# THE VIEWS OF HENRY N. WIEMAN AND HARRY E. FOSDICK ON PRAYER: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

by

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# INTRODUCTION

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## INTRODUCTION

### A. The Statement of the Subject

It is the purpose of this thesis to examine and to compare the views of Henry Nelson Wieman and Harry Emerson Fosdick on the subject of prayer.

### B. The Delimitation of the Subject

The study will be confined to the authors' own understanding of the meaning and practice of prayer, with no attempt to introduce any external criteria. As both writers recognize the need for a clear theology for the most effective practice of prayer,[1] it will be necessary to examine briefly the nature and content of Fosdick's and Wieman's theology. Furthermore, as both writers also acknowledge the influence of their own religious experience and of the ideas, social conditions, and major events of the era in which they write upon their

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1. Henry N. Wieman and Regina Westcott-Wieman, Normative Psychology of Religion, New York, Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1935, p. 137.
Harry E. Fosdick, The Meaning of Prayer, New York, Association Press, 1923, p. 56ff.

theology and concepts of prayer,[1] some preliminary consideration will be given to these factors. Finally, since these two writers also refer more or less extensively to the example and teaching of Jesus to illuminate or validate their concepts of prayer and its practice, there will be some evaluation of their concepts in the light of Christ's prayer teaching and example by way of concluding this study.

C. The Method of Developing the Subject

The comparative study of the writings of Henry N. Wieman and Harry E. Fosdick on prayer will accordingly proceed in this manner. Chapter One will present a preliminary survey of the historical foundations for the writings of Fosdick and Wieman. The survey will cover the late nineteenth century background of American liberalism, the major political, social, and economic developments of the twentieth century and important intellectual and theological trends of this contemporary era. Chapter Two will first treat the religious experience and basic theology of Henry N. Wieman, and

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1. Henry N. Wieman and Bernard E. Meland, American Philosophies of Religion, New York, Willett, Clark & Co., 1936, p. viii.
Harry E. Fosdick, The Living of These Days, New York, Harper & Bros., 1956, p. 101ff., p. 232.

then examine his writings on the meaning and practice of prayer. Chapter Three will in the same way study Harry E. Fosdick's religious experience, theology, and writings on prayer. Chapter Four will then compare the writings of Wieman and Fosdick on prayer on the basis of the data examined in Chapters Two and Three. Finally, the Summary and Conclusion will review the principal findings of this study and make a brief evaluation of the results in terms of Jesus' own prayer teaching and example.

### D. The Sources

Both Dr. Fosdick and Dr. Wieman have written extensively in the field of religion. In most of this writing, there is some reference to prayer. Moreover, each writer has authored one book dealing exclusively with prayer: Fosdick's The Meaning of Prayer and Wieman's Methods of Private Religious Living. Dr. Fosdick has also recently published A Book of Public Prayers. In addition to these, certain books by Fosdick and Wieman contain more material on prayer than others: Fosdick's Adventurous Religion and A Guide To Understanding the Bible, and Wieman's Normative Psychology and The Growth of Religion. Beyond these references, each author has written two recent books which have

value in bringing their religious thinking up to date: Fosdick's autobiography, The Living of These Days, and Dear Mr. Brown, and Wieman's Man's Ultimate Commitment and Intellectual Foundation of Faith.

In order to gain a comprehensive vew of Fosdick's and Wieman's writings on prayer, this study will be based chiefly on the books just listed, along with other pertinent material drawn from sources noted in the bibliography.

E. The Significance of the Subject

The value of this proposed study may perhaps best be set forth in a question: What is the character, function, and validity of prayer in an age which is largely dominated by materialistic, psychological, and scientific concepts of the meaning and nature of life? "It was the function of prayer to furnish that indispensable bond of union which through some medium must exist between the Creator, the creature, and the universe."[1] But "modern skepticism has done all that it could to make prayer unreasonable . . . It has denied everything that makes prayer possible."[2] Indeed, according to

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1. Albert Clarke Wyckoff, The Science of Prayer, New York, Association Press, 1918, p. 3.
2. Fosdick, The Meaning of Prayer, op. cit., p. 12.

Dr. Albert Clarke Wyckoff, with the advance of science,

> . . . life's center of gravity (is) now placed outside of religion instead of within it . . . (for) As science has increased its influence, prayer has decreased . . . (and) We of today are witnessing the struggle of prayer with psychology for its very life.[1]*

Yet "prayer is the most needed and neglected practice in modern life," writes Dr. Paul E. Johnson.[2] Moreover, prayer, in the sense of "every kind of communion with the power recognized as divine," in the opinion of William James

> . . . is the very soul and essence of religion. (In fact) . . . The genuineness of religion is indissolubly bound up with the question whether the prayerful consciousness be or be not deceitful.[3]

Fosdick also affirms that "nothing in religion can take the place of vital prayer,"[4] while Wieman says "The welfare of collective humanity . . . depend(s) more upon the right conduct of private religious living (prayer) than upon anything else."[5]

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1. Wyckoff, op. cit., pp. 8, 5.
2. Paul E. Johnson, "A Psychological Understanding of Prayer," Psychological Aspects of Prayer, ed. by Simon Doniger, Great Neck, New York, Pastoral Psychology Press, p. 41.
3. William James, The Varieties of Religious Experience, New York, The Modern Library, 1936 (1902), Pp. 454-455.
4. Harry E. Fosdick, Dear Mr. Brown, New York, Harper & Row, 1961, p. 175.
5. Henry N. Wieman, Methods of Private Religious Living, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1929, p. 7.

* All words within quotes that are placed in parentheses constitute interpolations or alterations by the writer of this thesis.

It would seem, therefore, that the need for rethinking the meaning and practice of prayer in terms of twentieth century life is paramount and one to which Dr. Fosdick and Dr. Wieman have made significant contributions. A comparison of their writing on prayer should prove fruitful because both men are recognized for estimable contributions to the field of modern religious thought, both commenced their work in interpreting religion to this generation at approximately the same time and are still actively engaged in so speaking, and often their writing is placed together in philosophical or religious anthologies. In another respect, while both Fosdick and Wieman hold prayer to be of utmost practical value, nevertheless they write about it from definitely contrastable points of view. Fosdick writes as a pastor concerned to help people to more abundant living through the practice of prayer. Wieman speaks more as a philosopher committed to promoting clarity of thought, acceptance of the highest values, and the development of creative interchange through prayer. Both writers are dedicated to the task of demonstrating the necessity, reasonableness, and validity of the prayer-life to this modern skeptical and confused age. Moreover, while there has been some

study of Fosdick's and Wieman's religious thought, no one has yet undertaken a study of their writing on prayer. However, by their own definition, their understanding of prayer must be at the very core of their basically empirical or experiential theology. Hence a comparative study of their writing on this subject should penetrate to the heart of their eminent contributions to their self-appointed task of interpreting the reality, rationality, and value of the religious life to twentieth century America.

# CHAPTER ONE

# HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR THE WRITINGS OF WIEMAN AND FOSDICK ON PRAYER

# CHAPTER ONE

# HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR THE WRITINGS OF WIEMAN AND FOSDICK ON PRAYER

## A. Introduction

The first thirty-three years of the twentieth century witnessed the maturing and then the gradual waning of American theological liberalism. Spokesmen for this development, Dr. Fosdick classified himself as an "evangelical liberal"[1] while Dr. Wieman has been described as a "modernistic liberal"[2] or "theistic naturalist."[3]

Now, according to John B. Cobb, Jr.,

> Wieman's theology can be understood only when we have first entered into the philosophico-spiritual situation of modern man, in which the stable world of substantial entities has been abandoned.[4]

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1. Harry E. Fosdick, The Living of These Days, New York, Harper & Brothers, 1956, p. 164.
2. Kenneth Cauthen, The Impact of American Religious Liberalism, New York, Harper & Row, 1962, pp. 29-30.
3. James Alfred Martin, Jr., Empirical Philosophies of Religions, New York, King's Crown Press, 1945, p. 86.
4. John B. Cobb, Jr., Living Options in Protestant Theology, Philadelphia, The Westminster Press, 1962.

Moreover, Professor Wieman himself observes that

> . . . in order to understand contemporary philosophies of religion and to evaluate their relevance to the present religious situation, careful inquiry should be directed to the sources on which they feed and full cognizance given to the historical banners they unfurl.[1]

Accordingly, this chapter will first survey the late nineteenth century conditions and influences out of which the liberal movement grew and then examine the major political, economic, and social developments of the twentieth century, together with important cultural and intellectual factors that formed the climate for twentieth century liberalism. The chapter will conclude with a brief description of conditions in American religious life from which and to which Dr. Fosdick and Dr. Wieman spoke.

## B. The Nineteenth Century Background of Twentieth Century Liberalism

Certain significant developments in the late nineteenth century "Victorian Era" of United States' history contributed perceptibly to the character and direction of twentieth century liberalism as represented by Fosdick and Wieman. Some of the political,

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1. Wieman and Meland, American Philosophies of Religion, op. cit., p. viii.

social, economic, intellectual, and religious aspects of these developments will now be briefly mentioned.

1. Political Developments

"The natural concomitants of war are demoralization and spiritual decline."[1] The post-Civil War era was marked by political confusion and corruption, unsuccessful efforts to reconstruct and reconcile the South whose way of life was completely disrupted by the emancipation of the slaves, and a series of ineffectual presidents, two of whom were assassinated and one impeached. The period closed with the Spanish-American War which resulted in United States' acquisition of the Philippines.

2. Social Developments

Sociologically, three trends characterized the Victorian Era. First, it was a period of unprecedented immigration from the European continent. The effect of this was not only to disturb the American economy and social structure but measurably to influence American religious life as these immigrants brought their beliefs and culture with them.[2] Secondly, the

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1. Information Please Almanac, Atlas, and Yearbook, Ed. by Dan Golenpaul, 15th ed., New York, McGraw-Hill, 1961, pp. 602-604.
2. Will Herberg, Protestant-Catholic-Jew: An Essay in American Religious Society, Garden City, N. Y., Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1955, p. 19.

period witnessed a tremendous urbanization of American society. Forty percent of the population lived in cities by 1900. This "age of the great metropolis" palpably altered the nature and problems of American church life.[1] Thirdly, American society during this era more and more divided into "interest groups" of farmers, manual laborers, "white collar" workers, and capitalists. This structure carried over into church life as well as politics with special problems peculiar to each group.

3. Economic Developments

Affecting many of these changes in American society were the rise of the great industrial corporations in steel, oil, electric services, and public transportation, which concentrated power and wealth in the hands of relatively few financiers and gave rise to protective labor movements, to combat conditions of child and sweat-shop labor and business exploitation of the working man. In this situation, many churches embraced the capitalist "Gospel of Wealth" upholding success as a criterion of a man's religion and viewing poverty as "the price of sin," and further allowing themselves to be converted into

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1. Olmstead, op. cit., p. 475.

vast business enterprises with emphasis upon efficiency and centralized organization.[1] Their singular indifference to the financial and political corruption of the era and to the plight of the workingman led Samuel Gompers of the American Federation of Labor to remark:

> My associates have come to look upon the church and the ministry as the apologists and defenders of the wrong committed against the interests of the people, . . . whose real God is the almighty dollar.[2]

Two notes of alarm regarding this period of "laissez-faire" private enterprise were sounded by the Panic of 1893 and the necessity of calling out Federal troops to break the Pullman Strike of 1894.[3]

4. Intellectual Developments

While political, social, and economic conditions were becoming increasingly problematic, many new intellectual currents(chiefly imported from the continent) were challenging the intellectual, moral, and spiritual complacency of the Victorian Era. On the one hand,the Darwinian and Spencerian concepts of

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1. Olmstead, op. cit., pp. 476-480.
2. C. H. Hopkins, The Rise of the Social Gospel in American Protestantism, 1865-1915, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1940, p. 85.
3. Almanac, op. cit., p. 604.

evolution were undermining the foundations upon which the accepted Biblical view of the universe was based. At the same time, the developments of Biblical higher criticism, introduced in America by Adolph Harnack, served to destroy traditional confidence in the authority of Scripture. These scientific trends in turn influenced the reformulation and bases of theological thought.[1] Religious knowledge was sought not so much in the infallible revelation of a transcendent God as in men's rational ability to understand the universe. Schleiermacher saw the essence of religion as "a sense of infinite dependence," Ritschl held that the purpose of religion is to cultivate the sense of values inherent in man, and David Hume(whose work particularly influenced Wieman) asserted that "all knowledge of fact and law arises in experience."[2] This absolute idealism received its superlative expression in the work of W. F. Hegel who believed the creative mind in man to be suprapersonal and that the universe itself is inherently rational and progressively becoming more so.[3] Such scientific empiricism greatly

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1. Olmstead, op. cit., pp. 466-468.
2. Cobb, op. cit., p. 25.
3. Ibid., p. 28.

influenced the religious developments of the nineteenth century which in turn led to the growth of twentieth century liberalism.

5. Religious Developments

In particular, four lines of nineteenth century religious development possess significance for twentieth century liberalism. First, there was an increasing effort on the part of American thinkers "to evaluate and adapt these various intellectual concepts to form a theology which stressed the immanence of God in the world and the progressive moral improvement of man."[1] Secondly, there was a growing resort to ritualism, partly to compensate for the loss of intellectual assurance of faith. Along with this went a perfection of pulpit oratory at the hands of men like Henry Ward Beecher, Lyman Abbott, Phillips Brooks, Thomas Talmadge and Washington Gladden.[2] Third, the reaction to moral sterility and social abuses led to various holiness movements within the church and paved the way for the twentieth century rise of the Social Gospel. Finally, men adopted either a strictly fundamentalist or an increasingly liberal stance in response to the new scientific and philosophical ideas. Bi-products of

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1. Olmstead, op. cit., p. 468.
2. Ibid., pp. 448-450.

this reaction were a proliferation of new sects and cults, a movement toward church unity and ecumenicity, the reinterpretation of the meaning of missions in the light of growing religious tolerance, and an intensification of the struggle between liberalism and orthodoxy. The year 1895 saw the promulgation of the famous Five Points of Fundamentalism(inerrancy of Scripture, the Virgin Birth, the substitutionary theory of the Atonement, the physical resurrection of Christ, and His imminent bodily return) on which Fosdick's orthodoxy was later to be attacked.[1] Two of Fosdick's teachers were also prosecuted for denying point one,[2]a fact which contributed to his and Wieman's liberalism.

Kenneth Cauthen aptly summarizes these various nineteenth century formative factors for twentieth century liberalism as involving a dominating concept of the immanence of God in the continuity of all life, the principle of autonomy which magnified the moral needs of the self as "the determinative and active ground on the basis of which religious realities are postulated," and a stress upon the dynamic aspects of life that led to a tentativeness of theological

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1. S. G. Craig, Christianity According to Dr. Fosdick, (reprinted from the Presbyterian), St. Davids, Pa. n. d.
2. Fosdick, The Living of These Days, op. cit., p. 229.

formulation, a faith in the intrinsic goodness of man, and the belief that God works in and through the evolutionary process toward the ultimate perfection of the universe.[1] The tensions of economic abuses, social upheaval, and political corruption intensified this readiness for the liberal reformation of the twentieth century.

C. The Twentieth Century Environment of Liberal And Post-Liberal Theological Writing

The liberal religious thought of men like Fosdick and Wieman is the product not only of nineteenth century formative factors but also of the major currents and social-intellectual trends of their own century. So Fosdick states, "The theology of any generation cannot be understood apart from the conditioning social matrix in which it is formulated . . ."[2] Moreover, "how uncritically the advocates of liberalism accepted the spirit of their time and incorporated it into their own theology," Professor Pelikan comments.[3] Therefore, in order to understand the life in which and to which Dr. Fosdick and Dr. Wieman were speaking, this section

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1. Cauthen, op. cit., p. 25.
2. Fosdick, The Living of These Days, op. cit., p. 232.
3. Jaroslav Pelikan, Foreword to Cauthen, op. cit., p. ix.

will first trace the major political-social-economic developments of the period and then consider the intellectual religious climate in which their particular answers to the vital religious questions of the age were formulated.

1. Political-Social-Economic Developments

So closely are the various aspects of twentieth century American history interrelated that no attempt will be made to deal with political, social, or economic factors separately. The first sixty years of the century have been a time of unprecedented change and tension. Labor movements gained strength in resistance to capitalist monopolies. The Federal Government enacted legislation first to control the trusts, and then to curb labor strikes that threatened the public weal. In the wake of the worst depression in United States history, the New and Fair Deal programs of Presidents Roosevelt and Truman undertook to insure bank savings, to subsidize farmers, to regulate inflationary prices, to relieve unemployment, and to protect public health and provide social security. The Eighteenth (Prohibition) Amendment to the Constitution was first passed and then repealed about a decade later. The Nineteenth(Woman Suffrage) Amendment, on the other hand,

met with a favorable response and has remained in force. In addition, this era marked the first attempt to legislate racial integration.[1] On the international front, the twentieth century has experienced the widespread devastations and dislocations of two world wars, followed by continual Cold War and frequent, more localized outbreaks of armed struggle to combat the increasing threat of Communist aggression and control. At the same time, the century has witnessed an alarming development of nuclear weapons coupled with an exciting exploration of space, many scientific and medical advances, the failure of the League of Nations and growth of the United Nations, together with the collapse and then more recent resurgence of the ecumenical movement of the Christian churches.[2]

Along with such specific events, the past sixty years have seen an increasing mobility of United States' population, a gradual breakdown of family life(partly due to women's entrance into the labor market), an increase in unemployment, and a steadily mounting rate of juvenile delinquency, alcoholism, crime, and mental illness. By 1919, moreover, eighty-six percent of the total wage-earning

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1. Almanac, op. cit., pp. 604-605.
2. Ibid., p. 712.

population of the United States was industrially employed with a resultant decline of rural life.[1] This confronted American religion with other problems of adjustment.

Such international and domestic political, economic and social foment indicated by this brief sketch of twentieth century life greatly influenced the development of certain intellectual and religious features now to be described.

