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A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE DOCTRINE OF MAN
ACCORDING TO HENRY NELSON WIEMAN AND REINHOLD NIEBUHR

By

Hubert Dana Newton

A.B., Seattle Pacific College

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

A. The Problem

The question of man is of never-ending interest. The widespread use of personality tests, as well as the many self-evaluation tests in current periodicals, testifies to the fact that man is interested in man.

But the question is of far greater importance than the testing of one's extrovert-introvert tendencies. The question of man's nature becomes crucial when it is observed in the brightness of God's light. The Psalmist's question, "What is man that thou art mindful of him?" has greater significance now than did the original query. It is not only a question of man's finiteness, but also of man's dilemma, for although the Psalmist marvelled that God had made man a little lower than the angels, and had crowned him with glory and honor, had set him over the works of God's hands and put all things in subjection under his feet,¹ yet the writer to the Hebrews states the problem of history in writing: "But now we see not yet all things subjected to him."²

There is a dilemma in man's life that challenges a quest that is more than curiosity. This quest is crucial. What is man, his problem, and the solution to that problem?

Many views have attempted to answer these questions. The

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1. Cf. Psalm 8:4-6.

2. Hebrews 2:8b.

three outstanding traditional ones have been humanism, nationalism, and supernaturalism.¹ Recent international and national events and the contemporary social scene have seemed to make it difficult to consider humanism seriously. In 1940, Dr. Edwin Lewis referred to it as "sterile humanism."² Nationalism has met with crushing defeat in the last few years in Western culture. The most prominent representatives of supernaturalism today are those designated as "Christian Realists," expressed in the movement known as Neo-Orthodoxy.

There are some who violently oppose supernaturalism, see the fallacies of nationalism, and know the weaknesses of humanism. They have attempted to redefine issues in terms of theistic naturalism, otherwise known as theistic pragmatism. They know but one reality—that which may be explored by scientific observation and reason.

The problem under consideration then is to compare these two schools--Neo-Orthodoxy and Theistic Naturalism--in terms of their view of man, and to determine if and how they depart from the traditional Christian view of man as set forth in the Scriptures.

B. The Significance of the Problem

This problem is important in at least two ways. First, the events of the world have accentuated the fact that man's sojourn on this globe is at a crucial point in history. Many insist that the old ideals of man are inadequate and must be replaced. Others insist that

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1. Cf. Robert L. Calhoun: What is Man? p. 60.
2. Edwin C. Lewis: Philosophy of the Christian Revelation, Foreword, p. ix.

the solution to man's dilemma is by reaffirming with new freshness, clarity, and force the traditional doctrines. Whatever the answer may be, it must answer the problem of man's ills. Does man do wrong? If so, why does he do wrong? What is his nature? Before any remedy for man's ills can be affirmed, it must determine the answer to these questions.

Secondly, this problem is significant in the light of the two views presented. Neo-Orthodoxy claims that its views are based upon the Bible.¹ Theistic Naturalists make no such claim, but assert that their views do not radically differ from the traditional theistic view of man. Ames states:

"Pragmatic Naturalism escapes many difficulties of traditional theologies by its view of human nature," but "It does not minimize the frailties of human nature nor exaggerate its nobler qualities."²

In the light of this dilemma it is significant to place these two views beside the standard of the Scriptures and evaluate them according to its doctrine of man.

C. The Delimitation of the Problem

In the scope of a work such as this, it is obvious that the subject cannot be treated fully. Rather than attempt to give the general views of each school of thought, the views of an outstanding representative in each school are presented.

Professor Henry Nelson Wieman represents Theistic Naturalism. He is said to be "the only Christian philosopher who is attempting to

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1. Cf. Reinhold Niebuhr: The Nature and Destiny of Man, p. 151.
2. Edward S. Ames: "From the Standpoint of a Naturalist," essay in Wieman and Meland: American Philosophies of Religion, p. 336.

forge a genuinely new system of philosophy."¹ According to Henry P. Van Dusen, "he stands midway between the proponents of non-theistic religion and the more traditional theists, seeking to give a point of view to which both can give allegiance."² In so doing he makes a sympathetic contact at many points with that of the humanists. The influence of his thought is great, particularly with those who are restless under old modes of thought. He is best known for his view of God; thus, much of his view of man must be an inference from his view of God.

Reinhold Niebuhr is credited with launching the attack upon liberal optimism and revived the interest in man as sinner with his book published in 1932, Moral Man and Immoral Society. He is the center of attack by those who feel that man's nature should be understood in terms of history and the complexities of nature.

These two men represent theistic naturalism and supernaturalism, respectively. Their views will be evaluated in this work in the light of the truth set forth by the Apostle Paul. Much must be covered in this short survey, and it is the aim of this work to present only the major views.

D. Sources of Data

In a work of this kind it is impossible to cover adequately all the writings of the men under consideration and others that are relevant to the problem. Thus, certain works have been selected as

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1. Henry P. Van Dusen, Editor: Ventures in Belief, p. 77.
2. Ibid.

most pertinent. The works of Professor Wieman selected as most significant are The Issues of Life, The Normative Psychology of Religion, and The Source of Human Good. Professor Niebuhr's Gifford Lectures, The Nature and Destiny of Man, are used to represent his views. Even the Apostle Paul must be delimited in a work of this nature. Thus, his doctrine of man in his Epistle to the Romans is exclusively used as the norm to evaluate the views of Professors Wieman and Niebuhr.

Primarily, the source of the material will be the writings of the men themselves. A few secondary works of interpretation will also be used to corroborate the information gleaned from the primary sources.

E. The Method of Procedure

The first chapter will contain a discussion of Wieman's doctrine of man, including (1) presuppositions which aid in the understanding of his view of man and (2) the formal presentation of his doctrine of man. Chapter Two will present Professor Niebuhr's doctrine of man, including his definition of the only adequate view of man as well as the formal presentation of his doctrine. In Chapter Three the views of the two men will be compared with each other and evaluated by St. Paul's view in his letter to the Romans. The thesis will be concluded with a brief summary of the findings.

CHAPTER I

THE DOCTRINE OF MAN ACCORDING TO HENRY NELSON WHELAN

CHAPTER I

THE DOCTRINE OF MAN ACCORDING TO HENRY NELSON WIEMAN

A. Introduction

Professor Wieman's view of man is somewhat syncretistic, as is his view of God. He has an ingenious ability to combine certain features of several views. Furthermore, in none of his writings does he state clearly his view of man in such a way that it can be contrasted with other views. He does not analyze man's nature as much as he presents man's present predicament and gives a remedy. Therefore, before presenting his formal doctrine of the nature of man, his presuppositions and methods of determining knowledge will be given; his metaphysics and epistemology will be illustrated by his view of the source of matter and life; and finally, his doctrine of God will be presented to help clarify his view of man.

The formal presentation of his doctrine of man will be treated as follows: (1) The Origin of Man, (2) Characteristics of Man, (3) Man's Dilemma, and (4) Man's Salvation.

B. The Presuppositions which Determine Wieman's Doctrine of Man

1. Metaphysics and Epistemology.

By frank admission and insistence, Professor Wieman's cosmic presupposition is naturalistic: "The metaphysics we are defending . . .

is a spiritual metaphysics which is none the less material through and through."¹ This may sound contradictory, which is the reason D. C. Macintosh calls Wieman a "tight rope walker."² But by "material" he does not mean "merely pellets of inanimate matter" but also events that include the biological, social, and historical forms of existence. Nothing has any causal efficacy except material events so defined.

Professor Wieman calls this the "newer naturalism," in which reality is defined in terms of events. No cause or explanation for anything can reach deeper than events, their structures (that is, the relations of these events), and their qualities. Professor Wieman asserts, then, that there is no reality separated from experience. This is in agreement with the Jewish Christian belief that the Sovereign Good works creatively in history, but Professor Wieman does not agree with the Jewish Christian idea of supernaturalism, for nothing can be known unless it be an event or some possibility carried by an event. When that which is transcendental becomes an event, it is no longer transcendental.

These presuppositions rest upon an analysis of human experience. Professor Wieman has well classified himself as an Empirical Theist. His tools for analysis are observation, experiment, and reason. These are really only two tools, for experiment is controlled observation. As stated by Meland in reference to an article by Wieman, "That only is knowledge, in religion as in every other area of intellectual search, which has been attained through the tested methods of observation and

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1. Henry Nelson Wieman: The Source of Human Good, p. 301.
2. D. C. Macintosh: Essay in Is There A God?, Charles C. Morrison, Editor, p. 24.

reason."¹

His analysis is scientific, but Wieman believes there is more to the world than what science can tell us. There is no science of the world, for each science is dedicated to a particular study of the world. An aggregate of sciences would not work, for the very nature of the sciences prohibits them from being mixed together. However, knowledge is and can be known by an "inference from the sciences" by use of the reasoning processes. Thus, science is essential in the quest for truth. Experience is also a component of knowledge but it is not knowledge, because it does not tell us of the object experienced. Experience is valuable only when it is approved by the scientific method of analysis. Professor Wieman lists four steps in this analysis:

- "(1) Forming an idea of what course of action will produce specified consequences by observing various consequences that have issued from specified conditions. . . .
- "(2) Ascertain as accurately as possible just what are the conditions under which this course of action can be profitably followed to produce the desired and anticipated consequences.
- "(3) Find or create these conditions, perform the course of action, and observe what happens.
- "(4) Develop by logical inference what further to expect in the light of what has been observed to happen and test these inferences just as the original idea was tested, namely, by steps one, two, and three just described. . . ."2

There are three kinds of knowledge which may be obtained by means of this method: (1) knowledge obtained by the several sciences, (2) knowledge known by common sense which utilizes the "inference of the sciences," and (3) the knowledge of experience found by committing oneself in full devotion to the object under investigation if that object

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1. H. N. Wieman and Bernard E. Meland: American Philosophies of Religion, p. 297.
2. Wieman: The Issues of Life, p. 187.

is found to be worthy of devotion.¹ This third kind of knowledge allows Wieman to call his metaphysical materialism spiritual. New meaning, greater than the analysis, is the result. Out of this the loving heart "may build itself a mansion of knowledge in which two personalities may dwell together in mutual understanding."² This new meaning, greater than the analysis, is the ultimate determinant of truth and knowledge.

2. The Source of Matter and Life.

Twenty years ago Professor Wieman presented his idea of the origin of matter and life as an inference from science.³ Whether or not he would still adhere to the specific "inference" is questionable, because his whole epistemology is that there are no fixed portions of reality. However, what the world meant to him at that time is presented here, as it is indicative of his conception of the origin of man, and nowhere in later writings does he refer to man's origin more than to → say that man is animal "grown up."

Science cannot tell us everything, but there is a kind of knowledge about the world that is reached "by inference from what the sciences do teach us."⁴ Such is the inference of physics. One of the best established laws of physics is entropy or the degradation of energy. That is, the world is running down. Energy is not diminishing in amount but it is becoming evenly dissipated so that it will do no work. It is

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1. Cf. Ibid., p. 199.

2. Ibid., p. 244.

3. Cf. Wieman: "What the World is to Me," Ventures in Belief, Henry P. Van Dusen, Editor, pp. 75-108.

4. Ibid., p. 85.

continuously operating toward a static equilibrium. Ultimately, in a few trillion years, declare the physical sciences, all life and matter will be nothing but a mild glow in space.

From this scientific truth, then, is the inference that as there is in progress a "running-down" of the universe, there is also a "winding-up" of the universe. This counter-tendency builds up energy for work, that is, for the activities which constitute matter and life.

There are two possibilities then: (1) the world goes through cyclic periods in which energy swings like a pendulum toward static equilibrium and then toward creating matter and life, or (2) both forces are operating at the same time.

Inasmuch as the one tendency is toward static equilibrium, the inference, substantiated by experience, is that the counter-tendency is one of innovation. This innovation, or winding-up process, receives its dynamic from the energy released by the running-down process. The products of the winding-up process are matter, then life, then personality, with new possibilities ever before it.

This is more than biological evolution, for that pertains, as far as scientific observation can determine, to only an exceedingly small part of planet activity. Biological evolution is simply the transformation an organism undergoes in order to survive. This does not necessarily pertain to rising to higher levels of life, for many of the lower forms of life survive better than the higher and more complex forms. Only in rare instances do higher forms of life rise out of the struggle to survive.

It is an observable fact, however, that there has been a pro-

gressive organization of higher forms of living which the physical and biological sciences have not been able to account for. When we come to human life we find a definite striving for values, often at the expense of survival. This striving for an increase of values requires as one prerequisite the building up of energy into very complex organic forms where it is available for rich conscious experience. The exercise of reason is then necessary to utilize this energy.

Both of these processes--the development of complex living organisms, and the exercise of reason--receive their dynamic from the running-down process of the universe. This running-down process is the tendency toward maximum stability, which would be a static equilibrium with perfect order.

The winding-up process creates a certain amount of disorder as new innovations are made. Disorder could and does produce conflict and anarchy. Therefore, the established order must be reconstructed into a more complex system so as to include and use properly the innovations. This is the work of the progressive organization of the world. This organization is God. ←

Man is the creation of this order. It has produced man and it sustains man.

This, then, is the cosmic scene. Man is the present highest form of innovated energy, a product of the winding-up process of the universe, and as the highest form, he has the ability of reason which enables him to carry on this process of innovation by committing himself to its progressive organization, which overcomes the anarchy and disintegration which well might result from such change, by developing a

more complex order. This is the progressive organization of the world, and if it is not going on anywhere in the universe except this planet, then "we are the sole representatives, the only champions and the single hope of the cosmos for this increase of values."¹

Man, a complex bundle of energy, stands in the gap between the possibility of "reaching up among the stars to use and control the downward stream of energy as we now use and control the flow of rivers,"² or the inevitable opposite of contributing to and becoming a meaningless glob in space.

3. The Doctrine of God.

Professor Wieman's conception of man is nowhere stated clearly. However, God as defined by him is wholly within experience. He states, "We have no recourse to any 'transcendental grounds, orders, causes or purposes' beyond events, their qualities and relations. . . . The only creative God we recognize is the creative event itself."³ Thus, God is wholly within the realm of experience. Therefore, man's nature may be determined in terms of his participation in this experience. Consequently, it is necessary to understand Wieman's view of God to understand adequately his view of man.

a. General Definitions.

Because Wieman's approach to truth is strictly inductive, his definition of God is necessarily general. He rebels with passion against

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1. Wieman: "What the World is to Me," Ventures in Belief, p. 97.
2. Ibid., p. 98.
3. Wieman: The Source of Human Good, p. 7.

those who form a presupposition of what God ought to be and then struggle to define Him and experience Him in just that way. This is the error of the traditionalist. Rather, God is found as we apply observation and reason to the facts which are made evident as we strive for the highest possible values to which all men may give their devotion.

It is evident that there is Something upon which human life is most dependent for its security, welfare and increasing abundance.

"The mere fact that human life happens, and continues to happen, proves that this Something, however unknown, does certainly exist. . . . He is simply that which is supremely significant in all the universe for human living, however known or unknown he may be."¹

Thus, God is the object of supreme value in the universe. He is that condition or order or pattern in the universe that constitutes supreme value for all human living. To Wieman, God is "that actuality which sustains, promotes, and constitutes the supreme good."²

Wieman's reason for defining God so loosely is that by so doing the question of God's existence will become a dead issue. With that controversy removed, all energies can be turned to seeking the nature of God and living for God.

b. God and Value.

