *Methods of Private Religious Living*, pp. 51–52: "When we speak of the integrating process at the level of human society we mean the process by which (1) we are made increasingly interdependent and (2) our behavior is so changed as to make us more cooperative and mutually helpful one to the other. . . . But while it is more than human it will not lift humanity to the great goods of life unless men make right adaptation to it. . . . The process goes on whether we will or no, but we must 'get right with it' if we would escape catastrophe." Note that King's reference to *Wrestle of Religion with Truth* is inaccurate.

122. Wieman, *Methods of Private Religious Living*, pp. 52–53: "This process of progressive integration which we see at work in human society is cosmic in its scope. Electrons interact in such a way as to make atoms, atoms to make molecules, molecules to make cells, cells to make living organisms, living organisms to make individual minds and human society. It is what Smuts calls Holism, . . . Whitehead the principle of concretion, . . . S. Alexander and Lloyd Morgan the nisus toward ever higher creative syntheses, Hocking the Whole Idea."

has a certain pattern and structure. This pattern of behavior upon which man is dependent for maximum security and increase of good, is the God of the universe. "God is the behavior of the universe which has thus nurtured human life and which continues to keep it going and growing."<sup>123</sup>

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As we have seen above, Wieman makes it clear that God is not to be identified with all patterns of behavior or with the universe in its entirety (pantheism). Only that pattern of behavior can be called God "which preserves and increases to the maximum the total good of all human living where right adjustment is made."\*

From the above we may conclude that Wieman's God is a process, an order of events, a system or pattern of behavior. All of this is consistent with his naturalistic leanings. Traditional theism tends to see God as an all-powerful person who is the shaper of events, or the overruler of them, or somehow the generator of them. Wieman however, following his naturalistic leanings, sees God as a process within nature, a process which is the structure or order of events.

## 6. Wieman's use of specifically Christian symbols in his conception of God

No exposition of Wieman's mature view of God is complete without a discussion of the rather illuminating way in which he reinterprets many of the traditional Christian concepts concerning God. Wieman seeks to preserve and interpret everything which has given power to the life and worship of the Christian religion. As we have seen, this interpretation is made in the frame of his own naturalistic processes of thought. "Nothing has value except material events. . . ."† This means that most of the terms of classical Christianity must be used with a new and different meaning. These subtle changes in meaning must always be kept in the mind of the interpreter of Wieman because of Wieman's constant tendency of using historical phrases in a sense other than that which has been carried by them in the past.

Wieman's whole life's work represents the most valiant attempt to keep the values of evangelical Christianity while discarding its philosophy and theology. He looks upon the literal interpretation of most Christian doctrines as absurd and unscientific. But when these literal interpretations are removed, Christian doctrines are found to have a symbolic value that is indispensable for living religion. In an article which appeared in a series entitled, "How My Mind Has Changed in the Last Decade," Wieman writes:

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\* Wieman, WRT, 62.

† Wieman, SHG, 8.

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123. The quotation is from Wieman, *Wrestle of Religion with Truth*, p. 62.

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I use traditional Christian symbols much more than I did ten years ago. I do not think that this indicates any access to orthodoxy. But I find that when the ambiguities and superstitions and superficialities have been cleared away from these ancient forms of expressions, they carry a depth and scope of meaning which no other words can convey, because the same history which has made them has made us.\*

With these propaedeutic remarks we turn now to a discussion of the basic Christian symbols which receive fruitful treatment in Wieman's conception of God.

### i. The grace of God

Wieman agrees with the view that man can never achieve the good by his own power. Whenever man uses his power to serve the good that is discerned by his own appreciative consciousness rather than serve the good that is determined by the creative power of God, his efforts are doomed to defeat.† The structure of man's appreciative consciousness is too limited in scope and distorted in form ever to become an independent guide for human life. Man's awareness of this inadequacy leads to despair. But the despair which arises at this point is not totally destructive; it really opens the way to salvation; for despair concerning the adequacy of his own appraisal of value may lead man to give himself to the guiding grace of God.‡<sup>124</sup>

Despair for its own sake has no value. But when it turns man from trust in his own reason or sense of value to absolute trust in the grace of God, it opens the way to salvation. "As a gateway into this transformed way of living, where security is found in the power and goodness of God, despair is the highest wisdom."§

Now what is this "grace of God" upon which man is so dependent. The grace of God is "creative transformation become dominant in the life of man."|| Every individual has the important task of searching out the nature of creativity and seeking to live in accord with its demands. But the actual directing toward the good and the actual achievement of it cannot be exercised by the ability of man; this can be done only by the creative event when ac-

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\* Wieman, Art. (1939),  
116.

† Wieman, SHG, 49.

‡ Wieman, SHG, 49.

§ Wieman, SHG, 49.

|| Wieman, SHG, 49.

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<sup>124</sup> Wieman, *Source of Human Good*, p. 49: "Man uses his power and prosperity to serve the good as discerned by his own appreciative consciousness rather than the good as determined by the creative power of God. . . . This judgment of God and the despair it brings are not merely condemnation; they really open the way of salvation and fulfilment; for despair concerning the reliability of his own appraisal of value may lead man to commit himself to the healing and guiding grace of God."

cepted as sovereign over life.<sup>125</sup> This creative event operating in its sovereignty is what Wieman means by the “grace of God.”\*

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## ii. Divine love and justice

Wieman's interpretation of the love of God grows out of his doctrine of the creativity of God. As we have seen, God is the growth of connection between sensitive organisms, all the way from cells and plant spores to human personalities and groups. He is that creative interaction from which originates all the richness of experience, as well as personality and society. So as human personalities we are both originally and continuously generated by God's creativity. God's love is this creativity.†<sup>126</sup>

God's “judgment” is inseparable from his love. It is the same thing working under different conditions. God's love is the growth of connections whereby individuals and groups are brought closer together in mutual interaction. It is what we have just described as creativity. God's judgment is the “mutual destructiveness” which comes to individuals and groups as a result of their resistance to the transformation which is required by the new life of interdependence. The closer drawn the cords of love, the more destructive of one another do men become when they resist the transformation brought forth by these closer connections.‡<sup>127</sup>

## iii. Divine forgiveness

The forgiveness of God is an expression of his love. It is accomplished by God setting up conditions whereby it is possible to transform sinners despite

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\* Wieman, SHG, 50.            ‡ Wieman, Art. (1940)<sup>2</sup>,  
† Wieman, Art. (1940)<sup>2</sup>,        156.  
155.

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125. Wieman, *Source of Human Good*, p. 50: “But the actual directing toward the good and the actual achievement of it can be exercised not by any ability of man but only by the creative event when accepted as sovereign over life.”

126. Henry Nelson Wieman, “What Is Most Important in Christianity?” *Religion in the Making* 1 (1940): 153–155: “It is the growth of connections between sensitive organisms, all the way from cells and plant spores to human personalities and groups. . . . [Creative interaction] is the creative origin of all richness of experience as well as of personality and society. . . . As human personalities we are both originally and continuously generated by God's creativity. . . . God's love is this creativity.”

127. Wieman, “What Is Most Important?” p. 155: “God's ‘judgment’ or ‘wrath’ is inseparable from his love. It is, indeed, the same thing, but working under different conditions. God's love is the growth of connections whereby individuals and groups become mutually enriching members of a shared life. It is what we have just been describing as creativity. God's wrath is the mutual

15 Apr their resistance to his love. Sin is clinging to anything, or the striving after  
1955 anything, when such clinging or striving is obstructive to creative transformation.\*<sup>128</sup> Sin is anything in one's personality which resists the creativity of God. When sin is unforgiven, God cannot overcome this resistance except by destroying the individual or group which does the resisting. When sin is forgiven the resistance is still present but God can overcome it without destroying the persons who do the resisting.†<sup>129</sup>

Before this forgiveness of sin can be accomplished at least three things are required. First, creative interaction must be released from the coercive and absolute control of any one order of life or set of structures. Wieman holds that this first condition for the forgiveness of sin was partially met in the Roman Empire by the intermingling of races and the interpenetration of cultures.‡<sup>130</sup>

The second condition which has to be met in order that sins be forgiven is that a psychological, social historical process get under way which would make creativity potent and sovereign over the lives of a few (at least) so that no hope or dream, no ideal or order of existence could exercise equal control over them.§

This was accomplished by the life, crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ.<sup>131</sup> We shall discuss Wieman's conception of the death and resurrection of Christ subsequently.

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\* Wieman, SHG, 278.

† Wieman, Art. (1940)<sup>2</sup>, 150.

‡ Wieman, Art. (1940)<sup>2</sup>, 160.

§ Wieman, Art. (1940)<sup>2</sup>, 159.

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destructiveness of such individuals and groups when they are drawn closer together by these connections but resist the transformation which is required by the life of mutual enrichment within these closer bonds of interdependence. . . . The closer draw the cords of love, the more destructive of one another do men become when they resist the transformation imposed by these closer connections."

128. Wieman, "What Is Most Important?" p. 156: "God's forgiveness is accomplished by setting up conditions whereby it is possible to . . . transform sinners despite their resistance to God's love. . . . Sin is the clinging to anything, or the striving after anything, when such clinging and striving prevents one from undergoing the transformations involved in creative interaction."

129. Wieman, "What Is Most Important?" p. 150: "Sin is anything in the conduct of human living which resists the creativity of God. When sin is unforgiven, God cannot overcome this resistance except by destroying the individual or group which does the resisting. When sin is forgiven the resistance is still present but God can overcome it without destroying the individuals or groups concerned."

130. Wieman, "What Is Most Important?" p. 159: "Creative interaction between persons must be released from confinement to any one set of structures or order of life. . . . This first condition for the forgiveness of sin was partially met in the Roman Empire by the intermingling of races, the interpenetration of cultures. . . . In this way the individual and the group was somewhat released from the coercive and absolute control of any one order of life."

500 131. Wieman, "What Is Most Important?" p. 160: "This was accomplished by the life, crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ."

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A third condition which must be met before the power of God unto salvation is free to deliver men from sin is repentance. The confession and repentance of sin means three things. It means, first, to recognize that there is something deep in one's personality which does resist the transformation required for that fullness of creative interaction demanded by the connections one has with other people.\*<sup>132</sup>

Confession and repentance of sin mean, in the second place, that one shall resolve repeatedly to hold oneself subject to every transformation required by creative interaction, no matter what pain or loss such changes may involve.†<sup>133</sup>

Confession and repentance of sin mean in the third place that one must search out every habit, every object of desire, fear, hope, and dread which seems to be recalcitrant to creative interaction, and resolve that each of these shall be taken from or given to one only as creative interaction may require.<sup>134</sup> "Nothing shall be mine except as I receive it from the creativity of God. Nothing shall be held back by me when the creativity of God would take it away."‡

Whenever the three conditions stated above are met, Wieman is certain that God's forgiving power will be at work. God's forgiveness is not some static decree. Rather it is a dynamic reality working in history, in society and in each personality who meets the necessary conditions.

#### iv. The crucifixion and resurrection of Christ

Wieman looks upon the death and resurrection of Christ as indispensable events for the salvation of man. Jesus during his life developed in a small group of men a richness of creative interaction that was unique and sublime.

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\* Wieman, Art. (1940)<sup>2</sup>, 164.

† Wieman, Art. (1940)<sup>2</sup>, 164.

‡ Wieman, Art. (1940)<sup>2</sup>, 165.

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132. Wieman, "What Is Most Important?" p. 164: "There is, however, a third condition which must be met before the power of God unto salvation is free to work without limit in delivering men from that sin which is unto death. . . . The confession and repentance of sin means three things. It means, first, to recognize that my personality at depths far below the reach of consciousness at any given time is patterned and structured by an organization which does resist the transformations required for that fullness of creative interaction demanded by the connections I have with other people."

133. Wieman, "What Is Most Important?" p. 164: "Confession and repentance of sin mean, in the second place, that I shall resolve repeatedly, and with all the depths of sincerity that is in me, to hold myself subject to every transformation creative interaction may require, no matter what pain, death or loss such changes may involve."