2. Significant Cultural and Intellectual Developments

a. Cultural Trends

The twentieth century has become known as an age of rampant secularism, materialism,and scientific technology.[2] Faith in the almighty dollar has been coupled with faith in the American way of life and in the reformative power of mass education.[3] Progressive educators like John Dewey(who also influenced Wieman) adapted the pragmatic philosophy of scientific empiricism to their educational systems, holding that whatever works to human advantage is good and that "any activity pursued in behalf of its general and enduring value is

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1. Olmstead, op. cit., p. 541.
2. Ibid.
3. Herberg, op. cit., pp. 273-274.

religious in quality."[1] The redemptive education of the American public has been pursued not only through the school system but through mediums of mass communication such as radio, television, motion and sound pictures, and the newspapers. Successive and continuing waves of immigration have further made America "the triple melting pot" of Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish traditions which have increasingly tended to merge into a great "American culture-religion" which is "the religious aspect of Americanism conceived either as the common ground of the three 'faiths' or as a kind of super-religion embracing them."[2] Preachers of this religion, moreover, advocate a kind of "faith in faith" as the best way of promoting this Americanism and the results its devotees hope to derive from such faith are primarily "peace of mind, happiness, and success in worldly achievement." But this temper of twentieth century America is not a religious but a cultural manifestation, infecting however the entire religious climate of the modern age.

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1. John Dewey, A Common Faith, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1934, p. 27.
2. Herberg, op. cit., p. 279.
3. Ibid., p. 282.

b. Scientific Developments

Furthermore, while the ravages and phobias of two world wars have greatly decreased man's sublime confidence in himself, gradually converting extreme liberal into neo-orthodox attitudes toward the meaning of life, at the same time, great scientific advances have decreased his reliance upon supernatural aid. Besides providing man with nuclear weapons and prospective flights to the moon, twentieth century biochemistry and bio-physics have perfected the medical uses of radium,[1] given us radar and the X-ray, many constructive uses of atomic power, new vaccines and treatments for many of mankind's worst diseases, and have contributed important discoveries regarding the nutritional values of vitamins and the glandular effects of hormones. Industrial research, too, has been devising many ways of making life more comfortable and prosperous,[3] so that many people have felt that they did not need to seek the help of God in prayer.

c. Psychological Advances

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1. Marie Curie, "Radium, Its Discovery and Its Possibilities," These Eventful Years: The Twentieth Century in the Making, New York, Encyclopaedia Brittanica, Inc., 1924, Vol. II, pp. 449-454.
2. J. Arthur Thomson, "What Science Can Do For Man," ibid., p. 423.
3. Harrison E. Howe, "Industry and Invention," ibid., pp. 455-474.

In addition, extraordinary twentieth century developments in the field of psychology, psycho-analysis, and psychotherapy have further relieved religion of much of its former work in dealing with problems of personal adjustment to life, besides tending to alter many traditional concepts of the function and validity of prayer. Psychoanalysts like Sigmund Freud(1856-1939) "internalized religion as the product of subjective wish-motives" arising out of the conflict between the libidinal impulses of human nature with the moral censorship of the superego.[1] Freud considered the mythological and religious view of life as "nothing other than psychological process projected into the outer world."[2] Carl Gustav Jung(1875- ) went beyond Freud to a collective theory of religion as emerging out of the "conflict to overcome conflict" which is empowered by unconscious energy from sources "beyond the individual consciousness."[3] To Jung, according to Dr. Johnson,

> . . . religious symbols are not invented but have grown out of the basic conditions of human nature which . . . are everywhere the same . . . It is characteristic of (this) collectivism to subordinate the individual person to the impersonal whole. This tendency appears in theories of religion offered by . . . Dewey and Wieman.[4]

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1. Paul E. Johnson, Psychology of Religion, rev., New York, Abingdon Press, 1959, pp. 37, 33.
2. Johnson, op. cit., p. 34.
3. Ibid., p. 38.
4. Ibid., p. 39.

Two other psychologists do not seem to have influenced Fosdick or Wieman directly but their theories have some bearing on liberal and post-liberal thought. Gordon Allport(1897- ) exalts the uniqueness of conscious self-motivation, so that "the unique character of a mature religion is integral with the central intention of the individual person . . . (and) Faith is a personal affair which no one else can provide or prescribe for the individual."[1] This has been a very prominent concept in twentieth century liberalism. Finally Jacob Moreno(supported by the philosophy of Martin Buber) developed the understanding that man is never himself in isolation but grows only in and through interpersonal relationships, including the relationship with God,"the eternal Thou."[2]

3. Religious Developments

Religious manifestations of and reactions to these various events and conditions of twentieth century American life have taken several significant forms which will now be briefly mentioned. A recent article in Pastoral Psychology is entitled: "Psychology: Twentieth Century Religion?" The author admits that

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1. Johnson, op. cit., p. 40.
2. Martin Buber, I and Thou, trans. by Ronald Gregor Smith, 2nd ed., New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, pp. 6, 79.

> In an indirect sense psychology has become religion through the influence of psychology on religion . . . (but then concludes) At most psychology can be a religious-like substitute for religion for a certain sub-group of our population, mainly intellectuals.[1]

Here is one phenomena of twentieth century life that has confronted Wieman and Fosdick in their writing on prayer. It has already been noted that many Americans of this era have placed the same faith in science (and its method)[2] and others have subscribed to the secular religion of "Americanism."[3]

Notwithstanding such observable tendencies the basic insecurities of two world wars, depression, unemployment and the social need of belonging have resulted in great increases in church membership during the twentieth century;[4] and the fear of the future, too, has driven many Americans to seek the power of prayer and the salvation offered by the churches.

However, the new scientific understanding of life, coupled with confidence in the scientific method has greatly influenced writers and preachers to try to make their religious utterances scientifically respectable and has tended to upbuild the religion of man at

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1. Leif J. Braaten, "Psychology: Twentieth Century Religion?", Pastoral Psychology, XIII, 129, Dec., 1962, pp. 27, 34.
2. Supra, pp. 21-22.
3. Supra, p. 21.
4. Herberg, op. cit., p. 276.

the expense of the revealed religion of the Bible. The early twentieth century witnessed, therefore, a last-ditch struggle between fundamentalism and liberalism[1] on the one hand, and the increasing obliteration or transcendence of theological differences in movements toward church unity, ecumenicity, and changing concepts of missions on the other.[2]

The various theological formulations of these religious tendencies have been aptly summarized in Cauthen's book on The Impact of American Religious Liberalism. He recognizes Evangelical Liberals as "serious Christians" who were searching for a theology which could be believed by "intelligent moderns", classifying Fosdick and Walter Rauschenbush with his Social Gospel in this group.[3] Modernistic liberals, on the other hand, are ". . . 'intelligent moderns' who nevertheless wished to be thought of as 'serious Christians'" though basically determining their thinking by a twentieth century outlook.[4] Mathews, MacIntosh, and Wieman belong here. Men like Dewey may be categorized as "optimistic humanists" and Walter Lippman(whom Wieman quotes) as "pessimistic humanists."[5]

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1. Fosdick, The Living of These Days, op. cit., pp. 144-176.
2. Olmstead, op. cit., pp. 529, 230.
3. Cauthen, op. cit., p. 27.
4. Ibid., p. 29.
5. Ibid., p. 32.

Liberalism itself further subdivides into Ethical-social liberalists(Fosdick among them) "whose primary interest was in relating the Christian message to the ethical and social needs of men in the modern world"[1] and Empirical Modernists, like Wieman who resolutely attempted to "erect a theology on the basis of a method suggested by modern empirical science."[2] Opposed to all these were the conservatives and fundamentalists who subscribed to a greater or lesser degree to "a rigid dogmatic outlook largely negative in effect and lacking the creativity" of older orthodoxy.[3]

Half-way through the sixty years being described in this chapter, liberalism was radically challenged by the neo-orthodoxy of men like Barth, Brunner, Niebuhr, Bennett, and Tillich, all of whom are mentioned by either Wieman or Fosdick as influencing their thought and the direction of liberalism. It is not possible within the scope of this study to define sufficiently this new theology in all its variants. Instead, let Dr. Cauthen's general description suffice to characterize this movement:

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1. Cauthen, op. cit., p. 33.
2. Ibid., p. 36.
3. Ibid., p. 31.

> . . . while the fundamental aim of liberalism was to harmonize the ancient Gospel with the life and thought of modern culture, the basic aim of post-liberal thought has been to discover the distinctive, authentic Christian faith which appears in the Bible and to set it forth in its purity against all other competing faiths. . .[1]

Writing during the most critical days of World War II, Dr. Fosdick characterized this period as "A great time to be alive."[2] Again, at the close of his autobiography he gives the following summary of the twentieth century era that has been described in this section:

> . . . I find this generation the most stimulating, exciting, provocative - yes, promising era I have ever seen or read about . . . Prophetic, germinative ideas are here; there are open doors of possibility for good as well as evil, which did not exist when I was born. . . I want to see what is going to happen next. . .[3]

No more epigrammatic description of the environment of Fosdick's and Wieman's writings could be written.

## D. Summary

In presenting a brief survey of the nineteenth century formative factors for twentieth century liberalism and of the twentieth century influences that helped to shape the thought of Fosdick and Wieman,

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1. Cauthen, op. cit., p. 229.
2. Harry E. Fosdick, A Great Time to Be Alive: Sermons on Christianity in Wartime, New York, Harper & Bros., 1944.
3. Fosdick, The Living of These Days, op. cit., p. 319.

this chapter has described some of the conditions that confronted these two writers with the basic need for prayer, and that also perceptibly guided their understanding of the function, nature, and validity of the practice of prayer.

The nineteenth century was characterized by political, social, economic, and intellectual conditions that led to a religious emphasis upon the immanence of God in the evolutionary process, the innate goodness and perfectibility of humanity, the derivation of all knowledge from man's rational powers, faith in science and the scientific method, in short -- a basically anthropomorphic philosophy of life.

The further scientific and industrial advances of the twentieth century intensified these nineteenth century developments. At the same time, the catastrophe of two World Wars with resultant political, social, and economic setbacks and dislocations created in American life an apprehensiveness and insecurity that led many into the churches in search of power and peace of mind through a solution to the problems confronting them. Others, however, lapsed more and more into the secular religion of faith in the American Way of Life and faith in faith itself.

A double challenge,therefore,confronted Fosdick

and Wieman: to combat the humanistic, secularistic tendencies of their age, and to develop an understanding of religious faith and its practices as would be intellectually respectable and relevant to a basically scientific, materialistic generation. At the heart of their experiential or empirical solutions to this challenge lies their concept of the meaning, function, and validity of prayer, to which this study now turns.

# CHAPTER TWO

## THE WRITINGS OF HENRY N. WIEMAN ON PRAYER

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### A. Introduction

To understand the writings of Wieman and Fosdick on prayer, one needs to appreciate the influence exerted not only by their immediate historical environment, but also by their own religious experience, and by their related concepts of God's dealings with men. While on the one hand it may be said that "prayer is the soul of religion,"[1] it is equally true that the context and nature of a man's life and thought will condition his prayer. Accordingly, turning now to a study of Wieman's writings, this chapter will first consider as aspects of his religious experience Dr. Wieman's home background, education and religious incluences, a brief account of his work, and his major objectives in writing on prayer. Next, such elements of Wieman's basic theology as are considered relevant to his concept of prayer will be examined, including his epistemology, concept of religion, doctrines of man and God, and his soteriology and eschatology. Then Wieman's writings on the meaning of prayer - as these

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1. Fosdick, The Meaning of Prayer, op. cit., p. xi.

involve a presentation of preliminary definitions, false concepts, the nature and aspects of prayer - will be surveyed in somewhat greater detail. Finally, Dr. Wieman's writings on the practice of prayer will be examined in relation to types of prayer, sources for understanding prayer, method of prayer, and the personal prayers of Wieman himself. Wherever practicable within the limits of this study, Wieman's own words have been quoted to represent his views.

B. The Religious Experience of Henry Wieman

To date, very little has been written about Dr. Wieman's life. However, from several basic autobiographical comments, together with an article he wrote for The Christian Century on changes in his thinking,[1] it will be possible to present this brief survey of his home background, education, work, and objectives in writing.

1. Home Background

Wieman was born on August 19, 1884 in the state of Missouri.[2] He writes of his family that his father was a Presbyterian minister and his mother a

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1. Henry Nelson Wieman, "Some Blind Spots Removed," The Christian Century, January 25, 1939, pp. 116-118.
2. Henry Nelson Wieman, "What's the World to Me," Ventures in Belief, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1930, p. 77.

woman who "changed her beliefs radically and is still testing and inquiring at seventy-seven."[1] He adds:

> My parents did not teach me religion. I was never indoctrinated with religious truths. . . But I caught something from my parents by contagion . . . (which) in time formulated itself into a religion . . . (but was then) a dumb aspiration, a passion and a wonder - about what? I did not know, only I discovered the way my mother moved like a force of nature toward her chosen ends of life.[2]

It was the family custom to attend church, but as the oldest of eight children, Wieman often had to baby-sit. He utilized this time to read poetry, observing that "I fear my religion has never been religious."[3] Although exposed to church influences, Wieman was evidently never forced to accept its beliefs but left free to catch from his parents the spiritual dynamic of a religion lived.

2. Education and Religious Influences

The religiously liberal and vital environment of Wieman's home made him more receptive to subsequent intellectual and theological influences.

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1. Henry N. Wieman, "Theocentric Religion," Contemporary American Theology, ed. by Vergilius Ferm, New York, Round Table Press, Inc., 1932, p. 339.
2. Ibid., p. 340.
3. Ibid.

He notes that

> Since I was never led to identify religion with any particular set of beliefs or institutions or programs, I never felt any religious distress . . . when I had to make radical changes in my beliefs.[1]

Therefore he had no trouble with the evolutionary theory of Fiske and Spencer, or with Royce's idealism and the study of comparative religions at Park College. Instead, he experienced here a strong inner compulsion to devote his life to the philosophy of religion, rather than to a previously planned career of journalism. Thus,

> I went to a theological seminary, not because I ever intended to be a minister but because I wanted to study religion and thought that I should know it from the inside, . . . But I was a rebel in the field all through my stay at seminary.[2]

Following graduation, a year in Europe which acquainted him with the thought of Rudolf Eucken, Wildebrand and Troeltsch, he estimated to be of little educational value because these men overstressed the importance of history which "cannot show us how to live . . ."[3] Back in the United States, Wieman served a pastorate for two and a half years "because I could

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1. Wieman, "Theocentric Religion," op. cit., p. 341.
2. Ibid., p. 343.
3. Ibid., p. 340.

not get the position I wanted in teaching."[1] He next spent "the greatest part of my life up to date " in Harvard studying under men like William Ernest Hocking and Ralph Barton Perry. Subsequently, he taught philosophy for ten years (1917-1927) at Occidental College in southern California. Here his methodology and theory of value developed under the influence of Dewey's experimental religious humanism, while J. C. Smut's "holism" helped to shape his metaphysical views. While at this time terming Albert Whitehead's writing on reality the "most significant achievement that modern time can show," Wieman called his idealized concept of God the product of a "wholly groundless" if "religious speculation."[2]

From southern California, Wieman was called to the chair of religious philosophy at the University of Chicago Divinity School. He now made a careful study of the theological views of Barth, Brunner, Tillich, and Berdyaev - without subscribing to any of them.[3] Currently, Dr. Wieman is on the staff of Southern Illinois University, having enjoyed a long

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1. Wieman, "Theocentric Religion," op. cit., p. 340.
2. Ibid., p. 346.
3. Wieman, "Some Blind Spots Removed," op. cit., p. 116.

and distinguished career as professor of philosophy, the fruit of intensive and extensive study both at home and abroad.

3. The Work of Henry N. Wieman

While teaching, Dr. Wieman's literary output has been prodigious, and has reflected several changes in his religious thinking. One might divide this writing into four main chronological periods. His earliest books, Religious Experience and Scientific Method (1927) and The Wrestle of Religion with Truth (1928), written while teaching at Occidental College, were an attempt to ground his religious belief upon a sound, objective, scientific basis and to develop an intelligent religious method of "seeking adjustment to God."[1] During the second period, while at Chicago, this procedure was further developed with a growing emphasis upon theocentricity in Wieman's system of values. Methods of Private Religious Living (1929) and The Issues of Life (1930) represented this development. Still at Chicago, Dr. Wieman entered upon a third phase of collaborative writing. With professors MacIntosh and Otto, he debated the question, Is There A God? (1932). With his wife, Regina Westcott-Wieman, he

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1. Henry Nelson Wieman, The Wrestle of Religion with Truth, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1928, p. vi.

made a study of American Philosophies of Religion in 1936, and with Walter Marshall Horton wrote a history of The Growth of Religion (1938).

Of the changes in this thinking manifested by these books, Wieman writes:

> New vision has come through transformations passing over the social order, . . . (through) contact with certain individuals who live the Christian way profoundly, . . . (and through) my struggle to make contact with certain other thinkers in public discussion, notably MacIntosh, . . . Otto, . . . R. L. Calhoun, . . . (and) John Dewey.[1]

These changes took place in six areas of Wieman's thought. He came to see and utilize the value of Christian symbolism as best expressing the abiding meanings of life in a Christian culture. He saw more clearly the profound depths of sin as an estranging substitution of human ideals and purposes for the divine will and grace. The latter he defined as "the good which God puts into each concrete situation over and above all that man can do . . ."[2] Increasingly he recognized that "the grace of God is in Jesus Christ, . . . the living Christ, . . . a catalytic agent . . . which started a process of forming connections of

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1. Wieman, "Some Blind Spots Removed," op. cit., p. 116.
2. Ibid., p. 117.

mutual support and enrichment between persons. . ."[1] This same living Christ, Wieman realized, is identified with the church as the vehicle of God's grace. And man is to envision God as beyond personality, wholly other than creation, yet working creatively in it.[2]

Then, in Wieman's more recent period of writing, he departed from Christian terminology into a more philosophical language to express his thought of God and prayer in terms of "creativity" and "creative interchange." Thus The Source of Human Good(1940) represents a crystallization of Wieman's philosophy which is applied to the interpretation of history in The Directive of History(1949). Man's Ultimate Commitment(1958) summons man to cooperate with creativity which is further defined and justified in Wieman's latest book, Intellectual Foundation of Faith(1961). Thus it appears that in the course of his writing, Wieman has moved via scientific empiricism through a re-evaluation of Christian tradition in the light of human experience to a fresh statement of what Wieman believes to be the central truth of existence, namely, the supreme value of divine creativity as both

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1. Wieman, "Some Blind Spots Removed," op. cit., p. 118.
2. Ibid.

transcendent ideal and vital imminent power to which it is man's most important business to relate his life cooperatively. This brief description of the development of Wieman's thought has been given here since it will not be possible to trace this growth in relation to every subpoint of this study.

4. Wieman's Objectives in Writing

Dr. Wieman states that

> What I am chiefly trying to do in the field of religion is to promote a theocentric religion as over against the prevalent anthropocentric . . . (making)the actuality of God himself and not our ideas about God the object of love and devotion, (by) . . . not (allowing) our wishes and needs to shape our ideas of God, but (shaping) it solely in the light of objective evidence.[1]

In doing this, Wieman is neither trying to "reconcile science and religion," nor to introduce "scientific method into religion in order to make religion respectable and acceptable to the intelligentsia."[2] Rather, he employs scientific method to be certain of dealing with the "objective, existential God, and not merely ideas."[3]

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1. Wieman, "Theocentric Religion," op. cit., p. 346.
2. Ibid., p. 346.
3. Ibid., p. 347.