"How is good determined?" is a question that has reared philosophies and gods. It is obvious that intrinsic good is not determined by the accumulation of material goods, for they may be used for evil, nor is it determined by satisfaction, for human desires are not always

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1. Wieman: Religious Experience and the Scientific Method, pp. 9,10.
2. Wieman: Essay in Is There A God?, Charles C. Morrison, Editor, p. 24.

altruistic. Neither can intrinsic good be determined by quality, for quality changes with time and environment. Nor is good determined by human control, for it cannot be trusted to produce what may be accepted as good by all. Intrinsic good may be defined as "a structure of events endowing each happening as it occurs with qualities derived from other events in the structure."¹ That is, there is a process which relates created good to other created good, thus building a structure of life that has meaning and harmony. This "creative event" produces qualitative meaning which is intrinsically good. The creative event itself is hardly known as an object but is known primarily by the event or events which occur in human experience. This experience has three general features:

(1) Persons are receptive and responsive to one another through communication, thereby experiencing an emerging awareness of qualitative meaning. Each person is lifted to a higher level by deriving meanings from others.

(2) These new meanings are integrated with others previously acquired.

(3) Thus, the world expands in appreciation and interacts more in relationship to the person.

It is this process of reorganization which generates new meanings and integrates them with the old, thus molding man's life into a deeper unified totality of meaning. This creative good or event shapes human lives. It is God, because it is the force in life which brings forth supreme values.

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1. Wieman: The Source of Human Good, p. 55.

c. God is Supra-human but not Supernatural.

The creative event produces a structure of value which could not be intended or imagined by the human mind. Human effort cannot accomplish anything which the human mind cannot imagine. Man cannot be creative in that which he cannot foresee. The creative event is the author of this. "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."¹ Thus, the creative event is supra-human, not that it operates outside of human life, but creates the good of the world beyond man's foresight and imagination.

However, this creative event is not supernatural, although it is inevitable that man should think it so, because to the ordinary man nature is that part of the world which is appreciable, and should assume that that which is not accessible to his appreciation must be supernatural. However, the creative event is not separated from experience.

"Like the ancient supernaturalism, and in opposition to almost all religions and philosophies that stand over against supernaturalism, the naturalism here defended repudiates the supremacy in value of all the goods and goals of the created appreciable world and turns to what creates them for the sovereign good of life."²

Man cannot use or control the creative event because it acts beyond man's knowledge and leads him to new levels. One of the necessary subevents is that man's desires are transformed, not fulfilled. The primary demand of the creative event upon man is that man give himself over to it to be transformed in any way that it may require.

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1. Ibid., p. 75.

2. Ibid., p. 78.

d. God is Not a Personality.

The difference between animal and man is one of personality. Personality is that which communicates and therefore shares experience. Communication requires symbols (actions, words, etc.). Language represents our most elaborate system of symbols. Personality being that which communicates, personality develops along with communication. It cannot develop by itself. Only when two or more organisms interact with one another and the physical world by means of symbols can we have personality. A person who is isolated will ultimately become a mere animal. Thus, individual personality by itself does not constitute the greatest value but rather an association of communicating personalities along with physical conditions and symbols. "Personality is a necessary component in the greatest value."¹ Consequently, the greatest value cannot be a personality. A personality cannot stand alone.

Therefore, God is not a personality, for he constitutes the greatest value, realized and possible. He is greater than personality.²

Then the question is: Is God this structure of existence of personalities together with their physical conditions and symbols? No, God is more than that in terms of value. He is not the totality of existence, the sum of the parts, but he is the order of actual and possible structures of value which will ultimately issue in the realization of the greatest value when we rightly conform to its requirements.

Professor Wieman uses words such as "order," "pattern," and "interaction," not to dim the warmth of a religious response to God,

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1. Wieman: The Issues of Life, p. 218.

2. Note: Wieman uses the pronouns "he" and "it" interchangeably in referring to God.

but to most adequately describe the truth involved. He states that "for the sake of love and worship, we must be able to use at the proper time and place these cold words with steely sharp edges that can cut their way through tangled confusion."¹ Professor Wieman's point is that man must find something greater than personality to serve. He states:

"The greatness of personality lies in the fact that it can serve that order of existence and possibility in which are found the greatest values that can ever be achieved. God is precisely that order."²

This word "order" is not a passive idea, but it is dynamic. This order of value is not only a procedure of existence but is one order characterized by a power which brings certain things to pass. As Shailer Matthews puts it, "God is the personality-producing process of the universe."³ Of course, then, God is not himself a personality, but is that ordered process which sustains and develops personality and thus generates the greatest possible value.

Thus, God cannot be known outside of human experience, and it is here that he may be observed, analyzed, and given full submission.

e. God is Absolute Good.

Absolute good is that which is good under all conditions and circumstances. It is absolute good because 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."⁴

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1. Wieman: The Issues of Life, p. 222.
2. Ibid., p. 227.
3. Quoted in Ibid., p. 229.
4. Wieman: The Source of Human Good, p. 80.

It is absolute good because it is of infinite value. No amount of created good can compensate for the blockage of that creativity which is our only hope for the future. It is unqualified good. There is no perspective from which its goodness can be modified in any way. It is entirely trustworthy. "We can be sure that the outcome of its working will always be the best possible under the conditions."¹ Absolute good is not all-powerful good, as neo-orthodoxy claims, asserting that good overrules evil and that ultimately everything will come out all right. This cannot be guaranteed. Creative good is not absolute in that sense, but neither is anything else.

f. Summary.

God cannot be known clearly, but his function is evident. He is the supreme value within the universe because he produces intrinsic good. He is supra-human because he creates and sustains, and is not supernatural for he is wholly within the cosmic scene.

Inasmuch as he is supra-human, he is not a personality, for he is the creative event which produces personalities out of organisms through the instrument of communication. Thus, he is greater than personalities.

He is absolute good, because he is in all conditions, is unlimited, of infinite value, is unqualified good, and is entirely trustworthy. He is not all-powerful.

God is a special order and process of interaction among all factors which brings forth supreme value. This is seen in Wieman's

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1. Ibid., p. 81.

statement:

"This order and process of interaction between many factors, some of which we know and some of which we do not, is the unmistakable presence of God in our midst. The supreme intellectual problem of our existence is to get more accurate knowledge of the precise nature of this interaction; and the supreme practical problem is to conduct human life in conformity to its requirements. Hence God is the proper object of supreme devotion for all human living when living is intelligent."¹

C. The Formal Presentation of Wieman's Doctrine of Man

1. The Origin of Man.

"From whence has man come?" is an important question in the study of man's nature. Inasmuch as he bears the characteristics of his progenitor, if he is a product of natural causality then his character will be consistent with such a view.

Professor Wieman maintains that man has risen to a higher level of existence from the animal stage, but that such a rise was not just a result of bio-chemical processes. He is the product of a progressive organization of the world, a creative process which has produced man by the means that we call natural events. For, says Wieman, "No knowable cause or explanation for anything that happens can reach deeper than events and their structures and qualities."²

Furthermore, man is in no distinct favor with this process other than that he is its most complex structure and hence its highest order. Wieman states:

"The process moves on whether we like it or not and it will destroy

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1. Wieman: The Issues of Life, p. 178.
2. Wieman: The Source of Human Good, p. 7.

us if we do not dedicate ourselves to it ever more completely . . . If men should fail to dedicate themselves to this progressive organization and so be destroyed, the movement would be set back. It would not cease, for other forms of life would remain and presumably out of the remaining forms of life some other animal would develop capable of stepping to the forefront of the movement where man now stands."¹

—God is that process which generates the greatest possible value. Man, a personality, is not its goal or end. ". . . personality seems to be a necessary incident in the actualization of highest values."²

—We cannot assume that man was made in God's image for God is not a personality.

Man has just recently, in terms of the world's age, begun to be supra-animal. "Humanity is not yet grown up. The animals we call human are just beginning to try to live in this new way."³

2. Characteristics of Man.

The question, "What is man?" is already partially determined by affirming that his ancestors were animals.

a. Man is in His Infancy.

He is not so far removed from the animal world as yet that he has dropped off all resemblance. As man species he is young. "The life of man upon this planet is young. He has scarcely begun his career. He is not yet beyond his infancy."⁴ And thus, as yet an infant homo sapiens, he displays the expected characteristics. "This immaturity of the human species is shown by its instability, its chaos and blundering. It is

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1. Wieman: "What the World is to Me," Ventures in Belief, p. 100.

2. Wieman: The Issues of Life, p. 229.

3. Ibid., p. 16.

4. Ibid., p. 241.

shown by its rebelliousness."¹

Thus, man's errors and frailties may be attributed to the fact that he is just recently "animal come human."

b. Man is a Personality.

Man is a growing process. His transition from animal to human may be given in one statement: "It is from the urge to the art of life," and is yet far from completion.

The distinctive feature of the human species is that it can communicate with signs and symbols. Animals to a varying degree can interact only. The story of the development of personality is the story of the development of communication. "Personality is that which communicates and hence which shares experience."²

Certain physiological characteristics of man provide favorable conditions for the growth of personality, such as the large brain and complex nervous system, the formation of the mouth and tongue, the hand and opposed thumb allowing dexterity required for tool making. Perhaps the most important contributing feature of man is the prolonged helplessness of the infant, thus compelling its parents to live together for a long period of time in intimate and complicated association.

". . . the prolonged helplessness of the human infant, with the required organization and reorganization of adult cooperation, might well have been the chief factor in causing interaction between human organism and environment to pass over into the form of symbolic representation, or communication, thus producing personality, spirituality, and all human greatness."³

Communication is that which transforms a mere animal into a personality.

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1. Ibid., p. 16.

2. Ibid., p. 209.

3. Ibid., p. 216.

Personality is one component in the structure of value which constitutes greatest value. An individual personality has no value in itself, for without other personalities it would degenerate into being an animal. Therefore its greatest value is that it can be in interaction with other personalities, with physical conditions and meanings where it is a necessary part of the whole in position for great progress.

This labored presentation on personality and communication has been given to emphasize that Professor Wieman attributes the present "dignity" of man to physiological characteristics in which communication is the instrument of the creative event. If this creative event works at sub-human levels of life, then the result of creativity has been to a large extent physical and social. Man's morality becomes incidental in his path to new possibilities.

c. Man is a Religious Organism.

Man, in order to grow, must find something greater than personality to serve; and as a personality he is able to give devotion to values. In the words of Wieman:

"The greatness of personality lies in the fact that it can serve that order of existence and possibility in which are found the greatest values that can ever be achieved."¹

"If a man is intelligent and correctly informed, there is nothing that can arouse in him such passionate searching as the endeavor to find and fit his personality into this order in the process of the world which leads to the greatest values. This searching and finding is religion."²

Dis.
Cognition

Thus, man's essential nature "consists in seeking, adoring, and serving

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1. Ibid., p. 227.
2. Ibid., p. 281.

whatever has greatest value."¹

Dr. Wieman has well discovered by his empirical process that man is innately religious.

d. Man is Capable of Great Progress.

As personality able to communicate in a complex fashion, and aware of a process which works for intrinsic values, man is in a position that could lead to great progress. He

" . . . now stands at the fighting frontier of the progressive organization of the world, so far as our knowledge reaches. Just now is his splendid hour. He has the opportunity to give himself over wholly to the life-making, value-magnifying movement of the universe."²

3. Man's Dilemma.

Man, as the highest organism developed by creativity, finds himself in a crucial dilemma. As a communicative being his communal relations have expanded. Science and technology have transformed the state of human existence swiftly. Many created values have flooded in upon man. Unless they are properly related to him and he to them they will be his doom. For they are only created values and cannot be objects of devotion.

Anything that opposes the creative event is evil. Evil could do great damage to creativity, for creativity could be forced down to lower and lower levels. Human existence could be wiped out. However, the creative event could not be wiped out. It can be opposed by the destruction of that which it creates and by any limitations of its

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1. Wieman: Essay in Is There a God?, p. 82.

2. Wieman: "What the World is to Me," Ventures in Belief, p. 101.

creative activity.

(1) General Description of Evil.

Evil is absolute. Any who deny the absoluteness of evil, such as the neo-orthodox, do not know the reality of evil. "Evil is not truly evil if it is predetermined to be overruled or if it is bounded above, below, before, and after by an eternity of perfect good."¹ Evil is absolute in four senses: (a) It is evil everywhere and under all circumstances. (b) It is unqualified evil, that is, evil from every standpoint. (c) Evil is ultimate. There is no source of good that permits it. (d) Evil is unconfined. It is not limited by a power so mighty that evil will never cross certain limits. But evil is not almighty. It will never oppose good completely. Thus Wieman is dualistic in respect to good and evil, for they are orders which necessarily exist together.

The devil, who is ascribed to be the author of evil, is not a personality as tradition has painted it. (The devil is the finest created good that can be achieved when that good refuses to hold itself subject to creativity.)

There are two general kinds of evil: that which is rooted in the nature of things, and that originating in human life.

(2) Natural Evil.

A characteristic of natural evil is inertia. Professor Wieman defines inertia as "insensitivity and resistance to creativity."² It is caused by three conditions: (a) Lack of vital energy. This ex-

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1. Wieman: The Source of Human Good, p. 88.
2. Ibid., p. 105.

haustion produces much irritation, anger, and violence. (b) Running down of energy. "Anything is evil which drains the precious and limited supply of energy for life."¹ Pleasure and triviality may be the contributors of this kind of evil. (c) Cancelling out of conflicting energies. This is true in the cosmos and in man. That is, one energy opposes another so that both are dissipated in their opposition.

(3) Human Evil.

It is hard to determine where natural evil ends and human responsibility for evil begins. {Professor Wieman defines sin as "any resistance to creativity for which man is responsible." } Man's basic sin is his rebellion against God whether it be conscious or unconscious. This rebellion is caused by pride and prosperity when man prefers to accumulate created goods rather than submit to the creative event. Or sin might be man's desperate rebellion against God in seeking created goods rather than trusting the creative event for his necessities of life. A third type of sin is not specifically rebellion but indifference when man does not provide the conditions that are favorable for the free work of creativity.

Most sin, according to Dr. Wieman, is unconscious and unintended. This is not because man does not sin, but because he is not aware of it. This itself is sin, for man cannot be delivered of sin until he is conscious of it. Sin is fading from the minds of men today. The cultural standards of morality no longer serve adequately to give a sense of sin. For man has grown from weakness to power through science

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1. Ibid., p. 107.

and technology and the mores have been inadequate. To know sin one must know reality. But custom and tradition have seemed to hide reality. The creative event is reality and its created goods and its symbols have hidden it from men.

A sense of guilt is one of the most common characteristics of the personality. Much guilt is false because it is determined by the mores of society, but a real sense of guilt is wholesome and vital because it comes from an awakened sense of values. "The sense of guilt is altogether wholesome and noble when it arises from the depth and breadth of a man's appreciation of values."¹ Thus, sense of guilt is that knowledge of what ought to be. There are few today who have a true sense of guilt. We are premature humans--animals grown up. But our civilization has not waited for us to grow up and has now advanced beyond our ideals to handle it. ". . . we stand confused, with more power at our command to achieve possibilities of value than any people ever had, but without a guiding vision of the possibilities we should strive to bring into existence."²

Professor Wieman states that we are now passing over one of the great divides of history. Other civilizations have come up, but they have gone back tottering.

"The masses of men keep coming on; they have already reached the entrance of that narrow defile where death and life await them. Never before in all his long pilgrimage has man so fatefully met these two companions. After that meeting, either death or life will be master of men."³

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1. Wieman: Normative Psychology of Religion, p. 155.
2. Wieman: The Issues of Life, p. 247.
3. Wieman: The Source of Human Good, p. 53.