134. Wieman, "What Is Most Important?" p. 165: "Confession and repentance of sin mean in the third place that I shall search out every habit, every object of desire, fear, hope and dread, that I can at all suspect to be recalcitrant to creative interaction, and resolve that each one shall be taken from me or given to me, according as creative interaction may require."

15 Apr 1955 So long as Jesus lived, however, this creative interaction never broke free of the established patterns of the Hebrew tradition. The followers of Jesus continued to dream and hope that he would establish an earthly kingdom as Hebrew tradition prescribed.<sup>135</sup>

The crucifixion cracked this structure of existence and possibility. It did this by destroying the hope of the disciples, and even temporarily destroying the creative interaction which they had had in fellowship with one another when Jesus was with them. With the crucifixion Jesus failed them utterly. They had hoped that he was the messiah. But he died miserably upon a cross and was wholly unable to do what their Hebrew way of life prescribed for him. The hopes and dreams of the disciples all disappeared in the black-out of the crucifixion.<sup>136</sup>

But after the despair had lasted for about three days, something miraculous happened. The life-transforming creativity which Jesus had engendered among them came back.<sup>137</sup> It had risen from the dead.

But what rose from the dead was not the man Jesus; it was creative power. It was the living God that works in time. It was the Second Person of the Trinity. It was Christ the God, not Jesus the man.\*

Who is this Christ that rose from the dead? As we have seen, he is not merely the man Jesus. "Christ is the domination by the creative event over the life of man in a fellowship made continuous in history."† Through this domination Christ is the revelation of God to man, and the salvation of the world.‡<sup>138</sup>

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\* Wieman, SHG, 44.

† Wieman, SHG, 269.

‡ Wieman, SHG, 269.

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135. Wieman, "What Is Most Important?" p. 160: "Jesus during his life developed in a small group a height and depth and richness of creative interaction that was unique. . . . It never broke free of the established patterns of their Hebrew heritage as long as Jesus lived. They continued to dream and hope that Jesus would establish a kingdom . . . as Hebrew tradition prescribed."

136. Wieman, "What Is Most Important?" pp. 160–161: "The crucifixion cracked this structure of existence and possibility. . . . It did this by destroying their hope and even, for a little while, the creative interaction which they had had in fellowship with one another when Jesus was with them. With the crucifixion Jesus failed them utterly. They had hoped that he was the messiah. But he died miserably upon a cross and was wholly unable to do what their Hebrew way of life prescribed for him. . . . The hope of Israel . . . all disappeared in the black-out of the crucifixion."

137. Wieman, "What Is Most Important?" p. 161: "But after the numbness and the despair had lasted for about three days, a miracle happened. That kind of interaction which Jesus had engendered among them came back."

138. Wieman, *Source of Human Good*, p. 269: "Through this domination Christ is the revelation of God to man, the forgiveness of sin extended to all men, and the salvation of the world."

## Chapter V

### A COMPARISON AND EVALUATION OF THE CONCEPTIONS OF GOD IN THE THINKING OF WIEMAN AND TILLICH

We turn now to a discussion of the basic problem of this dissertation, viz., comparing and evaluating the conceptions of God in the thinking of Wieman and Tillich. Up to this point we have attempted to interpret the conceptions of God held by Wieman and Tillich separately, without any mention of their points of agreement or disagreement. Now we will look at their conceptions of God together, with a view of determining their convergent and divergent points.

We shall see as the discussion develops that Wieman and Tillich have much more in common than is ordinarily supposed. It has been a not too infrequent tendency to group Wieman with the naturalistic thinkers and Tillich with the neo-supernaturalistic thinkers. As we have seen, even Wieman himself attaches the neo-supernaturalist tag to Tillich. In *The Growth of Religion*, Wieman grouped Barth, Brunner, Niebuhr, and Tillich together as neo-supernaturalists. A close analysis of Tillich, however, will reveal that he cannot so easily be grouped with the neo-supernaturalists. There is much in his thinking that smacks of religious naturalism. His opposition to supernaturalism is much more pronounced than his opposition to naturalism. He is forever revolting against the view that there is a world behind the world.

Yet despite these similarities between Wieman and Tillich which are often overlooked, we must recognize that there are important differences between the two. Any adequate comparison of Wieman and Tillich will recognize their differences along with their points of concurrence.

#### 1. God's existence

One of the basic points at which Tillich and Wieman concur is in affirming that God is an undeniable reality. Both are so convinced of the reality of God that they would dismiss all arguments for the existence of God as futile and invalid. As we have seen, Tillich contends that theologians and philosophers should have said something about the ontological implications of finitude rather than present elaborate arguments for the existence of God. "The arguments for the existence of God," contends Tillich, "neither are arguments nor are they proof of the existence of God. They are expressions of the question of God which is implied in human finitude."\* In a similar vein Wieman affirms the futility of the traditional arguments. He says: "No one has less

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\* Tillich, ST, I, 205.

15 Apr interest than I in trying to prove the existence of God. . . . I hold such procedure folly.”\*  
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Although Tillich and Wieman agree in the assertion that all arguments for the existence of God are invalid, they differ in reasons given for the invalidity of these arguments. Wieman thinks that the existence of God is as certain as any reality in the physical world; this God is capable of being perceived through the senses. Hence any attempt to prove the existence of God is as futile as attempting to prove the existence of the physical world or the people about us. Wieman laconically states: “All the traditional arguments to prove the existence of God are as much out of place in religion as arguments to prove the existence of nature would be in science.”†

On the other hand, Tillich finds the traditional arguments invalid because of his contention that God transcends the category of existence. To say “God exists” is, for Tillich, the basest blasphemy. “It is as atheistic to affirm the existence of God,” asserts Tillich, “as it is to deny it.”‡ Tillich feels that it would be a great victory for Christian apologetics if the words “God” and “existence” were very definitely separated. God does not exist. He transcends the categories of essence and existence. Therefore, to argue that God exists, affirms Tillich, is to deny him.§<sup>1</sup>

Wieman is far more willing to apply the term existence to God than Tillich. Wieman never wearies of pointing out that God exists. Tillich’s insistence that God transcends the category of existence grows out of his basic conviction that God is being-itself. This means that God is not a being, not even the most powerful or most perfect being. All discussions of the existence of God start out with the assumption that God is something or someone, i.e. a being. But this objectification or “thingification” of God, asserts Tillich, is blasphemy.<sup>2</sup>

So Tillich finds it necessary to say “God does not exist” because his ontological analysis leads him to define God as being-itself. Wieman, on the other hand, finds it necessary to say “God exists” because his naturalistic position leads him to define God as the creative event within nature. However, at bottom Tillich and Wieman are seeking to convey the same idea, viz., that the reality of God is an indubitable certainty. They are seeking to lift the question of God out of the arena of debate.

There is a further point at which Tillich and Wieman seem to be in agree-

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\* Wieman, Art. (1932)<sup>3</sup>, 284.

84. ‡ Tillich, ST, I, 237.

† Wieman, Art. (1932)<sup>3</sup>, § Tillich, ST, I, 205.

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1. King used the quotation from *Systematic Theology*, p. 237 in chapter 3. The next four sentences also appear in chapter 3, but as part of a larger quotation from Tillich. Cf. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 205: “It would be a great victory for Christian apologetics if the words ‘God’ and ‘existence’ were very definitely separated except in the paradox of God becoming manifest under the conditions of existence, that is, in the christological paradox. God does not exist. He is being-itself beyond essence and existence. Therefore, to argue that God exists is to deny him.”

2. This paragraph is similar to a passage in chapter 3; see p. 407 in this volume.

ment on the question of God's existence. Both seek to assure the reality of God through the definition of God. As we have seen, Wieman seeks "so to formulate the idea of God that the question of God's existence becomes a dead issue, like the question of the other inescapable forms of initial existence."\* To accomplish this he has offered as a "minimal" definition of God the following: "God is that something upon which human life is most dependent for its security, welfare, and increasing abundance . . . that something of supreme value which constitutes the most important conditions."† If God be defined as supreme value or as that process which underlies and makes possible the maximum achievement of value, then the fact of his existence is "inescapable," he feels. "The best there is and can be . . . is a self-proving proposition."‡ So Wieman feels that just as it is folly to attempt to prove the existence of nature to natural creatures, or the United States to its citizens, it is equal folly to try to prove to human beings, whose essential nature consists in seeking, adoring, and serving whatever has greatest value, that there is something which has greatest value. He says: "Never in any of my writings have I tried to prove the existence of God except by definition."§ So Wieman is confident that he has solved the problem of proving God's existence by a definition.

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Like Wieman, Tillich seeks through his definition of God to assure the reality of God and make it virtually impossible to deny him. Tillich's position at this point is clearly set forth in the following statement:

The name of this infinite and inexhaustible depth and ground of all being is God. This is what the word God means. . . . If you know that God means depth then you know much about him. You cannot then call yourselves atheists or unbelievers. For you cannot think and say: "There is no depth in life! Life itself is shallow. Being itself is surface." Only if you could say this in complete seriousness you would be atheists—otherwise not.||

Thus Tillich, like Wieman, is seeking so to formulate the idea of God that the question of God's existence becomes a dead issue.¶ As we have seen, Tillich's basic definition of God is "being-itself" or "power of being." God as being-itself neither needs nor can receive proof. He is that ultimate—Tillich's term is *das Unbedingte*—which is a certain quality of the world man encounters and which analysis reveals as "presupposed" in all his encountering. In other words, Tillich is seeking to say that God is presupposed in the question

\* Wieman, Art. (1932)<sup>3</sup>, 276.

† Wieman, RESM, 9.

‡ Wieman, Art. (1931)<sup>2</sup>, 171.

§ Wieman, Art. (1932)<sup>3</sup>, 284.

|| Tillich, Art. (1944)<sup>4</sup>, 320.

¶ In a very interesting article Tillich expresses definite agreement with Wie-

man's attempt to make the question of God's existence a dead issue. Tillich feels that such an approach is in line with the ontological method of the philosophy of religion, the method which he (Tillich) feels is most adequate. Tillich states: "If the idea of God is to be formulated in such a way that the

question of God's existence becomes a dead issue" (Wieman), . . . we are in an ontological atmosphere, although the ontological approach is not clearly stated and its relation to the cosmological approach and to faith is not adequately explained." (Art. (1946)<sup>2</sup>, 9).

15 Apr of God. One cannot deny him without affirming him. God as the "power of  
1955 being," as *Seinsmachtigkeit* is the source of all power. Thus the power of thought is derived from the ground of power. So far as one has power, contends Tillich, he cannot escape God. For God as "power of being" is that power by which one doubts, feels, thinks, knows, exists.

So by defining God as "being-itself" or "power of being," Tillich has made it virtually impossible for one to deny the reality of God. Even to deny him is to affirm him, because he is the power by which the denial is made.

Wieman and Tillich are at one in seeking to define God in such a way that even the sceptic and atheist cannot deny his existence. They believe they have solved the problem of proving the reality of God by a definition.

We may raise the question at this point whether Wieman and Tillich have been successful in their endeavors to make the question of God's existence a dead issue. In criticising Wieman's general procedure at this point, Macintosh suggests that an easy way to prove the existence of God to the satisfaction of everyone, is to reduce the definition of the term until everyone, even the confessed atheist will have to admit his existence. Macintosh questions this procedure on the ground that it gains assurance that God is by drastically subtracting from what God means.\*<sup>3</sup>

This criticism is basically sound, and it applies to Tillich's procedure as well as Wieman's. Both Wieman and Tillich, in their attempt to formulate the idea of God so as to make the question of God's existence a dead issue, have given up much that is most essential from the religious point of view in the idea of God. As we shall see subsequently, both Tillich and Wieman reject the conception of a personal God, and with this goes a rejection of the rationality, goodness and love of God in the full sense of the words. An impersonal "being-itself" or "creative event" cannot be rational or good, for these are attributes of personality.

It seems that in the Christian message, "God" means "a being," not "being-itself." He is of course, not a being "alongside" others, but He is a being "above others." Therefore "existence" can be predicated of Him, though not the contingent finite existence of His creatures. He is not merely "the ground of everything personal"; He is personal Himself.<sup>4</sup>

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\* Macintosh, Art. (1932),  
24.