To summarize, while too little is known of Wieman's personal background, it is worthwhile to have gained some understanding of his experience and education, to have had some over-all view of his writing, and to have sensed the earnestness of his high purpose and dedication to truth, before turning to an examination of Wieman's theology.

C. The Basic Theology of Henry N. Wieman

The concern now is to survey Wieman's basic theology as it evolved out of his personal experience in the course of his studies, teaching and writing on religious philosophy, especially as these may relate to his concept of prayer. This section will, therefore, examine pertinent material setting forth Wieman's epistemology, concept of religion, doctrines of God and of man, and his soteriology and eschatology.

1. Epistemology

In order to understand a writer's concept of prayer, it is surely necessary to understand how he believes that man arrives at any knowledge of reality, or truth, or God; and in what way he conceives of God's self-communication, if any, to men. In explaining Wieman's naturalistic theism, B. E. Meland states that Dr. Wieman "starts with the experience of value in the

environing world of events as the means of deriving criteria for his definition of God and religion."[1] So Wieman would avoid the "miasma of subjectivism" by relinquishing "all claim to knowledge of God save that which can be obtained by observation and reason."[2] Wieman holds that the mind can only proceed to develop a structure of highest values, venturing all upon their validity. This method will provide a faith "the ultimate foundation of (which) can stand . . . unshaken through all (doubt and failure) . . . because it does not rest on the assumption that God has given me grace to know the truth beyond the natural powers of the human mind."[3] To attain such knowledge, man must look to science for "its verifiable insights regarding the physical structure of the universe," to "common sense for its wisdom derived from human experience," and then to the saints, sages, and religious heroes of mankind (including those reported in the Bible) to discover "the character and purpose of man's spiritual life."[4]

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1. Wieman-Meland, American Philosophies of Religion, op. cit., p. 295.
2. Wieman, "Theocentric Religion," op. cit., pp. 347, 349.
3. Henry Nelson Wieman, Intellectual Foundation of Faith, New York, Philosophical Library, 1961, p. 114.
4. Wieman, The Wrestle of Religion with Truth, op. cit., pp. 61-62.

Through these three approaches, man may attain quite valid concepts as to the nature of reality.[1] However, it is also true for men that "what we perceive is determined by our habits . . . (Therefore) the clear and certain perception of God waits on the formation of the right habits . . . (and these) must be found by experimental living."[2] The most effective methods of forming these habits include private and public worship, meditation, fellowship, and mysticism.[3] Wieman insists with regard to the traditional understanding of revelation that it "provides no access to truth beyond the bounds of observation, agreement of observers, and coherence."[4] This is true because

> Revelation in itself is not knowledge at all . . . (but) the lifting of the creative event to a place of domination in the devotion of a continuing fellowship to form one enduring strand of history . . . by . . . the life and teachings of Jesus, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, the forming of the fellowship, (and) the disentangling of the new faith from the Hebrew cultural perspective and from bondage to any one single perspective or set of rules.[5]

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1. Wieman, The Wrestle of Religion with Truth, op. cit., p. 218.
2. Ibid., pp. 83-84.
3. Vid. Wieman, Methods of Private Religious Living, op. cit.
4. Henry N. Wieman, The Source of Human Good, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1946, p. 215.
5. Ibid.

The Bible is the record of revelation. But the Word of God is the living Christ, rightly called "revelation" only when it "holds supremacy over created good in the lives of the fellowship."[1] Revelation is apprehended by faith. However, "faith is not knowledge primarily, but a self-giving."[2] Faith is developed by prayer.

Thus, in Wieman's epistemology, truth is observable in the structure of creation, by apprehending the highest universal values and venturing all on their validity in the commitment of faith, thus <u>experiencing</u> the truth. There is <u>revealed</u> truth only insofar as the creative event gains dominance over created good in the lives of the continuing community. Faith, developed through worship, is commitment to creativity.

2. Concept of Religion

The concept of religion that evolves from such a pragmatic approach to understanding reality is largely ideational and valuational - yet containing strong practical dynamic. "Religion," Wieman writes, is a very practical matter. It is simply the way a man deals with the most inclusive practical problems of his life. Hence every man must be religious who

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1. Wieman, The Source of Human Good, op. cit., p. 216.
2. Ibid., p. 215.

applies intelligence to the total conduct of his life."[1] Dr. Wieman then defines religion as "man's attempt to realize the highest good, through coming into harmonious relations with some reality greater than himself, which commands his reverence and loyal service."[2] This may become

> . . . man's acute sense of profound dependence upon some actual condition (God) which now exists. It is also his strenuous, often desperate attempt to adjust himself to that condition in such a way as to escape disaster and to achieve highest good . . . Consequently religion, by its essential nature must drive man to a passionate quest for knowledge concerning that existential condition upon which his all depends.[3]

Dr. Wieman notes that Christianity has come "to be identified with a faith directed to a transcendental reality."[4] He adds:

> (But) we here propose to interpret Christianity in terms of the source of human good . . . (which is) not metaphysically . . . but functionally transcendental . . . (serving) everyone of the vital and saving functions performed by the myth of a metaphysically transcendental reality . . . We shall try to

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1. Henry Nelson Wieman, "Reason and Intelligence," What Religion Means to Me, New York, Doubleday, Doran & Company, p. 60.
2. Henry Nelson Wieman and Walter Marshall Horton, The Growth of Religion, New York, Willett, Clark & Company, 1938, p. xii.
3. Wieman, The Wrestle of Religion with Truth, op. cit., p. 231.
4. Wieman, The Source of Human Good, op. cit., p. 263.

> show that creative good . . . is . . . the actual reality which has done the work and played the part fictitiously attributed in the Christian tradition to something eternal (nontemporal), immaterial, and superhistorical.[1]

However, the Christian faith itself, according to Dr. Wieman, really "lays upon us the stern demand to have a clear understanding of the way God works in the midst of human life."[2]

In sum, "Religion is (basically) man's endeavor to adapt himself to the facts of existence." To this end, since "God is a fact and this world is made up of facts," a lucid practical theology becomes an imperative.[3]

3. Doctrine of God

In discussing his concept of prayer, Dr. Wieman writes that

> The idea of prayer is inextricably involved in the idea of God. The present confusion in thought and practice of prayer is due to the present confusion in thought about God. Until we get an idea of God that will enable us to deal with this reality in an intelligent manner, the confusion about prayer will continue.[4]

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1. Wieman, The Source of Human Good, op. cit., p. 293.
2. Ibid., p. 291.
3. Wieman, The Wrestle of Religion with Truth, op. cit., p. 3.
4. Wieman and Wieman, Normative Psychology of Religion, op. cit., p. 137.

Dr. Wieman further opines that

> . . . from the point of view of philosophy of religion it may be better to have an incomplete concept of God which is nevertheless so clear and distinctive that it enables us to recognize God as surely present in human experience, than to have a full, rich concept which is so inaccurate, ambiguous, and confused with other concepts that we can never identify God anywhere with certainty, or be sure that God exists nor develop a better idea of God by methodical testing of our original definition.[1]

From this practical standpoint, Professor Wieman seeks to give a lucid explanation of the nature and work of God that is deeply relevant to human experience.

a. The Nature of God

Wieman approaches a description of God first in terms of what God is not, and then in terms of what God is. It is desirable to ascertain the place of Christology and Pneumatology in Wieman's theology, in order the better to understand his concept of the prayer relationship.

(1) What God Is Not

Dr. Wieman believes it most important first to clear away false concepts of the nature of God. He feels that in the name of religious tolerance and liberalism, men often lose "the sense of any real deity," using the term "God" to "apply to anything

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1. Wieman and Horton, The Growth of Religion, op. cit., p. xvii.

that one happens to prefer."[1] So our generation suffers either from the "inability to distinguish anything as sovereign over all of human history . . ." or from "attributing absolute worth to some tradition, . . . group, . . . culture, . . . race, . . . state or doctrine . . . " in short, to something less than God.[2] Wieman decries such idolatry.

At the same time, it has already been noted that Wieman considers it unsatisfactory to conceive of God as "something eternal, immaterial, and super-historical."[3] Neither will Wieman accept the liberal and humanist thought of God "at the top of everything as the supreme pattern of what ought to be."[4] While it is not strictly true to identify God wholly in terms of "structure and process,"[5] neither is it altogether proper to speak of God in terms of personality because

> Personality is progressively created . . . from a sub-human level by interchange with other persons . . . (so that) for God to be person, other persons must exist before God can be created by interchange with them.[6]

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1. Wieman, The Source of Human Good, op. cit., p. 112.
2. Ibid., p. 113.
3. Supra, p. 47, 48.
4. Wieman and Horton, The Growth of Religion, op. cit., p. 348.
5. H. N. Wieman, "God and Value," Religious Realism, ed. by D. C. MacIntosh, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1931, p. 155.
6. Wieman, Intellectual Foundation of Faith, op. cit., pp. 60-61.

Thus,

> . . . God is very different from what we know as human persons . . . (so that) the Trinity . . . and other theological contrivances for upholding the popular demand for a personal God . . . (are) forced to admit the inadequacy of personality as applied to the creative source of all value . . . (and) testify to an inner contradiction.[1]

In short, it is erroneous thinking either to define God in purely transcendental or non-existential language, or to equate Deity with any form of "created good."[2] What, then, is God in Wieman's understanding?

(2) What God Is

Dr. Wieman's approach to a definition of God is to ask "what are the criteria which must distinguish any reality that can be called God?" And he answers:

> God in the religious sense . . . must be **and** can be only what rightfully commands the supreme devotion of man . . . Such a reality is characterized in three ways. It must be super-human . . . (having) power for good which is greater than the intelligently directed efforts of men . . . It must be . . . the best reality there is in existence . . . And it must be (or exercise) the greatest power for good.[3]

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1. Wieman, The Source of Human Good, op. cit., p. 266.
2. Ibid., pp. 79, 287.
3. Wieman and Horton, The Growth of Religion, op. cit., p. 350.

Above all, any valid description must present God as "an object of immediate experience."[1] This is the general direction of Wieman's conceptualization of God. The resultant definitions may vary and develop in meaning through the course of Wieman's long writing career. It would be most profitable to delve deeply into the nature of these changes. However, within the limits of this study, it will be necessary here to confine the survey to a brief summary of Wieman's developing definition of God.

In his early writing Wieman describes God as

> that object which will yield maximum security and abundance to all human living . . . [2]

or

> . . . the one sustaining, all-pervading character which the universe displays, the principle of concretion, the constitutive, aesthetic order of all being.[3]

And in relation to his study of prayer, Wieman adds that God is

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1. Wieman and Horton, The Growth of Religion, op. cit., p. 351.
2. Henry Nelson Wieman, Religious Experience and Scientific Method, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1927, p. 381.
3. Wieman, The Wrestle of Religion with Truth, op. cit., p. 187.

> . . . that integrating process which works through all the world . . . to bring human lives into organic fellowship . . . and to maintain and develop organic interdependence and mutual support between all parts and aspects of the cosmos.[1]

A year later, in Issues of Life, Wieman writes that "God must be the supreme good or greatest value."[2] This definition Wieman develops into "that structure which sustains, promotes, and constitutes supreme value,"[2] and this in turn becomes:

> . . . that kind of interaction between things which generates and magnifies personality and all its highest values . . . the process of progressive integration. . .[3]

During his third period of writing,[4] Dr. Wieman is describing God as

> that interaction between individuals groups and ages which generates and promotes the greatest possible mutuality of good, . . . (or) the essential brotherhood of men.[5]

In Normative Psychology of Religion, God is identified with the "growth of meaning and value," which is explained as

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1. Wieman, Methods of Private Religious Living, op. cit., p. 22.
2. Henry Nelson Wieman, The Issues of Life, New York, The Abingdon Press, 1930, p. 220.
3. Wieman, "Theocentric Religion," op. cit., p. 351.
4. Supra, p. 38.
5. Henry Nelson Wieman, Douglas Clyde MacIntosh, and Max Carl Otto, Is There A God? A Conversation, New York, Willett, Clark & Company, 1932, pp. 11, 319.

> . . . the greatest actual and possible connection between activities which makes them mutually sustaining, mutually enhancing, and mutually meaningful.[1]

Such a God is, in Wieman's thinking, "what rightfully commands the supreme devotion of man."[2] Moreover, he believes that his meaning in so describing God is the same as that of Jesus in speaking of God as "Father" - "sustaining and promoting the mutuality(Kingdom of God) which arises between members of a worthy family."[3] So,

> God has found us and we have found God when we are caught up into this creative process of associated living, and are used by it, enriched, and transfigured by it.[4]

From so conceiving God as "creative process," the transition into Wieman's most recent mode of expressing his thought of God is very natural. Wieman views this creative process as The Source of Human Good, or "creative good," which he is careful to distinguish from "created good."[5] Creative good may operate in human life in terms of creative events, of which Christ is the supreme "creative event."[6] And the events are

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1. Wieman and Wieman, Normative Psychology, op. cit., p. 50.
2. Wieman and Horton, The Growth of Religion, op. cit., p. 343.
3. Wieman, MacIntosh, and Otto, op. cit., pp. 16-17.
4. Ibid., p. 319.
5. Wieman, The Source of Human Good, op. cit., pp. 79, 287.
6. Ibid., pp. 271-272.

productive of a kind of "creative interchange", or "creative intercommunication" which in turn become further creative events, and which "create diversity along with mutual support and drive out diversity of mutual frustration and destruction."[1] Ultimately, Wieman selects the term "creativity" as best suggesting both the transcendent and imminent qualities of this creative process. "Creativity" may be defined as

> . . . the creative transformation of the individual in the wholeness of his being, . . . (which involves) an expanding of the range and diversity of what the individual can know, evaluate, and control, . . . an increasing of his ability to understand appreciatively other persons and peoples across great barriers of estrangement and hostility, . . . increasing the freedom of the individual, and increasing the capacity of the individual to integrate into the uniqueness of his own individuality a greater diversity of experience, so that more of all he encounters becomes a source of enrichment and strength.[2]

Wieman says that "intuition is another name for creativity,"[3] but it may be equated with Christian love only "when this love has been purged of the evils commonly embodied in it." So God may be defined as the basic creativity operating "to save and transform"

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1. Henry Nelson Wieman, The Directive in History, Boston, The Beacon Press, 1949, pp. 116-117.
2. Henry Nelson Wieman, Man's Ultimate Commitment, Carbondale, Southern Illinois University Press, 1958, pp. 175, 4.
3. Wieman, The Source of Human Good, op. cit., p. 185.
4. Wieman, Man's Ultimate Commitment, op. cit., p. 5.

by way of the four modes of being : existence, ideality, actuality, and unifying power. Or, to summarize, God is creativity, operating through creative interchange or process, in creative events to transform life. From the standpoint of how God operates through prayer, one needs to inquire further as to the place of Christ and the Holy Spirit in Wieman's doctrine of God.

(3) The Place of Christology and Pneumatology in Wieman's Doctrine of God

God's grace, or the "good which God puts into each concrete situation over and above all that man can do . . . is in Christ Jesus . . . the living Christ."[1] But Christ is not the man Jesus but "the domination by the creative event over the life of man in a fellowship made continuous in history . . . God incarnate in these creative events (is) the Christ revealing God, forgiving sin and saving the world."[2] Thus Christ is seen as the active working of God or creativity in the life of man. Elsewhere Wieman identifies this same creative activity as that of the Holy Spirit:

> (thus) . . . creative energy controlling the fellowship is also called the "Holy Spirit" in the Christian vernacular . . . and "revelation" only when it holds supremacy over created good

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1. Wieman, "Some Blind Spots Removed," op. cit., p. 117.
2. Wieman, The Source of Human Good, op. cit., p. 269.

> in the lives of this fellowship . . . (Then) it becomes a transforming and saving power of communication (which) has been called the Holy Spirit.[1]

So God works "in the church in the form of the Holy Spirit, when the church is faithful to its mission."[2] In a sense, this "work" of God is inseparable from Dr. Wieman's description of God's nature. But he does have several further things to say about God's work.

b. The Work of God

Beyond what has already been said about God's activity as creative process, Wieman explains that in Christian and Jewish tradition, five particular "doings" are ascribed to God: the doing of creation, the doing of salvation, the doing of judgment and government of history, the doing of revelation or creative event in Jesus Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit in the faithful church.[3] Dr. Wieman further states that these traditionally described doings of God are the same activities that God as creativity performs. Creativity creates the world and all that men are able to know. Creative communication "transforms man as he cannot transform himself." Moreover, God rules history through

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1. Wieman, The Source of Human Good, op. cit., p. 216; and Intellectual Foundation of Faith, op. cit., p. 55.
2. Wieman, Intellectual Foundation of Faith, op. cit., p. 52.
3. Ibid., pp. 53-55.

events and by way of "dark ages" God "judges history and condemns it when men do not allow God to operate fully and effectively in their lives."[1] How then does man relate to this God and God to man?

4. Doctrine of Man

Dr. Wieman finds that "religion arises out of human nature . . . (and) is inherent in human nature . . . Religiously, man is a personality . . . growing in personal relationships as a product of the creative process which is God."[2] Furthermore,

> . . . Civilization is the work of man. Growth of community is the work of God. Man must always live for God. Whenever he tries to make God live for man, disaster ensues. The living God alone can be master of human life and all its strivings . . . (and through God) something magnificent is being done in cosmic existence by means of human nature.[3]

Thus man is in and must commit himself to be in a dependent creaturely relationship to creativity so growing religiously by "propulsion, crisis, decision, release, specification, and fellowship . . . " all steps which belong properly to the life of prayer.[4] And this is a presently and ultimately saving relationship.

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1. Wieman, Intellectual Foundation of Faith, op. cit., pp. 53-55.
2. Wieman and Horton, The Growth of Religion, op. cit., pp. 440-449.
3. Ibid., pp. 478-480.
4. Ibid., p. 482.