This is the human predicament. Man is largely not the cause of it for he is recently animal become man, and his civilization has outgrown his religion. Man may not be the cause of it, but he can be the generator of it and the determiner of its solution.

4. Man's Salvation.

Wiemer has defined God as a process which creates created good and interrelates this created good, enriching it with past experience, present activity, and future possibilities. He is a creative process within the realm of nature and can be perceived. It is to this God that Wiemer exhorts us to submit ourselves. Man cannot save himself. It is only by giving himself over completely to that creative process that he can be liberated from his almost sub-human nature.

> It is difficult to know exactly what Wiemer would have man commit himself to. To be consistent with his naturalism, the object of submission is a creative principle in the universe. Others would call this vitality. In line with his epistemology, the object of our commitment may be determined by scientific observation and analysis. The activities of the object of our devotion--God, if known well enough, may thus be accurately predicted. Wiemer insists upon the primacy of the experimental method in enabling man to worship God. He states:

" . . . if observation is understood to include all that we can discover by analyzing the component parts of any perceptual event, then this creative power can be observed. That is to say, it can be discovered by intellectual analysis of observed events, and all intelligent observation is precisely that."¹

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1. Wiemer: "Neo-Orthodoxy and Contemporary Religious Reaction," essay in Religious Liberals Reply, Beacon Press, Editors, p. 11.

He also asserts that man needs non-cognitive myths in enabling him to worship God. These Christian myths are symbols that have profound meaning. (But these myths must guide us to something that can be validated by rational and scientific inquiry. Ultimately then myths fulfill their function and are replaced by knowledge.) One of the outstanding myths is the living Christ. The living Christ is the growth of meaning in each concrete situation.

"It is growth of connections of value which fill the world with depth and height of meaning . . . It is not the work of man. It is not the achievement of conscious purpose. It is the grace of God in Christ Jesus, found of Paul with a shout that rings down the centuries."¹

This myth can now be understood by the aid of rational investigation.

In addition to knowledge as a saving grace is faith. Knowledge is impotent without faith. Faith is not to be understood as a means of knowledge when rational knowledge is inadequate. Faith is not belief; it is an act--an act of submission to God. But man does not need to wait until he knows all about God before he submits himself to God. The fact is, man knows very little about God. What man does know is the richness of experience that God has created by bringing into harmony people and events. This can be seen. Thus man can, with confidence, yield himself to that force which creates. Not to do so is sin. To do so is salvation.

The problem that religion undertakes, then, according to Wieman, is ". . . first, to find that behavior of the universe, and, second, to make that human adaptation to it, which will yield the maxi-

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1. Wieman: "Some Blind Spots Removed," essay in Contemporary Religious Thought, Thomas S. Kepler, Editor, p. 198.

mun good."¹

When man becomes aware and awakened to all the boundless possibilities in life, that is religious experience. "Religion of this original sort is man's groping into the unexplored possibilities of all being in order to win ultimate salvation and escape ultimate destruction."²

There are certain means of finding and submitting oneself to God. One way is by prayer, for prayer is the process of getting into an attitude of submission to the creative event. Another way is by confession of sin. This is vital to religious health. Only by repudiation of any disloyalty to God can there be transformation. Confession is an act of loyalty itself. It is the acknowledging of any disloyalty to the sovereign will of God. Confession also keeps one sensitive and discriminating of the demands of God. Confession of sin enables one to yield himself to these demands.

The results of these means are forgiveness and conversion. Forgiveness of sin is God reaching out to take the individual and weave his activities into a growing system of meaning and value. God's forgiveness is renewed growth of meaning and value in the life of the individual after he has been disloyal. Conversion is that change of personality by which the individual is received into the life of God. "All genuine conversion . . . is a transformation that results from prior growth and issues in further growth."³

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1. Wieman: "The Nature of Religion," essay in Contemporary Religious Thought, p. 23.
2. Ibid., p. 25.
3. Wieman: Normative Psychology of Religion, p. 160.

"The redemptive process is progressive deliverance from bondage to limited objectives, inner conflict, and stagnated spirit."¹ Professor Wieman defines redemption as an awakening of the personality to the physical and social order by submission to the process of creativity.

5. Summary.

This then is man: sprung from animal and still unable to shake off his ancestral heritage, he has awakened to consciousness in being able to communicate with other organisms. He is a religious creature as he is responsive to values. Thus his horizon has expanded and he is capable of great progress. However, his religious qualities have not progressed commensurate with his technological qualities. He has many goods, but not enough good. Thus he is capable of great evil. His only hope of salvation is to submit himself to the supra-human creative process which has created him and his goods. Through the redemptive process of this creativity he may be regenerated and made sensitive and responsive to his surroundings. Thus he will become the member of a great unity which sustains him and which he sustains.

It may be that man will "mount the golden stair . . . and enter into a secret place of the most high where worlds are made and unmade and the utmost splendor of the universe is created."²

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1. Wieman: Normative Psychology of Religion, p. 170.
2. Wieman: "What the World is to Me," Ventures in Belief, p. 101.

D: Summary and Conclusion

Dr. Wieman has not disappointed us in forging ahead with new thought. That he has related naturalism and religion is itself an achievement. His completely empirical approach makes it difficult to comprehend his exact definition of God. God can be known only in events and their relationships. He is the creative force which promotes the greatest good by relating and harmonizing events so that they enhance one another.

Man is a creation of God in that energy has been developed into matter, to life, and then to personality by this creative force. As yet man has not progressed far enough beyond the animal stage, but he has progressed far enough to be conscious of the existence of and the need for submission to God. This causes a dilemma, for man has progressed enough to indulge in created things in such a way as to inhibit creativity, and yet he has not advanced sufficiently to curb such indulgence. In short, technology has developed much faster than man's ability to adjust to it. This is man's sin. This, however, is only a part of the evil in the world today. Anything that opposes creativity is evil. Therefore, fatigue, inertia, conflicting energies, ignorance; all of these are evil.

The salvation of the world and of man rests upon man's response to God, for man is the highest developed organism. This salvation consists of complete submission to God. This commitment is aided by scientific knowledge which enables man to know truth, and by myths which give meaning beyond man's rational comprehension when validated by rational methods. It is to this God that man must dedicate himself if this civilization is to progress to new horizons of meaning and richness of experience. The future holds either a salvation beyond man's conception, or a destruction which might reduce personality to animal nature or less.

CHAPTER II

THE DOCTRINE OF MAN ACCORDING TO REINHOLD NIEBUHR

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A. Introduction

Whereas Dr. Wieman has attempted to mediate a position among almost all religions except traditional Christianity, Dr. Niebuhr uses all other philosophies as illustrations that the Christian tradition is essentially and necessarily true. His analysis of man is both profound and careful.

His views presented here are taken entirely from his Gifford Lectures, now in two volumes entitled The Nature and Destiny of Man. This is not a partial view, however, for these two volumes are a complete statement of his doctrine of man. Dr. Thelen, in her review of Niebuhr's anthropology, states: "In the two volumes of The Nature and Destiny of Man . . . Reinhold Niebuhr's realistic theology finds mature and comprehensive expression."¹ The significance of these lectures is indicated also by Carl F. Henry's tribute:

"The most important work in the field of theological and philosophical anthropology for a generation is Reinhold Niebuhr's The Nature and Destiny of Man . . . which has become the rallying point of a restatement of the doctrine of original sin."²

This presentation will necessarily follow Dr. Niebuhr's de-

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1. Mary Frances Thelen: Man As Sinner, p. 86.
2. Carl F. Henry: The Protestant Dilemma, p. 135.

velopment, for each consideration is understood properly only in the light of what precedes. To rearrange more systematically would distort the exact meaning of his views. Before presenting his formal doctrine of man, his presuppositions of the inadequacy of other views and the principle of interpretation of his own view will be presented. The formal presentation of his doctrine of man will proceed as follows: (1) Man's Essential Nature, (2) Man's Sinful Nature, (3) Man's Regenerate Nature.

B. The Presuppositions which Determine
Niebuhr's Doctrine of Man

1. Inadequate Views of Man's Nature in Respect to Basic Problems.

Dr. Niebuhr presents two facts of man. The first is that man is a child of nature, "compelled by its necessities, driven by its impulses, and confined within the brevity of years. . ."¹ The second is that man is a spirit who stands outside of nature, life, himself, his reason, and the world. That is, man has not only a consciousness, but a self-consciousness which qualifies him for self-transcendence. These two facts are indicated by the different philosophies which either emphasize man's rational capacities and his capacity for self-transcendence and forget his relation to nature, or define man in terms of the natural order and obscure the uniqueness of man.

It is difficult to do justice to both qualities, without a proper principle of interpretation. Dr. Niebuhr accuses modern thinking of inability to do such justice and consequently of having an in-

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1. Reinhold Niebuhr: The Nature and Destiny of Man, Vol. I, p. 3.

accurate and confused view of man. He states:

"Though man has always been a problem to himself, modern man has aggravated that problem by his too simple and premature solutions. Modern man, whether idealistic or naturalistic, whether rationalistic or romantic, is characterized by his simple certainties about himself. . . . modern culture . . . is to be credited with the greatest advances in the understanding of nature and with the greatest confusion in the understanding of man."¹

Dr. Niebuhr traces all modern concepts from two distinctive views of man. One source he calls "classical antiquity." By that he refers to the views of the Graeco-Roman world. From this source came both Idealism and Naturalism with all the admixtures of both. The other source is the Biblical view.

Platonic, Aristotelian, and Stoic thought was that man was to be understood primarily from the standpoint of his abilities to think and reason. Plato and Aristotle held a common rationalism and dualism. In their rationalism they practically identified man's reason with the divine, for reason is identical with God. To them individuality is not significant, for it depends only on the particularity of the body. Thus they were both dualistic and identified the body with evil, assuming the essential goodness of mind or spirit. Stoicism was pantheistic, but agreed with Plato and Aristotle in its completely negative attitude toward the passions and the whole impulsive life of man and thus set reason in contrast to the body.

In contrast, Democritus and Epicurus interpreted man as a part of nature and reduced man to mechanical necessity.

The great emphasis upon man's reason should have incited optimism, but the Classics were pessimistic. They thought of the body as

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1. Ibid., pp. 4,5.

a tomb. History, a series of cycles, was meaningless. Seneca said, "Forgive the world: they are all fools,"¹ and Aristotle confessed that "not to be born is the best thing, and death is better than life."² It is from this background that the traditional views came.

Dr. Niebuhr compares the traditional views--Idealism, Naturalism, and Romanticism-- in respect to three great problems of man's nature: man's creativity, man's individuality, and man's sin.

a. Man's Creativity.

Vitality and form are the two aspects of creation. Vitality is the will or driving force to survive. Form is the species, or the identifying particularity. The human species is different from other creation in that man can participate in creation. There is then an element of creativity in man. Creativity involves both vitality and forms. Thus in addition to these two basic aspects of creation there are: (1) the freedom of spirit to transcend natural forms, within limits, and to direct and redirect vitalities, and (2) the ability of spirit to create a new realm of unity and order.

(1) Rationalistic Idealism.

Idealists identify spirit too simply with reason, and reason too simply with God. Reason is defined either as the source of vitality and form or as that which changes the vitality of nature into genuine creativity. Since man is creative, the obvious conclusion is to identify his creative capacity with reason.

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1. Ibid., p. 10.

2. Ibid., p. 9.

(2) Romantic Naturalism.

Romanticism is a protest against those who glorify reason. Those who classify themselves in this category stress that natural vitality is the source of human creativity. However, they fail to recognize the degree to which the freedom of man's spirit has entered in.

Nietzsche asserted the will to power (vitality) against reason. He justified "instinct" against all disciplines of life. Others, of whom Marx was most outstanding, stated that reason is dishonest in its pretended mastery over the vital impulses of physical life. Niebuhr credits Marx with a real insight into man's nature, for Marx asserted that men seek to do good, but define it in terms of their own interest. He recognized the paradox in humanity that man in following his own interest seeks to protect it with a screen of general interest and universal values. But Marx loses the view when he proposes the cure, for he attributes the dishonesty to the society of classes and thus proposes a reorganization of society. Freud also recognized the dishonesty of reason, but interpreted it in terms of sex, whereas Marx interpreted it in terms of economics.

Another protest against reason is that it is not the organizing and forming principle of human life. Thus, unities and forms of nature are emphasized over against the disintegrating and divisive tendencies of reason. Bergson is the modern representative of this line of thought. According to him, primitive religion is a precaution against self-thinking which he identifies with the power of intelligence. However, he realizes that even primitive religion can become too narrow, because it becomes static and man's imperial tendencies enter in. Thus, Bergson seeks to escape this danger by mysticism. Here, then, according

to Bergson, is the problem of man. He is involved in the paradox of creativity and destructiveness, arising from his ability

" . . . (a) to affirm and to break the unities and forms of natural cohesion; (b) to affirm them excessively so that they become forces of anarchy; (c) to create higher rational unities and realms of coherence but to corrupt these in turn by insinuating partial and narrow loyalties into them."¹

Thus he ascribes to man the ability to create structures of unity and then to use these structures as forces for self-rule. Man can create greater structures of reason and relationships, but again man corrupts these by considering them as ends for self rather than means for others.

All of these naturalistic views err in interpreting the vitality of man. They ascribe to the realm of biological and organic that which is clearly a compound of nature and spirit. As idealism tends to depreciate biological impulse, naturalism tends to appreciate it as pure form without recognizing that human nature knows no animal impulse in its pure form. In man there is a freedom in the natural impulse which animals do not know. Pride of self and contempt of others enter in.

In Marxian philosophy the role of consciousness is depreciated. Dr. Niebuhr says of it: "Matter is not a product of mind, but mind is itself the highest product of matter."² Consciousness is merely the reflection of the balance of interest in which a man stands. Thus Marxianism does not conceive of the real freedom and transcendence of the human spirit. It is unable to understand the real character of human evil. It does not understand man's "will to power" and therefore constructs a society which will satisfy the physical needs of all men as the

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1. Ibid., p. 38.

2. Ibid., p. 47.

answer to man's dilemma.

Thus it is not possible to understand the paradox of human creativity and destructiveness by rationalism or romanticism.

Therefore, according to Dr. Niebuhr, modern culture is forced to choose between four untenable viewpoints:

"(a) It exalts destructive fury because it is vital, as in fascism [Nietzche]; or (b) it imagines a harmony of vital forces in history which the facts belie, as in liberalism; or (c) it admits the dishonest pretensions of rational discipline and the reality of human destructiveness provisionally but hopes for a complete change . . . through a revolutionary reorganization of society, as in Marxism; or (d) it despairs of any basic solution for the problem of vitality and discipline and contents itself with palliatives, as in Freudianism."¹

b. Man's Individuality.

Individuality is a product of both nature and spirit. Nature gives the particularity of the body, but individuality is more than that. Man is different than animal in that he has real and unique individuality not only by the particularity of nature, but by the freedom of the spirit. That is, man's center is beyond himself. "Man is the only animal which can make itself its own object."² Thus man is able to transcend not only nature, but also himself. This enables man to be capable of endless variations, so that no individuals are alike.

". . . human spirituality is sharply distinguished from animal existence by the measure of human freedom and the consequent degree of discrete and unique individuality in man."³

(1) Idealism.

Idealism tends to identify consciousness with mind and to

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1. Ibid., p. 53.

2. Ibid., p. 55.

3. Ibid., p. 56.

equate the highest reaches of conscious mind with a divine or absolute mind. They recognize that the self transcends nature and self. However, self is identified with universal spirit. Hence, selfhood ceases to be true individuality and becomes merely one part of universal mind. "Idealism conceives the self primarily as reason and reason primarily as God."¹

Sin is classified as the inertia of "animal nature." Idealism fails to recognize finiteness as part of human spirituality.