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3. D. C. Macintosh, "Is There a God?" in Morrison, ed., *Is There a God?* pp. 22-23: "Eager to demonstrate the existence of God to the satisfaction of everybody, one might begin by reducing the definition of God until the term means no more, to begin with, than everyone, even the confessed atheist, will have to admit to exist. . . . What I question . . . is his adding to the assurance *that God is* by subtracting so drastically and, it would seem, so permanently, from *what God means*."

4. Thomas, "Method and Structure," p. 104: "It seems to me that in the Christian message, 'God' means 'a being,' not 'being-itself.' He is, of course, not a being 'alongside' others, but He *is* a being 'above others.' Therefore 'existence' *can* be predicated of Him, though not the contingent finite existence of His creatures. . . . He is not merely 'the ground of everything personal'; He *is* personal Himself."

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Moreover, the Christian God is not merely an impersonal process within nature. He is a personal being above nature, forever giving meaning and direction to process. If this is the Christian view, it is clear that Tillich's and Wieman's statement of it has been weakened at points by their attempt to make the question of God's existence a dead issue. Both Wieman and Tillich sacrifice too much for the sake of getting rid of a troublesome question.

Another question that we must raise at this point is the accuracy of making the question of "proof" of God's existence irrelevant by definition. In this procedure both Wieman and Tillich, whether they realize it or not, are employing a version of the ontological argument. This raises the perennial question whether the being of anything can be "proved" by definition, by the refinement of a concept.

It must be pointed out that the versions of the ontological argument set forth by Tillich and Wieman are quite different from the Anselmic version of the ontological argument. Anselm sought to prove the existence of the being with the richest conceivable attributes, while Wieman and Tillich seek to prove by definition "a being of minimum specifications." In other words, Anselm sought to prove the existence of God by a definition with maximum specification of attributes, while Tillich and Wieman seek to prove the reality of God by definitions with minimum specifications. In all three cases, however, the reality of God is involved in the definition of God, and hence is a necessary truth of reason. So Tillich's and Wieman's versions of the ontological argument present some of the same difficulties that men like Thomas Aquinas and Immanuel Kant found in the Anselmic version.

## 2. The personality of God

Tillich and Wieman are in one accord in denying the category of personality to God. They feel that to refer to God as a person is to limit him. Both would agree that "God towers in unique majesty infinitely above the little hills which we call minds and personalities."\*

They differ somewhat, however, in the reasons given for objecting to the claim of a personal God. The basic reason for Wieman's objection is to be found in his general naturalistic and empiricistic positions. We have seen that, for Wieman, the basic things in the world are events, happenings, or processes. There is nothing transcending or undergirding events. Everything that exists is either an event, an aspect of an event, or a relation between or within events. This means that God must be found in the natural order. Like everything else that exists, God is a material being, a process with an enduring structure which distinguishes his character from that of other processes.<sup>5</sup> God

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\* Wieman, *Art.* (1936)<sup>2</sup>, 432.

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5. The previous five sentences also appear in chapter 4; see pp. 462-463 in this volume.

15 Apr 1955 is the "creative event" within nature rather than the "creative event" above nature. There is not the slightest empirical evidence, contends Wieman, that God as the creative event within nature is personal in character. Empirical observation reveals that personality is limited to creatures.

Wieman feels that it is much more empirical to refer to God as process than as personality. Throughout his definitions of God there is the persistent affirmation that God belongs to the category of process. He refers to God as an "integrating process,"\* an "interaction,"† a "pattern of behavior,"‡ and the "creative event."§ In each of these definitions, Wieman is seeking to say that God is not a concrete object; he is a process in which concrete objects affect one another; he is an event, not a continuing entity. So Wieman is certain that empirical observation points more to process and interaction as the basic character of the "creative event" than to personality.

Tillich's objection to the claim of a personal God, unlike Wieman's, grows out of his general ontological analysis. This leads him to affirm that personality is a characteristic of beings, not of being-itself. Personality might be applied to being-itself in a symbolic sense, meaning that God is the ground of everything personal, but never can it be applied to him in a literal sense. Being-itself transcends the categories of finitude, and is prior to the split of subject and object. To speak of God as a person would mean making him an object besides other objects, a being among beings, maybe the highest, but anyhow a being.<sup>6</sup> But to objectify God in such a sense is, for Tillich, the basest blasphemy.

Tillich's objection to the conception of a personal God does not lead him to affirm with Wieman that God is process. Tillich feels that a God who is merely process is as limited as a God who is merely a person. God as being-itself is infinitely more than process or interaction.

It is interesting to note that Wieman and Tillich concur on the point that God is not impersonal. The fact that they deny that God is personal does not mean, for them, that God is impersonal. Wieman insists that God responds to personal adjustments in a "personal" manner, and that his nature must be so conceived that it accounts for the existence of personality.|| Tillich, in a similar vein, insists that God is the ground of everything personal and that he carries within himself the ontological power of personality.#<sup>7</sup> Because of this, God can-

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\* Wieman, MPRL, 22, 46, 47.

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‡ Wieman, WRT, 62.

† Wieman, Art. (1932)<sup>3</sup>.

§ Wieman, SHG, 58f.

|| Wieman, GOR,

359-362.

# Tillich, ST, I, 245.

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6. This sentence also appears in chapter 3, but as part of a quotation from Tillich. Cf. Tillich, "Idea of the Personal God," p. 9: "The concept of a 'Personal God,' . . . makes God a natural object besides others, an object amongst objects, a being amongst beings, maybe the highest, but anyhow *a* being."

7. This sentence also appears in chapter 3, but as part of a quotation from Tillich. Cf. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 245: "It means that God is the ground of everything personal and that he carries within himself the ontological power of personality."

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not be impersonal. In brief, Wieman and Tillich are certain that God is not sub-personal but supra-personal. Therefore they use the personal pronoun in referring to God, being at the same time conscious of its inadequacy.\*<sup>8</sup>

In spite of their insistence that the idea of a personal God is confusing, Tillich and Wieman agree that the symbol is of vital importance for religious worship. Wieman says that "the mythical symbol of person or personality may be indispensable for the practice of worship and personal devotion to the creative power, this need arising out of the very nature of creative interaction. . . ."† Tillich finds the symbol of a personal God indispensable for living religion, if for no other reason than that, as the philosopher Schelling says, "only a person can heal a person."<sup>9</sup> He further contends that this kind of symbolism must be maintained against pantheistic and naturalistic criticism, lest religion fall back to the level of a primitive-demonic pre-personalism.‡

It must be pointed out that Tillich and Wieman use the word "symbol" in a somewhat different sense. Wieman uses symbol to mean little more than a sign. It is the creation of a subjective desire. Tillich, on the other hand, insists that a symbol is more than a technical sign. The basic characteristic of the symbol is its innate power. The genuine symbol participates in the reality of that which it symbolizes. Moreover, true symbols indicate something about the nature of God, but that indication is never precise, unambiguous, literal. So when Tillich speaks of personality as a symbolic expression of God's nature, he is sure that here is an implicit indication of the nature of God.

Several points require comment.

1. How sound is Wieman's view that God is process instead of personality? Wieman sees God as unifying activity seeking to bring about an organic unity as yet very incompletely actualized. This means that there is a gap between actual existence and unrealized possibility, between timeless forms and fluent process. Now this gap must be filled by God if he is properly performing his unifying activity. But in order to fill the gap, God must transcend the process and yet be active and actual. In other words, in order for God to perform his unifying activity, he must be more than process. He must have some unwav-

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\* Wieman, IOL, 219-230. Tillich's position at this point is clearly set forth in the following statement: "The supra-personal is not an 'It,' or more exactly, it is a 'He' as

much as it is an 'It,' and it is above both of them. But if the 'He' element is left out, the 'It,' element transforms the alleged supra-personal into a sub-personal, as it usually

happens in monism and pantheism." (Art. (1940)<sup>2</sup>, 10).

† Wieman, SHG, 267-268.

‡ See Chap. III, sec. 10.<sup>10</sup>

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8. This paragraph is similar to a passage in chapter 4; see p. 495 in this volume.

9. Tillich, "Idea of the Personal God," p. 10: "For as the philosopher Schelling says: 'Only a person can heal a person.' This is the reason that the symbol of the Personal God is indispensable for living religion."

10. See p. 445 in this volume.

15 Apr 1955     ering grasp or vision of forms not yet actualized. This means that he must transcend the flux of events.

2. Wieman speaks of God as a system of events. The question still remains, however, what it is that generates the system. What is it that stands behind the system to account for its systematic character? Wieman leaves this problem unsolved because he refuses to see God as a concrete object or entity. He has tried to get away from metaphysics by defining God as a system of interactions, but he has merely succeeded in posing the problem of accounting for the system.<sup>11</sup>

3. Tillich affirms that God is personal in the sense that he is the ground of personality. God lives in that he is the ground of life. God is good in that he is the ground of goodness. Now since it is Tillich's conviction that God as "being-itself" is the ground of all being, it logically follows from this type of thinking that God is also evil and impersonal since he is the ground of these.

4. Both Tillich and Wieman contend that God is "supra-personal." Now if this means that Deity represents a higher type of consciousness and will than that represented by human personality, it simply states what has been maintained by almost every theistic personalist. As Thomas Aquinas says: "The name person is fittingly applied to God; not, however, as it is applied to creatures, but in a more excellent way (*via eminentiae*)."\*

But it is one thing to say that personality which is in part known includes experiences which we do not yet know; and it is quite another thing to say that there is an entity of some sort which is lacking in consciousness and rationality. It is in the latter sense that Wieman and Tillich seem to speak. Such a position never reveals to us whether an unconscious "supra-personality" is better or worse than personality.

Certainly it seems more empirical to ascribe personality to God than to ascribe "supra-personality" to him. In the world of experiences the basic source of personality production and sustenance has been personality. Now when we are confronted with the fact of personality production and sustenance on a cosmic scale, why not ascribe the source to cosmic personality? It would be better by far to admit that there are difficulties with an idea we know—such as personality—than to employ a term which is practically unknown to us in our experience.

The "supra-personal" is a term without any concrete content; it is at best but a label for the unknown, and not a definable hypothesis. If we are, there-

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\* Quoted from Knudson,  
DOG, 300.

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11. Homer H. Dubs, "Religious Naturalism—An Evaluation," *Journal of Religion* 23, no. 4 (1943): 260: "If God is a system of events, we must still inquire what it is that generates this system; what it is that stands behind the system to account for its systematic character. But Wieman conceives of no such concrete object or entity. . . . He has tried to get away from metaphysics by defining God as a system of interactions; he has merely succeeded in posing the problem of accounting for that system."

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fore, to think of God, it must be either under the personal or some impersonal form. There is no third alternative. But even though this be admitted, Wieman and Tillich would still insist that personality involves limitation and so is inapplicable to God. This idea, however, rests upon a false conception of the nature of personality. It is certainly true that human personality is limited, but personality as such involves no necessary limitation. It means simply self-consciousness and self-direction. The idea of personality is so consistent with the notion of the absolute that we must say with Bowne "that complete and perfect personality can be found only in the Infinite and Absolute Being, as only in him can we find that complete and perfect selfhood and self-expression which is necessary to the fullness of personality."\* The conception of God as personal, therefore, does not imply limitation of any kind.

5. All the conclusions of Tillich and Wieman seem to point to an impersonal God. Despite their warnings that God is not less than personal, we see traits throughout their thinking that point to a God that is less than personal. Wieman's God, for instance, is an interaction, that is, a behavior process. Just as the psychological behaviorist takes man's behavior as man himself, Wieman takes God's behavior as God himself.† Thus God is not a concrete object or a continuing entity. He is a process. In short, Wieman's God is an unconscious process devoid of any true purpose.