5. Soteriology and Eschatology

The term, "savior", in Wieman's thought, refers to "whatever the individual may believe has the power to save from evil."[1] To this power man must render absolute self-commitment, as he must also give himself to the free inquiry into the nature of this power.[2] Man needs salvation from sin which is "any state of being which is not completely dominated and controlled by one mastering devotion to the whole reality of God."[3] To Wieman, the best statement of what salvation means is expressed by Jesus' saying: "Whosoever loseth his life shall save it and whosoever saveth his life shall lose it."[4] In such salvation one attains victorious living, but it is found only when the creative event"is lifted . . . (to become) the dominant directive of human endeavor." This happened supremely in the group that surrounded the historic Jesus.[5] The death of Jesus

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1. Wieman, Man's Ultimate Commitment, op. cit., pp. 20-21.
2. Wieman, Intellectual Foundation of Faith, op. cit., p. 2.
3. Wieman and Wieman, Normative Psychology of Religion, op. cit., p. 148.
4. Wieman and Wieman, op. cit., p. 168.
5. Wieman, The Source of Human Good, op. cit., p. 42.

was necessary because "so long as Jesus lived, the creative event was bound to limits and confined by obstructions which could have prevented it from bringing salvation to man if Jesus had not been crucified."[1] But "it would seem to be unjustifiably dogmatic and arbitrary to say that only to Christianity is this redemption and salvation given . . . "[2] So, by way of summary Wieman says that

> There is a creative power in history which is able to conquer and to save, but it is not the power of man, even though it works through man. In all times, both good and ill, man must live under its control if history is to be fruitful . . . When . . . religious faith joins with education and the two work together with government, industry, and technology to meet the required conditions, creative power can transform not only the life of the individual and society but also the material world. . .[3]

Wieman states further that "the ordeal of this transformation might reach the limits of endurance for the most transformable and might destroy all others.[4] Dr. Wieman's theology is not basically eschatological, although there are some such eschatological elements in it. He seems to feel that "any claim that divine

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1. Wieman, The Source of Human Good, op. cit., p. 43.
2. Ibid., p. 287.
3. Ibid., pp. 309, 288.
4. Ibid., p. 288.

power must overrule evil denies the reality of evil . . . (Actually it is more true to say that) the greater the possibilities for good, the greater the possibilities for evil."[1] But there are grounds for hope in that creativity's power is far greater than man's and "we have no knowledge of any evil that can (completely) destroy creativity."[2] Wieman further likens the ordeal of this transforming process to the Christian myth about last things and the end of the world, adding that the end of history is always imminent although we never know when it will come. The main problem is to find the right kind of faith that will meet this test, and this is commitment to creativity, developed in prayer."[3]

This concludes the description of Dr. Wieman's theological framework for the understanding and practice of prayer. He has said that God can be empirically known and verified in human experience. For God is an active integrating process or structure of events within (as well as transcending) the created universe. Briefly, then, God is creativity operating in creative events through the Creative Event (the living Christ)

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1. Wieman, The Source of Human Good, op. cit., p. 87.
2. Ibid., p. 90.
3. Wieman, Intellectual Foundation of Faith, op. cit., p. 119.

by the creative energy or transforming power of communication (the Holy Spirit) to produce a continuing fellowship of committed, being-transformed people (the church) in history; and this saving work among men may eventually transform the material world. This is God in Wieman's theology - supra-human but not supernatural . . .

> . . . a present, potent, operative, observable reality . . . more worthy of love than any other beloved . . . and one to whom men can pray and do pray, and who answers prayer . . . (by bringing) life to its highest fulfillment when men commit themselves to him; and destruction waits on human life when men do not.[1]

D. The Meaning of Prayer in Wieman's Writings

Given Dr. Wieman's understanding of God, the activity of worship or prayer assumes utmost importance as an avenue of man's responsiveness to creativity. This study now turns to an examination of Wieman's discussion of preliminary definitions, false concepts, the nature, and aspects of prayer.

1. Preliminary Definitions

In simplest terms, Dr. Wieman defines prayer as "worship plus petition."[2] Worship is the practise of commitment by ritual, symbol, self-examination, and

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1. Wieman, MacIntosh and Otto, Is There A God?, op. cit., p. 11.
2. Wieman, The Source of Human Good, op. cit., p. 282.

assembly."[1] As such it is "the heart of religion," for it is that system of habits which is so adapted to the

> environment as to catch the supporting lift and movement of (the) most helpful phase of our total environment - God . . .[2]

Petition is asking, not so much in words as by attitudes.[3] So "prayer is an attitude of combined sensitivity and responsiveness to God with a seeking for some specific outcome,"[4] thus "adjusting . . . the personality to God in such a way that God can work more potently for good than he otherwise could. . ."[5] The "idea of prayer (therefore) is inextricably involved in the idea of God," so that false concepts of God result in false concepts of prayer.[6]

2. False Concepts of God

Dr. Wieman considers it important to clear away false concepts of prayer before proceeding to a discussion of its nature. Prayer is, first of all, not mere words. Therefore,

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1. Wieman, Man's Ultimate Commitment, op. cit., p. 175.
2. Wieman, The Wrestle of Religion with Truth, op. cit., p. 70.
3. Wieman and Horton, The Growth of Religion, op. cit., p. 379.
4. Wieman, Man's Ultimate Commitment, op. cit., pp. 175-176.
5. Wieman and Wieman, Normative Psychology of Religion, op. cit., p. 137.
6. Ibid.

> . . . In prayer one is talking to himself. But he is not praying to himself . . . The words affect only oneself, but the prayer affects God . . .[1]

> (So) . . . a man can use words and not be praying at all, or . . . can pray without words. If the words were the prayer, phonographs could pray and so could parrots . . . The function of words is purely auto-suggestive.[2]

But this is not to say that prayer is auto-suggestion. Far from it! For,

> The attitude which is the prayer may be the result of auto-suggestion. But the attitude is directed to an objective super-human reality which responds to this attitude with a growth of meaning and value.[3]

Furthermore, prayer must not be viewed as "mere petition without worship."[4] This is not prayer but magic. And magic "is an attempt to exercise coercive power to get results (which) lack moral and religious character."[5] Nor must prayer become a perfunctory habit of going through certain motions merely because others do or out of fear for what may occur if the ritual is omitted.[6] Wieman also seeks to clarify the misunderstanding that "we cannot pray to God, if God is not a person."[7] Such

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1. Wieman and Horton, The Growth of Religion, op. cit., p. 379.
2. Ibid., p. 379.
3. Wieman and Wieman, Normative Psychology of Religion, op. cit., p. 141.
4. Wieman, The Source of Human Good, op. cit., p. 282.
5. Wieman and Wieman, Normative Psychology of Religion, op. cit., p. 130.
6. Ibid., pp. 131-132.
7. Wieman, Intellectual Foundations of Faith, op. cit., p. 77.

a thought fails to appreciate the nature of prayer as

> . . . a practice by which we endeavor to renew and deepen our commitment and put ourselves more completely under the control of what saves and transforms creatively.[1]

Prayer therefore is not the words spoken, nor thereby a kind of auto-suggestion, or any form of magic. Prayer must not become petition without worship. Prayer does not require the thought of God as personal. These constitute false concepts of prayer. What then is prayer?

3. The Nature of Prayer

Since it is largely through the experiential prayer relationship that man may come to know and be transformed by creativity, Dr. Wieman is most careful to try to explain the origin, need, justification, objectivity and subjectivity of prayer, together with its relation to psychology, law, and the church.

a. The Origin and Need of Prayer

Dr. Wieman shows that prayer is as elemental and as necessary as breathing.[2] It originates in the very nature of man's relationship to his environment. For the individual is sustained and grows in connection

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1. Wieman, Intellectual Foundations of Faith, op. cit., p. 77.
2. Ibid.

with the vitalizing, transforming, and uplifting forces and structures in the world about him. And prayer is his chief means of establishing and strengthening these connections.[1] Originally this was an unconscious and impulsive activity, before man had a clear idea of God.[2] But for greater effectiveness men developed more considered efforts of manipulating their god through incantations, magic, and exorcism. Much prayer remains on this level. Because modern man sees little validity in this type of prayer, he has to a large degree abandoned it. But the need for real prayer is not thereby diminished.[3] Rather there is need to understand its nature and justification.

b. Justification for Prayer

According to Dr. Wieman,

> . . . The individual person who prays is one who lives and moves and has his being in a system of connections that are ever forming and reforming, losing and regaining, . . . (with) certain attitudes . . . (greatly facilitating this process) . . . Prayer is the attempt to form just such facilitating attitudes.[3]

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1. Wieman and Horton, The Growth of Religion, op. cit., p. 378.
2. Wieman and Wieman, Normative Psychology of Religion, op. cit., p. 129.
3. Ibid., pp. 131-132.

Thus prayer is essential to personal growth.[1] Moreover, man is most urgently concerned with what can save him from destruction and "actualize most completely the constructive potentialities of existence.[2] Prayer is man's primary method of discovering and appropriating this saving power. Finally, as Dr. Wieman has asserted that "only by ultimate commitment to creativity can one be delivered from the limitations of this world," prayer has value as "a practice by which we endeavor to renew and deepen our commitment and put ourselves more completely under the control of what saves and transforms."[3] Indeed, a man can't live without "a private ritual for recovering this commitment again and again."[4] Thus prayer becomes an "indispensable requirement for attaining the good things of life."[5] Such is the justification for prayer. But what basis is there for thinking that such prayer has either objective or subjective reality?

c. The Objectivity of Prayer

Dr. Wieman wants it understood that prayer

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1. Wieman and Horton, The Growth of Religion, op. cit., pp. 378-379.
2. Wieman, Intellectual Foundation of Faith, op. cit., p. 17.
3. Ibid., pp. 78, 77.
4. Wieman, The Directive in History, op. cit., p. 130.
5. Wieman and Wieman, Normative Psychology of Religion, op. cit., p. 143.

connects men "with a sustaining reality in a life-giving way, as breathing connects us with air, (and) as eating connects us with . . . food,"[1] when this ultimate reality is conceived as "the growth of meaning and value in the world."[2] Moreover, he believes it proper to call this reality "God."[3] Indeed, he says that when God is so defined, there can be no question as to God's existence or as to the validity of exposing oneself to this reality through prayer.[4] The same would be true when the reality is conceived in terms of creativity, for there can be little question that creative events and creative interchange or communication do take place, and that through attitudes of worship or prayer a man may develop increasing receptivity to such forces operative in the world about and within him.[5]

d. The Subjectivity of Prayer

At the same time, Wieman says that "if 'subjective' means what goes on in the personality, then certainly prayer is subjective, because . . . the

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1. Wieman and Wieman, Normative Psychology of Religion, op. cit., p. 136.
2. Ibid., p. 137.
3. Ibid.
4. Cobb, op. cit., p. 97.
5. Ibid., pp. 99-100.

personality prays."[1] Indeed, certain psychological studies have attempted to show that

> . . . many of the experiences which seemed to validate prayer are but the subjective effects upon the individual of holding certain beliefs, of practising certain forms, of undergoing certain inner conflicts and suppressions, and of auto-suggestion . . . merely devices by which we do things to our states of mind.[2]

Nor would Wieman deny that there is auto-suggestion involved in prayer.[3] But he would deny that this is all there is to prayer, believing emphatically that an objective reality is also encountered.[4] Dr. Wieman then moves into a consideration of the relation of psychology to prayer by way of clearing up any further misunderstandings.

e. The Relation of Psychology to Prayer

Dr. Wieman believes that

> . . . if the reality which prayer reaches is supernatural, that cuts off any psychological understanding of it, because the supernatural cannot be known by any natural way of getting knowledge. It is (therefore) inaccessible to any scientific procedure, to any observation and reason . . . (being) an unrational or irrational or supernatural reality . . . (so

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1. Wieman and Wieman, Normative Psychology of Religion, op. cit., p. 139.
2. Ibid., p. 133.
3. Wieman, Methods of Private Religious Living, op. cit., pp. 32-33.
4. Ibid., pp. 34-35.

> that psychology must) pronounce prayer meaningless, functionless, useless, except for its subjective effect on the worshipper.[1]

But if instead, as Wieman maintains, prayer is adjusting the personality to connections of value or creativity, such adjustments may be studied by the science of psychology because empirically observable as operating within nature and human nature.[2] For the source of creativity, insofar as it resides within the individual himself, is in the preconscious "that achieves automatic and subtle recordings of multiple perceptions, hidden from consciousness and beyond the capacity of the conscious function (as) can be demonstrated."[3]

f. The Relation of Prayer to Law

This concept of prayer as responsiveness to creativity, insofar as the process takes place within the structure of the natural universe, thereby eliminates any supposed conflict between answered prayer and the regular operation of natural law. For although the reality addressed in prayer is indeed "greater than personality itself" and the growth of meaning and value is superhuman in the sense that it "is a doing which

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1. Wieman and Wieman, Normative Psychology of Religion, op. cit., p. 136.
2. Wieman, Man's Ultimate Commitment, op. cit., p. 178.
3. Wieman, Intellectual Foundation of Faith, op. cit., p. 181.

man himself cannot perform,"[1] nevertheless this reality works in and through natural law - operating "very widely and deeply in the cosmos but . . . not (just) the whole of it."[2] In short, God uses and works through natural law, but being supra-personal is not bound by it nor identified with it or with the cosmos. God works through prayer for "the growth of mutually sustaining and meaningful connections between activities going on in oneself and the environment."[3]

g. Prayer in Relation to the Church

According to Wieman, there are two aspects of the relationship between prayer and the church. On the one hand "one cannot worship effectively unless he has been transformed by a fellowship of faith."[4] For "to induce the attitude of worship it is necessary to have conditions favorable for it," and one of these conditions is "a group of people responding to the symbols in much the same way with much the same understanding of their significance."[5] On the other hand, the church receives its mission from the dual nature of man's ultimate commitment. This is to discover

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1. Wieman and Wieman, Normative Psychology of Religion, op. cit., p. 140.
2. Wieman and Horton, The Growth of Religion, op. cit., p. 378.
3. Wieman and Wieman, Normative Psychology of Religion, op. cit., p. 138.
4. Wieman, The Source of Human Good, op. cit., p. 281.
5. Wieman, Intellectual Foundation of Faith, op. cit., p. 171.

and provide the most favorable conditions for the development of appreciative understanding among people, and to give itself to the reality which transcends while it indwells human existence and apprehension. The church therefore has both "to evangelize . . . and to cultivate and deepen and empower this dual commitment." To this end, the church worships and prays: to inspire commitment and "to keep the organizations of the personality in alignment with the commitment."[1] It is now desirable to examine the aspects of this prayer ritual as conceived by Wieman

4. The Aspects of Prayer

Dr. Wieman thinks of prayer in several ways: as an attitude of personality, as a form of attentiveness, in terms of problem-solving mysticism, as a means to growth of meaning and value, as creative worship, and as responsiveness to creativity. These various facets of the nature of prayer somewhat overlap in Wieman's thought, yet each makes a distinctive contribution to his total concept of prayer.

a. Prayer as an Attitude of Personality

In his earlier writing, Wieman speaks of prayer most frequently as an "attitude whereby the

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1. Wieman, Man's Ultimate Commitment, op. cit., pp. 168-175.

personality adjusts to God, for the growth of mutually sustaining and meaningful connections."[1] Such an attitude needs to be cultivated by proper and persistent right habits which are formed by prayer. So,

> . . . the ultimately effective form of prayer . . . (will consist) in those habitual attitudes which (our) words and (our) ideas serve to engender. For it is these attitudes which enable God to work upon us in such a way as to actualize the desired possibilities, just as habitual attitudes of the organism enable the air to do our breathing for us . . .[2]

Such attitudes may produce conflict as well as integration.[3] But in any case this prayer is a "creative attitude . . . in response to which values grow."[4] The prayer attitude of responsiveness to God is never permanently or perfectly established, but must be renewed and improved, and always subject to "transformation of attitude toward God." Furthermore, it is to be remembered that one's attitude is greatly effected by the nature of the object upon which one focuses his attention.

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1. Supra, p. 70.
2. Wieman, The Wrestle of Religion with Truth, op. cit., p. 73.
3. Wieman and Horton, The Growth of Religion, op. cit., p. 393.
4. Ibid., p. 393.

b. Prayer as Attentiveness

Wieman also describes prayer in terms of attentiveness. In fact, to be conscious of God at all, attention must be focused on God.[1] And attention truly focused is not conscious of anything else beyond.[2] So here is another prayer habit to cultivate, as well as being an additional reason for needing a clear and valid doctrine of God. We must indeed learn "to live with God in God's way before we can know God."[3] This view of prayer as an attitude of personality and as attentiveness lead into a further aspect of prayer as a means to growth of meaning and value.

c. Prayer as a Means to Growth of Meaning and Value

Here, Wieman conceives of prayer as the means whereby a man voluntarily exposes himself to the growth of meaning and value in his life. His prayer then is "for this growth, in it, with it, and by the might of it." Wieman likens this process to the experience of the Christian saints, and recommends it to his

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1. Wieman and Horton, The Growth of Religion, op. cit., pp. 384, 391, 438.
2. Wieman and Wieman, Normative Psychology of Religion, op. cit., p. 133.
3. Wieman and Horton, The Growth of Religion, op. cit., p. 439.
4. Wieman and Wieman, Normative Psychology of Religion, op. cit., p. 142.

contemporaries, since

> Without prayer the growth of meaning and value in the world is disastrously crippled. (But) when prayer is added to other required conditions, a marvelous growth of beauty, goodness, and love occur.[1]

One step further in understanding prayer is Wieman's consideration of prayer as problem-solving mysticism.

d. Prayer as Problem-Solving Mysticism

Wieman makes it clear to begin with that he is not here referring to mysticism as a form of confused thinking or occultism or an unusual state of consciousness, or "inner conviction" or "inner light," or loss of volitional control where the mystic thinks it "must be God in him who acts, talks, and thinks."[2] Wieman considers that God is indeed less operative in such conditions which "seem to be disintegrating, hence opposed to the working of God."[3] Better forms of mysticism involve attentiveness to an ideal or increased sensitivity to the element of mystery in life, bringing a sense of peace and power.[4] But best of all is the "experience of discerning how things which were made for each other fit together . . . seeking an inte-

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1. Wieman and Wieman, Normative Psychology of Religion, op. cit., p. 146.
2. Wieman, Methods of Private Religious Living, op. cit., pp. 164-170.
3. Ibid., p. 171.
4. Ibid., pp. 186-187.

gration not yet discerned."[1] In such problem-solving mysticism, the procedure is to

> face the problematical situation without any formulated thought but in a state of receptivity and responsiveness, waiting for some clue that will lead on to a new line . . . one requisite is patience . . . (But) if the problem which is being treated . . . has to do with making adjustment of human living to the vast processes of God (and this is what all major problems ultimately involve) the experience we have described is . . . one of the most profound kinds of worship.[2]

Such problem-solving mysticism is one of the highest forms of prayer and leads into creative worship.

e. Prayer as Creative Worship

The main difference between prayer conceived as creative worship and prayer as problem-solving mysticism is that the former is a continuous, attentive, receptive self-exposure to the transforming work of the creative process, whereas the latter is such an exposure in the interests of solving a particular problem. In the latter case, when the problem is solved, the exposure may be terminated. In the former, an ongoing change of attitude is involved. And "a change in the basic attitude will change the world . . . eliciting features of the world that were

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1. Wieman, Methods of Private Religious Living, op. cit., pp. 186-187.
2. Ibid., pp. 187-192-

previously inaccessible to experience . . ."[1] Such a change in attitude through creative worship further leads to the concept of prayer as responsiveness in commitment to creativity.

f. Prayer as Responsiveness in Commitment to Creativity

The main difference between this aspect of prayer and prayer viewed as creative worship lies in the emphasis now upon the element of commitment, which is faith in Wieman's understanding. For faith is simply trust which leads to absolute surrender to the creative process. And it is in prayer, thus conceived, that "we learn to keep ourselves open throughout life to ever continued growth, . . . (or) to achieve genuine surrender to the working of God in our lives."[2] But this is also the ultimate goal of all prayer in Wieman's thinking. Thus prayer both begins and ends as an attitude which through focus of attention upon God becomes a means to growth of meaning and value that can be addressed to solving a particular problem or, more generally, to a form of creative worship which issues in ultimate commitment

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1. Wieman and Horton, The Growth of Religion, op. cit., pp. 187-192.
2. Cobb, op. cit., p. 100.

to creativity.