(2) Naturalism.

Naturalism reduces the whole quality of spirit in man to a "stream of consciousness," or to mere mechanical proportions. "Naturalism loses the individual because it does not view life in sufficient depth to comprehend the self-transcendent human spirit."²

(3) Romanticism.

A modern attempt to escape from the universality of reason and from natural causation is Romanticism. This school of thought refers to man's characteristics as feeling, imagination, and will. The non-rational forces in human personality are emphasized, and individuality is related directly to God. That is, man has an immediate relation to God. This, then, absolves the distinction between creature and creator. This is self-deification. This would seem to be highly individualistic, but man cannot bear to think of himself as the center of meaning. Ultimately he must seek support from something greater and more inclusive than himself. Consequently, this pure individualism is

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1. Ibid., p. 76.

2. Ibid., p. 81.

enlarged into a state or nation. "In romantic naturalism the individuality of the person is quickly subordinated to the unique and self-justifying individuality of the social collective."¹

This deification of self or state leads to complete relativism in morals, in religion, and in politics. As Schliermacher said, "If you want to grasp the idea of religion as a factor in the infinite and progressive development of the World Spirit then you must give up the vain and empty desire for one religion."² Niebuhr adds, "This means that the only meaning of life is that there should be a variety of meaning."³

Thus, Romanticism, in correcting Idealism and Naturalism, does recognize the good of creation, but does not recognize the true nature of creation; that it is ruled over by a Creator. Individuality then is lost in collectivism, as the very nature of man seeks for a greater reality outside himself.

Thus today man faces the loss of individuality either by being absorbed by the universality of reason, or by being minimized by natural causality, or by constructing a greater self based upon relativism of Romanticism.

c. Man's Sin.

The easy conscience of modern man is universal, says Dr. Niebuhr, because the essential goodness of man is assumed. The Christian view of salvation is rejected and judged irrelevant because there is no need of it. Man "considers himself the victim of corrupting institu-

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1. Ibid., p. 92.

2. Ibid., p. 86.

3. Ibid.

tions which he is about to destroy or reconstruct, or of the confusions of ignorance which an adequate education is about to overcome."¹ Even in today's chaos man is able to arrive at a view of himself which is obviously contrary to the facts of history. This is done by ascribing evil to an historical source. Marx derived evil from a faulty economic organization. Others attribute evil to the complexity of civilization.

Man turns to some particular event in history or to some specific historical corruption to escape the responsibility of sin. Yet these explanations do not explain how evil has arisen in human history. At the same time they consider either nature or reason virtuous. "Nature and reason are . . . the two gods of modern man, and sometimes the two are one."²

Modern culture's great achievement, the understanding of nature, is also the cause of misunderstanding human nature. Complete trust is given to the scientific method, empirical observation and mathematical calculation. Man interprets himself in terms of natural causality or unique rationality, but entirely overlooks man's essential nature: that man has a freedom of spirit which transcends both nature and reason.

(1) Idealism.

Idealists identify spirit and reason too easily and do not understand the relation between nature and reason. Consequently they overlook the fact that human freedom actually transcends that which is commonly known as rational. In addition they depreciate nature and con-

.

1. Ibid., p. 94.

2. Ibid., p. 95.

sign it to evil.

Professor Whitehead, for instance, believes that the root of evil lies in "pragmatic reason," which he defines as that reason which is connected with nature. Sin is the inertia of this intelligence.

To Spinoza the Fall signified that reason is unable to control passions completely. According to Leibnitz nature and reason are in harmony with each other, but not perfectly because of the friction caused by "the inertia of matter."

Idealists see the problem of human freedom more clearly than naturalists. They are aware of the paradox of man's involvement in and yet transcendence over nature. However, they cannot define sin as spiritual because they regard spirit as essentially good.

(2) Naturalism.

Naturalists recognize that reason is not harmless, but fail to see that freedom is the source of creativity as well as vice. They see the "natural-will-to-live," but fail to see the "spiritual-will-to-live." They call men back to the simple harmony of nature. With keen insight Dr. Niebuhr states that they "lead man back to the laws of nature and its harmony but it is not explained how he could ever have departed from them."¹

Others, such as John Dewey, appeal to the scientific method in order to observe things disinterestedly. In this way, he propounds, self-interest will be cured. He attributes evil, or anti-social conduct, to the "cultural lag," that is, to the failure of social science to keep abreast of technology. New educational techniques are his cure. Conse-

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1. Ibid., p. 106.

quently, scientific-freed intelligence could unbiasedly attack institutional and traditional injustices and thus free intelligence more.

This is the easy conscience of modern culture. It is based primarily upon moral optimism. However, even the pessimists are of easy conscience, for they do not hold man responsible for the evils in human nature. Modern culture has given many reasons for evil which contribute to this easy conscience. The conflicting views, however, testify that they are not adequate. Each has hold of a half-truth. "They failed to understand the human spirit in its full dimension of freedom."¹

"Neither naturalism nor idealism can understand that man is free enough to violate both the necessities of nature and the logical systems of reason."²

Dr. Niebuhr affirms Luther's view in stating: "The final sin of man . . . is his unwillingness to concede that he is a sinner."³

2. The Adequate Principle of Interpretation.

The failure of modern thought is "the lack of a principle of interpretation which can do justice to both the height of human self-transcendence and the organic unity between the spirit of man and his physical life."⁴

Dr. Niebuhr presents the Christian view of man, which he qualifies as the Biblical view, as the correct principle of interpretation "which neither reduces the stature of man to the level of nature, nor yet destroys it in an empty and undifferentiated eternity."⁵

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1. Ibid., p. 122.
4. Ibid., p. 123.

2. Ibid., p. 124.
5. Ibid., p. 126.

3. Ibid., p. 121.

The Christian view is based upon a religion of revelation in which God discloses Himself. Niebuhr states:

"From the standpoint of an understanding of human nature, the significance of a religion of revelation lies in the fact that both the transcendence of God over and His intimate relation to the world are equally emphasized."¹

That such a revelation is true is indicated by private revelation. Private revelation is the testimony in the consciousness of every person that his life touches a reality beyond himself which is deeper and higher than nature. Characteristics of this are the sense of dependence and the sense of being known, commanded, and judged from beyond ourselves. This consciousness, or conscience, is clarified by the Biblical faith as a relation between God and man, for it is a fact that man is judged and yet there is no sufficiently transcendent point in his own life from which judgment can take place.

Without this revelation, the private revelation of conscience becomes falsified and is explained as social approval of the judgment of one's own "best self." The conclusion then is, "I am justified."

Revelation is divided into two distinct categories, general and special. General revelations are creation, and the prophetic-historical. General revelation contributes three elements to human consciousness: (1) the sense of reverence for a majesty, (2) the sense of moral obligation, and (3) the longing for forgiveness. The doctrine of the God of creation confirms the fact that creation is not evil nor meaningless. Natural causation is rejected as being the rule of life. The errors of idealism are also overcome, for creation is created out of nothing and

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1. Ibid.

is not a formation by mind of formless stuff. The doctrine of God as judge is revealed by prophetic and historical revelation. The prophets declared that catastrophes come because man was unwilling to acknowledge his creatureliness and dependence upon God and tried to establish a security to which man has no right.

"The serious view which the Bible takes of this sin of man's rebellion against God naturally leads to an interpretation of history in which judgment upon sin becomes the first category of interpretation."¹

This view is justified when the faith in the God of the prophets is assumed.²

Such an interpretation needs one addition: that is, can and does the Divine overcome this tragic character of history and of man? The good news of the Gospel of Christ is that God takes the sinfulness of man into Himself, and overcomes in His own heart what cannot be overcome in human life. This is special revelation.

"Christian faith regards the revelation in Christ as final because this ultimate problem is solved by the assurance that God takes man's sin upon Himself and into Himself and that without this divine initiative and this divine sacrifice there could be no reconciliation and no easing of man's uneasy conscience. This revelation is final not only as a category of interpreting the total meaning of history but also as a solution for the problem of the uneasy conscience in each individual."³

Dr. Niebuhr asserts emphatically that Christ can be thought of properly only as a unity of two natures. He is the revelation of the character of God and the revelation of the true character of man. And basically He is the revelation of God's atonement and justification de-

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1. Ibid., p. 140.

2. Cf. Ibid., p. 141. Dr. Niebuhr develops this affirmation by stating that the principle of interpreting history must be outside of history.

3. Ibid., p. 143.

claring to men that God's final word is not one of judgment but of mercy. Dr. Niebuhr insists that this "is an absolutely essential pre-supposition for the understanding of human nature and human history."¹

C. The Formal Presentation of Niebuhr's Doctrine of Man

After showing that all other views but the Christian view of man are inadequate, and establishing his principle of interpretation, Dr. Niebuhr defines man's essential nature, analyzes man as a sinner, and sets forth man's regenerate life in Christ.

1. Man's Essential Nature.

" . . . modern culture fails to resolve the problems of vitality and form in human nature (creativity), of the meaning of individuality, and of the origin of evil," says Dr. Thelen in commenting on Dr. Niebuhr's book.² The first two are understood in the light of the fact that man is made in the image of God. That is, man is created as both finite and free, both body and spirit. Creativity is more than either reason or instinct, or nature. Man stands "in the juncture of nature and spirit."³ Creativity involves both form and vitality. However, man is more than either reason and nature, for he not only transcends nature, but he transcends himself. Therefore creativity is understood neither on the basis of reason or of nature, but man is interpreted as a unity of will in which human vitality, natural and spiritual, is set under the ordering will of God.

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1. Ibid., p. 148.

2. Mary Frances Thelen: Man As Sinner, p. 87.

3. Niebuhr: op. cit., p. 17.

From this view it is obvious that neither the harmony of nature nor reason is adequate to control human life. In addition, neither matter nor reason is essentially evil, for they are part of man; man is God's creation; and God's creation is good.

In regards to individuality, man viewed as creature again is the only adequate view. Idealism equates man with absolute mind so that the individual is swallowed up in the universal. Naturalism reduces man to a natural "stream of consciousness" where the uniqueness of the individual is insignificant. Romanticism, in attempting to correct these errors, deifies man by failing to distinguish between creature and Creator. Consequently man, in seeking something greater than himself, has deified a collective group--a nation or state.

The adequate view is that individuality is a product of both nature and spirit. Nature contributes particularity and spirit contributes freedom. Man is able to transcend himself which enables him to be capable of endless variation. And man will never, even beyond history, lose his particularity nor his uniqueness. Here is real individuality!

This then is man's essential nature. As a creature of God, he is both body and spirit. He is finite and free. Man is involved in the necessities of life and yet he can look beyond the necessities and can to a certain extent control those necessities. This freedom, enabling man to will, and to a certain degree determine his destiny, is the very situation which precipitates sin. It is from this essential nature of man that Dr. Niebuhr also declares that the origin and nature of evil is adequately treated.

2. Man's Sinful Nature.

"The uniqueness of the Biblical approach to the human problem," writes Dr. Niebuhr, "lies in its subordination of the problem of finiteness to the problem of sin."¹ It is to the problem of sin that he directs the major part of his book.

a. The Occasion of Sin.

Man's essential nature is the occasion for man's sin. Man, bound to nature and of free spirit, seeks to escape the necessities of nature. Or, aware of limitless possibilities because of his freedom, he withdraws from that freedom by reverting to the harmonies of nature. The paradox of man's nature is the occasion of anxiety which precipitates sin. "In short, man, being both free and bound, both limited and limitless, is anxious. Anxiety is the inevitable concomitant of the paradox of freedom and finiteness in which man is involved."²

Man's very nature, finiteness and freedom, though not being evil (for it is God's creation), is the situation leading to sin, for it causes anxiety. Anxiety is not sin either, but is the forerunner of sin. It is not sin, for faith could overcome the tendency of self-seeking. Also it is not sin because it is the basis of all creativity, for man is anxious not only about his limitedness, but also about his limitlessness. He does not know his possibilities, and therefore cannot regard anything as perfectly done. Consequently, man cannot rest contented upon any of his achievements. "Man may, in the same moment, be anxious because he has not become what he ought to be; and also anxious lest he cease to be

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1. Ibid., p. 178.

2. Ibid., p. 182.

all."¹ Thus, anxiety may lead to creativity or destruction.

Man's essential nature, then, is the occasion of man's sin.

b. The Nature of Sin.

The paradox of man's nature, his finiteness and freedom, is the basis of man's sin and of his achievements. This fact sets the stage for further examination and definition of man's sin. The anxiety caused by this paradox results in lack of trust in God. Man in attempting to appease his anxiety makes himself the center of his loyalty. Thus, man's basic sin is unbelief. He refuses to trust God implicitly to resolve the tension of finiteness and freedom. This sin is of two types generally. Man may attempt to deny his nature, that is, pride, or he may try to escape from his freedom, which is sensuality.

(1) The Sin of Pride.

" . . . pride is more basic than sensuality and . . . the latter is, in some way, derived from the former," declares Dr. Niebuhr.² In relating this basic sin to the observable behaviour of men, he analyzes pride according to four distinctions: the pride of power, of knowledge, of virtue, and of spirit.

(a) On the surface, pride of power is of two types. The first type is prompted by a sense of security, by those who have much power and assume that they will always be that way. The second type is prompted by a sense of insecurity, by those who seek power to guarantee their

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1. Ibid., p. 184.

2. Ibid., p. 186. Note: Niebuhr quotes Augustine, Pascal, Aquinas, Luther, Calvin to illustrate that this conforms with the traditional Christian view.

security, even at the expense of others. Greed is a characteristic of this second type. Modern technology has encouraged this lust, for it has seemed to conquer nature, thus enabling man to conquer that which seems to ultimately conquer him in death. However, Dr. Niebuhr considers the sense of insecurity the cause of all pride of power. Even those who are established in power increase the danger and fear of falling for they either incite others to oppose them, or fear that no one will be able to perpetuate their efforts. The uncertainties of society, of history, and of death all incite a reaction of pride of power.

"Thus man seeks to make himself God because he is betrayed by both his greatness and his weakness; and there is no level of greatness and power in which the lash of fear is not at least one strand in the whip of ambition."¹

(b) "Intellectual pride is . . . the pride of reason which forgets that it is involved in a temporal process and imagines itself in complete transcendence over history."² This is illustrated by philosophers who insist that their views are final, or who like to think that their view is uniquely their own thought. Or again, intellectual pride is obvious when one is unable to recognize limitations in himself that he sees in others. Whoever opposes that one's views is vehemently judged as incorrect. Intellectual pride then is caused by the temptations of man's freedom and man's finiteness. His freedom gives him great concern for finality of truth. His finiteness causes him to assert his truth against all competitors.

(c) Moral pride, or pride of virtue, is akin to intellectual pride in that one feels that his position of righteousness is the final

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1. Ibid., p. 194.

2. Ibid., p. 195.

position and that all others should conform. The pyramid of this pride is when man no longer has need of God. This sin is the worst and most destructive of all sin. "The whole history of racial, national, religious, and other social struggles is a commentary on the objective wickedness and social miseries which result from self-righteousness."¹

(d) The fruit of moral pride is spiritual pride. "The ultimate sin is the religious sin of making the self-deification implied in moral pride explicit."² This is manifest in those who claim that God has given them unique truth, and because of that, they are more righteous than others.