Tillich's God is "being-itself" or the "power of being." But "being-itself," as we have seen, is little more than a sub-personal reservoir of power, somewhat akin to the impersonalism of Oriental Vedantism.‡ "Being-itself" suggests a pure absolute devoid of consciousness and life. Even Tillich himself unconsciously recognizes that "being-itself" is such an absolute. Concerning a living God he says:

Most of the so-called anthropomorphisms of the biblical picture of God are expressions of his character as living. His actions, his passions, his remembrances and anticipations, his suffering and joy, his personal relations and his plans—all these make him a living God and distinguish him from the pure absolute, from being-itself.§

Here Tillich is saying what we have been implying all along, viz., that "being-itself" is an impersonal absolute devoid of life.

So Wieman and Tillich conclude by choosing the less-than-personal to explain personality, purpose and meaning.

6. What can be said concerning the positive religious value of the concep-

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\* Bowne, PER, 266f.

† Cf. Morrison, Rev. (1946), 1374-1376.

‡ See Chap. III, sec. 10.<sup>12</sup>

§ Tillich, ST, I, 242.

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12. See p. 445 in this volume.

15 Apr 1955 tions of God held by Wieman and Tillich? Is it possible to worship a behavior process or an impersonal absolute? It hardly seems so. The impersonal may be an object of thought. But before thought, which is subjective activity, can pass into worship, which is a process of communion and intercourse between living minds, the impersonal must be personalized.<sup>13</sup>

The religious man has always recognized two fundamental religious values. One is fellowship with God, the other is trust in his goodness.\* Both of these imply the personality of God. No fellowship is possible without freedom and intelligence. There may be interactions between impersonal beings, but not fellowship. True fellowship and communion can exist only between beings who know each other and take a volitional attitude toward each other. If God is a mere "interaction" or "process" as Wieman would say, or merely "being-itself" as Tillich would say, no communion with him would be possible. Fellowship requires an outgoing of will and feeling. This is what the Scripture means when it refers to God as the "living" God. Life as applied to God means that in God there is feeling and will, responsive to the deepest yearnings of the human heart; this God both evokes and answers prayer.<sup>14</sup>

It may be true that on the impersonal plane religion seeks union with the Divine Being.<sup>15</sup> But this type of union is vastly different from that of personal beings. As Knudson has so well put it:

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\* See Knudson, DOG, 304-308.

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13. Andrew Martin Fairbairn, *The Philosophy of the Christian Religion* (New York: Macmillan, 1902), p. 241: "No impersonal Being whether named fate or chance, necessity or existence, the soul or the whole, can be an object of worship, though it may be an object of thought. . . . The impersonal must be personalized before thought, which is a subjective activity, can pass into worship, which is a reciprocal action, or a process of converse and intercourse between living minds."

14. Albert C. Knudson, *The Doctrine of God* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1930), pp. 305-306: "There are two fundamental religious values. One is fellowship with God, the other is trust in his goodness; and both of these imply his personality. No fellowship is possible without freedom and intelligence. There may be interactions between impersonal beings, both organic and inorganic. But true communion can exist only between beings who know each other and take an emotional and volitional attitude toward each other. If God were pure intellect, as Aristotle conceived him to be, no communion with him would be possible. . . . Fellowship . . . requires an outgoing of feeling and will. This it is that underlies the moving word of Scripture, the 'living' God. Life, as applied to God, . . . means that in God there are a heart and will, responsive to human need, an attitude of mind that both evokes and answers prayer." In the early 1960s King used similar language in describing how his religious beliefs had changed during his years of civil rights activism; see King, *Strength to Love* (New York: Harper, 1963), pp. 141-142: "In the past the idea of a personal God was little more than a metaphysical category that I found theologically and philosophically satisfying. Now it is a living reality that has been validated in the experiences of everyday life. God has been profoundly real to me in recent years. . . . So in the truest sense of the Word, God is a living God. In him there is feeling and will, responsive to the deepest yearnings of the human heart: *this* God both evokes and answers prayer."

512 15. Knudson, *Doctrine of God*, p. 307: "Even on the impersonal plane religion seeks union with the Divine Being."

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There is a vast difference between a mystical, metaphysical union with an impersonal Being and the kind of union with the Divine taught us in Scripture. Here we have to do not with the union of absorption, but with a union that grows out of reciprocal intercourse, a union of heart and will and intellect; and such a union is possible only between personal beings. Only the personality of God makes possible the union of communion with him.\*

God's personality is also the presupposition of his goodness. There can be no goodness in the true ethical sense without freedom and intelligence. Only a personal being can be good. Wieman talks a great deal about the goodness of God and so does Tillich to a lesser extent; but this is goodness in an abstract impersonal sense, not in a genuine ethical sense. Goodness in the true sense of the word is an attribute of personality.<sup>16</sup>

The same is true of love. Outside of personality love loses its meaning. Tillich speaks of God as being love. But it is not love in the full sense of the word. Love, for Tillich, is just the dialectical union of opposites. Tillich's use of the word love is hardly different from the meaning given it by Empedocles, who meant by "love" no more than the attraction of the elements for one another.†

Wieman writes a great deal about the need for loving God. But we may ask, How can one truly love an interaction? Wieman would reply that it is always an interaction that we love. He affirms: "When I love Mr. Jones it is not Mr. Jones in the abstract, but the fellowship of Mr. Jones. Fellowship is a kind of interaction. . . . It is the interaction which generates love and is the real object of love."‡ Now it is certainly true that the interaction generates the love, but it does not follow from this that we love interactions. What we love deeply is persons—we love concrete objects, persistent realities, not mere interactions. A process may generate love, but the love is directed primarily not toward the process, but toward the continuing persons who generate that process.<sup>18</sup> In the words of H. H. Dubbs,

If God is to really be worthy of love, he must be more than a system of interactions—he must be an object, an enduring object, who can enter into interactions. A God who is merely interactions cannot really be love, so that religious devotion cannot attach to him.§

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\* Knudson, *DOG*, 307. 17, 18.

† See Chap. III, sec. 10.<sup>17</sup> § Dubbs, *Art.* (1943),

‡ Wieman, *Art.* (1932)<sup>3</sup>, 260.

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16. Knudson, *Doctrine of God*, p. 307: "His personality is also the presupposition of his goodness. There can be no goodness in the ethical sense of the term without freedom and intelligence. In other words, only a personal being can be good. . . . Goodness is an attribute of personality."

17. See p. 445 in this volume.

18. Dubbs, "Religious Naturalism—An Evaluation," p. 260: "[According to Wieman] we can deal only with interactions or systems of interactions: 'When I love Mr. Jones, it is not Mr. Jones in the abstract, but the fellowship of Mr. Jones. Fellowship is a kind of interaction. . . . It is the interaction which generates love and is the real object of love.' Of course, the interaction gener-

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So we must conclude that Tillich's "being-itself" and Wieman's "creative event" are lacking in positive religious value. Both concepts are too impersonal to express adequately the Christian conception of God. They provide neither the conditions for true fellowship with God nor the assurance of his goodness.

### 3. The transcendence and immanence of God

In a very real sense Wieman may be referred to as a prophet of God's immanence. He never wearies of pointing out that God is within nature. This emphasis grows out of his basic naturalistic position. As we have seen, Wieman holds that there is nothing more fundamental or elemental than events. Everything that exists is either an event, an aspect of an event, or a relation between or within events. This means that there are no floating transcendental principles which explain the world in terms of something outside the world. Principles, descriptions, and explanations refer to events and their relations (structures).\*

Like everything else that exists, God is found within the natural order. Whatever may be his several other attributes, his transcendence is not of the noumenal or completely independent variety. Whatever transcendence he has will be seen to arise out of his very immanence in the world of events.<sup>20</sup>

Tillich's thought at this point has often been considered the direct antithesis of Wieman's. He has been interpreted as a neo-supernaturalist, who affirms that God is above, before, and behind nature. As we have seen, Wieman himself so interprets Tillich's thought. But a close scrutiny of Tillich's view in this respect reveals that he is probably as near the naturalistic position as he is to the supernaturalistic. Tillich is forever revolting against the view that there is a world behind the world. His aversion for supernaturalism is clearly brought out in the following passage in which he answers Wieman's claim that he is a supernaturalist:

With respect to myself, I only need point to practically all my writings and their fight against the "side by side" theology even if it appears in the disguise of a "super." The Unconditioned is a qualification of the conditioned, of the world

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\* See Chap. IV, sec. 1.<sup>19</sup>

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ates the love, but I am afraid Wieman errs when he asserts that we always love interactions. . . . No, what we love deeply is not these memories or expectations, it is the person who brings them about—we love concrete objects, persistent realities, not mere interactions. . . . A process may generate love, but the love is directed primarily not toward the process, but toward the continuing persons (concrete objects) who generate that process." First set of ellipses in original.

19. See p. 451 in this volume.

514 20. This paragraph also appears in chapter 4; see p. 463 in this volume.

and the natural, by which the conditioned is affirmed and denied at the same time.\*

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In other words, Tillich is saying that in no sense can he be labeled a supernaturalist. He is convinced that the Divine does not inhabit a transcendent world above nature; it is found in the “ecstatic” character of this world as its transcendent depth and ground.<sup>21</sup>

God’s immanence is also expressed in the fact that everything finite participates in being itself and in infinity. If this were not the case, everything finite would be swallowed by non-being, or it never would have emerged out of non-being. So in a sense Tillich is as zealous to preserve the immanence of God as Wieman.

But this is only one side of Tillich’s thought at this point. His desire to protect the majesty of God and his complex ontological analysis cause him to stress the transcendence of God as much as his immanence. Indeed, at times Tillich seems to stress the transcendence more than the immanence. It is at this point that Tillich goes beyond Wieman, for Wieman is more impressed with the immanence of God than the transcendence.

Tillich finds a basis for God’s transcendence in the conception of God as abyss. God is transcendent in the sense that he, as the abyss of being, transcends every being and also the totality of beings—the world. God is beyond finitude and infinity, insists Tillich. “There is no proportion or gradation between the finite and the infinite. There is an absolute break, an infinite ‘jump.’”† As we have seen, the abyss is the inexhaustible depth of God’s nature. This is the unknowable side of God. In so far as God is abyss he is unapproachably holy, infinitely distant from man.<sup>22</sup>

Interestingly enough, Wieman agrees with Tillich that there is an uncomprehended element in God’s nature. Wieman speaks of “the uncomprehended reality of God’s total being.”‡ Despite his insistence that God is a knowable entity within nature, Wieman affirms that God is transcendent, “not in the sense of being wholly unknown, but in the sense of being unknown with respect to his detailed and specific nature.”§ In other words, Wieman seems to be saying that although we have some knowledge of God, we can never know his ultimate nature, i.e., his “detailed and specific nature.” Wieman is attempting to stress a functional transcendence rather than a metaphysical one.

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\* Tillich, *Rev.* (1940)<sup>3</sup>, 436.

70. § Wieman, *Art.* (1936)<sup>2</sup>,

† Tillich, *ST*, I, 237. 437.

‡ Wieman, *Art.* (1936)<sup>2</sup>,

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21. The quotation and the sentences following it also appear in chapter 1; see p. 346 in this volume.

22. This paragraph is similar to passages in chapter 3; see pp. 406 and 424 in this volume.

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So we see that Tillich and Wieman have quite a bit in common on the question of the immanence and transcendence of God. But there is a distinct difference in emphasis. Wieman's attempt to be a thoroughgoing empiricist and naturalist causes him to stress the immanence of God much more than the transcendence. On the other hand, Tillich's desire to protect the majesty of God causes him to stress the transcendence of God much more than his immanence. This emphasis is so strong in Tillich's thinking that he goes to the extreme of saying that it is the abyss that makes God God. This is his way of saying that it is God's transcendence rather than his immanence that makes him God.

Whenever Wieman and Tillich stress the immanence of God, they must be commended. Such an emphasis sounds a much needed note in the face of a supernaturalism that finds nature so irrational that the order of creation can no longer be discerned in it, and history so meaningless that it all bears the "minus sign" of alienation from God.<sup>23</sup> The emphasis comes as a necessary corrective to a supernaturalism that has overstressed the transcendence of God.