In so understanding prayer, false concepts are removed, prayer is seen as having both objective and subjective reality which is intrinsic to the very nature of God and life. So prayer is to be cultivated as an "attitude of sensitivity and responsiveness to God, combined with seeking for some specific outcome."[1] The more precise methods for cultivating such attitudes together with the ways in which these are efficacious will now be considered in relation to Wieman's writings of the practice of prayer.

E. The Practice of Prayer in Wieman's Writings

Much of what Wieman has to say with regard to the practice of prayer is interspersed with his writing on its theory, although he also devotes one entire book to the subject.[2] His treatment covers a description of various types of prayer, some reference to sources from which his prayer insights are drawn, a detailed discussion of methods of prayer, and a very few examples of his own prayers. This material will now be examined.

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1. Supra, p. 62.
2. Wieman, Methods of Private Religious Living, op. cit., p. 21.

1. Definition of Types of Prayer

Dr. Wieman speaks of three distinct types of worship: private, cooperative, and public. These are distinguishable mainly by the nature of the worshipping individual or group which in turn somewhat determines the character of the worship.

a. Private Worship

Most of Dr. Wieman's writings on prayer are primarily concerned with private worship, although the methods here prescribed are held to be applicable to worship under any conditions. However, since the "purpose of worship is to turn the mind away from the lesser things and give the whole attention to the supreme thing," this can be better achieved in seclusion from physical association with others, so that "private worship is essential to Christian living."[1] Nor does such a suggestion mean to imply an anti-social attitude since

> . . . it is only in this way that (one) can reach the profounder levels of fellowship . . . (by) seeking to join most fully with that integrating process(God) which works throughout all the world not only to bring human lives into organic fellowship with one another, but also to maintain and develop organic inter-

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1. Wieman, Methods of Private Religious Living, op. cit., p. 21.

> dependence and mutual support between all parts and aspects of the cosmos.[1]

b. Cooperative Worship

But while such worship needs frequently to be engaged in privately, Dr. Wieman also conceives the value of a form of cooperative worship where "we gather together to help one another find God each for himself in his own way . . . (assisting) each to make that adjustment which is most helpful to him personally.[2] What happens here is that each individual is developing his own private religious living in association with others in such a way as to promote their development, too. To this end the service is designed to provide beauty that can be religiously experienced; rituals, prayers, and readings that will offer an appreciative and critical survey of human experience in its widest scope and fullest content; and finally, a readjustment of personal attitude in the interests of more successful living.[3] Cooperative worship is important because "the isolated individual cannot ordinarily provide for himself such beauty as can be

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1. Wieman, Methods of Private Religious Living, op. cit., pp. 21-22.
2. Ibid., p. 117.
3. Ibid., pp. 117-118.

provided in public worship."[1]

c. Collective Public Worship

Now Dr. Wieman feels that such cooperative public worship differs markedly from the usual concept of public worship. For whereas the former is deliberately cooperative, the latter is chiefly a matter of mass psychology. Indeed the aim of collective public worship is "to provide the emotional glow and satisfaction that comes from feeling that we are all together having the same experience, (so that) each member of the crowd is brought to a state of acute suggestibility by the interacting of many individuals on one another."[2] But in cooperative worship,

> . . . each individual member conducts his own personal worship under the stimulus and cooperation of the group. Each does not passively yield to the sentiments that sweep over the crowd.[3]

Dr. Wieman considers this distinction very important. Basically, private worship is the foundation underlying all genuine worship, with deliberate cooperation supplying helpful stimulus and support.

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1. Wieman, Methods of Private Religious Living, op. cit., p. 121.
2. Ibid., p. 117.
3. Ibid.

2. Wieman's Sources for Understanding Prayer

Dr. Wieman derives these and other insights concerning the nature and practice of prayer from Scripture, especially the teaching of Jesus, and from his own experience and the experience of others.

a. Scripture

At various points in his writing, Dr. Wieman is concerned to relate his theology and prayer teaching to Biblical context. He speaks of "elements in our tradition, more or less mythically expressed, (which) illumine the human predicament."[1] So the scriptural history of redemption with judgment specifically leading to salvation that culminates in Christ is to be reinterpreted in "terms of the source of human good" or creativity which is "not metaphysically but functionally transcendental", that is, which operates at the level of human personal interactions to lift them beyond what man can do for himself.[2] Sin is resistance to creativity and the idolatry of created good, overcome when man "commits himself to the healing and guiding grace of God."[3]

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1. Wieman, The Source of Human Good, op. cit., p. 48.
2. Wieman, Intellectual Foundation of Faith, op. cit., p. 76.
3. Wieman, The Source of Human Good, op. cit., p. 49.

God's redemptive acts in the Old Testament are all preparatory to the supreme Creative Event (Christ) which continues to transform human life through the activity of the Holy Spirit in the fellowship of the church.[1] Thus Dr. Wieman relates his thought to redemptive history in Scripture.

b. The Life and Teachings of Jesus

Dr. Wieman's books, especially his earlier writings, indicate basic familiarity with the life and teachings of Jesus. Sometimes he refers to specific teaching, as of the Lord's Prayer, and less frequently uses direct quotations.[2] But mainly Dr. Wieman is concerned to make a clear distinction between Christ as the Creative Event and the man Jesus. So "God incarnate in (the creative event) and not the human nature of the man (Jesus) is the Christ revealing God, forgiving sin and saving the world."[3] Fellowship with God in Christ carries life-transforming power.[4] The movements of the Lord's Prayer show how men are to relate themselves in prayer to creativity.[5] Wieman's use of New Testament teaching

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1. Wieman, The Source of Human Good, op. cit., pp. 270-271.
2. As noted in his works.
3. Wieman, The Source of Human Good, op. cit., p. 269.
4. Wieman, Intellectual Foundation of Faith, op. cit., p. 55.
5. Wieman, Methods of Private Religious Living, op. cit., pp. 22-25.

is always purposeful if not abundant.

c. Wieman's Personal Experience

It is somewhat difficult to be sure whether Wieman has evolved his religious concepts partially from his study of Scripture (to which he was certainly exposed), or whether his ideas on prayer, for instance, grew mainly out of his own thinking and experience, and then on occasion were related to Scripture. He himself states that

> . . . it must be emphasized that these methods are not the result merely of theoretical reasoning and logical inference . . . but have been forged in the fires of experimental living . . . over many years. They have been tested by the experiences of life lived in the open amidst all the difficulties and complexities which confront us in the great struggle . . . and are the most precious harvest of experience the years have brought.[1]

d. The Experience of Others

In his teaching of philosophy, Dr. Wieman became widely familiar with both contemporary and historical theological perspectives and writings. Such contacts indubitably influenced his own understanding of prayer. However, he does not draw upon the writings of others with any frequency, except in

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1. Wieman, Methods of Private Religious Living, op. cit., pp. 5-6.

alluding to the devotional methods and experiences of the mystics.[1]

Thus, in conclusion, it might be said that while Dr. Wieman acknowledges a certain mythical validity and meaning as belonging to the redemptive theme of Scripture, especially as expressed in the life and teaching of Jesus, the bulk of Wieman's own prayer teaching derives, as he says, from his original thinking and personal experimentation.

3. Method of Prayer

Dr. Wieman's method for the practice of prayer must naturally be adapted to his understanding of God as supra-personal creativity and the source of human good. Prayer thus becomes essentially a form of voluntary and controlled self-exposure and self-commitment to the operation of the creative, transforming divine agency. In describing this activity, Dr. Wieman distinguishes the role of man from the role of God, and deals with the subject matter, movements, and effectiveness of prayer.

a. Man's Role in Prayer

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1. Vid Wieman, Methods of Private Religious Living, op. cit., Ch. 9.

Dr. Wieman maintains that the work of creativity in increasing values and meaning is a super-human work which man cannot perform for himself.[1] Nevertheless there are certain ways in which men can and must cooperate. Men must be "intelligently and devotedly religious," by recognizing and searching out creative interaction in all the relationships of life and by opening their own lives to its transforming power "to be shaped, lifted, remade, and transfigured by it," mainly through prayer.[2]

(1) Conditions for Effective Prayer

There are necessarily then certain conditions which men must meet for prayer to become effective. They must "take is seriously," be perfectly sincere, and set aside specific times for worship in private.[3]

Beyond these a man needs faith, practice, honesty, definiteness, solitude, and surrender.

(a) Faith

Although "a man does not need to believe in God in order to worship,"[4] he must "be alert,

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1. Wieman and Wieman, Normative Psychology of Religion, op. cit., p. 52.
2. Ibid., pp. 60-61.
3. Wieman, Methods of Private Religious Living, op. cit., pp. 16-21.
4. Ibid., p. 19.

responsive, outreaching and anticipative toward the growth of good wherever and however it may appear."[1] Furthermore, it is important to pray affirmatively, "for no good thing was ever done by merely a negative attitude."[2]

(b) Practice

Moreover, nothing important is ever realized in prayer without regular, disciplined, patient, practice.[3] Regular time must be set aside daily (preferably in the morning and evening) and one must earnestly desire the transforming or problem-solving power of prayer.[4] Indeed, it "takes years to acquire the art of worship."[5] A spoken prayer also requires frequent repetition to fix the desired attitude.[6]

(c) Honesty

Likewise, "unless (a man) is searchingly and pitilessly honest with himself and with God, he cannot expose himself to the presence of God, he cannot diagnose himself, and he cannot worshipfully reconstruct."[7]

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1. Wieman and Wieman, Normative Psychology of Religion, op. cit., p. 145.
2. Wieman, Methods of Private Religious Living, op. cit., p. 30.
3. Ibid., p. 193.
4. Ibid., p. 20.
5. Wieman, The Wrestle of Religion With Truth, op. cit., p. 81.
6. Wieman Methods of Private Religious Living, op. cit., p. 31.
7. Wieman, The Wrestle of Religion with Truth, op. cit., p. 81.

Complete sincerity is therefore indispensable, requiring too the exclusion of every belief which is doubted.[1] For only real contact with reality can really transform.

(d) Definiteness

Besides being honest, it is essential "to be definite, specific, and accurate in diagnosis and in statement of need."[2] For a problem must be acutely and comprehensively faced in order to be resolved.[3]

(e) Solitude

Now, furthermore, to be sufficiently definite, one must have privacy. For,

> . . . in the presence of others it would be shocking and outrageous to be as intimate and personal as one must be in solitary worship . . .[4]

Also in public one must "use conventional phrases, pious forms, and generalities broad enough to include a congregation's thinking." And such generalities never accomplish much.[5]

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1. Wieman, Methods of Private Religious Thinking, op. cit., pp. 19-20.
2. Wieman, The Wrestle of Religion with Truth, op. cit., p. 81.
3. Wieman, Methods of Private Religious Living, op. cit., pp. 19-20.
4. Wieman, The Wrestle of Religion with Truth, op. cit., p. 81.
5. Ibid.

(f) Surrender

But most important of all the requisites for effective praying is complete commitment to creativity so that unimpeded and continuing creative transformation can occur. Such surrender involves utter relaxation (as in problem-solving mysticism), the choice of a serving and saving vocation, and the gift of the total self (failures, guilt, and weakness as well as virtues and strength) to the service of creativity, freely participating in the human interchanges through which creativity creates.[1]

Thus cooperatively meeting these several conditions of prayer, man may "earn the right to pray."[2]

(2) Use of Words: Auto-Suggestion

In meeting the conditions of prayer, as well as in formulating specific petitions, should a man use words? Dr. Wieman states unequivocably that

> The prayer is not the words at all (but) the endeavor to adjust the personality to God . . . a man can use words and not be praying . . . or can pray without words . . . The function of words is purely auto-

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1. Wieman, Man's Ultimate Commitment, op. cit., p. 91.
2. Wieman and Wieman, Normative Psychology of Religion, op. cit., p. 144.

> suggestive . . . (and) God answers the attitude, not the words.[1]

At the same time, Dr. Wieman does recognize the value of well-chosen and often repeated words in helping to form and establish the right attitude toward personality, and in helping to clarify the petition.[2]

(3) Ruling Propensity(Purposiveness)

Dr. Wieman says that "one can worship for the sake of cultivating the art of worship itself."[3] Nor is such a practice to be discouraged since worship is so widely beneficial. However, "the ruling propensity" or "directed" interest of the personality in prayer must increasingly and ultimately be "shaped and directed by the creative event when its power is released through worship."[4] So, apparently, the "ruling propensity" of prayer is committed to creativity in ways that "other directed interests" may not be. For prayer "offers itself to creative power" in worship, "seeks fulfillment by way of the creative event," and"does not resist the transformation of new creation."[5]

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1. Wieman and Wieman, Normative Psychology of Religion, op. cit., p. 141.
2. Wieman, The Wrestle of Religion with Truth, op. cit., p. 76.
3. Ibid., p. 80.
4. Wieman, The Source of Human Good, op. cit., p. 285.
5. Wieman, Man's Ultimate Commitment, op.cit., pp. 50-51.

(4) Obstacles to Prayer

But, according to Dr. Wieman, there are certain uncooperative attitudes which set up obstacles to the transforming power of prayer. Among these is man's desire for created good which often opposes the purpose of creative good.[1] Or men obstinately resist new meaning and growth.[2] Such obstructive desires and fears "prevent the individual from relinquishing what must be relinquished if creative power is to produce the greater good . . . (or) prevent the individual from accepting the hardships involved in creative transformation."[3] However, worship may itself help the individual to overcome these internal obstacles, so that the progressive integration of prayer may take place.[4] But various external obstacles such as the popular standard of success, and the fragmentation and mechanization of life, are more difficult of treatment. These may successfully oppose the cultivation of "worshipful solitude."[5] Creativity will continue to operate but

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1. Wieman, The source of Human Good, op. cit., p. 49.
2. Wieman and Wieman, Normative Psychology of Religion, op. cit., p. 142.
3. Wieman, The Source of Human Good, op. cit., pp. 281-282.
4. Wieman, Methods of Private Religious Living, op. cit., p. 91.
5. Ibid., pp. 92-93.

may not exert full transforming power under such conditions. It is therefore man's part in prayer to provide all the conditions in which creativity may work without obstruction.

b. God's Role in Prayer

In prayer, "an objective environmental God" works creatively to transform human life.[1] Dr. Wieman seeks to show the objective reality of this God, the nature of God's transforming power, and how God works as creative process.

(1) God's Reality

Dr. Wieman insists that prayer is not just "a means by which the individual attains control of himself."[2] Here he makes a further distinction between prayer and worship. Worship involves deliberately subjecting oneself "to that total mass of (environmental) stimulation which is playing upon one all the time. Prayer is that purpose which becomes dominant in this state of worship."[3] In normal healthy prayer, this purpose is the product of the "persistent desires and past experiences of the

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1. Wieman, The Wrestle of Religion with Truth, op. cit., p. 76.
2. Henry Nelson Wieman, Religious Experience and Scientific Method, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1927, p. 249.
3. Ibid.

individual" as well as the reorganization and unification of these under the stimulation of God in prayer. God produces the result in and through the fully awakened personality.[1]

(2) God's Transforming Power

The transforming power of God in prayer operates as "a growth of connections of mutual support between the individual and his environment."[2] This growth is evinced in an increase of meaning and value,[3] as a creative synthesis or integration of life,[4] and as a growth in greatest good, or love.[5] There thus takes place "the emergence in the mind of what was not there before, in the form of new ideas, extended brotherhood, and higher ideals.[6] This is the work of God.

(3) God as Creative Process

This work of God in prayer may perhaps be best described, according to Wieman, as creative process. And "when this creative process which generates and develops all the great values catches us up

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1. Henry Nelson Wieman, Religious Experience and Scientific Method, op. cit., p. 250.
2. Wieman and Horton, The Growth of Religion, op. cit., p. 379.
3. Wieman and Wieman, Normative Psychology of Religion, op. cit., pp. 52-60, 137.
4. Wieman and Horton, The Growth of Religion, op. cit., pp. 325-327.
5. Wieman, Man's Ultimate Commitment, op. cit., pp. 36-37.
6. Ibid.

(into associated living), so using, enriching, and transforming us, . . . God has found us and we have found God."[1] Moreover,

> There is a creativity at work in human life which is always ready to break through the resistances set up within the individual person and in social customs and institutions. When these resistances are removed, the creativity begins to transfigure the life of man and the world in which he lives.[2]

God's role in prayer, therefore, is to do what man cannot possibly do for himself.[3]

If this is so, and if man's role is chiefly to hold himself in an attitude of extreme sensitivity to God, with God responding to man's attitude rather than to his words, what is to be the subject matter of prayer?

c. The Subject Matter of Prayer

With regard to the content of prayer, Dr. Wieman finds the modern man is quite puzzled. Should he pray for physical things or only moral and spiritual good? Should he ask for anything or just lose himself in contemplation? If God knows what is best,

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1. Wieman, MacIntosh and Otto, Is There A God?, op. cit., p. 324.
2. Wieman, Man's Ultimate Commitment, op. cit., p. 50.
3. Wieman, Intellectual Foundation of Faith, op. cit., p. 88.

isn't prayer futile?[1] But Dr. Wieman believes that people should and may "pray effectively for specific things" as long as they recognize that these things have not value in themselves, but "only as they are needed to conserve or increase the connections we have. It is these connections which must be the real objects of concern in prayer."[2] In fact the growth of these connections may bring about more specific things we desire.[3] In all events it is necessary to remember that prayer is not the words uttered but the attitude which may be further developed by following a ritual of worship involving certain movements.

d. The Movements of Prayer

In a more general sense prayer involves a basic threefold movement: the attaining of an understanding of the sustaining process through which one must work to attain a desired good, the clear comprehension of the specific problem faced, an honest perception of one's own attitude and the needed reconstruction of it in relation to the sustaining

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1. Wieman and Wieman, Normative Psychology of Religion, op. cit., p. 134.
2. Ibid., p. 142.
3. Ibid., p. 143.

process and specific problem.[1] Beyond these worship comprises acts of adoration, commitment, confession, petition, communion, intercession, and reconstruction which Wieman describes briefly.