All of this pride involves deception, primarily of self. In order to deceive oneself, one deceives others in order to corroborate the self-esteem which he is protecting. This deception is not done primarily by ignorance. The juncture of nature and spirit creates a general state of confusion, and that confusion incites deception. Yet, in moments of despair, one's deception and confusion are lifted and he sees himself as he really is. This very realization of truth about himself causes man to deceive others to help him deceive himself.

"All efforts to impress our fellowmen, our vanity, our display of power or of goodness must, therefore, be regarded as revelations of the fact that sin increases the insecurity of the self by veiling its weakness with veils which may be torn aside. The self is afraid of being discovered in its nakedness behind these veils and of being recognized as the author of the veiling deceptions. Thus sin compounds the insecurity of nature with a fresh insecurity of spirit."³

(2) The Sin of Sensuality.

"Without question Biblical religion defines sin as primarily

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1. Ibid., p. 200.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p. 207.

pride and self-love . . ."1 However, because sensuality is more apparent, it is usually condemned most harshly.

Greek thought even as it entered Christianity attributed evil to animal passions, with sex as the symbol of lust. Paul considered lust a consequence of and punishment for the more basic sin of pride and self-deification. Sensuality is a secondary consequence of man's rebellion against God. Sensuality is both self-love expressed in terms of indulgence, and an attempt to escape from self by indulging in that which will place man's center outside of himself. "It [sensuality] betrays an uneasy conscience . . ."2 Thus it may be either a desire to enhance the ego or to escape from it. It is obvious that man's sex passion exceeds the requirement for procreation. The impulse is something different from animal impulses. It enters into the spirit of man. ". . . the instincts of sex are particularly effective tools for both the assertion of the self and the flight from the self."3

Finally, sex may become the means of escaping from the tensions of life. The important part sex plays in man's relationship to God is illustrated by the account of the Fall in Genesis. Sin was primarily disobedience to God, but a consequence was man's consciousness of sexuality. The Freudian thought that sex guilt is caused by repression overlooks the cause of the repression. Of course, undue repression is harmful and aggravates the sex problem. The real answer is that sex itself is not sinful, but that man, losing his true center in God, falls into sensuality of which sex is the most obvious expression.

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1. Ibid., p. 228.

2. Ibid., p. 234.

3. Ibid., p. 237.

" . . . sex reveals sensuality to be first another and final form of self-love, secondly an effort to escape self-love by the deification of another and finally as an escape from the futilities of both forms of idolatry by a plunge into unconsciousness."¹

Both pride and sensuality then are products of man's anxiety. Man falls into pride when he tries to raise his finite existence to infinite significance. He falls into sensuality when he tries to escape his freedom by losing himself in some natural vitality.

c. The Inevitability and Responsibility of Sin.

Dr. Niebuhr accuses both the "moralist" and the "literalist" of obscuring the true issue of sin. He sums up all moralistic views as Pelagian and arraigns them on the charge that they have minimized the rule of sin by attempting to solve the obvious paradox of inevitability and responsibility for sin. In attempting to place the responsibility for sin squarely upon man's shoulders they have defined will as essentially free. The bias toward evil is not man's responsibility but is attributed to the "inertia of nature." This imposed bias is not sin, for sin is the conscious defiance of God's will. Original sin is described negatively by these men--that is, that a superhuman quality was removed. Therefore, according to this view, actions not consciously perverse would not be condemned, and the responsibility of sin would be removed from man.

The literalistic error is classified as Augustinian. Their mistake, according to Dr. Niebuhr, is to interpret original sin as an inherited taint--that man's essential nature has actually been changed. The inevitability of sin is changed to an historical sin. Adam is the

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1. Ibid., p. 239.

generic father of sinners and not only representative man. This view also tends to remove the responsibility of sin from man.

Dr. Niebuhr attempts to mediate the positions of the Pelagians and the Augustinians by redefining the occasion of sin and effect of sin upon a person's will. In so doing he defines sin as inevitable and yet as man's responsibility. He does recognize the seeming absurdity of the Christian view of sin: "The whole crux of the doctrine of original sin lies in the seeming absurdity of the conception of free-will which underlies it."¹ He then states the Christian view, declaring that it is built upon the Pauline doctrine: ". . . the will is free in the sense that man is responsible for his sin, and is not free in the sense that he can, of his own will, do nothing but evil."²

Sin is neither a necessity of man's nature nor a caprice of his will. It comes from a defect in man's will, and as it is from man's will, and will presupposes freedom, the defect cannot be blamed upon a defect in man's nature.

This is Dr. Niebuhr's dialectic. Man as spirit transcends the world and himself. This transcendence is the basis of his freedom. This transcendence is also the basis of his temptation, for in his freedom he stands within the necessities of nature and can observe his dependence upon it. Consequently, he is anxious. His reaction to his anxiety is to try to overcome his dependence upon nature, to exalt himself rather than to trust himself in subjection to the will of Him who created him as a finite, spiritual creature. The self does not have the

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1. Ibid., p. 243.

2. Ibid., p. 244.

faith to trust itself to God's will and attempts to overcome the anxiety by itself. Man then increases his insecurity rather than curing it, for he points himself toward a false center in life, thus defeating his very purpose. This false center is the mother of pride, of injustice, and of sensuality. The primal sin is lack of trust in God. This is the sin of unbelief. It is obvious that this unbelief is neither from ignorance nor from necessity, but is caused by man's freedom.

However, Dr. Niebuhr goes on to state, the Biblical view adds to this. The idea of inevitability is caused not only by the situation in which man stands because of his essential nature. Evil enters this very situation prior to any human action. This is the Biblical figure of the devil. Even Adam's sin was not the first, for the devil first tried to overcome his own finiteness by asserting himself. Thus Niebuhr concludes that "the situation of finiteness and freedom would not lead to sin if sin were not already introduced into the situation."¹ This is the paradox of the inevitability and responsibility of sin.

To affirm this, Professor Niebuhr appeals to experience. The remorse or repentance that a person has after he sins testifies that man is responsible for the act. It is true of course that some have only complacency, but the fervency with which these protect their complacency reveals their uneasy consciences. The Pharisees, in protecting their righteousness, sent Jesus to the cross. The element of sacrifice in

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1. Ibid., p. 254.

different religions testifies that sin can be understood truly only in the relation of a person to God and that man feels responsible for his sin. Even the saintliest people are aware that they are not free from sin. And the more saintly they become the more conscious they become of sin which they commit. Their continuous repentance testifies to their sense of responsibility for sin, and also the inevitableness of sin.

In conclusion, it is within man's freedom that he sins. Yet here is the paradox; man sins, it is inevitable, yet he participates in the sin and realizes it. This is freedom. "Man is most free in the discovery that he is not free."¹

d. Man's Present State and Original Righteousness.

There is a contrast between man's essential nature and what he actually is. There is the sense of a conflict between what man is, and what he ought to be. Total depravity, which interprets man as knowing no good, distorts the real issue. This distortion has come from those who adhere to the doctrine of an historical Fall. "When the Fall is made an event in history rather than a symbol of an aspect of every historical moment in the life of man, the relation of evil to goodness in that moment is obscured."²

(1) The Relation of Original Righteousness to Man's Present State.

Essential nature is composed of two elements: man's natural endowments and man's freedom of spirit. Although it is not precise to distinguish between them strictly as to their expression, yet it is ob-

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1. Ibid., p. 260.

2. Ibid., p. 269.

vious that there are certain laws or regulations for both. Man's nature is guided by and made harmonious by certain natural laws. Man's spirit has also certain laws which are for the purpose of harmony. These laws of the spirit which are necessities of freedom are faith, hope, and love. Man needs faith, for in his freedom he seeks security beyond nature, which cannot give adequate security. Hope is a derivative of faith projected into the future. Without it the world would hold only terror. Love is also dependent upon faith and is essential for harmony in the world. Love presupposes faith, for one needs a faith in God to free himself from self that he may love. "Love thy neighbor" is preceded by "Love thy God."

These three virtues are basic requirements of man's freedom. They exist as laws because man does not obey them rightly. The fact that he realizes them as laws in his life indicates that man is aware of good. These requirements are man's original righteousness. Original righteousness is not a question of historical chronology, but is that law of freedom of which man is conscious. It is not an historical state of perfection but a consciousness of original perfection. This consciousness is not a possession of perfection but the memory of perfection. This memory is God's law written upon man's heart.

This of course radically affects the traditional view of man's original perfection, historical Fall, and his resulting depravity. To Dr. Niebuhr, perfection before the Fall is perfection before the act,¹ and it is not a possessed perfection, but a demanding perfection. Man's

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1. Cf. Ibid., p. 278. Dr. Niebuhr defines "act" as any thought or motion of self for its own protection.

depravity then is not total in that he does not know good, but is total in that he does know good and does not do it.

This brings one to the core of Dr. Niebuhr's view. Man's essential nature enables him to know the demands of original righteousness. His essential nature is the occasion of sin. But this sin is not known by the self until after the act when the self takes a position outside the self (as enabled by its essential nature), and becomes conscious of wrong action.¹ Therefore, man does not know sin until after the act. Adam, says Niebuhr, was sinless before he acted and sinful in his first recorded act. "This is a symbol for the whole of human history."²

Thus, original righteousness is co-existent with man's moral depravity. Man is not completely depraved in that he is aware of original righteousness as the law of his life. He is depraved in that he knows it but does not do it. Therefore, original righteousness exists in history as moral law.

(2) The Nature of Original Righteousness.

The nature of original righteousness is summed up in Jesus' commandment: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind," and "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."³ This commandment of love demands a harmony between self and God, with self, and between self and neighbor. If such

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1. Cf. Ibid., p. 279. Niebuhr adds the fact that, unfortunately, man often judges himself not on what he does, but upon what he ought to do. His sense of oughtness justifies him. Moralistic Christianity makes the mistake of defining men according to their ideals.
2. Ibid., p. 280.
3. Matthew 22:37-39 (American Standard Version).

a condition were actually so, there would be no need for a command. If there were not a sense of what the "thou shalt" should be, the command would be irrelevant.

Here then is man's locus of righteousness. He does not possess it but knows that he ought. Man's original righteousness is to him original law. It is of three parts:

(a) "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God" is man's perfect relation to God in which complete obedience is made possible by love. This is trust; it is perfect belief in God. This law is basic for it is a faith that produces hope and love. Niebuhr states:

"Faith in the wisdom of God is thus a prerequisite of love because it is the condition without which man is anxious and is driven by his anxiety into vicious circles of self-sufficiency and pride."¹

But this faith is not a simple possibility of human existence. Man never perfectly trusts God. "Freedom from anxiety . . . is an ultimate possibility which man as sinner denies in his actions."²

(b) The second command--". . . with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind"--is for a unity of self in love. Although sinful man is well aware that this unity would give good health, and although man would intend to do it, yet he never succeeds in doing anything with all his heart, soul, and mind. Anxious self is centered in self and can offer only coerced obedience. Thus the perfect harmony of self is possible only if there is perfect love toward God.

(c) The law of neighbor is also a derivative of love toward God. Man's anxiety inhibits him from a genuine concern for his neighbor.

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1. Ibid., p. 289.

2. Ibid., p. 290.

The law of love, then, toward God and toward others is the requirement of human freedom. If it is perfectly fulfilled it supercedes justice. But it remains as a moral requirement because man does not perfectly obey. "Love is the law of freedom, but man is not completely free; and such freedom as he has is corrupted by sin."¹

(3) Summary.

In conclusion, this is man's original righteousness and present state, according to Dr. Niebuhr:

(a) Man's essential nature is nature and spirit; organic structure and freedom.

(b) Man's sin is occasioned by his essential nature plus a present-existing force of evil.

(c) Man's essential nature enables him to know the requirements of righteousness. It is inevitable that he fail in keeping them, yet his very knowledge places him in a position of responsibility for them.

(d) These requirements are man's original righteousness. The requirements of his freedom are faith, hope, and love.

(e) This righteousness is not completely lost in man's Fall, but remains with sinful man as the knowledge of what he ought to be, as the law of his freedom.

(f) Man is sinful, yet he knows the ultimate requirements of his nature as free spirit. He is not fully conscious of the nature of these requirements; yet when they are defined he is not ready to meet them.

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1. Ibid., p. 296.

3. Man's Regenerate Nature.

Every system of thought that takes history seriously presents some solution to the problem of history. The solution depends upon the analysis of the problem. The analysis by naturalism is that any departure from the harmony of nature is chaotic. Therefore the solution is to return to the harmony of nature. To them all truth may be known by observation and reason; thus any appeal to knowledge by faith is sheer nonsense. Death is the end of history for each man. Yet, it is significant that it has been necessary to beguile men from the fear of death; not that man fears extinction, but he fears what awaits him after death.

Idealism and mysticism attribute the problem of man to the evil of matter. Their solution is to resort to pure reason or to contemplation, and their yearning is to be freed from history. Their eternity means a loss of particularity and individuality.

Dr. Niebuhr states unequivocally that the problem of sin is the basic problem of life. It is to be expected then that the solution to his problem will be one that handles the sin question adequately in history and beyond history.

a. The Basis of Regeneration.

Jesus Christ, the disclosure of God's mercy, is the ultimate, final, and sufficient basis of man's regeneration. This is true Messianism. Not every view of Messianism has agreed with this. The Jewish nationalistic view was that God would come to the Jews, vindicating them from their enemies and firmly establishing them as God's kingdom of righteousness. The ethical view is that God will save the

righteous and destroy the evil ones.

Jesus rejected both of these views in that He came not to rule as king of the Jews, nor to redeem the righteous. The revelation of God in Christ Jesus is a revelation of sacrificial love which redeems the unrighteous. Niebuhr states:

"The final enigma of history is . . . not how the righteous will gain victory over the unrighteous, but how the evil in every good and the unrighteousness of the righteous is to be overcome."¹

The Christ of the Cross is God's supreme and final revelation, for this is the true basis of regeneration.

This resolves the problem of the prophets who proclaimed with passionate certainty the wrath and justice of God but were less certain about His mercy. The contradiction of justice and mercy baffled them. God's suffering love resolved this contradiction, for He voluntarily accepted the consequence of sin. In this God does not abrogate His justice, for God takes the consequences of His wrath and judgment into Himself.

This is God's wisdom, the wisdom of the Cross. The highest justice of God is the holiness of His love. This does not mean that forgiveness and justice are one. God overcame evil by displaying in history His purpose to take the judgment of evil upon Himself. This emphasizes the seriousness of sin rather than minimizing it. It is on this basis that man despairs of himself and re-centers his life in divine, sacrificial love. Man's very nature of freedom which enables him to transcend history necessitates a solution to his problem which is

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1. Reinhold Niebuhr: The Nature and Destiny of Man, Vol. II, p. 43.

beyond history. He finds justification in the love of Christ, for it is understood from a point beyond history. The sacrificial love of Christ is an act in history but it cannot justify itself in history. From the standpoint of history, mutual love, and not sacrificial love, is the highest good. Sacrificial love is a love which "seeketh not its own." Such a love cannot maintain itself in history. Not only would it suffer at the hands of evil, but justice in history is balanced by competing wills and interest, eliminating anyone who does not participate in the balance. The love of Christ can be justified only beyond history. It is this revelation alone that can re-center man properly. Here is the point where the sinlessness of Christ is expressed most clearly. The Cross is the point in history where the sinful rivalry of self against self is cast aside.

"The Cross symbolizes the perfection of agape which transcends all particular norms of justice and mutuality in history. It rises above history and seeks conformity to the Divine Love rather than harmony with other human interests . . ."¹

A life which is not in conformity with the actual situation in history and thus sacrifices its life cannot be measured in terms of history. The gain of such action can be measured only in terms of eternity.