However, there is always the danger that in revolting against any extreme view one will go the opposite extreme, failing to see the partial value inherent in the former. It is possible, for instance, so to stress the immanence of God that the truth in the doctrine of the divine transcendence will be completely overlooked. This is what happens in the case of Wieman. In his attempt to confront modern skepticism with a God who is immanent in nature, Wieman leaves out many basic Christian principles that are preserved in the doctrine of transcendence. God cannot be reduced to natural processes, because he is the ground and creator of the natural order. To make God merely a process in nature is to rob him of his divinity. If God is to be truly God, he must be more than a behavior process; he must, in some sense, be above and before nature. Wieman fails to affirm this because of his bias toward a naturalistic philosophy which is alien to the spirit of Christianity.

There is an unnecessary ambiguity in Tillich's thought concerning the transcendence and immanence of God. On the one hand he speaks as a religious naturalist making God wholly immanent in nature. On the other hand he speaks as an extreme supernaturalist making God almost comparable to the Barthian "wholly other." In other words Tillich seems to stress the absolute immanence of God on the one hand and the absolute transcendence of God on the other. But it is hardly possible to reconcile these two views. If God is absolutely immanent he cannot be absolutely transcendent, and conversely, if he is absolutely transcendent he cannot be absolutely immanent. Even Tillich's dialectical principle cannot come to his aid at this point because the presupposition of the dialectical principle is that there is a point of contact between the "yes" and "no." Tillich himself realizes this. In one of his most succinct criticisms of Barth, Tillich writes: "A dialectic theology is one in which 'yes'

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23. Horton, "Tillich's Role in Contemporary Theology," p. 30: "[Barth and Gogarten] find nature so irrational that the order of creation can no longer be discerned in it, man's spirit so perverted that the image of God is lost, history so meaningless that it all bears the 'minus sign' of alienation from God."

and 'no' belong inseparably together. In the so-called 'dialectic' theology they are irreconcilably separated, and that is why this theology is not dialectic."\*<sup>24</sup> The dialectical principle, which balances the "yes" of God's immanence with the "no" of his transcendence, is totally disrupted when either the "yes" or the "no" is considered exclusive or absolute.

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The basic weakness of Tillich at this point is that he fails to maintain the tension between the transcendence and immanence of God which is necessary for a meaningful theistic position. God must be both "in" and "beyond" the world. If he is absolutely beyond, then he is not in; if absolutely in, then not beyond; but remove the absolutely, and he may be both. The doctrines of transcendence and immanence are both half-truths in need of the tension of each other to give the more inclusive truth.

#### 4. The super-human character of God

Tillich and Wieman have at the forefront of their thinking a deep theocentric concern. Both are convinced that God is the most significant Fact in the universe. However much they disagree on the nature of God, they are at one in affirming the significance of God. Both are convinced that man's ultimate devotion is due to God and God alone. Tillich expresses this idea in the assertion that God is what ultimately concerns us. This ultimate concern is the abstract translation of the great commandment: "The Lord, our God, the Lord is one; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your mind, and with all your strength."† This ultimate concern is unconditional, total and infinite. For any preliminary concern to be elevated to ultimacy, is for Tillich, the height of idolatry. It is also the source of many tragedies. When something essentially partial is boosted into universality, and something essentially finite is given infinite significance, almost anything can occur.‡<sup>25</sup> Only God warrants man's ultimate concern.

Like Tillich, Wieman feels that nothing should be placed before God. He contends that man should give himself, all that he is and all that he desires, all that he possesses and all that is dear to him, into the control of creative good to be transformed in any way that it may require.§ He is convinced that

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\* Tillich, Art. (1935)<sup>1</sup>, 127.                      temporary idolatry of religious nationalism as an example.  
 † Tillich, ST, I, 11.  
 ‡ Tillich uses the con-                      § Wieman, SHG, 80.

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24. Horton introduced this quotation with the phrase "Tillich's most succinct criticism of Barth runs as follows" ("Tillich's Role in Contemporary Theology," p. 29).

25. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 13: "Idolatry is the elevation of a preliminary concern to ultimacy. Something essentially conditioned is taken as unconditional, something essentially partial is boosted into universality, and something essentially finite is given infinite significance (the best example is the contemporary idolatry of religious nationalism)."

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the chief tragedies that befall man and his historic existence stem from man's tendency to elevate created good to the rank of creative good (God). Just as Tillich sees the elevation of preliminary concerns to the status of ultimacy as idolatrous, Wieman sees the elevation of created good to the rank of creative good as idolatrous. Wieman feels that the best in Christianity is the reversing of the order of domination in the life of man from domination of human concern by created good over to domination by creative good (God).<sup>\*26</sup> So Wieman's emphasis, like Tillich's, is theocentric throughout.

This theocentric concern leads Tillich and Wieman to the further assertion that God is not man. Both are averse to anything that smacks of humanism. As we have seen, Tillich's ontological analysis leads him to affirm that God must not be confused with man in any sense. God as being-itself infinitely transcends all beings. He is not a being, not even a "highest being" or a "most perfect" being. He is the power of being in everything that has being.†

This idea is more concisely expressed in the assertion that God is the unconditional. The unconditional is not a section of reality; it is not an object among objects. The unconditional transcends the distinction between subject and object. Instead of God being an object for us as subjects, he is the prius of the separation into subject and object, that which precedes the division. As we have seen in the earlier part of the discussion, this prius of separation is not a person. It is power, power of being.<sup>28</sup>

All of this is Tillich's way of saying that God infinitely transcends human existence. He is convinced that there is a qualitative distinction between God and man.

Wieman, like Tillich, never wearies of pointing out that God is super-human. It is probably no exaggeration to say that Wieman's objectivistic, realistic, theocentric trend developed in opposition to religious humanism. He feels that the deification of man is the pitiable absurdity man has ever perpetrated. He is convinced that the work of God is totally difference from the work of man. The difference is not merely of degree or magnitude. It is a difference of kind.‡ So Wieman, like Tillich, sees a qualitative difference be-

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<p>* Wieman, SHG, 25, 26. † See Chap. III, sec. 2.<sup>27</sup> ‡ This is one of the points at which Wieman is unalterably opposed to Dewey. Man is regarded</p>	<p>by Wieman as a passive factor in the event from which good emerges, so that it is not really man who clarifies and carries forward the ideal. It is</p>	<p>God, the creative event. Dewey, on the other hand, attributes the emergence of value to the co-working of men plus more general factors.<sup>29</sup></p>
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26. Parts of this paragraph also appear in chapter 4; see pp. 459 and 467 in this volume.

27. See p. 404 in this volume.

28. This paragraph also appears in chapter 3; see pp. 416-417 in this volume.

29. Charles Hartshorne and William L. Reese, *Philosophers Speak of God* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), p. 396: "Man is regarded by Wieman as a passive factor in the event from which good emerges so that it is not really man who clarifies, carries forward, and implements the ideal; this is the function of God or creativity. Where Dewey would attribute the emergence of value to the co-working of men plus more general factors, Wieman would say that this emergence is the work of God."

tween God and man. God operates in ways over and above the plans and purposes of man, and often develops connections of mutual support and mutual meaning in spite of or contrary to the efforts of men.<sup>30</sup>

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For all that Wieman and Tillich have said about the primacy of God over everything else in the universe, we have nothing but praise. In spite of the fact that we have found it necessary to raise some questions as to the adequacy of their conceptions of God to speak to the deepest yearnings of the religious soul, we do not in the least want to minimize the importance of their messages as a cry against the humanism of our generation. They do insist that religion begins with God and that man cannot have faith apart from him. They do proclaim that apart from God our human efforts turn to ashes and our sunrises into darkest night. They do suggest that man is not sufficient to himself for life, but is dependent upon God. All of this is good, and it may be a necessary corrective to a generation that has had all too much faith in man and all too little faith in God.<sup>31</sup>

### 5. The power and knowledge of God.

Tillich places a great deal of emphasis on the omnipotence of God. He continually speaks of God as the power of being. The one word that stands in the forefront of Tillich's God-concept is the word power. Power is that which makes God God. God is the underlying "ground" or "power" behind everything that exists. God as power of being resists and conquers non-being. It is because of this power to resist non-being that God warrants man's ultimate concern. As we have seen, Tillich does not mean by omnipotence that God has the power to do anything he wishes. Nor does it mean omni-activity in terms of causality. Omnipotence means, rather, "the power of being which resists nonbeing in all its expressions."\*<sup>32</sup>

Unlike Tillich, Wieman places little emphasis on the power of God. As we

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\* Tillich, ST, I, 273. In spite of his persistent stress on the power of God, Tillich places considerable limitation on God's power in his conception of God as "abyss". There is a

basic ambiguity in Tillich's thought at this point. This ambiguity is found in the fact that Tillich's language and method suggest an extreme absolutistic theism, while his conception

of God as "abyss" suggests finitistic theism. This phase of Tillich's thought will be discussed and evaluated in the section on God and evil.

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30. Parts of this paragraph also appear in chapter 4; see pp. 459-460 and 462 in this volume.

31. A version of this paragraph appears in several other essays that King wrote at Boston University. See "Karl Barth's Conception of God," 2 January 1952, p. 106 in this volume; "Contemporary Continental Theology," 13 September 1951-15 January 1952, p. 138; and "A Comparison and Evaluation of the Theology of Luther with That of Calvin," 15 May 1953, p. 191. Cf. George W. Davis, "Some Theological Continuities in the Crisis Theology," *Crozer Quarterly* 27, no. 3 (July 1950): 217-218.

32. The preceding five sentences also appear in chapter 3; see p. 405 in this volume.

15 Apr shall see subsequently, Wieman is much more impressed with the goodness of  
1955 God than the power of God. He emphatically denies that God is omnipotent. If God has any power, it is the power of process or growth. Wieman writes:

Process is power. Activity is power. I do not know of any kind of power except that of process, activity, movement, growth, fulfillment, on-going. The power of God is the power of this growth.\*

Wieman considers it quite erroneous to look upon power as “back of” the process or growth, making it go from the outside. Power is one essential constituent of the process of growth, which is God.<sup>33</sup>

So Wieman would totally disagree with Tillich’s assertion that God is a sort of reservoir of power that empowers every being that comes into existence. Wieman, contrary to Tillich, emphatically denies that God is the underlying “ground” or “power” behind everything that exists. For Wieman, God is only the source of the good.

When it comes to the question of the omniscience of God, both Wieman and Tillich are at one in refuting its traditional formulation. In traditional theology omniscience is the faculty of a highest being who is supposed to know all objects, past, present and future, and beyond this, everything that might have happened if what has happened had not happened. Tillich looks upon this interpretation of omniscience as absurd because of the impossibility of subsuming God under the subject-object scheme. Wieman sees it as absurd because there is not the slightest empirical evidence for the existence of such a “highest being” who knows all objects, past, present, and future. It is Tillich’s attempt to remain true to his ontological assertion that God is being-itself that causes him to deny the omniscience of God. It is Wieman’s attempt to be a thoroughgoing empiricist that causes him to deny the omniscience of God.

Despite his concurrence with Wieman on the absurdity of the traditional doctrine of the omniscience of God, Tillich goes beyond Wieman by seeking to set forth the qualitative and symbolic meaning of the doctrine. Herein lies a great distinction between Wieman and Tillich on the attributes of God generally. Tillich, while rejecting the traditional meaning of attributes, seeks to give them a qualitative interpretation and thereby to accept them—at least symbolically. Wieman, on the other hand, finds the attributes out of harmony with his naturalistic and empiricistic views, and therefore rejects them outright. This accounts for the fact that he nowhere gives a systematic treatment to the attributes of God.

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\* Wieman, Art. (1936)<sup>2</sup>, 429.

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33. Wieman, “God Is More,” p. 429: “To speak of power as ‘back of’ the process or growth or activity, making it go from the outside, is an error, I think. . . . Power is one essential constituent of the process of growth, which is God.”

The omniscience of God means, for Tillich, that

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nothing is outside the centered unity of his life; nothing is strange, dark, hidden, isolated, unapproachable. Nothing falls outside the logos structure of being. The dynamic element cannot break the unity of the form; the abysmal quality cannot swallow the rational quality of the divine life.\*

This has tremendous implications for man's personal and cultural existence. In personal life it means that there is no absolute darkness in one's being. The divine omniscience is ultimately the logical foundation of the belief in the openness of reality to human knowledge. We are able to reach truth because the divine life in which we are rooted embodies all truth.†

We shall reserve critical comment on this phase of Wieman's and Tillich's thinking until the section on the goodness of God.