(1) Adoration and Praise

Wieman states that the first step of worship is described in the first sentence of the Lord's Prayer as an act of adoration. Here one simply relaxes,

> . . . waiting and endeavoring to be filled with the consciousness of that encompassing and sustaining and integrating reality, which, if he is psychologically capable of using the word . . . he calls God.[2]

This is really a step of faith leading to commitment.

(2) Commitment

In the second step, paralleling the second petition of the Lord's prayer, one calls to mind "the vast and unique possibilities for good which are inherent in this integrating process called God."[3] Then one makes the required adjustment between himself and the "cosmic process which is God."[4] This adjustment consists of an absolute, complete, yet constantly

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1. Wieman, Methods of Private Religious Living, op. cit., p. 33.
2. Wieman, Ibid., pp. 23-24.
3. Ibid., p. 24.
4. Ibid.

renewed commitment, embracing confession and forgiveness of sins, and taking priority "over local and private interests and over all else in human life."[1]

(3) Confession

Thirdly, one faces squarely the problem with which he is struggling - surveying it "as comprehensively and acutely as possible to find what most needs to be done."[2] Then one engages in equally searching self-analysis to "find what change must be made in our own mental attitudes or personal habits,"[3] in the interests of solving the problem. In traditional Christian terms, these would be called acts of confession and reparation. They result in the closing of a circuit, "so that the constructive, uplifting , life-giving, integrating process of the world can do its work."[4] Then this righted attitude issues in acceptable behaviour. "Worship is the only way in which this can be thoroughly and effectively done."[5]

(4) Petition

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1. Wieman, Intellectual Foundation of Faith, op. cit., pp. 87, 198.
2. Wieman, Methods of Private Religious Living, op. cit., p. 26.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., p. 27.
5. Ibid., p. 28.

Following the establishment of the right attitude through the movements of adoration, commitment, and confession, the prayer is now ready to move into petition - directed toward the establishment of mutual connections of support. Here it is desirable

> . . . to formulate in words as clearly and comprehensively as possible the readjustment of personality and behaviour which I have discovered is required of me if I am to close the circuit between certain disconnected factors in the world about me.[1]

Moreover the statement should be repeated many times to get the readjustment deeply rooted as a subconscious attitude of personality. While Dr. Wieman acknowledges that this last is a form of auto-suggestion, he feels that it goes beyond mere mental culture because of the nature of the communion attained during the preceding steps.

(5) Communion

This state of communion which Dr. Wieman believes has already been established in the course of the first four movements of prayer is largely a matter of fostering sensitivity to creativity and contact with the creative process much as one may expose oneself to an electric shock through contact. Dr. Wieman

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1. Wieman, Methods of Private Religious Living, op. cit., p. 30.

wants it to be clearly understood that one cannot produce the shock simply by following the method of worship, but one does thereby establish the contact with the process called God, thus making it possible for the divine power to work.[1]

(6) Intercession

While Dr. Wieman does not explicitly refer to intercession, what he calls the cooperative public worship contains some of the elements of intercessory prayer, in that it involves conscious support of one another in prayer.[2]

(7) Reconstruction

Moreover, the term "reconstruction" as used by Wieman is perhaps less descriptive of a further movement of prayer than it is of the whole process by which a reconstruction of habits takes place in prayer - through confession and petition after receptive attitudes have been created through adoration, commitment, and communion. What then is the effectiveness of such a method of worship or prayer?

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1. Wieman, Methods of Private Religious Living, op. cit., p. 35.
2. Ibid., pp. 116-118.

e. The Effectiveness of Prayer

Dr. Wieman believes that "when man's prayer and worship are directed to the real God, they contribute enormously to the good of the world."[1] Indeed such activities have real

> . . . practical value . . . (as) a way of doing things . . . (because they enable us) to discover what personal readjustment is required of us and to establish that readjustment in ourselves.[2]

So, in fact, "history may be transformed by prayer."[3] But without prayer such readjustment would not be possible, for "if one could drive on under his own steam, he would never be thrown back on the need and practice of commitment to creative interchange."[4] But how does creativity accomplish its work through prayer? How is prayer answered or left unanswered, and what are the effects of prayer?

(1) How Prayer is Answered

Dr. Wieman emphasizes that "the infinite source of . . . creativity can have religious

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1. Wieman and Horton, The Growth of Religion, op. cit., p. 395.
2. Wieman, Methods of Private Religious Living, op. cit., p. 27.
3. Wieman and Horton, The Growth of Religion, op. cit., p. 380.
4. Wieman, Intellectual Foundation of Faith, op. cit., p. 88.

significance only as it operates in human life."[1] The creative power therefore will work at the human level through human means such as the auto-suggestive effect of words. But the attitude established by the words is addressed to "an objective, superhuman reality which responds to this attitude with a growth of meaning and value."[2] Also the prayer power may operate through man's self-commitment to God. For,

> God, at the higher levels of Christianity means our Father in heaven. The fatherhood of God means . . . that power of God which works to make the whole world one family . . . (Thus) sincere self-commitment to God . . . will induce in the personality that attitude of readiness and responsiveness to all the complex and subtle interplay between man and nature, which is most favorable to the growth of such connections . . . Through prayer wounds can be healed which otherwise could find no cure . . . (For) prayer is the way one establishes (a) . . . creative attitude.[3]

Or, more recently, Wieman states that "the sensibility to creativity established by prayer opens the way for interacting individuals to undergo transformation by acquiring thoughts, feelings, and perceptions from one another and integrating these with resources

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1. Wieman, Intellectual Foundations of Faith, op. cit., p. 76.
2. Wieman and Wieman, Normative Psychology of Religion, op. cit., p. 141.
3. Wieman and Horton, The Growth of Religion, op. cit., p. 384.

already possessed . . ."[1] But what answers prayer here is not the subconscious mind but the "creative interchange between all factors involved, thus producing the outcome sought in prayer."[2] Dr. Wieman therefore feels that "God interpreted as creativity meets religious needs much better than God represented to be a supernatural and almighty power . . ."[3] since it would be presumptuous to show how such a transcendent being answers prayer, but it is possible to demonstrate how creativity works through the human conscious, sub-conscious, and pre-conscious.[4] In this way of thinking of prayer, does Dr. Wieman see any kind of prayer that must remain unanswered?

(2) The Problem of Unanswered Prayer

Dr. Wieman is frank to state that since "Attitudes cannot be wholly changed at will, therefore prayer, (which is a voluntary transformation of attitude toward God) . . . is by no means almighty."[5] Moreover, since no man has complete control over such attitude-shaping factors as environment, personal

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1. Wieman, Man's Ultimate Commitment, op. cit., p. 176.
2. Ibid., p. 177.
3. Ibid.
4. Wieman, Intellectual Foundation of Faith, op. cit., p. 181.
5. Wieman and Horton, The Growth of Religion, op. cit., p. 391.

associations, and traditions, the answer to prayer is often obstructed. There is further the operation of natural law. "If everyone could get anything he wanted by prayer, this universe would soon be wrecked . . . "[1] Prayer is notwithstanding an "indispensable requirement for the attainment of the great goods of life," in cooperation with natural law.[2] Finally Dr. Wieman asserts that,

> If what is sought in the initial prayer runs counter to the demands of creative transformation moving in the direction of the kingdom of love, then the prayer will be changed in the creativity which answers it, so that in the end one seeks and receives what is much better than the original petition.[3]

In this sense, perhaps there is no unanswered prayer. If so, then, beyond this transformation of the prayer itself by creativity, what will be the effects of prayer as Dr. Wieman conceives them?

(3) The Effects of Prayer

In order to avoid duplication of material already presented with regard to the transforming

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1. Wieman and Wieman, Normative Psychology of Religion, op. cit., p. 143.
2. Ibid.
3. Wieman, Man's Ultimate Commitment, op. cit., p. 177.

effects of prayer, the treatment here will be confined to noting the various "arts" and improvements which Wieman mentions specifically as developing through the prayer experience.

(a) "Arts" Achieved in Prayer

Dr. Wieman lists six beneficial "arts" of effective living that may be nurtured in prayer: the art of using time, the art of loafing, the art of overcoming fear, the art of withholding judgment, the art of overcoming a sense of failure, and the art of mental concentration and remembering.

i. The Art of Using Time

Wieman says that "the art of using time is one of the most important of all needs of effective living . . . (It consists in going and selling) all that you possess in order that you may have it and use it to the best advantage . . .

> To acquire this art one must expose himself to the stimulus of God, thus awakening his aspiration and the deepest drive of his nature. In this state of personal awakening, he must examine his habits and his manner of life to discover wherein he is at fault in his use of time . . . Then . . . he can establish that mental attitude and that total organic set which is best adapted to make the most excellent use of every moment of time.[1]

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1. Wieman, The Wrestle of Religion with Truth, op. cit., pp. 77-78.

ii. The Art of Loafing

However, Wieman goes on to say that "No one uses time aright who has not acquired the art of (scientific) loafing . . . achieved through worship." Here

> . . .(one) throws off every care . . . his spirit becomes as a little child at play . . . in his mind there is nothing but the lilt of a song, or a snatch of poetry, . . . or a bit of Holy Writ . . . To achieve this one must periodically expose the secret recesses of one's heart to the searching presence of God and by diagnosis bring to consciousness whatever hidden worries may be lurking there . . . (Thus) worship reaches down a transforming hand to reshape the roots of our nature.[1]

iii. The Art of Overcoming Fear

This kind of worship will also enable a man to overcome fears of all kinds. For, since "the cause and nature of our most disturbing fears are hidden from us . . . through exposure and diagnosis and reconstruction of worship these fears can be treated and cured."[2]

iv. The Art of Withholding Judgment

Then there is "the art of withholding judgment in suspense without anxiety and worry." This

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1. Wieman, The Wrestle of Religion with Truth, op. cit., pp. 78-79.
2. Ibid., pp. 79-80.

is indeed a most difficult art but may also be achieved through the exposure, diagnosis, and reconstruction of worship.[1]

v. The Art of Overcoming a Sense of Failure

Similarly, "when one's enterprise is wrecked," Dr. Wieman writes,

> . . . and his courage broken . . . there is a method of worship by which one digs down to the deepest drives of his nature, awakens the ultimate passions of life through exposure to God, and so recovers the dauntless thrust of endeavor.[2]

vi. The Art of Mental Concentration

Finally, Dr. Wieman speaks of the art of mental concentration, whereby one achieves "profound and accurate thinking" and remembering. This art he links with that of "open-mindedness" which alone makes it possible to arrive at "well-established and well-tested convictions."[3]

But the master art of them all, concludes Dr. Wieman, "is the art of worship itself, by which may be developed any specific ability within the limits

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1. Wieman, The Wrestle of Religion with Truth, op. cit., p. 80.
2. Ibid., p. 80.
3. Ibid.

of physiological possibility . . . and (these) limits . . . have never yet been found."[1]

(b) Improvements in Living Conditions

Besides such "arts" achieved in worship, prayer also produces certain improvements in living conditions which affect personality, personal relationships, health, and social conditions.

i. Improved Personality

In the first place, according to Wieman, one's own individual character is improved through the readjustment of attitudes achieved in worship. Indeed,

> One can deliberately establish such deep rooted traits of character by this method of repetition in affirmative language (i. e., of statements defining the required adjustments after the self-analysis of worship. (Indeed) there is no other way in which it can be done so thoroughly, so intelligently and with such beneficial results for all mankind.[2]

ii. Improved Personal Relationships

Then, in addition, Dr. Wieman shows by personal example that

> . . . an attitude of personality deliberately established (inworship) to meet the requirements of that order which is God (has) power

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1. Wieman, The Wrestle of Religion with Truth, op. cit., p. 80.
2. Wieman, The Issues of Life, op. cit., p. 232.

to make the objective world different.[1]

So by changing his individual attitudes, Wieman found that the attitudes of a group with whom he was working were also improved. Thus, "the order of God (became) more potent and pervasive in his office."[2]

iii. Improved Health

Wieman feels that the same process works to improve health.

> In ill health for example one may retire for prayer and seek out that order of inter-relationship between biological process of the organism, the needs of other personalities, the important tasks to be done, . . . endeavoring to grasp . . . what are the requirements of the order of greatest value.[3]

Then, by seeking to establish in himself the attitudes which meet those requirements, observable physical results often ensue.[4]

iv. Improved Social Conditions

At any rate, "the world is made better by prayer (as) we find our way to the higher order (of God) through the flames of destruction of all that opposes God and transformation."[5] Thus, basically,

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1. Wieman, The Issues of Life, op. cit., p. 233.
2. Ibid., p. 234.
3. Ibid., p. 234-235.
4. Ibid., p. 234.
5. Ibid., pp. 234-235.

> Prayer at its best is the deliberate establishment of those attitudes of personality through which the order of God can possess the world. (And as such) it produces objective and observable consequences which can be noted.[1]

With regard to the effectiveness of prayer, then, Dr. Wieman appears to feel that there is a sense in which real prayer, involving worship, is always answered by God. For creativity responds to and works through attitudes rather than words to effect improved capacities and adjustments between individuals and their environment, including their personal relationships.

It is helpful that Dr. Wieman has given several of his own verbal prayers to illustrate his concept of the practice of prayer, which will now be noted.

4. The Prayers of Henry N. Wieman

Dr. Wieman has printed only a few of these prayers, but has also given in some instances a description of the circumstances in which the prayer was formulated. These few illustrations do afford a better understanding of what prayer means to Wieman. Suppose, he says, that in worshipful self-analysis

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1. Wieman, The Issues of Life, op. cit., p. 237.

one discovers in himself an inordinate egotism, self-concern, and self-promoting ambitions. One might then phrase the "needed readjustment of personality" thus:

> I enter into deep organic community of heart and mind with . . . (any people affected by our egocentric drives) . . . (or) I am simple, lowly, sensitive, and sympathetic toward . . . (these same people)[1]

Such a statement of readjustment to will be "repeated many times in the spirit of worship."[2] Or again, Wieman imagines a meeting with a friend not seen for some time which first appeared to be reasonably successful. However, in worship it becomes clear that Wieman and his friend "had not entered into that community which we both sorely need for effective living." Rather, they had kept their conversation at superficial levels. So Dr. Wieman then prays this reconstructive prayer:

> God, every impulse of my nature is attuned to his, to learn of him and to minister to his need . . .[3]

Again, repeating these words several times to fix the desired reconstruction of personality more firmly in his mind in such a way that "I am more adequately adjusted to the divine order of my total environment in

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1. Wieman, Methods of Private Religious Living, op. cit., p. 31.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., p. 74.

that respect which enables me to enter more deeply and readily into communion with my friend . . ." Wieman notes that the next day the meeting with the friend was wholly successful.[1]

On another occasion, Dr. Wieman found himself struggling vainly to remember and systematize innumerable details involved in pastoring a church while maintaining a busy college teaching schedule. He comments:

> It was then that I discovered that great things can be accomplished by the exposure, diagnosis, and reconstruction of prayer. 'God help me to remember everything instantly, the moment it is needed.' The prayer was not in the words alone but in that reconstructed adjustment to the divine order whereby this order, which is God, could do the remembering for me. My prayer was answered. I never forgot a single engagement or essential detail.[2]

The last illustration by Dr. Wieman that this writer was able to find records a prayer of reconstruction directed to achieving benefits from the "art of loafing." After first exposing oneself to the searching presence of God in the hour of relaxation, Wieman suggests this prayer:

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1. Wieman, Methods of Private Religious Living, op. cit., p. 75.
2. Ibid., pp. 75-76.

> God, quicken every cell of my body, and all the love of my heart, and every impulse of intellectual and artistic achievement.[1]

While recognizing that there is indeed a sense in which auto-suggestion is involved in such prayer, nevertheless Dr. Wieman feels that it is God working through such means. In short, the result is not produced by the prayer but by the power of creativity operating in and through the prayer. It seems that Dr. Wieman believes that this may be amply demonstrated experientially by the very nature of the results which are beyond what man could possibly do for himself.[2]

## F. Summary

The foregoing study of Dr. Wieman's religious experience, basic theology, and concepts of the meaning and practice of prayer has shown how Dr. Wieman's own Christian liberal and philosophical background prepared him for an empirical approach to the understanding of man's experience of how God works in man through man's committed sensitivity to creativity, established and practiced in attitudes of worshipful and purposefully directed prayer. It was thus seen that Dr.

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1. Wieman, The Wrestle of Religion with Truth, op. cit., p. 79.
2. Supra, pp. 90-91.

Wieman's concept of prayer evolved out of his own experience and his concept of God as creativity working directly in human life through creative events and creative interchange, as men faithfully commit themselves to the influence of this divine creativity. Prayer itself may be conceived as an habitual attitude of personality, as attentiveness to God, as a means to growth of meaning and value, as problem-solving mysticism, and as creative worship leading to responsiveness in commitment to creativity. Wieman's methods of private religious worship are basic to any valid cooperative or public worship. Men must fulfill certain conditions of faith, regular practice, honesty, definiteness, solitude and surrender for effectual praying. Any uncooperative attitude or fragmentation of directed interest obstructs the operation of creative process in prayer. Creativity can have meaning for men only as it is an experienced power in their lives, but it is transcendent insofar as it uplifts the human situation and extends beyond it. Wieman conceives prayer as having three main movements: exposure, diagnosis, and reconstruction or readjustment, within which take place such traditional acts as adoration, communion, and intercession. Although there are elements of auto-

suggestion involved in formulating verbal diagnosis and reconstruction, it is divine creativity, not any human effort, that answers the attitude rather than the specific words of prayer. In answering prayer creativity uses all natural means, such as natural law, laws of mind and personality, human interchange, auto-suggestion, and so forth. Working through such means in prayer, creativity develops certain arts of living and effects improvements in individual personality, personal relationships, health and social conditions. Thus prayer is the heart of religion and worship the means through which the order of God becomes potent and pervasive.