"The perfection of agape as symbolized in the Cross can neither be simply reduced to the limits of history, nor yet dismissed as irrelevant because it transcends history. . . . It is the final norm of a human nature which has no final norm in history because it is not completely contained in history."²

In this sense Christ is the second Adam as well as the Son of God.

"Christ's perfection reestablishes the virtue which Adam had before the

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1. Ibid., p. 74.

2. Ibid., p. 75.

Fall."¹

This revelation requires a response of faith and contrition: faith because it is contrary and beyond the comprehension of man's reasoning power, and contrition because only in despair of self will man be wrested from the sin of self-centeredness.

"Faith and contrition are so closely correlated because it is the apprehension of the truth beyond ourselves in faith which makes us contritely conscious of our previous effort to complete the structure of truth from within ourselves; and this contrition in turn validates the truth of faith."²

The only adequate basis for man's supreme problem of sin is the revelation of the Christ of the Cross. It is revelation because it is God-initiated and is known only by faith. It is adequate because it resolves the problem of justice and mercy showing that God's justice is satisfied in Himself. It is adequate because it is the only norm of righteousness that can meet man's problem, for it is beyond history and yet in history giving the proper center of man's life in sacrificial love. It neither ignores history nor negates history but fulfills history, for God has entered history and has disclosed the meaning of history to man. Christ is the wisdom of God.

b. The Nature of Regeneration.

The primary result of man's regeneration is one of peace. The disclosure of God's wisdom in the Cross of Christ is mercy. When man is re-centered in Christ he is reconciled to God. Dr. Niebuhr gives three steps in the regenerated life, basing them upon Galatians 2:20:

(1) "I am crucified with Christ." Self must be shattered and re-

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1. Ibid., p. 76.

2. Ibid., p. 63.

centered in Christ. (2) "Nevertheless I live" is the experience of new self-hood. ". . . the vicious circle of self-centeredness has been broken."¹ (3) "Yet not I; but Christ liveth in me" indicates that the new self is a result of grace, and not actual achievement, but intention. The divine grace is imputed perfection, for Paul adds, ". . . and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith of the Son of God . . ." The peace of conversion is not the contentment of achievement but the knowledge of forgiveness.²

However, Niebuhr asserts that an actual change is effected. The Cross of Christ is not only a disclosure of God's wisdom, but also of God's power resulting in a newness of life. "Grace is the power of God over man. Grace is on the other hand the power of God in man . . ."³ This idea of a source of power beyond man agrees with the conviction that human life and history cannot complete themselves. The power is the presence of the Holy Spirit.

The newness of life, however, is very limited according to Niebuhr. Sin is overcome in principle but not in actuality, for as long as man remains in history he remains in the tensions of life which make perfection impossible. Christ spoke of two aspects of His kingdom--it has come, and it will come. Between these two periods of time is an interim period in which man is yet subject to the necessities of his nature.

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1. Ibid., p. 110.

2. Cf. Ibid., pp. 101,102. Dr. Niebuhr refers to Romans 6:11-12, Ephesians 4:17-32; 5:8, and Galatians 5:24-26 to show that this is a distinctly Biblical doctrine.

3. Ibid., p. 99.

"In thus conceiving history after Christ as an interim between the disclosure of its true meaning and the fulfillment of that meaning . . . a continued element of inner contradiction in history is accepted as its perennial characteristic."¹

Inasmuch as man as man must continue to dwell in history until history is fulfilled, he must live according to the contradiction of history. It is on this basis that Dr. Niebuhr has constructed an "interim ethics" in which man centers himself in sacrificial love (agape) and conducts himself according to mutual love and justice. Even the best of saints cannot meet the demands of sacrificial love. In the light of this, Niebuhr contends that to live according to mutual love and justice is sufficient for man in history.

". . . it is not even right to insist that every action of the Christian must conform to agape, rather than to the norms of relative justice and mutual love by which life is maintained and conflicting interests are arbitrated in history."²

Dr. Niebuhr's view of the regenerated life, then, is that although sin is not completely eradicated, yet man does lay hold of the resources as well as the revelation of God by faith. Even so, man is yet always conscious of his sin. The primary result of regeneration is peace. This peace is not a product of achievement but of reconciliation. Perfection will never be within history but only upon the fulfillment of history when God's kingdom comes.

"To understand that the Christ in us is not a possession but a hope, that perfection is not a reality but an intention; that such peace as we know in this life is never purely the peace of achievement but the serenity of being 'completely known and all forgiven'; all this does not destroy moral ardour or responsibility. On the contrary it is the only way of preventing premature completions of life, or arresting the new and more terrible pride which may find its roots in the soil of humility, and of saving the Christian life from the intolerable pretension of saints who have forgotten that they are sinners."³

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1. Ibid., p. 49.

2. Ibid., p. 88.

3. Ibid., p. 125.

c. The Fulfillment of Regeneration.

"Everything in human life and history moves toward an end."¹
Here is the tension between time and eternity. It is here that man's finiteness ceases to exist and where his freedom finds fulfillment.

The Biblical idea of the end is wrapped up in the symbol of the second coming of Christ. This must be understood symbolically rather than literally for if it were literal then history would be fulfilled despite the persisting conditions of finiteness. Dr. Niebuhr presents three fundamental Biblical symbols of the end.

(a) The return of Christ is really "an expression of faith in the sufficiency of God's sovereignty over the world and history . . ." ²
The final consummation of history lies beyond the conditions of the temporal process.

(b) The last judgment symbolizes the fact that Christ will be the judge of history--that is, that man will be judged by his own ideal of possibility. The judgment will be upon sin and not finiteness. This refutes all conceptions of history which assert that redemption will be by self or by growth. This produces fear, for man will be judged by an absolute standard.

(c) The resurrection of the body symbolizes the fact that eternity will fulfill and not annul the richness and variety of human individuality. It also implies that only the coming of God's kingdom can solve the problem of man--finiteness and freedom.

Dr. Niebuhr admits that the Christian view of the fulfillment

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1. Ibid., p. 287.

2. Ibid., p. 290.

of history is quite incomprehensible, but affirms that

"The Christian hope of the consummation of life and history is less absurd than the alternate doctrines which seek to comprehend and to effect the completion of life by some power or capacity inherent in man and in his history."¹

In summary, Dr. Niebuhr's view of the regenerated nature of man is that it is based upon the sacrificial love of God as revealed in Christ upon the Cross; that this love both atones for and breaks the principle of sin; that as long as man remains in history he is subject to the contradictions of finiteness and freedom even though he experiences newness of life; and that sacrificial love will culminate in a fulfillment of history which is beyond history of such nature that human individuality will be filled with meaning.

D. Summary and Conclusion

It is evident that Dr. Niebuhr has presented contemporary religious thinkers with a penetrating and profound philosophy and apologia of man and the Christian faith. He has brought all secular philosophies to judgment before the bar of logic, showing that metaphysically both Idealism and Naturalism have presented only half-truths, one asserting the essential goodness of mind and ignoring nature, the other guilty of exactly the reverse. He has also ably shown that epistemologically neither Rationalism nor Romanticism have discovered the fount of truth, for pure reason is neither pure nor infinite, and on the other hand there is certainly more to life than the harmony of nature.

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1. Ibid., p. 298.

The true principle of understanding man and the universe is that the transcendent God who is beyond history has disclosed Himself in history making Himself the object of man's devotion and revealing truth beyond man's natural understanding. This revelation is the Cross of Christ, showing God to be a God of mercy as well as justice.

These presuppositions—the inadequate and adequate principles of the interpretation of man—clarify man's nature. In the light of these, the formal doctrine of Niebuhr's view of man is presented.

He insists that in order to understand man's sin it is necessary to understand man's created nature. By the creative hand of God he is both body and spirit, finite and free. It is this very nature that is the occasion of man's sin, for man, aware of his limitless possibilities, seeks to escape the necessities of nature. This paradox causes anxiety which precipitates sin, for man seeks to resolve his anxiety either by exalting his freedom or by indulging in nature. Either way, he centers himself in himself. Basically this is unbelief in God, for he refuses to trust in God. The nature of his sin is either pride or sensuality.

This sin is not a result of ignorance nor of natural or historical causality. It is a result of man's choice, for he knows to do better. That he does not do better shows that sin is inevitable. That he knows to do better testifies that man is responsible for his sin.

This knowledge of the better is man's original righteousness which is with him as law. His original righteousness is selfless love. Its existence as a "thou shalt" declares that it exists as law and is not fulfilled by man. The myth of Adam's Fall symbolizes the truth of this, for his original righteousness consisted of a "thou shalt not" which he disobeyed.

From the beginning of self-consciousness, then, man has been depraved, not totally in the sense that he knows no good, but totally in that he had never completely fulfilled the demands of his own original righteousness. Man is centered in himself.

God has entered into this dilemma of man, however, by providing man the proper center of his devotion. That center is Christ whose death on the cross has atoned for man's sin, reconciling him to God. By faith and contrition man finds newness of life in Christ.

This newness of life is primarily one of peace, for man has been forgiven for his sin. This newness of life also is one of power, for man's life has been re-directed toward God and hence his life actually is changed. However, on the whole man's life is changed in intention rather than in actuality. As long as man remains in history he cannot escape the necessities and demands of historical existence.

As one reconciled to God, man looks hopefully to a complete fulfillment of righteousness beyond history. The doctrine of the resurrection of the body symbolizes that man will ultimately be redeemed by God and will retain and realize fully all of his individuality in eternity.

This comprehensive and profound treatment of the problem of man justifies Carl F. Henry's tribute in his statement that Reinhold Niebuhr's The Nature and Destiny of Man is "the most important work in the field of theological and philosophical anthropology for a generation . . ."¹

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1. Henry: op. cit., p. 135. Cf. Ante, p. 27.

CHAPTER III

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE DOCTRINE OF MAN

ACCORDING TO WIEMAN AND NIEBUHR

EVALUATED BY THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

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A. Introduction

Upon casual observation one might think that these two men do not differ greatly in their views, for both claim to be theistic and both insist upon submission to God. However, any serious study will reveal that they differ radically. The fact is that this writing is not the first to bring them together, for in 1947 the Beacon Press published a book entitled Religious Liberals Reply in which Dr. Wieman has an article. It is significant that of the seven liberals who blasted Neo-Orthodoxy and Supernaturalism, four directed their attack at Reinhold Niebuhr, accusing him of being illogical, incomprehensible, and mistaken.¹ One man wrote:

". . . if . . . the disciples of 'transcendence' proceed to make a virtue of incomprehensibility and incoherence, they will have attacked something that we can speak about and do know to be valid--the rational coherence of ordered and tested thought."²

Dr. Wieman, after referring to Dr. Niebuhr, writes:

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1. Note: Of the other three views, two are attacks against Neo-Thomism, and the third is an attack against Protestantism and Roman Catholicism in general with reference to Niebuhr.
2. Arthur E. Murphy: "Coming to Grips with the Nature and Destiny of Man," essay in Religious Liberals Reply, The Beacon Press, editors, p. 33.

"Neo-Orthodoxy is a stage through which we had to pass to recover from a situation that might otherwise have been hopeless. It is like the fever of a diseased organism . . . We have learned more from it than from any other religious teaching of recent date and are deeply indebted to its outstanding leaders. But the time is coming shortly when we must get rid of it if we can. A fever may be deadly when it passes beyond the period and intensity of its corrective function."¹

These two men are opposed to each other on about every issue except that man needs help. However, this comparison will be confined to man's source, his nature, his salvation, and his destiny.

In addition, these four issues will be evaluated by a Biblical standard, the Epistle to the Romans. This evaluation is not an exposition of the Epistle. Only that which is salient to these issues will be presented. It is recognized also that Paul's letter does not treat each point fully, for he did not anticipate this comparison. However, what he did write will have a vital bearing upon the issues involved.

It is obvious that Professor Wieman makes no attempt to adhere to or to represent the Biblical doctrine of man, whereas Dr. Niebuhr does, but reserves for himself the right to freshly interpret and criticize that doctrine. As Dr. Niebuhr claims to represent the Biblical view it will be well to examine his claims, as well as to discover the major points upon which Dr. Wieman radically differs.

B. The Comparison and Evaluation of the Views of Wieman and Niebuhr

1. The Source of Man.

a. The Comparative Study.

True to his naturalistic metaphysics, Professor Wieman attri-

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1. Wieman: "Neo-Orthodoxy and Contemporary Religious Reaction," essay in Religious Liberals Reply, p. 5.

butes man's origin to the processes of nature. Man is more than the fruit of causality, however, for he is the product of a creative process in the world which is continually working toward unities of structure. These unities become more and more complex when conditions are favorable, giving greater meaning and richer experience. When unity controls complexity that is maximum good. Man is the highest order of that structure. However, man as personality is not the highest possible order of that structure, but is a "necessary incident in the actualization of highest values."¹ The creative process, which creates these structures and works toward the highest values, is God, the Creator of man.

Dr. Niebuhr asserts the essential truth of the Biblical view in stating that man is a creature of the transcendent personal God, who is the author of all nature, creating man and nature ex nihilo, out of nothing.

b. The Evaluation.

The Epistle to the Romans does not deal specifically with the problem of man's source. Yet it is obvious that Paul was in harmony with and assumed the truth of the Jewish view that man is a creature of the transcendent God. Paul does refer to creation and creator in speaking of judgment and redemption.² Hence it is obvious that Dr. Niebuhr is here in harmony with the Biblical view.

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1. Wieman: The Issues of Life, p. 229.
2. Cf. Romans 1:20 and 8:19-20.

2. The Nature of Man.

a. Man's Essential Nature.

(1) The Comparative Study.

The highest level of the creative event is man, according to Wieman. Man is an animal grown up. The most distinctive feature of man is that he is able to communicate in a complex fashion and therefore can share experience. This characteristic makes further growth possible so that man may become super-man, progressing to higher and higher levels. If man ceases to interact with others, he ceases to be a human personality, and ultimately will become again mere animal. An individual personality has no value in itself.

Man is free in that he is dominated by the creative event and thereby is free from other domination. "The metaphysics we are defending interprets freedom as a kind of determinism."¹ Men lose their freedom to the extent that their lives are lived in opposition to the creative event. Thus man is the highest form of nature with the freedom to know alternatives, to choose, and to submit to the force which enables him to fulfill that choice. If he chooses anything less than the creative event, his freedom is lost. If he does choose the creative event, his freedom is being dominated by the event.

"Finiteness and freedom" are the key words of Niebuhr's view of the essential nature of man. Man's two-fold nature keeps him dependent upon the necessities of nature, but at the same time enables him to go beyond the limits of both nature and himself. He is able to make

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1. Wieman: The Source of Human Good, p. 301.

himself his own object. Man not only possesses a consciousness, but possesses self-consciousness. However, as a creation of God, his body --that is, his finiteness--is as much he as his spirit. Both naturalism and idealism err in interpreting man only in terms of either nature or mind. Naturalism is furthest from the truth, for it does not conceive of the real freedom of the human spirit.

Dr. Wieman's reply to this is:

"Those who look to man for self-transcendence and creative power are driven to despair of history and hence look beyond it for salvation. They have not yet cast off that adolescent arrogance which swings between folly and hopelessness."¹

(2) The Evaluation.

It is noteworthy that Paul tells the Gentiles that they are without excuse for they know God's law.² Here is a mark of transcendence. Man is aware of an objective moral order which is beyond creation. This is man's spirit.