## 6. The eternity and omnipresence of God

On the questions of the eternity and omnipresence of God, Tillich again gives clearer expression than does Wieman. Here, as in other instances, Wieman's naturalism prevents him from going all of the way with Tillich. As we have seen, Tillich affirms that two interpretations of eternity must be rejected, that of timelessness, and that of endlessness of time. Rather than meaning timelessness, eternity means "the power of embracing all periods of time."‡ The eternal keeps the temporal within itself by maintaining "the transcendent unity of the dissected moments of existential time."§ There is a similarity between the eternity of God and the eternity of a mathematical proposition.

A symbolic indication of the meaning of the eternity of God may be found in human experience, in the unity of remembered past and anticipated future in an experienced present. As the present is predominant in human experience, eternity is symbolized as an eternal present. But this present is not simultaneity. Simultaneity would erase the different modes of time. The eternal present is moving from past to future but without ceasing to be present.<sup>35</sup> In this sense God is eternal in such a way that the distinctions within the flow of time are preserved. So Tillich includes within the divine life both temporality and eternity.

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\* Tillich, ST, I, 279.

† See Chap. II, sec. 8.<sup>34</sup>

‡ Tillich, ST, I, 274.

§ Tillich, ST, I, 274.

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34. Chapter II, section 8 does not exist.

35. This paragraph is similar to a paragraph in chapter 3; see p. 437 in this volume.

15 Apr 1955 Wieman's stress is on the temporality of God rather than the eternity. Indeed his idea of God has been referred to as "extreme temporalistic theism."\* His very definitions of God—"growth," "creative event" and "process"—point to something that is temporal and passing rather than eternal. An event or a process of growth is neither a continuing entity nor a persistent reality. It is something forever in a state of becoming. It is quite apparent that Wieman's characterization of God as "process" or "creative event" is due to his desire to abandon the scholastic notion of substantial being. Like Whitehead, he has preference for dynamic terminology. He seeks to stress the activity of God as against a static *ens necessarium*, absolute Being.<sup>36</sup> So, unlike Tillich, Wieman is so determined to make God a temporal reality that he almost completely overlooks his eternity.

When it comes to the question of God's omnipresence, both Tillich and Wieman are at one in denying its traditional meaning. However, Tillich goes beyond Wieman in seeking to interpret the attribute of omnipresence in qualitative terms. God is omnipresent in the sense that he creates extension out of his nature as ground and that he is the ground in which all space is rooted. Space is in God, not God in space. So Tillich concludes that God cannot be spatial, although he must be temporal.

Now a word of critical comment. Certainly Wieman and Tillich are on sound ground in affirming the temporality of God. It is often supposed that if God is nonspatial, he must be nontemporal. But this does not necessarily follow. The two categories are sufficiently different to stand on their individual footing. If God is a living God he must include temporality, and with this a relation to the modes of time.

This stress on the temporality of God, however, must not obscure the fact that there is some permanence in God's nature. Herein lies the weakness of Wieman. He stresses the temporality of God to the point of minimizing his eternity. As stated above, Wieman's characterization of God as "process" or "creative event" is due to his desire to abandon the scholastic notion of substantial being. He seeks to stress the activity of God as against a static absolute being. But this attempt to avoid one sort of abstraction, namely, one which leaves out becoming, leads directly into another, namely, one that

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\* See Hartshorne's and Reese's chapter on Wieman in PSG, 395-408.

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36. Robert Lowry Calhoun, "God as More than Mind," *Christendom* 1, no. 2 (Winter 1936): 344-345: "I welcome the evident values of this preference for 'dynamic' terminology which Wieman shares with Mead, Dewey, and Whitehead. . . . But with whatever gain there may be in their declaration of independence from the scholastic notion of substantial being, there is danger of a serious loss of precision. . . . These are terms which Wieman employs to signalize the *actuality* of God as against abstract form or ideal, and the *activity* of God as against a static *ens necessarium*, absolute Being."

leaves out that which becomes.<sup>37</sup> Tillich sees this and therefore attempts to preserve in God, at least symbolically, both dynamics and form, temporality and eternity.\*

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Wieman's temporalistic view of God comes as a proper revolt against a misconceived and one-sided substance philosophy. But his whole doctrine of God is weakened by his failure to emphasize the factor of permanence in the idea of God. The religious worshiper is in quest of a God who is not only the increaser of value, but also the conserver of value. We have seen how Wieman continually identifies God with the production or emergence of values. Production of value, we are told, is also destruction of value. New values displace old. But what happens to these displaced values? Are they simply destroyed as though they never existed? In this case all of man's objectives must in the long run prove futile.<sup>38</sup>

Wieman would probably retort that values are conserved in works of art and in many forms of conscious and unconscious memory. But what happens when human life no longer inhabits the earth? Even if we concede that the earth will be inhabitable forever—an astronomical impossibility—we still have to confront the fact that the human attention span is too limited to house, at any given human present, any appreciable proportion of the values of past generations. So without an eternal conserver of values our efforts are worthless, and no act can in the long run have better consequences than any other.†<sup>39</sup> In such a situation the rivalry of values is meaningless. In order for value-experience to be meaningful, then, there must be a God eternal enough to conserve values. God must be identified not only with the production or emergence of values, but also with the indestructibility of them.‡

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\* Cf. Calhoun, Art. (1936), 345.

† This argument can be used in favor of the doctrine of personal immortality—a doctrine which Wieman rejects. At bottom personal immortality

represents the faith that good purpose never fails to all eternity. The basis of all human endeavor is in the hope that purpose can achieve values. Without personal immortality all of our efforts are

worthless and the whole universe seems to be destructive of supreme value.

‡ Cf. Hartshorne and Reese, PSG, 404–405.

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37. Calhoun, "God as More than Mind," p. 345: "But in avoiding one sort of abstraction, namely, one which leaves out 'becoming,' they fall into another, and leave out *that* which 'becomes.'"

38. Hartshorne and Reese, *Philosophers Speak of God*, pp. 404–405: "Production of good, we are told, is also destruction of good. New goods displace old. . . . But what about the displaced goods? Are they simply nullified and as though they had never been? In that case all our specific objectives must in the long run prove vain."

39. Hartshorne and Reese, *Philosophers Speak of God*, p. 405: "Even if the earth were to be inhabitable forever—an astronomical impossibility, one gathers—or if man may hope to escape to another planet, still there just is not room, with the limitations of the human attention span, for any appreciable *proportion* of the values of past generations . . . to house themselves in the

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## 7. The goodness of God

The question of the goodness of God is one that stands in the forefront of Wieman's thinking. Tillich, as we have seen, is more impressed with the power of God. For Tillich it is power that makes God God. But, for Wieman, it is goodness or value that makes God God. These are the important words in Wieman's discussion of God. God is the "source of human good"; He is "supreme value." Says Wieman: "I maintain . . . that the basic category for God must be goodness and value."\*

Wieman contends that God is the only absolute good. As we have seen, he seeks to defend this claim by defining absolute in a fivefold sense.† First of all, absolute good refers to that which is good under all circumstances and conditions. It is good that is not relative to time or place or race or class or need or desire. It is good that remains changelessly and identically the same. A second mark of absolute good is that its demands are unlimited. God is good in this sense because he demands our wholehearted surrender. A third mark of absolute good is its infinite value. Fourth, absolute good is unqualified good. Finally, absolute good is entirely trustworthy.

God's goodness meets all these requirements. His goodness is not relative to time or place or desire or even human existence. He demands our wholehearted surrender. His worth is incommensurable with any finite quantity of created good. There is no perspective from which his goodness can be modified. God is entirely trustworthy. Wieman is certain that the outcome of the working of God will always be the best possible under the conditions, even when it may seem to be otherwise.

Wieman holds that God is supreme value because he brings lesser values into relations of maximum mutual support and mutual enhancement. This mutual support and enhancement is not only between contemporaries but also between successive generations, ages and cultures. All of this is Wieman's way of stressing the fact that God is supreme value and the only absolute God.

Tillich, like Wieman, uses the terms goodness and value in referring to God. In one passage he says:

The very fact that the one God is called "good" gives him a divine character superior to that of the evil god, for God as the expression of man's ultimate concern is supreme not only in power but also in value.‡

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\* Wieman, *Art.* (1943)<sup>3</sup>, 266.

† See Chap. IV, sec. 1.<sup>40</sup>

‡ Tillich, *ST*, I, 225.

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consciousness of any given human present. . . . It would really mean that our efforts are worthless, that no act can in the long run have better consequences than any other."

40. This paragraph, and the two following it, are condensed from passages in chapter 4; see pp. 466-468 and 477 in this volume.

In another context Tillich speaks of true being as the ultimate good.\* Yet, in spite of these passages, instances in which he refers to the goodness of God are very scanty. In his whole Systematic Theology one can hardly find a page of references in which Tillich affirms the essential goodness of God. Even when the terms goodness and value are used, they are defined in terms of being. Herein lies a basic difference between Wieman and Tillich. Wieman is basically concerned with the goodness of God. Tillich, on the other hand, is basically concerned with the power of God. Wieman's basic emphasis is axiological while Tillich's is ontological.

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Now we may give some critical comments on the questions of God's power and goodness as treated by Wieman and Tillich. In the judgement of the present writer, both Wieman and Tillich are partially correct in what they affirm and partially wrong in what they deny. Wieman is right in emphasizing the goodness of God, but wrong in minimizing his power. Likewise Tillich is right in emphasizing the power of God, but wrong in minimizing his goodness. Both Tillich and Wieman overstress one aspect of the divine nature to the neglect of another basic aspect. God is not either powerful or good; he is both powerful and good. Matthew Arnold's simple, almost trite, phrase contains the gist of the matter: God is a power, not ourselves, making for righteousness. Not power alone, nor righteousness alone, but a combination of the two constitutes the meaning of God. Value by itself is impotent; being by itself is morally indifferent. On the one hand, there is the view of Wieman which erects the idea of value as the sole ultimate principle. On the other hand, there is the view of Tillich which erects power or being-itself as the sole ultimate principle. Neither viewpoint adequately formulates the Christian doctrine of God.<sup>41</sup>

Wieman talks continually about the goodness of God. But one is forced to wonder whether Wieman's God is capable of bringing this goodness into being. As we stated above, value in itself is impotent. Hence a God devoid of power is ultimately incapable of actualizing the good. But if God is truly God and warrants man's ultimate devotion, he must have not only an infinite concern for the good but an infinite power to actualize the good. This is the truth expressed in the somewhat misleading doctrine of the divine omnipotence. It does not mean that God can do the non-doable; neither does it mean that God has the power to act contrary to his own nature. It means, rather, that God

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\* Tillich, TPE, 27.

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41. Demos, Review of *Systematic Theology*, p. 706: "Matthew Arnold's simple, almost platitudinous, phrase contains the gist of the matter: God is a power, not ourselves, making for righteousness. Not power alone, nor righteousness alone, but the blend of the two constitutes the meaning of God. Value by itself is impotent; being by itself is morally indifferent. On the one side, there is Platonism which erects the Idea of the Good (Value) as the sole ultimate principle. On the other side, there is the view of this book which erects beingness as the sole ultimate principle. Neither viewpoint adequately formulates Christian theology."

15 Apr has the power to actualize the good and realize his purpose. Moral perfection  
1955 would be an empty possession apart from a corresponding and sustaining power. It is power that gives reality to the divine being. Wieman's failure to see this causes us to doubt the adequacy of his conception of God as a meaningful theistic position.