# CHAPTER THREE

# THE WRITINGS OF HARRY E. FOSDICK ON PRAYER

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## A. Introduction

As in the case of Wieman, the writings of Harry E. Fosdick on prayer develop out of or in relation to his own religious experience, certain environmental influences and his specific theological insights. Following the same procedure as in chapter two, the study will now focus on the religious experience and basic theology of Dr. Fosdick leading into an examination of his exposition of the meaning and practice of prayer(as found chiefly in The Meaning of Prayer, but also in several other writings).

## B. The Religious Experience of Harry E. Fosdick

In 1956, yielding to the pressure of friends who valued his insights into the history of the twentieth century, Dr. Fosdick released an autobiography dealing with his home background, childhood, education, religious influences, the crisis of his nervous breakdown, the occasion for writing many of his books, and his main objectives in writing. This autobiography, entitled The Living of These Days, furnishes most valuable material for this section, under the topics

just noted. Two verses from Fosdick's hymn, from which the title for the book was taken, may also serve to key-note the life and writing of this outstanding preacher of the twentieth century:

> God of grace and God of glory,
> On thy people pour thy power;
> Crown thine ancient Church's story;
> Bring her bud to glorious flower.
> Grant us wisdom, grant us courage
> For the facing of this hour . . .
>
> Lo! The hosts of evil round us
> Scorn thy Christ, assail his ways!
> From the fears that long have bound us
> Free our hearts to faith and praise.
> Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
> For the living of these days . . .[1]

1. Home Background and Childhood

In his autobiography, the writer of this prayer-hymn shares vivid recollections of a long liberal religious ancestry into which he was born on May 24, 1878. Stephen, the first American Fosdick, was excommunicated from his church in Charleston.[2] A grandson Samuel was an active churchman in New London and two subsequent Samuels settled in Oyster Bay until the Revolutionary War ruined their fortunes. Grandfather John, the first Baptist in the Fosdick family, became

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1. Harry Emerson Fosdick, "God of Grace and God of Glory," The Methodist Hymnal, New York, The Methodist Publishing House, 1939, No. 279.
2. Harry Emerson Fosdick, The Living of These Days: An Autobiography, New York, Harper & Brothers, 1956, p. 5.

a Latin teacher and vigorous campaigner against alcoholism and the abuses of slavery. Grandmother Fosdick, a strong Quaker, was daughter of a Baptist minister who was excommunicated for not believing in hell. On his mother's side, Fosdick's family were plain hard-working pioneers seeking religious freedom among the Baptists and the Quakers. His father took over grandfather Fosdick's teaching position in Buffalo, where he served fifty-four years. Fosdick's childhood memories include family musical evenings, attending Buffalo Normal School and the Prospect Avenue Baptist Church, and wondering if certain stars really outlined figures of God and Jesus.[1] His mother's nervous breakdown precipitated Fosdick's "first momentous religious decision" at the age of seven to be baptized into the membership of the Westfield Baptist Church, where the family had moved in the interests of Mrs. Fosdick's recovery. Of his home religious environment, Fosdick writes:

> My family, deeply Christian, believed in the church and were always active in its service. Moreover, my parents' faith was so persuasively transmitted by contagion rather than by

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1. Fosdick, The Living of These Days, op. cit., p. 17.

> coercion that I recall in my childhood no revolt against it, only a cordial acceptance and sensitive response . . .[1]

Thus Fosdick grew up oblivious of the tornado of revolt that was developing all about him, under the impact of French skepticism, Darwinianism, Marxism, "the new Biblical criticism and the new study of comparative religion."[2] The following exceedingly happy ten years of Fosdick's life were spent in Lancaster, near Buffalo.

2. Education and Religious Influences

High School days found Fosdick aligning himself with his Family's sympathy for "the underdog" in the depression of 1873 and in the railroad strike of 1877. He writes that

> The main source of unhappiness for me in early school days was my religion. I took it desperately in earnest . . . The happy aspects of it I found in my family where Christianity was the natural, practical, livable spirit of the home. But some of the most wretched hours of my boyhood were caused by the pettiness and obscurantism, the miserable legalism and terrifying appeals to fear that were associated with the religion of the churches.[3]

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1. Fosdick, The Living of These Days, op. cit., p. 19.
2. Ibid., p. 20.
3. Ibid., p. 33.

In 1894, the family moved to Buffalo where he attended the High School of which his father was principal, became adjutant of the Cadet Corps of the National Guard and developed a strong interest in the classics and in Horatio Alger's "success" stories. He notes that "the American background in my childhood was becoming increasingly materialistic." Fosdick's freshman year at Colgate University, while awakening his interest in evolution did "little to disturb the even tenor of my accustomed thinking."[1] During a subsequent year spent at home because of the low state of the family finances, Fosdick had "hours of inner exaltation with premonitions in them of truth to be seen and work to be done."[2] But then, returning to college at the age of nineteen, Fosdick began doubting the inerrancy of Scriptures, turned away from any church association, and seriously questioned "the intellectual credibility of the Christian faith."[3] He wrote to his mother. "I'll behave as though there were a God, but mentally I'm going to clear God out of the universe and start all over to see what I can find."[4] He received

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1. Fosdick, The Living of These Days, op. cit., pp. 40, 41, 46.
2. Ibid., pp. 49-50.
3. Ibid., p. 53.
4. Ibid.

help in this process from William Newton Clark who convinced him that "any divinity in Jesus must consist in his spiritual (not physical) quality."[1]

Notwithstanding these doubts, Fosdick never let go of his "overmastering concern about religion . . . (which) was only deepened by (his) struggle for a credible faith."[2] His thoughts now began to turn to the ministry as a career though he expected to teach rather than preach in order "to make a contribution to the spiritual life of (his) generation."[3] At Colgate Divinity School, he paid attention to the experiential sermons of Washington Gladden, Lyman Abbott and George A. Gordon, and to the philosophical idealism of Hegel, Lotze, Schleiermacher and Ritschl. Fosdick followed the trend to explore the basic abiding experiences behind their attempted doctrinal formulations "in the interest of a deeper, more vital, more transforming Christian experience than literalism, legalism, and authoritarianism could supply."[4] In 1901, Fosdick won a scholarship to Union Theological

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1. Fosdick, The Living of These Days, op. cit., p. 54.
2. Ibid., p. 56.
3. Ibid., p. 57.
4. Ibid., pp. 63-64.

Seminary in New York, at the same time becoming engaged to Florence Whitney of Worcester. He found a summer job teaching Vacation Bible School and winter work at the Baptist City Mission. He came to New York full of highest expectations and over-stimulated to succeed. His rigorous schedule and inadequate diet precipitated the nervous breakdown which, while interrupting his studies, was to prove of crucial significance to his spiritual development and subsequent career.

3. The Breakdown

Fosdick writes of this experience:

> One night in late November I could not sleep. It was the beginning of the most hideous experience of my life . . . It was not trouble that slew me but . . . the excitement of the most exhilarating opportunity I ever had. I fled to Worcester and then . . . to Buffalo, a humiliated and nervous wreck . . . (to know) the waves of melancholia, the obsessive anxieties, the desire for suicide and all the rest . . . After months of perdition, my physician insisted that I be sent . . . to a sanitarium in Elmira . . .[1]

Improving, he was allowed to visit his fiancee four months later, and her father sent him to England where he made rapid progress. Fosdick estimates that "this

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1. Fosdick, The Living of These Days, op. cit., pp. 72-73.

whole horrid experience was one of the most important factors in my preparation for the ministry" for

> I went down into the depths where self-confidence became ludicrous . . . The harder I struggled the worse I was . . . I, who had thought myself strong, found myself beaten, unable to cope not only with outward circumstances but even with myself. In that experience I learned some things . . . that theological seminaries do not teach. I learned to pray, not because I had adequately argued out prayer's rationality, but because I desperately needed help from a Power greater than my own. I learned that God, much more than a theological proposition, is an available Resource . . . a spiritual Presence in living communion with whom we can find sustaining strength . . . And I learned as well much about human nature that academic courses in psychology leave out.[1]

Returning to Union and his first pastorate in the Adirondacks, it was at first rough going. However, despite the grief of his mother's death, in 1903 he was ordained, in 1904, he graduated summa cum laude from Union, accepting a call to the First Baptist Church in Montclair, and that summer he and Florence Whitney were married. His writing begins about that time.[2]

4. A Brief Survey of the Work of Harry E. Fosdick

Fosdick soon received invitations to preach

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1. Fosdick, The Living of These Days, op. cit., p. 75.
2. Ibid., p. 81.

in college and then his preaching "naturally began to turn into books." One of his earliest, Manhood of The Master(1913) was written at the request of the Association Press. The Meaning of Prayer(1915) was written to clarify his own thinking on the subject following his breakdown experience of prayer. It was subsequently translated into seventeen languages.[1] In his struggle to preach, Fosdick gradually discarded expository preaching because it was too much like a lecture. It was his increasing experience as a pastoral counselor that gradually led Fosdick to preach to people's actual needs. His writing reflected the same approach. About 1912, Fosdick developed an active social concern, motivated by the social gospel of Walter Rauschenbush and his friendship with Rufus Jones, founder of the American Friends Service Committee. He had meantime become lecturer, then instructor in homiletics, and finally professor of practical theology at Union Seminary.[2] His teaching experience led to the writing of two books: A Guide To Understanding the Bible(1938) and The Modern Use

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1. Fosdick, The Living of These Days, op. cit., pp. 89-91.
2. Ibid., pp. 109-113.

of the Bible, published in 1940. Both books grew out of an insight of James E. Frame that Scriptures record "abiding truths and experiences in changing mental categories."[1] Likewise The Meaning of Faith (1917) grew out of Fosdick's efforts to develop for his students a "reasonable, credible, defensible interpretation of the Christian gospel."[2] While As I See Religion (1932) also stated apologetically certain insights that also grew out of his teaching experience.

World events in 1914 found Fosdick militantly crusading for United States' entry into World War I. He volunteered his services as a speaker to Allied troops and found his preaching much strengthened by this experience. At the close of the war, Fosdick returned to New York as guest preacher at the First Presbyterian Church while retaining his professorship at Union. The Meaning of Service (1920) reflected his sermons here on the "ethical application of the Christian faith and spirit to personal and social problems."[3] His rather liberal stance, however, soon

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1. Fosdick, The Living of These Days, op. cit., p. 118.
2. Ibid., 119.
3. Ibid., p. 134.

led to his involvement in the Fundamentalist Controversy and, when challenged, resulted in his resignation from First Presbyterian rather than subscribe to the Westminster Confession of Faith. His book, Adventurous Religion (1925), reflected many of Fosdick's views of the matter. Fosdick emerged from the controversy as the recognized "leading American interpreter of the Christian religion for men and women of scientific training,"[1] and with an invitation to become pastor of the Park Avenue Baptist Church. He resisted this invitation until John D. Rockefeller, Jr., promised that this communion would eliminate all "sectarian restrictions on membership" and build him a large uptown edifice (Riverside Church) "amply equipped to serve the metropolitan community."[2] His twenty-year pastorate here was distinguished by complete freedom in preaching to increasing congregations, a nation-wide radio ministry, the creation of a fully non-sectarian and inclusive church with a program that met every conceivable need within the uptown community. His book, On Being a Real Person

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1. Fosdick, The Living of These Days, op. cit., p. 177.
2. Ibid., p. 178.

(1943) was the product of Fosdick's extensive experience as a pastoral counselor during his Riverside Church ministry. The outbreak of World War II found Fosdick as strongly pacifist as he had been militant during the first World War. He was outspoken in his objections to "ruthless, indiscriminate, obliterative bombing of civilians,"[1] the use of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima,[2] and "the essentially unchristian nature of war" itself.[3] A Great Time To Be Alive (1944) represented Fosdick's earnest wish to deal constructively with the many personal and public problems that war presents.[4]

Following his retirement from the pulpit of Riverside Church in 1945, Dr. Fosdick continued to preach and lecture extensively, worked on two anthologies, Great Voices of the Reformation, and Rufus Jones Speaks to Our Time, wrote his autobiography in 1956, compiled a collection of his Riverside Sermons (1958) and A Book of Public Prayers (1959). Most recently he issued the fruit of his radio counseling ministry in Dear Mr. Brown (1961).

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1. Fosdick, The Living of These Days, op. cit., p. 287.
2. Ibid., p. 299.
3. Ibid., p. 301.
4. Harry Emerson Fosdick, A Great Time to Be Alive: Sermons on Christianity in Wartime, New York, Harper & Brothers, 1944, Introduction.

Fosdick's theology and understanding of prayer are expressed at varying length in nearly all these books. Expansion and some modification of thought is evidenced as Fosdick seeks to meet the needs of his time thus fulfilling his objectives in writing and preaching to which attention will now be turned.

5. Fosdick's Objectives in Writing

Really Fosdick's objectives in writing went hand in hand with his aims in preaching. In fact he comments, "I do not see how a man can preach without writing. I have always thought with my pen in hand. My preaching (then) naturally began to turn into books."[1] In the same way much of his lecturing, counseling, devotional material, and public prayers also issued in books. In all of these, Fosdick spoke and counseled and prayed and wrote as a people's pastor. His main concern at all times was to meet the needs of the people for a vital faith, for an understanding of prayer and Christian faith and service, for a more meaningful use of the Bible, for being real persons, and for constructively dealing with the many problems of daily

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1. Fosdick, The Living of These Days, op. cit., p. 89.

life in a period of intense bewilderment, stress, and strain. Early he conceived this vocation in terms of being "an interpreter in modern, popular, understandable terms of the best that I could find in the Christian tradition."[1] In this endeavor his sermons became "more and more cooperative enterprises between the preacher and congregation," where pastor and people together worked through real problems.[2] His writing reflects the same aim to

> . . . help people to meet trouble triumphantly, or to live above the mediocre moral level of a modern city, or to believe in God despite the world's evil, or to make Christ's principles standard in the face of our disordered world . . . with no dodging of the difficulties . . .[3]

This becomes a life-transforming ministry which Fosdick embraced whole-heartedly. Furthermore, in his underlying effort

> . . . to relate Christian faith and ethic to social problems, one conviction has been central: that the ultimate criterion of any civilization's success or failure is to be found in what happens to the underdog.[4]

Such a conviction inspired Fosdick's unceasing confrontation with major moral issues of his day. It was

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1. Fosdick, The Living of These Days, op. cit., p. 78.
2. Ibid., p. 96.
3. Ibid., p. 98.
4. Ibid., p. 272.

his unflagging belief that all aspects of religion needed to be examined in the light of their practical contribution to the betterment of man's individual and social existence. These convictions were reflected in Fosdick's writings, along with a consistently attempted "rethinking of Christianity in modern terms so that it would be . . . intellectually palatable to modern minds that believed in . . . evolution and the reign of natural law."[1] It is now pertinent to see how these convictions and objectives affected Fosdick's theological views.

C. The Basic Theology of Harry E. Fosdick

While making no pretense of being a "technical theologian," Fosdick classifies himself as an "evangelical liberal."[2] He explains, however, that he has "never been able to be either a theological reactionary or a theological radical."[3] The former was impossible because

> . . . the fact that astronomies change while stars abide is a true analogy of every realm of human life and thought . . . Therefore no existent theology can be a final formulation of spiritual truth.[4]

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1. Fosdick, The Living of These Days, op. cit., p. 202.
2. Ibid., pp. 229, 164.
3. Ibid., p. 229.
4. Ibid., p. 230.

At the same time Dr. Fosdick rejected radicalism since

> The radicals always seemed to me to have decided that the stars had vanished because an old astronomy had gone . . . (whereas) ideas of God change and ought to, but the fact does not mean that anything has happened to God.[1]

Indeed, Fosdick says that his own thinking changed during forty years in the ministry. He comments:

> Then(at the beginning) we were trying to accomodate Christ to our scientific civilization; now (1943), we face the desperate need of accomodating our scientific civilization to God.[2]

Yet in all this development, Fosdick says that

> Basic in my thinking has been conviction that my theologies are psychologically and sociologically conditioned, and that dogmatism in theology whether 'liberal' or 'orthodox' is ridiculous.[3]

Always, in his thinking and writing, Dr. Fosdick was seeking the truth or experience underlying any particular formulation of it.[4]

A consideration of the resultant concepts of epistemology and religion, Fosdick's doctrine of God and man, and his soteriological and eschatological definitions as these became clarified throughout

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1. Fosdick, The Living of These Days, op. cit., pp. 230-231.
2. Fosdick, A Great Time To Be Alive, op. cit., p. 201.
3. Fosdick, The Living of These Days, op. cit., p.231.
4. Ibid., p. 230.

long experience as a pastor will now furnish the framework for a better understanding of his writing on the meaning and practice of prayer.

1. Epistemology

How is God known to man according to Fosdick's thinking? Fosdick believes that

> The process of spiritual development reflected in the Bible seems . . . to involve not only human discovery but divine self-disclosure . . . (Also, there is) an objective spiritual world to be discovered . . . The God of the Bible has proved his quality as 'the living God,' who has not yet said his last word on any subject or put the finishing touch on any task.[1]

Thus, God continues to reveal himself and to act in history, so that

> We human beings, despite our ignorance and sin, are experientially confronted with spiritual reality . . . We do face the moral imperative of conscience and high hours of revelation; . . . we do confront supreme personalities, Christ over all, whom we cannot dodge, deny, or forget; . . . (and such) Christian experience is the abiding continuum underlying vital faith.[2]

At the same time,"all truth is God's truth, and great

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1. Harry Emerson Fosdick, A Guide to Understanding The Bible: The Development of Ideas within the Old and New Testaments, New York, Harper & Brothers, 1938, p. xiv.
2. Fosdick, The Living of These Days, op. cit., p. 235.

discoveries, like evolution or the reign of natural law, if they are true for science are true for religion also."[1] Thus, it is Fosdick's conviction that God continues to reveal himself and to be known experientially in all aspects of reality.

2. Concept of Religion

Dr. Fosdick finds that religion is basically

> . . . life motivated by ideas of God's will. When those ideas are high and true, they save. When they are low and false, they damn.[2]

In this general framework, Christianity at its best

> . . . is a firsthand personal experience (including) the experience of prayer as a vital, sustaining source of spiritual power (which results in) . . . practical dedication to the service of mankind . . . (and) unprejudiced good will . . .[3]

Moreover, he who reaches such "depths of religion must come, not with his rational segment only but with the whole of himself."[4] Religion, therefore, is essentially "the relationship of the soul with God."[5] How, then, does Fosdick conceive of God?