In the light of both Niebuhr and Romans, Wieman has a low view of human personality. Man is not made in the image of the creative process. Wieman justifies his definition of God as non-personality by reasoning that God is much greater than personality. No one would argue with him that God is much greater than human beings, for we are creatures of the Creator. But Wieman reveals that he has no conception of what personality really is. As a naturalist he can conceive of man's nature only in terms of man's body.

It is not possible at this point to determine whether the Epistle to the Romans supports Niebuhr's view of man's essential nature

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1. Ibid., p. 308.

2. Cf. Romans 2:15.

in its entirety. There is no doubt that Niebuhr has presented a profound view of man which does not deviate drastically from the Biblical view. A discussion of man's sinful nature will clarify this issue.

b. Man's Sinful Nature.

(1) The Comparative Study.

To Dr. Wieman, man's sinful nature is only one part of this present dilemma. Man's present predicament is that created good is opposed at certain points to creative good. The creative good, or event, or process, is always working in human life or nature for good. This is by making possible greater relationships between created things. The greatest relationship thus far is the structure of interrelated human personalities capable of communication. This created good in turn makes possible greater created good capable of greater relationships and meaning.

This created good, however, may become evil, for it may become the object of devotion usurping the place of creative good. Or it may become evil if the abundance of created good fails to be unified in harmony. Either way, further creativity is retarded. Even religion may become evil if the created good stands in the way of creativity. For instance, if the symbols of Christianity (such as the cross of Christ or the resurrection) are worshipped, real creativity will be retarded. Man's present dilemma is caused by an abundance of created good which has not had opportunity to become related and harmonious. Technology and science have brought the world in close relationship, but this has happened so quickly that there has not been harmony of relationships. Thus evil is a result of "social lag," which Wieman calls

inertia of matter.

Man is not exempt from responsibility in this evil. Much of man's sin is caused by ignorance. Yet man does give devotion to created good knowingly. This is his primary sin. Man centers himself in the wrong thing.

Evil, then, is the sluggishness of nature or relationships, and it is sin when man devotes himself to anything less than the creative event itself.

Dr. Niebuhr never digresses from his basic proposition of man's essential nature when he defines sin. The whole understanding of evil rests in a proper understanding of man. Man is the index of evil. Nature is essentially good, for it is God's creation. Yet, it is man's essential nature which is the source of sin. His created finiteness and freedom cause anxiety which in turn inevitably causes sin. Sin is inevitable, for man always tries to resolve his anxiety by trusting in himself or some other created thing rather than God. However, sin is not necessary, for there is always the possibility of trusting in God. In addition, man knows that he sins because his original righteousness is with him as law. The sin of Adam is the symbol of a present recurring fact. Thus, sin is not done in ignorance, and man is fully responsible for it even though his created nature precipitates it.

Both Wieman and Niebuhr recognize that this present age has an "easy conscience." Wieman attributes this to outmoded mores of society which are inadequate for today. Real and wholesome guilt is caused by an awakened sense of values. Niebuhr attributes the easy

conscience of modern man to a culture which underestimates the problem of freedom and necessity in nature and thus underestimates the freedom of man. These are they, says Dr. Niebuhr, who reject the Christian faith as irrelevant and blame man's present predicament upon the great advance of modern culture causing great confusion, or corrupting institutions, or the confusion of ignorance which can be overcome by education. His conclusion is worth repeating: "Nature and reason are thus the two gods of modern man, and sometimes the two are one."¹

(2) The Evaluation.

The Epistle to the Romans is quite explicit on the problem of sin. Paul, as does Niebuhr, places the responsibility of sin primarily upon man. Sin is not done in or caused by ignorance, but is done in knowledge. It is caused by not glorifying God whom they know:

"... because that, knowing God, they glorified him not as God, neither gave thanks; but became vain in their reasonings, and their senseless heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things."²

Man's knowledge is not only of the existence of God but also somewhat of His character. His majesty and divinity are clearly seen in creation. In addition to this man is aware of an objective moral order, God's law. The Gentiles have a law written upon their hearts which they do not obey, and the Jews have the revealed law which they do not obey. It is on this basis of knowledge that Paul is able to say, "Therefore, thou art without excuse, O man . . ."³

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1. Niebuhr: The Nature and Destiny of Man, Vol. I, p. 95.
2. Romans 1:21-23.
3. Romans 2:1.

The universality of sin is also evident in Paul's writings. It is upon the basis of observation that he concludes: ". . . all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."¹ Here is defined the nature of sin also. Hamartia is the word used for "sin" and literally means "missing the mark." The Biblical use, however, connotes more than error. It is not a defect; it is a positive reaction--a personal offense against a personal God. In identifying sin with disobedience in Romans 5:19, Paul emphasizes that sin is revolt against God. This results in a great gulf between man and God. It is a broken relationship, the seriousness of which can be seen only in the light of God's extreme means of salvation, the sacrifice of His Son.

The why of man's sin is answered by Paul in Chapter 5. There is no doubt but that Paul was referring to an historical man as the channel of the entrance of sin into the world. Paul does not labor to say that all men are totally depraved because of this, but he does labor to say that the force of evil entered human history through the disobedience of one man. "Therefore," he writes, "as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all have sinned . . ."² Thus Paul traces man's sin back to an historical event, not to man's created nature. In no way does he allow sin to be traced back to the work of God. Sin entered history through one man's disobedience and his nature has appeared again in every successive generation and person. This presents a paradox which William Sanday states:

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1. Romans 3:23.

2. Romans 5:12.

"Man inherits his nature; and yet he must not be allowed to shift responsibility from himself; there is that within him by virtue of which he is free to choose; and on that freedom of choice he must stand or fall."¹

Paul adds to the understanding of the effects of sin in Romans 8, where he contrasts flesh and spirit. By flesh is meant what we see of man, what he does and what happens to him. It cannot mean body as material, for in chapter 6 Paul speaks of the members of our body being controlled by whatever we yield them to. Thus flesh pertains to man's will, his power of choice which is perverted by the force of evil which is in every man. This includes the passions of the body which themselves are either controlled by or become the tyrants of man's will. They are controlled when man is controlled by God. They become tyrants when man centers himself in anything other than God. "And even as they refused to have God in their knowledge, God gave them up unto a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not fitting . . ."² J. A. Beet writes on this problem:

"That Paul speaks . . . of the body as a dwelling-place of sin and of the desires and works of the flesh as bad, implies that all men are by nature fallen . . . We cannot distinguish the influence of sin from the influence exerted through the flesh by the principle of sin. Hence sin may be looked upon as the animating principle of the flesh . . . Frequently all our mental and bodily powers are at work to get that which will preserve or indulge the body: e.g. intelligent efforts to make money, prompted by desire for bodily gratification. Probably all sin has a similar ultimate origin . . . Since the body desires objects merely for its own preservation and gratification, the desires of the body are essentially selfish. Consequently, indulgence of them puts us in opposition to our fellows; and 'jealousy and strife' are constant results of a life according to the flesh."³

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1. William Sanday and A. C. Headlam: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, p. 138.
2. Romans 1:28.
3. J. A. Beet: A Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, p. 221.

Thus, sin in the world is attributed directly to man. It is universal. This sin is direct rebellion against God in knowledge and results in a separation of judgment between God and man. The force of sin is traced to its entry into human history through one man's disobedience. Man's present sinful nature is known as "flesh" meaning his own self-centeredness. Man is both a victim of it and responsible for it.

According to Romans, Wieman's view of sin itself is hamartia --he has "missed the mark"! Sin is rebellion against the Creator, not an inhibition to creativity. Here Wieman falls under judgment of William Sanday's words: "It is impossible to have an adequate conception of sin without an adequate conception of God."¹ Wieman's greatest error is attributing evil to nature and giving it a functional rather than a moral connotation. On the contrary, says Paul, nature has been made evil by man.² Man is fully responsible for all the sin that is in the world. Wieman fails to see the seriousness of man's sin.

Niebuhr is more difficult to analyze on his doctrine of sin. Romans corrects him in respect to Adam, and here may be the point where Niebuhr also fails to see the seriousness of man's sin. He does not affirm that sin is in the very core of man's nature, that creation itself has been affected by one man's disobedience. He attributes anxiety to man's created nature whereas it would seem that Paul attributes anxiety to man's revolt against God. Thus Niebuhr traces the inevitability of sin back to God's creative work and supports its probable inevitability upon empirical grounds. Paul traces the inevitability of

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1. Sanday: op. cit., p. 114.

2. Cf. Romans 8:20-21.

sin back to man's disobedience. Paul's empirical presentation of sin in chapters 1 to 3 show sin to be universal, not inevitable.

Niebuhr must be credited, however, with making it crystal clear that man sins by knowingly violating his relationship with a personal, holy God. He has given profound insight into the fact that man sins, not in ignorance, but in knowledge of God's moral demands.

3. The Salvation of Man.

The subject of salvation will here be treated as to its basis, means, and historical results.

a. The Comparative Study.

Both Wieman and Niebuhr strongly appeal to man to trust in God. However, their definitions of God radically differ. It must be conceded that inasmuch as Wieman defines God as one order within the whole order of nature, and that order expresses itself in creativity, he is really beckoning man to submit himself to the harmonies of nature. He does inject a transcendent tinge by emphasizing worship. Even then, however, as man is purely nature, it is to nature he must bow. It is true that he calls us to a particular force of nature. Here it is noteworthy how he determines what we worship. Knowledge is a product of observation, which includes experiment, intuition, and reason. Inasmuch as ignorance is one of the chief causes for sin, an enlightened mind is one of the chief answers.

Faith is necessary in addition to knowledge, but it is not the kind of faith which is operative only when knowledge is inadequate. Faith is basically an act, not a belief, of giving oneself into the

keeping of that which commands faith. Thus faith and knowledge work hand in hand. "Knowledge is needed today not primarily to engender faith but to guide faith in the service of creative good when science and technology are the tools we must use in rendering service."¹

Wieman opposes Neo-Orthodoxy exactly at this point. He says that it errs in attributing reality to myth and insisting that faith in this myth is revelation which is beyond rational knowledge and examination. He states:

"Religious leaders and others who perpetuate the old myths while repudiating the knowledge now attainable concerning the creative source of human life and its values, and even denying that intellectual analysis of observed events can ever attain such knowledge, are blocking the way of salvation."²

To Wieman all results of salvation are historical because nothing exists outside of history. Therefore, the comparison will here be limited to the immediate results of man's nature. It is difficult to distinguish between the individual and his world in Wieman's view. When man becomes transformed, not only politics and society will be transformed, but even nature and earth. Man's immediate transformation consists of re-centering his life from created good to creative good. Sin may and does continue in one largely because man's nature, meaning structure, is what it is. He may even oppose creative good. Yet the creative good will continue to work in him taking supreme control in his life.

To Niebuhr, even as man's sin is personal and against a personal God so is his salvation personal and accomplished by a personal

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1. Wieman: The Source of Human Good, p. 48.
2. Wieman: "Neo-Orthodoxy and Contemporary Religious Reaction," in Religious Liberals Reply, p. 13.

God. Man's salvation is dependent upon forgiveness from Him who is supreme Judge, and thus it must be a forgiveness that does not abrogate God's justice. The answer to this is that God has taken the consequences of His judgment upon sin into Himself. This was accomplished in the sacrificial death of Christ. This is God's supreme and final expression of sacrificial love.

Man's part in this salvation is one of response to God's sacrificial love. This response is one of faith. Faith involves both belief and action--belief because the revelation of God in Christ is foreign to and beyond man's rational powers, and action because man must re-center his life in Christ in devotion and principle.

The result of faith is one of transformation. The primary characteristic of the transformation is that the principle, not the fact, of sin is broken. Man does not suddenly, nor eventually in history, become perfect, for his essential nature of finiteness and freedom continues, but his life is re-directed. He has forgiveness in Christ's atonement. He is reconciled to God. This is God's grace.

Grace includes power as well so that man's life is actually transformed also, but he is constantly in need of forgiveness. Thus man continues to live in history subject to its demands, but he is forgiven outside of history.

b. The Evaluation.

The Epistle to the Romans is dedicated to the theme of salvation in the death and resurrected life of Jesus Christ. Christ is the revelation of God's righteousness and thus defines righteousness as judgment and mercy. This seeming contradiction is resolved in the

cross. Paul referred to Christ as the propitiation for our sins.

He writes of Christ:

" . . . whom God set forth to be a propitiation, through faith, in his blood, to show his righteousness because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime, in the forbearance of God; for the showing, I say, of his righteousness at this present season: that he might himself be just, and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus."¹

Godet calls these two verses the "marrow of theology," and supports that by quoting John Calvin: ". . . there is not probably in the whole Bible a passage which sets forth more profoundly the righteousness of God in Christ."²

First, it is apparent that this salvation is God-initiated. Secondly, this salvation is propitiatory. That is, it is favorable to God. Its favorableness is accomplished by the blood of Christ; that is, the life of Christ. Hence Christ is the favorable sacrifice. The efficacy of this sacrifice is on the basis of a response of faith. Thus propitiation is not effective except through faith on the part of the person, and through the shedding of blood on the part of Christ. The primary purpose of the blood of Christ is to demonstrate God's righteousness. This is a demonstration that Christ's death was sufficient to pay for the judgment of all. In this way God retains His justness while He justifies guilty people.

This meaning is heightened in Romans 5:10 by the presentation of God's reconciliation of man through the death of His Son. This supports Niebuhr's view of the Cross, that God has taken upon Himself the

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1. Romans 3:25-26

2. F. Godet: Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, p. 150.

sins of the world. However, this same verse presents another part of salvation which Niebuhr almost completely overlooks, namely that "being reconciled," we shall be "saved by his life . . ." He has well represented the atonement of Christ, but nowhere in his Nature and Destiny of Man does he refer to the resurrection of Christ or the Resurrected Christ. He refers to the doctrine of the resurrection of the body as a symbol of particularity of the individual in eternal life. It is no wonder then that Dr. Niebuhr has a limited view of man's regenerated nature. He has not appropriated the newness of life which results in "dying with Christ" and being "alive unto God in Christ Jesus." It appears that his rational approach to Christian doctrine inhibits him from sharing in Paul's glorious and yet logical treatment of identifying oneself with Christ's death.¹ Our newness of life is more than a re-directed devotion; it is a new participation in Christ. Therefore Paul was able to write:

"Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey the lusts thereof: neither present your members unto sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves unto God, as alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under law, but under grace."²

This does not mean perfection, but it does carry us closer to it than Dr. Niebuhr would have us believe. He concludes a discussion of sacrificial love (agape) and ethics with these words which cannot be supported anywhere by Paul's exhortations of holy living:

". . . it is not even right to insist that every action of the Christian must conform to agape, rather than to the norms of rela-

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1. Cf. Romans 6.
2. Romans 6:12-14.

tive justice and mutual love by which life is maintained and conflicting interests are arbitrated in history."¹

Paul, in Romans 8, seems rather to put the emphasis exactly the opposite: ". . . for if ye live after the flesh, ye must die; but if by the Spirit ye put to death the deeds of the body, ye shall live."² One does not find Paul mediating a position between sin and sanctification as Niebuhr does for his "interim of history." Perhaps it is at this point that Niebuhr considers himself to be realistic.

Wieman's chief difficulty in grasping the Christian view of salvation is his metaphysics of naturalism and his epistemology of rationalistic empiricism. He cannot conceive of any reality beyond nature and thus he insists that it is impossible for a supernatural God to participate in history. If God participates in history, then He is completely in history. As a naturalist he does not see the seriousness of man's personal anarchy and he is thus able to describe man's relationship with God as one of continuity. Atoning salvation to him is completely irrelevant.