One may well question the adequacy and significance of Tillich's statement that God is being-itself. Everybody knows that there are existing things, and if one wants to become more philosophical, one can go on and say that there is an existing ground of the existence of everything. But this is saying little more than the tautology that the universe exists. Every intelligent person admits that the universe is immense, infinite and awesome; but this does not make him a believer. What one wants to know is whether the universe is good, bad, or indifferent. It is the failure to grapple sufficiently with this question that seriously weakens Tillich's God-concept. It is true that Tillich uses the terms goodness and value, but he defines these in terms of being. To be good means to be. It will be recalled that Spinoza speaks of the perfection of the universe, but defines perfection in terms of substance. So, too, Tillich speaks of value, but defines it in terms of being. (We have noticed already that divine love is declared to be a wholly ontological concept.)<sup>42</sup>

Tillich's tendency to relegate value to an almost insignificant rank is clearly manifested in his analysis of value-categories in relation to being-itself. Structure, according to Tillich, is derived from being-itself; in turn, value is derived from structure. So to this point value is at a second remove from reality. But this is not all; value-concepts presuppose the contrast between ideal and actualities, and hence a split between essence and existence.\* In other words, value is now a third remove from reality. Value-categories are relegated to the realm of finite being.†<sup>43</sup>

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\* See Tillich, *ST*, I,  
202–204.

† Cf. Demos, *Rev.*  
(1952), 707.

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42. Demos, *Review of Systematic Theology*, pp. 706–707: "One may well question what of genuine significance there is in the author's statement that God is being-itself. Everybody knows that there are existing things, and if one wants to speak causally, one can go on and say that there is an existing ground of the existence of everything. But this essentially amounts to no more than the tautology that the universe exists. . . . All sensible people grant that the universe is grand, infinite, immense, awesome; but this does not make them believers. What one wants to know is whether the universe is good or bad or worse (i.e., morally indifferent). . . . It will be recalled that Spinoza speaks of the perfection of the universe, but defines perfection in terms of substance. So, too, our author uses the terms goodness and value (incidentally, how scanty are such references in this book!) but then defines these in terms of being. (To be good means to be; we have noticed already that divine love is declared to be a wholly ontological concept.)"

43. Demos, *Review of Systematic Theology*, p. 707: "Structure (meaning) according to the author is derived from being-itself; in turn, value is derived from structure. Thus value is at a second remove from reality. This is not all, however; value-concepts presuppose the contrast between

Tillich speaks continually of the holiness of God, but even here he is not endowing being-itself with moral perfection. The holy means the sacred, and not the righteous or the morally good.\*<sup>44</sup>

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So in almost all of Tillich's references to God it is power that stands in the forefront. In a real sense, this emphasis is dangerous, because it leads toward a worship of power for its own sake. Divine power, like any other power, can become despotic power if it is not controlled by divine goodness. In short, neither Tillich's notion of being-itself, nor any other purely ontological notion is adequate for the Christian idea of God. The latter is a synthesis of the two independent concepts of value and being.<sup>45</sup>

We have quoted above two passages in which Tillich referred to the goodness of God. These passages reveal that he is at least aware of the significance of the category of value for an adequate God-concept. But his definition of God as being-itself prevents him from affirming it. He realizes that if he refers to God as good, he thereby conditions the unconditioned, and drags God into a subject-object relationship making him a being beside others. So in order to be consistent with his ontological analysis, Tillich talks of God as being good in the sense that he is the ground of goodness. This, however, gives rise to the same criticism that was raised concerning the personal status of God. If God is good only in the sense that he is the ground of goodness, it follows that he is evil since he is the ground of evil. If the attribute of goodness means anything it must have content and it must be a quality of some rational substance. To state that God is the ground of goodness is merely an abstraction. One wishes to get behind this abstraction to an ontological substance in which the attribute of goodness inheres. So here again we see the inadequacy of Tillich's being-itself for the Christian idea of God.

To sum up, neither Tillich nor Wieman gives an adequate conception of God's nature. The former places an undue emphasis on being to the neglect of value; the latter places an undue emphasis on value to the neglect of being.

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\* See Tillich, *ST*, I,  
216–217.

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ideals and actualities, and hence a split between essence and existence; they apply in the creaturely and finite world (pp. 202–204). In other words, value is at a *third* remove from reality. Value-categories are relegated to the realm of finite being."

44. Demos, Review of *Systematic Theology*, p. 707: "Professor Tillich speaks of God as holy. . . . God is not just pure being; he is a being endowed with moral perfection. But wait: the holy means the sacred essentially; it stands in *contrast* with the 'righteous' or the 'morally good,' or with 'moral perfection' (pp. 216–217)."

45. Demos, Review of *Systematic Theology*, p. 707: "All this seems to me dangerously romantic—dangerous because it easily slips into a worship of power for its own sake. If we are to save divine power from becoming despotic power we must cling to the notion of the goodness of God as an irreducible element in his essence. To sum up, neither the Thomistic notion of complete actuality, nor the author's notion of being-itself, nor any other purely ontological notion is adequate for the Christian idea of God. The latter is a synthesis of the two independent concepts of value and being."

15 Apr 1955 A more adequate view is to maintain that both value and being are basic in the meaning of God, each blending with the other but neither being reduced to the other.<sup>46</sup>

### 8. God's creative activity

In traditional theology creation referred to the act whereby the underived self-existent God brought into being what had no form of independent existence hitherto. So strong was the Christian, theistic belief in an absolute, transcendent God who worked under no external limitation, that creation was said to be ex nihilo, i.e. generation out of nothing. With this traditional concept both Wieman and Tillich are in radical disagreement. Wieman contends that the doctrine of creation ex nihilo is self-contradictory; moreover, it would be impossible for Wieman on the basis of his method to get any knowledge of such an initial generation, supposing it ever occurred. Tillich disagrees with this traditional theory because it looks upon creation as an act or an event which took place "once upon a time." Creation, for Tillich, does not refer to an event, it rather indicates a condition, a relationship between God and the world.<sup>47</sup>

So, for Tillich, as for Wieman, there is no supernatural being before and above all beings as their creator. Instead of being a supernatural creator, Tillich's God is "the ground of Being."\* Tillich's desire to place all theological matter under the scrutiny of strict ontological analysis causes him to go beyond Wieman in interpreting the meaning of the traditional doctrine. Thus he is able to find some meaning in the traditional doctrine of creation ex nihilo. The phrase is taken to mean that God creates the world out of not-being; hence human nature (and all nature) is constituted by not-being; natu-

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* Ground, according to Tillich, is neither cause nor substance, taken literally, but something "underlying" all things in a manner which we can	only symbolize through causation or substantiality. Literal causes always are also effects, something conditioned (whereas God is unconditioned), while	"substance" and "accidents" lack the freedom with respect to each other which Christianity affirms both of God and of creatures. <sup>48</sup>
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46. Demos, Review of *Systematic Theology*, p. 706: "It will be noticed that, for Plato, the Idea of the Good is a source of being; and as we will see, our author regards being as a source of value. I would maintain that the notions of value and being are *coördinate* in the meaning of God; each blending with the other but neither being reduced to the other."

47. The first four sentences of this paragraph appear in chapter 4 and the last two are in chapter 3; see pp. 481 and 425 in this volume.

48. Hartshorne, "Tillich's Doctrine of God," p. 165: "'Ground' is neither cause nor substance, taken literally, but something 'underlying' all things in a manner which we can only *symbolize* through causation or substantiality. Literal causes always are also effects, something conditioned (whereas God is unconditioned), while 'substance' and 'accidents' lack the freedom with respect to each other which Christianity affirms both of God and of creatures."

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ral existence is a limitation of being; and man, just because of his heritage of not-being, is afflicted with anxiety, striving, and imperfection. We have already seen how Tillich uses all three modes of time to symbolize God's creative activity. All of this gives evidence of the fact that creation, for Tillich, does not refer to an event; it is rather the word given to the process which actualizes man in existence.

In spite of his rejection of the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo*, there is a sense in which Wieman speaks of God as creator. God is the creator of all created values. God is the sum-total of all the natural conditions of value-achievement.

Many problems arise from these analyses of God's creative activity. The basic problem in Wieman is whether or not he has raised more problems in his denial of creation than he has solved. The basic problem in Tillich is whether the man who is actualized in existence is properly "man" or "God"; whether the view of Tillich is an ultimate monism or pluralism. These problems will be discussed in the next two sections. Suffice it to say at this point that neither Wieman nor Tillich has taken seriously the scriptural witness to God's creation of man, God's imparting to man a center of consciousness with freedom and responsibility, a will with co-creative powers.\*

### 9. God and evil

Wieman looks upon the "problem of evil" as a false problem; it arises only when one departs from the empirical evidence for God as "the good," or the chief factor for good in nature, and begins to speculate about God as also something the creator of all existence. When the idea of God as creator is relinquished, the problem disappears. The more empirical problem is to define the actual nature and scope of evil, and not to indulge in unempirical speculation as to its origin. We have already seen above how Wieman takes pains to describe the nature and scope of evil.†

This view of God is avowedly finitistic. God is only the source of good. He is therefore limited by evil forces external to his nature. He is not the ultimate ground of all existence because of the very existence of these evil forces. Wieman asks:

Why is God not the ultimate ground of all existence? Because he is not the ultimate ground of murder, lust, treachery and all the horrors of existence. To try to reverse such a reality as God, is to try to initiate a religion that is worse than voodooism.‡

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\* Gen. 1:27-31; 2:7-8; † See Chap. IV, sec. 3.<sup>49</sup>  
Psalms 8; Mark 12:30; Mt. ‡ Wieman, Art. (1932)<sup>2</sup>,  
23:37. 111.

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49. See p. 483 in this volume.

15 Apr Thus Wieman avoids the problem of evil by positing a finite God who is in no  
1955 way the creator of all existence.

Tillich cannot dismiss the problem of evil as easily as Wieman, because of his contention that God is the ultimate ground of all reality. As we have seen, Tillich divides evil into three classes.\* (a) Physical evil, pain, and death), according to him, offer no real problem because they are natural implications of creaturely finitude. (b) Then there is moral evil which is the tragic implication of creaturely freedom. (c) Finally, there is the apparent fact of meaninglessness and futility— and this, according to Tillich, is the only sort of evil which offers genuine difficulty for theological belief. Tillich's solution to the problem of evil of this third sort is very difficult to understand, partly because of its excessive conciseness. Such evil is described as "the negativities of creaturely existence."<sup>50</sup>

Tillich hints at another solution to the problem of evil. This solution is found in his positing a nonrational aspect in God's nature. This is set forth in the concept of God as "abyss." As we have seen, the abysmal nature of God is a nonrational, unformed dimension of incalculable power.† There are two aspects to God's nature, viz., the logos and the abyss. The former is the rational aspect and the latter is the nonrational. It is this nonrational aspect that accounts for much of the evil in the world. So Tillich attempts to solve the problem of evil by finding a nonrational aspect in God's nature. Like Wieman, he ends up with a finitistic view of God. His language and method seem extremely absolutistic, but his stress on the abysmal aspect of God's nature is definitely finitistic. Tillich's finitism is to be distinguished from Wieman's in one significant respect: in Wieman's conception the limitation of God's power is external to his nature, while in Tillich's thought the limitation is an aspect within God's nature.

How adequate are these views? Wieman seeks to avoid the problem of evil by a complete denial of creation. He holds to the finiteness of God, yet without being subject to the criticism which may be directed against belief in a Creator-God. But the denial of a Creator-God raises more problems than it solves. Such a denial gives no explanation of the source of consciousness and value. Moreover, it fails to explain the unity of nature. This easy solution of the problem of evil fails to grapple thoroughly with the problem of good. Its impersonalism is philosophically inadequate.

Some questions may be raised concerning Tillich's solution to the problem of evil. At one point he says that physical evil offers no real problem because it is a natural implication of creaturely finitude. But this is no solution to the problem. Physical evils are surely evil, and the fact that they are implicated in

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\* See Chap. III, sec. 5.

† See Chap. III, sec. 4.<sup>51</sup>

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50. This paragraph is similar to a paragraph in chapter 3; see p. 431 in this volume.