His epistemology also keeps him from knowing God correctly, for to him there is no reality outside experience and thus all reality may be examined carefully. For Christ to have a pre- and post-historical existence is nonsense. That cannot be examined and what cannot be examined is of no use to us. Thus a divine Christ who mediates salvation is an impossibility, and of course one who is not divine could hardly mediate salvation.

It is no wonder that Wieman insists that man's knowledge of God

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1. Niebuhr: Nature and Destiny of Man, Vol. II, p. 88. Cf. Ante., p. 6.
2. Romans 8:13.

remain vague. To him, God ". . . is simply that which is supremely significant in all the universe for human living, however known or unknown he may be."¹

Thus Wieman's worship is a worship of values, and he encourages each man to humbly do the best he can in life.

4. The Destiny of Man.

a. The Comparative Study.

Dr. Wieman freely admits that "No one knows what happens to the individual after death."² Whether death is the end or life continues, the great demand is to commit oneself to the creative event. Wieman holds out a little more hope for society than he does for the individual. Created good may progress or it may regress, but there are possibilities beyond our imaginations. Science and technology, if used properly, may overcome all inertia and thus remove the major causes of man's sin. All this will be accomplished in history.

In direct contradiction, Dr. Niebuhr asserts that man will find his true destiny beyond history. He also admits that what happens after death is difficult to determine, but he is sure of one characteristic--that sacrificial love will vindicate itself and rule in the lives of all who share in eternal life.

b. The Evaluation.

St. Paul wrote glowingly of final glorification to the Romans.

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1. Wieman: Religious Experience and the Scientific Method, p. 10.
2. Wieman: The Source of Human Good, p. 279.

He established its certainty upon the basis of man's sonship to God in the Risen Christ. He described it as a fulfillment of all the expectations of corrupted creation, for all of creation shall be redeemed. And finally, the ultimate result will be that all of regenerated mankind will be conformed to the image of God's Son. It is only in the Biblical view of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ that one gets a clear idea and the certainty of the hope that God has given us.

C. Summary and Conclusion

It is evident that Dr. Wieman in no way represents Biblical Christianity. On every major issue he stands under the judgment of the Scriptures. He is very ingenious in his effort to unite Christianity and naturalism. However, his metaphysics inhibits him from recognizing that man is a creature of a Sovereign God and that man is more than complex nature. The evil in life must be attributed to nature, and he proposes a sort of "cultural lag" theory. This leaves no room for the atoning work of Jesus Christ which is the very crux of Christianity. Thus it is evident that Dr. Wieman does not present a Christian anthropology or soteriology and does not share in the hope everlasting.

Dr. Niebuhr rightly considers man as created in the image of God, possessing not only nature, but spirit. Man has revolted against God and thus needs salvation which has been provided by God in the atoning work of Christ. However, Dr. Niebuhr does not properly represent the Biblical view on all points. He affirms that man's created nature, though good, is the occasion of sin. The view in Romans is

more harsh than this indicating that man's very created nature has been corrupted by one man's disobedience. Dr. Niebuhr's view of regeneration is his poorest representation of Christianity, for he overlooks the vital truth of the living, Resurrected Christ dwelling in the believer and making him, not necessarily sinless, but certainly freed from the principle and practice of sin. Dr. Niebuhr refers to the Fall of man and to the resurrection of the body as myths, and gives evidence that he considers the resurrection of Christ a myth also. To him, these myths have a meaning. However, his attempt to rationalize the Biblical tradition leaves him unprotected against the attacks of liberals such as Arthur E. Murphy who writes:

"What this seems to mean . . . is that these doctrines have some important element of truth in them but are not true in the form in which they were traditionally accepted, while any attempt to say what is true in them ends in logical incoherence. It ought to follow from this that Dr. Niebuhr cannot conceive them in any way that does not violate the principle of logic, and hence, on these critical matters, literally does not know what it is that he believes, except that it is something strongly suggested to his mind by these traditional doctrines, but something which turns out, in every attempt to think it through, to be either false or logically inconceivable."¹

Dr. Wieman states: "Neo-Orthodoxy has confused myth and intellectual understanding, and it tries to live under the guidance of an incoherent mixture of the two."²

Paul, in writing to the Romans, was more straightforward in proclaiming the Gospel than the declaration that in it we find profound truth.

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1. Arthur Murray: "Coming to Grips with the Nature and Destiny of Man," essay in Religious Liberals Reply, The Beacon Press, Editors, p. 19.
2. Wieman: Essay in Religious Liberals Reply, p. 13.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

A. Summary

This is an era of swiftly shifting thoughts and theologies. The crisis of the times has demanded a rethinking of established theological positions. Man finds himself not only the contender for truth, but also the center of the contention. Any theological issue must take man into account for man's response and the ensuing results are the nexus to the destiny of civilization. Therefore, the proponent of any system of religion must adequately define man, his essential nature, and his need.

There are two general views on the American scene today, claiming to be theistic, that are vying for dominance. They are Theistic Naturalism and Neo-Orthodoxy. Two eminent men represent these views respectively: Henry Nelson Wieman and Reinhold Niebuhr. It has been the purpose of this study to determine the validity of their views in respect to man's nature by comparing them with one another and by evaluating them in the light of St. Paul's Epistle To The Romans.

Chapter one contains Dr. Wieman's view of man. Inasmuch as his writings have been devoted to the doctrine of God, it was necessary to present this doctrine first in order to understand his view of man.

His doctrine of God is dependent upon his presupposition of a naturalistic metaphysics and upon an empirical epistemology. That is, as far as man is concerned, nothing exists outside of nature and its activity. Events constitute the basic reality of life. These events can be known by observation, analysis, and evaluation. This method measures the value of these events. The complexity of the events presents richness of experience and promotes further growth of events. The complexity and harmony of these multifarious events is caused by a creative event, for the events could not cause themselves. This creative event is God.

On the basis of this, Dr. Wieman defines man as the highest organism of the creative event. The instrument used in developing man is communication. Man is capable of complex communication which enables him to have a harmony of related events. This qualifies man as personality. However, man's ability to communicate may contribute to his doom rather than enrich his life, for it has created innovations which may be too much for man to accommodate himself to. Modern science and technology have advanced so rapidly that man's cultural and spiritual resources have not accompanied the development. This is the occasion of Wieman's liberal use of the term "evil." Evil is anything that opposes or inhibits creativity. Matter itself is evil inasmuch as it is slow to respond to creativity. Created goods are evil if they be considered as an end in themselves. Social relationships and religious traditions are evil if they in any way thwart the creative processes of God. Man is evil and guilty of sin when he inhibits the creative event from having full control in his life.

As man is the most highly developed organism, he is the index of salvation. Upon him rests the responsibility of committing himself completely to God. Upon him rests the destiny of this present civilization. This submission is not a blind submission, for man, with the aid of science and meaningful myths, may determine what is genuinely worthy of his full devotion. Determining what is worthy of devotion is a huge step in the right direction, but two steps are necessary. The other is the step of faith which is man's act of submission to God. This is the demand for today. Upon these two steps rests the destiny of the world.

Chapter Two contains Dr. Niebuhr's view of man as found in his two volumes, The Nature and Destiny of Man. He clarifies his own view of man's nature by showing the errors of all other views. Idealism errs in stressing mind as true reality and looking upon matter as temporal and evil. Naturalism negates any possibility of existence which is more than nature and its possibilities. Both have hold of truth, but only partial truth. The truth of man is that he is both nature and mind. Furthermore he is more than mind in its usual meaning, for he is capable of transcending not only himself, but also time and space. Therefore, the only adequate principle of interpretation is one that meets the needs of both nature and spirit. The principle of interpretation that is adequate is the Biblical view of the transcendent God who has revealed Himself in history. As He is transcendent He is the proper center of devotion for man. Anything less than that would not meet man's need, for nothing within history is suitable for his devotion. As he has disclosed Himself in history, He assures

man that He is not only a God of justice but also of mercy, for His supreme revelation is the sacrificial death of Christ on the Cross.

On the basis of this principle of interpretation, Niebuhr presents his view of man. As a creation of God, man's nature is essentially good. He was created both body and spirit. That is, man is both finite and free. His finiteness compells him to depend upon the demands of nature. His freedom enables him to see the inadequacies of nature and the limitless possibilities of spirit. This paradox causes anxiety. The resulting tension of this anxiety is the precipitant of sin. It is not that man must sin, for he could choose to trust in God in order to resolve his tension. However, such is not the case. Even though sin is not a created or conditional necessity, yet it is inevitable, for man always centers self in self rather than in God.

This self-centeredness is man's basic sin. He knows better but he does not do it. This knowledge of the better is accountable to man's original righteousness. Original righteousness is the purest law of God, sacrificial love, existing with man as law. If man satisfactorily fulfilled the demands of sacrificial love it would cease to exist as law, but inasmuch as it is a "must" for man, it is obvious that man's original righteousness is not a realized fact but a moral demand. That man is aware of this "oughtness" places man accountable to God. Thus, even though sin is inevitable, yet man is responsible for it.

This sinful nature in man cannot possibly be overcome unless man centers himself in that which is beyond himself and any relative entity. Either is idolatry. Thus man's salvation is in centering himself in that which is beyond history. This can be known because that

which is beyond history has revealed himself in history--yet in such a way that only judgment beyond history justifies the revelation. This revelation is the cross of Christ. His death is efficacious as an atonement for the sins of mankind, for God has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. In this way God does not abrogate His justice and yet He is able to display mercy to the whole world. The death of Christ is truly our reconciliation to God.

This reconciliation is primarily the forgiveness of sin. In addition the tyranny of sin is broken, for man is re-centered in Christ. However, man is not completely free from sin. As a resident in history and still of the nature of body and spirit, man is continuously involved in the paradox of his nature. History is of such nature that if man were entirely freed from sin and lived a life of sacrificial love, he would cease to exist in history, for history does not justify such a life. Therefore Niebuhr proposes that man live according to an "interim ethics" until history is fulfilled in eternity. This "interim ethics" is a life in tune with the balances of justice and the harmonies of mutual love.

When history is fulfilled, man's destiny will be fulfilled. His essential nature will have fruition of meaning. His spirit will be liberated from all anxiety, for the demands of historical existence will have passed away. His body will remain as symbolized by the doctrine of the resurrection of the body retaining for man true individuality and particularity.

This is Niebuhr's view of man's nature and destiny.

Chapter Three revealed that these two men are opposed on every main issue. Their views were compared as to the source of man, the

nature of man--including his essential and sinful nature, man's salvation, and his destiny.

Dr. Wieman opposes Niebuhr most strongly on his supernaturalistic view of God and his definition of faith. Whatever is supernatural is irrelevant to man's needs and is beyond man's rational inquiry. The times are too crucial, insists Wieman, for man to be devoting himself to something that cannot be validated by observation and reason. The greatest error of the Neo-Orthodox and Niebuhr is that real truth is obscured by clinging to a literal interpretation of traditional myths. These myths, such as the living Christ, are not themselves to be the object of devotion, but are pointers to a deeper devotion to the creative event which they represent.

Dr. Niebuhr accuses the view that Wieman holds as minimizing the seriousness of man's sin. Sin is primarily man's revolt against God, and not the inertia of matter nor the ignorance of man. Wieman makes this error because he fails to see that man is more than a product of nature. He is spirit also, able to make the world and himself the object of his consciousness. In depreciating man Wieman fails to see that man is created in God's image. Thus Wieman views personality as a step in the creative work of God. Niebuhr affirms that man is the object of God's creation and that man will be fully redeemed by God in the fulfillment of history.

The Epistle to the Romans judges Wieman and corrects Niebuhr. The Epistle does not bear directly upon the issues of man's source and essential nature except to affirm that man is the created child of God. On the problem of sin it was shown in Chapter Three that Wieman "missed

the mark." Sin is certainly more than an inhibition to the processes of creativity. Sin is the rebellion of man's will against his Creator. Evil cannot be blamed upon nature, for nature has been made evil by man. Man is fully responsible for all the sin in the world. Thus Wieman does fail to see the seriousness of sin.

His view of man and sin also prohibits Dr. Wieman from having a proper understanding of man's salvation. Atonement is irrelevant to man's need, for it is supernatural. The myth of the living Christ is a symbol, not a person. Dr. Wieman stands in danger of Paul's words: ". . . knowing God, they glorified him not as God, . . . but became vain in their reasonings, and their senseless heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools . . ." ¹

Dr. Niebuhr reserves for himself the right to a critical view of Scripture and therefore stands corrected by the Epistle to the Romans. In his attempt to make man fully responsible for sin, he has traced the cause of sin back to God. According to Niebuhr man's sin is occasioned by his created nature. Paul never traced man's sin back to the work of creation. Paul affirms that sin is at the very core of man's corrupted nature, whereas Niebuhr contends that the core of man's nature is good but that the core is the cause of sin.

In the treatment of man's salvation Dr. Niebuhr has presented only one-half of the dynamic of Christ. He has ably presented a philosophical treatise on the atonement of Christ which gives forgiveness to all men of faith. But he has left out the great truth of the resurrection of Christ and His living presence in the believer. He

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1. Romans 1:21-22.

does refer to the Holy Spirit as the presence of Christ, but affirms strongly that man's sin is broken in intention but not in actuality. In side-stepping the doctrine of the resurrection of Christ, Niebuhr leaves the reader in doubt as to what he believes about the truth that Paul gave his life to proclaim.

It was this vivid sense of the Risen Christ that enabled Paul to write with forceful clarity of the certainty of final glorification. On an issue of such importance, Dr. Niebuhr might well abandon his metaphysical dialectic and assert with unabashed certainty that "It is Christ Jesus that died, yea rather, that was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us,"¹ and that we shall "be conformed to the image of his Son . . ." ²

B. Conclusion

The study of man according to Henry Nelson Wieman and Reinhold Niebuhr has illumined the subject tremendously. It has revealed that giant minds are attempting to define man and his universe. Each presents his case with earnestness and sincerity. The comparison of their views has shown that although both claim to be theistic, they are completely opposed to each other in respect to their views of the nature of reality, of man, and of his salvation. It may be concluded that there will be no wedlock of Theistic Naturalism and Neo-Orthodoxy.

For one who holds a Biblical view of man, Dr. Wieman's whole emphasis must be considered not only incorrect but also dangerous. To

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1. Romans 8:34.

2. Romans 8:29.

the casual reader his appeal is inviting, and his ingenious use of Christian realities as symbols makes this appeal beguiling. It must be recognized that any recourse to a naturalistic view has seeming validity to those who find a life of faith difficult. His incorporation of certain Christian truths has made his writings acceptable to many Christian-minded people. But his failure to comprehend the truth of man's sinfulness and the forbearing love of God eliminates him from being received by those who have beheld the Son of God.

Dr. Niebuhr's philosophical and rationalistic approach to man's problem is obviously of tremendous value. His careful analysis enables one to compare the validity and value of other views with his. The Biblical theologian, however, must be discriminate in incorporating Niebuhr's views. With logical ease he assigns many Christian truths to the position of symbols. He follows the principle that Biblical truths must be subservient to his rational dialectic. Such a practice by brilliant men may not be dangerous, but it encourages others to render Scripture as they see fit.

Finally, this study has shown the profound understanding of man as revealed in the Scriptures. They are still the fountain-head of knowledge. The brilliant beauty of Biblical truth is accentuated by the fact that eminent men today have not surpassed it in its realistic view of man's sin and its message of salvation which is foreign to man's speculation but exceedingly relevant to man's deepest needs. For one who would know the nature of man, let him study the writings of men if he wishes, but let him also have recourse to the Scriptures.

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