51. See p. 418 in this volume.

the finitude of all creaturely being does not help at all. For if creation is finite, and finitude be evil, then God is the creator of evil.<sup>52</sup>

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By attributing evils in the world to some nonrational aspect in God's nature, Tillich introduces a dualism into the divine nature that can hardly be regarded as satisfactory either religiously or intellectually. This conception suffers from all of the inadequacies of any ultimate metaphysical dualism. Tillich leaves such a tremendous gap between God as abyss and God as logos that there hardly appears to be a point of contact between the two. Nowhere does Tillich adequately explain the relationship of these two aspects of God's nature. So great is the mystery between the abyss and the logos that one is compelled to wonder why the two should be called God.\*<sup>53</sup>

### 10. The question of monism versus pluralism

As we have seen above, Wieman seeks to maintain an ultimate pluralism in which God is in no way responsible for evil. Wieman is emphatic in the assertion that God is not the ultimate ground of all existence. He is probably one of several ultimate realities.<sup>†</sup><sup>54</sup> With this ultimate pluralism Tillich would not concur. For Tillich God is the one ultimate reality, the ultimate ground of all existence. Tillich, then, is monistic in his emphasis, while Wieman is pluralistic. As we attempted to show above, Tillich's monism is not only qualitative, but also quantitative.<sup>‡</sup> Tillich holds to an ultimate ontological monism, both qualitative and quantitative. God is ultimately the only metaphysical reality. The life of man is a phase of the actualization of God and not a separate metaphysical reality.

If there is any one point at which Wieman and Tillich are in basic disagreement, it is here. Wieman holds to an ultimate pluralism, both quantitative and qualitative. Tillich, on the other hand, holds to an ultimate monism, both qualitative and quantitative.

Here again we find Wieman and Tillich each overstressing one phase of

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\* Cf. DeWolf, TLC, 134.

† Wieman, Art. (1932)<sup>2</sup>

‡ See Chap. III, sec. 11.<sup>55</sup>

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52. This paragraph is similar to a paragraph in chapter 3; see p. 431 in this volume.

53. L. Harold DeWolf, *A Theology of the Living Church* (New York: Harper, 1953), p. 134: "In Tillich's view the relation between God as *abyss* and God as *logos* is left so completely in mystery that it is unclear why the two should both be called God."

54. Wieman, "Theocentric Religion," p. 111: "The only point we want to make is that God is not *the one* ultimate reality. He may be one of several ultimate realities."

55. See p. 477 in this volume. The following three sentences are also from section 11 in chapter 3.

15 Apr reality while minimizing another. Wieman is so impressed with manyess that  
1955 he overlooks oneness. Tillich, on the other hand, is so impressed with oneness  
/ that he overlooks manyess.

Neither of these views is basically sound. Wieman's ultimate pluralism fails to satisfy the rational demand for unity. Sense-experience is manifold and pluralistic; but reason is unitary and systematic. Monism, as Kant recognized, is the deepest demand of reason. A unitary world-ground is implied in the principle of causality. Moreover, there is system in this universe; cognition would be impossible without it. Further, no ultimate system can be made up of independent units. If the system be real, the units must be subordinated to the system.\*<sup>56</sup>

Certainly this quest for ultimate unity haunts the religious man. One of the main things that the religious worshiper is seeking is a Being who is able to reduce all multiplicity to unity. Wieman's failure to discover this unity leaves him with a conception of God that is both religiously and intellectually inadequate.

As Wieman's ultimate pluralism is unsatisfactory, so is Tillich's ultimate monism. There is much in Tillich that is reminiscent of Spinoza and Hegel. In each of these systems finite individuality is swallowed up in the unity of being. Individual persons become merely transitory modes of the one substance, having no substantial character of their own.

One of the greatest dangers of Tillich's system is that it tends toward pantheism. This type of thinking makes God impersonal and breaks down the separateness and independence of finite personality. In this sense it brings havoc to true religion. True religion is not concerned about metaphysical union of the human with the divine, but with a relation of mutual understanding between them, a relation that expresses itself in worship and love. Such a relationship is possible only between persons who maintain their distinct individuality. To make human personality a mere phase or mode of the absolute is to render real religious experience impossible. Pantheism is both practically and theoretically disastrous.

Tillich talks a great deal about the freedom of man. The most pervasive idea in all of Tillich's utterances about man is that man is free. In numerous instances man's nature is spoken of as "finite freedom." He says: "Man is man because he has freedom."† Again he says: "Freedom makes man man."‡<sup>57</sup>

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\* Cf. Knudson, POP, 202.

‡ Tillich, Art. (1940)<sup>3</sup>, 123.

† Tillich, ST, I, 182.

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56. Albert C. Knudson, *The Philosophy of Personalism* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1927), p. 202: "But there is at least system; cognition would be impossible without it. And no ultimate system can be made up of independent units. If the system be real, the units must be subordinated to the system."

57. Boozer, "Place of Reason," p. 10: "In numerous instances man's nature is spoken of as 'finite freedom.' . . . Tillich writes again: 'Man is man because he has freedom.' . . . 'Freedom makes man man.'"

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Man has in a sense left the divine ground to “stand upon” his own feet. He is to some extent “outside” the divine life. “To be outside the divine life means to stand in actualized freedom, in an existence which is no longer united with essence.”\*<sup>58</sup> But the question that inevitably arises at this point is, how can Tillich have both his monism and human freedom? We have seen how he tries to maintain both, and thereby presents a contradiction which he never completely resolves. The fact is that freedom is nonexistent in a monistic system. Freedom requires metaphysical otherness. But in a monistic system there is no otherness on the part of finite persons. Finite beings are parts of the Infinite or absolute and issue forth from its being by a kind of logical necessity.

In order for freedom to exist there must be distinct individuality and independence on the part of the finite soul. This the individual is deprived of in a thoroughgoing monism. Such monism breaks down the exclusiveness of personality, and erases the boundary lines between personal beings, making the finite person simply a part of the absolute. All of this reveals the futility of Tillich’s attempt to stress the freedom of man in his monistic system. When taken in all of its logical implications, Tillich’s system provides no place for finite freedom.

A final weakness of Tillich’s system, as with all monistic systems, is its failure to grapple with the problem of error. It makes error as necessary as truth, and thus leaves us with no standard that would enable us to distinguish between them and no means of using the standard if we had it.

To sum up, both Wieman’s pluralism and Tillich’s monism are inadequate as philosophical and religious world-views. Each overemphasizes one phase of reality while totally neglecting another important phase. Here again, the solution is not either monism or pluralism; it is both monism and pluralism. Tillich and Wieman fail to see that both positions can be meaningfully maintained. It is possible to hold a quantitative pluralism while holding a qualitative monism. In this way both oneness and manyness are preserved. Neither swallows the other. Such a view defends, on the one hand, individuality against the impersonalism and all-engulfing universalism of any type of ultimate monism. On the other hand, it vindicates the idea of a basal monism against the attacks of any ultimate pluralism.

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\* Tillich, ST, I, 255.

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<sup>58</sup>. Boozer, “Place of Reason,” pp. 62–63: “Man has in a sense left the divine ground to ‘stand upon’ his own feet. He is to some extent ‘outside’ the divine life. ‘To be outside the divine life means to stand in actualized freedom, in an existence which is no longer united with essence.’”

## Chapter VI

### CONCLUSIONS

The following theses may be stated as conclusions drawn from this investigation of the conceptions of God in the thinking of Tillich and Wieman.

1. Tillich's basic and most persistent definition of God is "being-itself," esse ipsum. In affirming that God is being-itself, Tillich is denying that God is a being beside other beings. In this conception he intends to convey the idea of the power of being. God is the power of being in everything and above everything.

2. Wieman's basic definition of God is the "creative event." This definition is an amplification of what Wieman means when he speaks of God as growth. He further defines God as "supreme value" and as "the unlimited connective growth of value-connections." But these definitions seem to have three different meanings. When Wieman characterizes God as "supreme value" he seems to mean the ideal of perfection or of the achievement of maximum value. When he speaks of God as "the unlimited corrective growth of value-connections" he seems to mean the human and social processes which aim at the achievement of value. When he describes God as the creative event he seems to mean the natural forces underlying the achievement of value. These three meanings cannot be viewed as constituting a unity except in a highly figurative sense, and positively not for a religious philosophy which would be consistently empirical. At this point Wieman has failed to be consistently empirical.

3. Both Tillich and Wieman agree that God is an undeniable reality. They are so convinced of the reality of God that they would dismiss all arguments for his existence as futile and invalid. They further agree in seeking to assure the reality of God through the definition of God. But in attempting to formulate the idea of God so as to make the question of his existence a dead issue, Tillich and Wieman have given up much that is most essential from the religious point of view in the idea of God. Both sacrifice too much for the sake of getting rid of a troublesome question.

4. Both Tillich and Wieman deny the category of personality to God. They think that to refer to God as a person is to limit him. This denial of personality to God does not mean, they insist, that God is impersonal. Instead of being impersonal or sub-personal, God is supra-personal. Despite their warnings that God is not less than personal, however, we have seen traits throughout their thinking that point to a God that is less than personal. Wieman's God is an interaction, that is, a behavior-process. He is not a concrete object or a continuing entity. In short, he is an unconscious process devoid of any true purpose. Tillich's "being-itself" is little more than a sub-personal reservoir of power. In this respect Tillich's thought is somewhat akin to the impersonalism of Oriental Vedantism. "Being-itself" is a pure absolute devoid of consciousness and life.

5. Wieman's naturalistic position causes him to place great emphasis on the immanence of God. Like everything else that exists God is found within the natural order. Whatever transcendence God has is seen to arise out of his very

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immanence in the world of events. There is much in Tillich's view that comes close to the naturalistic position. He revolts against the view that there is a world behind the world. The Divine does not inhabit a transcendent world above nature; it is found in the "ecstatic" character of this world as its transcendent depth and ground.

6. Tillich's desire to protect the majesty of God and his complex ontological analysis cause him to stress the transcendence of God as much as his immanence. He finds a basis for God's transcendence in the conception of God as abyss. There is a basic inconsistency in Tillich's thought at this point. On the one hand he speaks as a religious naturalist making God wholly immanent in nature. On the other hand he speaks as an extreme supernaturalist making God almost comparable to the Barthian "wholly other."

7. Tillich and Wieman have at the forefront of their thinking a deep theocentric concern. Both are convinced that God is the most significant Fact in the universe. This theocentric concern leads Tillich and Wieman to the further assertion that God is not man. They see a qualitative difference between God and man.

8. Tillich and Wieman are at one in rejecting the traditional formulations of the attributes of God. Tillich goes beyond Wieman, however, by seeking to set forth the qualitative and symbolic meaning of the attributes.

9. Tillich includes within the divine life both temporality and eternity. Wieman's stress is on the the temporality of God. His failure to emphasize the factor of permanence in the idea of God weakens Wieman's doctrine of God at many points. It leaves a God who is the increaser of value without being the conserver of value. In such a situation, value-experience becomes meaningless.

10. The most important words in Tillich's conception of God are "power" and "being". The most important words in Wieman's conception of God are "goodness" and "value." Wieman's basic emphasis is axiological while Tillich's is ontological. Now both Wieman and Tillich are partially correct in what they affirm, but partially wrong in what they deny. Both overstress one aspect of the divine nature to the neglect of another basic aspect. Tillich places an undue emphasis on being to the neglect of value; Wieman places an undue emphasis on value to the neglect of being. A more adequate view is to maintain that both value and being are basic in the meaning of God; each blending with the other but neither being reduced to the other.

11. Both Tillich and Wieman reject the traditional doctrine of creation. For neither of them is there a supernatural being before and above all beings as their creator.

12. Tillich and Wieman are theistic finitists. However, they differ in one significant respect: in Wieman's conception the limitation to God's power is external to his nature, while in Tillich's thought the limitation is an aspect within God's nature.

13. Wieman holds to an ultimate pluralism, both quantitative and qualitative. Tillich, on the other hand, holds to an ultimate monism, both qualitative and quantitative. Both of these views have been found to be inadequate. Wieman's ultimate pluralism fails to satisfy the rational demand for unity. Tillich's ultimate monism swallows up finite individuality in the unity of being. A more

15 Apr     adequate view is to hold a quantitative pluralism and a qualitative monism. In  
1955         this way both oneness and manyness are preserved.

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A COMPARISON OF THE CONCEPTIONS OF  
GOD IN THE THINKING OF  
PAUL TILlich AND HENRY NELSON WIEMAN

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