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1. Harry Emerson Fosdick, "Roads to Religion," What Religion Means To Me, op. cit., p. 5.
2. Fosdick, Dear Mr. Brown, op. cit., pp. 170-171.
3. Ibid., pp. 173, 174, 176.
4. Fosdick, "Roads to Religion," op. cit., p. 14.
5. Fosdick, The Modern Use of The Bible, op. cit., p. 17.

3. Doctrine of God

Fosdick seems to have perceived that it is easier to experience God than it is to define Him. For he demonstrates how, because of this, even the Biblical understanding of God underwent development and change. Thus the Old Testament concept of a tribal or territorial deity who wrathfully commands the utter destruction of whole peoples and is unapproachable in his awful holiness, is superceded by the New Testament understanding of God as "the spiritual Presence in whom we live and move and have our being,"[1] the one universal Father of all mankind, the "God of Grace and God of Glory,"[2] who indwells the hearts of his children and acts in history to establish his kingdom of righteousness throughout all the earth.[3] As a child put it, "Daddy, God grew better as he got older, didn't he?"[4] Fosdick affirms that certainly a man's concepts of God must improve with maturity.

a. The Nature of God

Like Wieman, Fosdick undertakes to describe

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1. Harry Emerson Fosdick, The Modern Use of the Bible, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1940, p. 22.
2. Supra, p. 115.
3. Fosdick, A Guide to Understanding the Bible, op. cit., p. 54.
4. Fosdick, Dear Mr. Brown, op. cit., p. 41.

God's nature first in terms of what he is not, and then in terms of what he is.

(1) What God Is Not

Thus Fosdick begins by making it clear that God is "a prisoner in the laws of his own world; powerless to assist his children."[1] Nor yet is he "a divine Santa Claus or benign charity organization."[2] At the same time God is not "an artificer, now far off, who has left this machine of his running by its own laws."[3] Neither does God become "progressively less essential" as science renders mankind more self-sufficient,[4] nor is he limited as man is by finitude.[5] Fosdick further seeks to dispose of the confusions that result from thinking of God as "the principle of concretion," or "as a Baptist,"[6] or as "a pure mathematician" in terms of scientific thought,[7] or as "a vague oblong blur," or as "seated upon a throne."[8] Fosdick would avoid all purely subjective concepts of God "made up by the pooling of man's own ideals."[9]

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1. Harry E. Fosdick, The Meaning of Prayer, op. cit., p. 12.
2. Harry Emerson Fosdick, Adventurous Religion and Other Essays, New York, Blue Ribbon Books, 1926, p. 145.
3. Fosdick, The Meaning of Prayer, op. cit., p. 108.
4. Ibid., p. 145.
5. Ibid., p. 49.
6. Fosdick, Dear Mr. Brown, op. cit., p. 36.
7. Ibid., p. 38.
8. Ibid., p. 37.
9. Fosdick, Adventurous Religion, op. cit., p. 57.

But he firmly insists that it is necessary to have some clear concept of God in order to enter into deeper communion with him.[1] Indeed, "achieving a worthier idea of God has always been the problem of religion. Only a dead religion can escape it . . . (for as a) living religion grows . . . (it) seeks more adequate conceptions of the Eternal."[2] How then does Fosdick describe what God is?

(2) What God Is

Fosdick begins his description of what God is by explaining that

> . . . when now we think of a great God, we have to use symbols. (so) we take some element within our experience and lift it to as far as we can reach and use it to help us think about him. We call him a rock, and a fortress, and a high tower. We call him father, and mother, and husband, and friend. We call him Ancient of Days, and the Hound of Heaven . . . And Christians say that they see the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.[3]

These descriptions are one way of saying that "God has a near end." When the New Testament states that "He that abideth in love, abideth in God, and God abideth in him," this, to Fosdick, is one way of

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1. Fosdick, Adventurous Religion, op. cit., p. 69.
2. Harry Emerson Fosdick, Riverside Sermons, New York, Harper & Brothers, 1958, p. 255.
3. Ibid., p. 261.

explaining God's "near end" which is also touched in "the spiritual life and character of Christ."[1] At the same time, Fosdick recognizes God's transcendent nature as "infinite in being and perfection; almighty, most wise, most holy, most absolute, working all things according to his own immutable will."[2]

But Fosdick advocates the practice of prayer to translate such theology into vital religious experience wherein alone does God become real to the individual. For, as Fosdick says, "God to (Jesus) was a genuinely, vitally experienced Fact,"[3] and that is what He is meant to be to everyone.[4] It is now important to see how Fosdick conceives of Jesus' relationship to this God and to the Holy Spirit, as these help to illumine man's prayer relationship to God.

(3) The Place of Christology and Pneumatology in Fosdick's Doctrine of God

Dr. Fosdick writes to Dear Mr. Brown(1961):

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1. Fosdick, Riverside Sermons, op. cit., p. 262.
2. Fosdick, The Meaning of Prayer, op. cit., p. 36.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.

> My beliefs about Christ are very high. Once they were not. Years ago I was unsure but . . . as between a high Christology that discovers the Divine in Christ, and a low Christology that reduces him to our mode and size, I hold a high Christology . . . [1]

But consistently, both before and after writing such an affirmation, Dr. Fosdick has preferred to appeal to the spirit of Jesus as of uppermost importance to Christian faith, rather than to elaborate any distinction between the religion of Jesus and the religion about Jesus,[2] because of the dangers of legalism, literalism, and dogmatism. Consistently he has made an "appeal from inherited formulas to spiritual realities,"[3] and to the business of taking Jesus Christ himself in earnest.[4]

Moreover, to Fosdick, Jesus is the supreme example of the spirit by which man is meant to live. To him, this is basically what the "divinity of Jesus" means. Fosdick writes that

> Many people are troubled because they cannot believe that all of the great God was in Jesus. Of course all of the great God was not in Jesus. The omnipotence of the great God . . . was not in Jesus . . . (But what is meant by Jesus' divinity is) that in the

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1. Fosdick, Dear Mr. Brown, op. cit., p. 93.
2. Fosdick, Adventurous Religion, op. cit., pp. 317-318.
3. Ibid., pp. 325-326.
4. Ibid.

> spiritual life and character of Christ . . . . God reaches us.[1]

Since Jesus was fully human - physically, mentally, and spiritually - the assertion of Jesus's divinity, according to Fosdick, is first a statement about God. Man finds God in Jesus, in this "best life we know . . . in the mercy, saviorhood, love and will of Christ."[2] Secondly, there is an ascription of moral uniqueness to Jesus in the statement - a spiritual, moral, authoritative superiority which caused the disciples to say that "God came (in him)," so that "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father."[3] And finally Jesus' divinity suggests that "God in him who created his quality" is also wanting to abide in men to create this extraordinary goodness in all who are willing that such new life should grow in them.[4] So God is like Jesus, God came in Jesus and God wants the spirit of Jesus to dwell and grow in us. Furthermore "that experience of the immediately present and available Divine Spirit is the very climax of New Testament Christianity. The relation of the cleansing, sustaining, empowering work

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1. Fosdick, Riverside Sermons, op. cit., p. 263.
2. Ibid., p. 268.
3. Ibid., pp. 269, 270, 272.
4. Ibid., pp. 272-273.

of the Holy Spirit to the transcendent God, Fosdick likens to the sun which though ninety-three million miles away from the earth is in its light and warmth right here sustaining all earthly life.[1] Thus "what we call the Trinity was to Paul (and the early church) not primarily theology; (but) . . . a vital, transforming experience" of God.[2] Again Dr. Fosdick is here appealing from doctrinal formulations to the experienced spiritual reality underlying the doctrine. This reality is perceivable by man because God is at work in his universe.

b. The Work of God

Fosdick's concept of the work of God is very important to an understanding of his teaching on prayer. For prayer must be a vital transaction with a real entity operating to uphold and transform life.[3] Prayer becomes unreal to the extent that people "do not vividly grasp the idea that God cares for and is dealing with every one of us."[4] It is indeed a fact, Dr. Fosdick believes, to which all nature testifies

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1. Fosdick, Dear Mr. Brown, op. cit., p. 126.
2. Ibid., p. 126.
3. Fosdick, The Meaning of Prayer, op. cit., p. 139.
4. Ibid., p. 40.

that "there is nothing too great for the Creator to accomplish and nothing too small for him to attend to."[1] So that God's omniscience is not merely "extensive, but intensive."[2] Indeed, "God has a purpose for the universe as a whole," and for every part in relation to the whole.[3] And God wills to guide and help every man to realize this purpose.[4] Thus God works to create, recreate, sustain, empower, direct, and transform all life. It is man's part to cooperate with God in this work. Fosdick's theology therefore leads into a very high view of man's nature.

4. Doctrine of Man

In Fosdick's thinking, "To gain the whole world and lose a soul would be a very poor bargain for God as well as for man, (since) personality is the one infinitely valuable treasure in the universe."[5] In fact God has thought so highly of man that he has left the realization of his will dependent upon man's cooperation,[6] Man is made in God's image and meant

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1. Fosdick, The Meaning of Prayer, op. cit., p. 48.
2. Ibid., p. 50.
3. Ibid., p. 51.
4. Ibid., p. 58.
5. Ibid., p. 59.
6. Ibid., pp. 67-68.

to enjoy the life of a son of God, which means fellowship with God. Dr. Fosdick defends an anthropomorphic definition of God on grounds that therein "we take the best we know, personality - consciousness, intelligence, purposefulness, goodwill - and say that up that road, infinitely beyond our understanding, lies the truth about God."[1] And he sees that the best in men is marvelously disclosed in the life of Jesus.[2] Indeed, according to Fosdick, the whole Biblical tradition underscores two elements in human nature as being of utmost significance: the capacity of man for moral living and for fellowship with the Eternal.[3] And these estimates of human nature have produced the most human elements in civilization.[4] But how is man brought into this life-imparting and transforming relationship with God; and is such fellowship to be realized here or hereafter?

5. Soteriology and Eschatology

According to Dr. Fosdick, it is the fellowship that redemptively works in man to deepen the fellowship.

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1. Fosdick, Dear Mr. Brown, op. cit., p. 40.
2. Supra, p. 139.
3. Fosdick, A Guide to Understanding the Bible, op. cit., p. 96.
4. Ibid., p. 197.

There is in fact, "Something greater than cosmic forces, greater than law - with an eye to pity and an arm to save," communion with which transforms a man's life, and often his circumstances as well.[1] Such communion is established in prayer which, with thinking and working, is "one of the three forms of man's cooperation with God."[2] And man must work with God for his salvation.[3] As to the place of Christ's death in this concept, Fosdick suggests that Christ's cross is of vital importance as an act of vicarious sacrifice without which "there never has been any salvation in this world from evil."[4] Thus "on Calvary, an unfortunate deed was done for the souls of men."[5] But its importance does not lie in the fact of its being a unique, bloodly, sacrificial sin-offering. Rather, "Christ's death is part of his life; they are both part of one piece, based on dedicated self-sacrifice for the good of others . . . (and) Christ's life of saviorhood is to be continued in the vicarious sacrifice of his disciples' lives."[6]

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1. Fosdick, The Meaning of Prayer, op. cit., p. 4.
2. Ibid., p. 65.
3. Ibid., p. 66.
4. Fosdick, Dear Mr. Brown, op. cit., p. 131.
5. Ibid., p. 171.
6. Ibid., pp. 134-135.

This, Fosdick says, is the way sin is always atoned; and this is the way sinners are always saved. Also the cross may be taken as symbolizing the two sides of God's nature: his justice and his mercy. Yet,

> How pitifully inadequate all our analogies are to explain . . . the mystery of the cross! . . . the older I grow, the more I think that I understand the cross best when I stop trying to analyze it and just stand in awe before it . . .[1]

singing Isaac Watt's hymn, "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross." So the cross is representative of a basic law of life and of God's nature, beyond which a man must also acknowledge that it stands as a profound mystery. It might perhaps best represent Fosdick's thinking to say that Christ's part in salvation is to reveal God. Eschatologically, Fosdick says very little about salvation. He apparently feels that it is the Christian's duty to cooperate with God for the transformation of society in this world,[2] but also that redemption can only be fully realized beyond history. However, according to Kenneth Cauthen, he seems to have come to such a view less from a consciousness of the depths of sin, than from the

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1. Fosdick, Dear Mr. Brown, op. cit., pp. 137-138.
2. Supra, 124, 127, 128-129.

scientific pronouncement that this planet is to become again uninhabitable.[1]

Thus Dr. Fosdick, in practical (if not technical) theological language presents his understanding of God as a personal Being, knowable when experienced in human personality as the sustainer and transformer of individual and social life, chiefly through the prayer relationship. Christ is the fullest revelation both of God and of the highest possible manhood. Man is saved as he is transformed through the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit and through vicarious suffering, not only of Christ but of many saints in history. Man must cooperate in this salvation which is partially to be realized here but will only be consummated in the hereafter. Fosdick's basic concept of God underlying all this is of the Eternal Spirit ever dealing with men personally throughout history. Ideas of man may vary and change about him, but God remains the same forever. It is this God with whom man seeks fellowship in prayer.

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1. Kenneth Cauthen, op. cit., p. 80.

D. The Meaning of Prayer in Fosdick's Writings

To Dr. Fosdick, prayer is vital religion. He says this very strongly when he writes:

> Prayer is the soul of religion . . . Failure in prayer (therefore) is the loss of religion itself in its inward and dynamic aspect of fellowship with the Eternal. Only a theoretical deity is left to the man who has ceased to commune with God, and a theoretical deity saves no man from sin and fills no life with a sense of divine commission. Such vital consequences require a living God who actually deals with men.[1]

To explain further the importance and meaning of prayer, Dr. Fosdick offers some preliminary definitions, takes note of several false concepts of prayer, and then undertakes to describe the nature and aspects of prayer, before dealing with its practice.

1. Preliminary Definitions of Prayer

Fosdick feels that God deals with men both intimately and transformingly in the prayer relationship. Indeed, "prayer is a cumulative life of friendship with God," which must become "an habitual attitude and not simply an occasional act."[2] Thus prayer "is to us, however lamely we may exercise our privilege

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1. Fosdick, The Meaning of Prayer, op. cit., p. xi.
2. Ibid., p. 32.

the very center of our inward relationship with God."[1] Yet many people fail to enjoy the riches of this prayer fellowship because of a misunderstanding of what prayer is, and what it is meant to accomplish.

2. False Concepts of Prayer

Prayer was never meant to be a purely spasmodic affair whereby man undertakes "to use God as a power to be occasionally summoned to (his) aid."[2] Prayer is also no magical formula to obtain selfish ends, nor a way of getting things by begging.[3] At the same time, prayer is never answered without human cooperation.[4] It is not to be conceived as a kind of spiritual gymnastics - "a helpful soliloquy," with its main effectiveness in "the eyes of God" as deriving from good works and stemming from "the reflex action of man's own mind."[5] Neither should prayer be viewed as a "safety appliance like a lightning rod" raised upward to ward off God's stroke of justice.[6] Yet in no way must it seek to manipulate God to do man's will. What then is the essential nature of

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1. Fosdick, The Modern Use of the Bible, op. cit., p. 15.
2. Fosdick, The Meaning of Prayer, op. cit., p. 15.
3. Ibid., p. 31.
4. Ibid., pp. 29, 31.
5. Ibid., p. 44.
6. Ibid., p. 55.

prayer?

3. The Nature of Prayer

In treating the nature of prayer, Dr. Fosdick tries to show that "praying is a natural activity of human life,"[1] This activity is universally practiced, justifiable on grounds of its normalcy, addressed to an objective reality, and bearing understandable relatedness to the areas of pyschology, natural law, and the work of the church.

a. The Naturalness and Universality of Prayer

Prayer, as Fosdick sees it, is "a native tendency" of the human soul, to which men in all ages have been moved by times of deep emotion or stress.[2] As such, prayer is a universal experience which is moreover essential as "an elemental function of human life."[3]

b. Justification for Prayer

The justification for prayer, in Fosdick's opinion, lies in its very normalcy and universal timelessness as a functional human experience.[4] In addition, Fosdick repeatedly advocates the need of

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1. Fosdick, The Meaning of Prayer, op. cit., p. 13.
2. Ibid., pp. 1-3.
3. Ibid., pp. 9-10.
4. Ibid., Ch. I.

prayer on the grounds of its being man's primary medium of real and intimate fellowship with the Eternal. Prayer is as indispensable as a living relationship with God is indispensable. "And only to one who prays can God make himself vivid."[1]

c. The Reality of Prayer

As the chief means of bringing men into contact with the living God, the reality of prayer depends upon the reality of God. In seeking to convince men of this reality, Fosdick says:

> Can it be that men in all ages and all lands have been engaged in 'talking forever to a silent world' from which no answer comes? If we can be sure of anything is it not this - that wherever a human function has persisted . . . that function corresponds with some reality. (So) hunger could never have persisted without food, nor breathing without air, nor intellectual life without truth, nor prayer without God.[2]

This divine reality is both objective and subjective. It is objective in the sense just described, that Reality exists in the universe, always ready to meet man's need. Yet it is subjective in that the actual "presence of God can be experienced only within our own hearts. (So that) all the best in us is God in

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1. Fosdick, The Meaning of Prayer, op. cit., p. 35.
2. Ibid., p. 13.

us."[1] Likewise, the Bible, shows

> . . . the divine Spirit was an immediate, personal presence, awesome and masterful, directing thought and compelling action . . . (And) prayer was the immediate response of man to God's approach, involving inward communion and ethical devotion.[2]

So the objective God operates subjectively to influence men. Such experience is moreover a psychologically observable reality.

d. The Relation of Psychology to Prayer

Dr. Fosdick agrees with William James' dictum that "the reason why we do pray is simply that we cannot help praying."[3] Prayer is a psychological necessity.[4] Fosdick cites instances of the observability of the work of prayer in the lives of E. M. Stanley[5] and Sir Wilfred Grenfell.[6] He further suggests that what psychology understands as the creation of mature personality is the apostle Paul's teaching wrought by the redemptive activity of God's Spirit in what may be viewed as a prayer relationship.[7]

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1. Fosdick, The Meaning of Prayer, op. cit., p. 86.
2. Fosdick, A Guide to Understanding the Bible, op. cit., p. 225.
3. Fosdick, The Meaning of Prayer, op. cit., p. 9.
4. Ibid., p. 12.
5. Fosdick, The Modern Use of the Bible, op. cit., p. 176-177.
6. Fosdick, The Meaning of Prayer, op. cit., p. 39.
7. Fosdick, A Guide to Understanding the Bible, op. cit., p. 93.

Similarly, while admitting that it is often "quite impossible to distinguish between the voice of God and the voice of our own best conscience and ideals," (indeed no attempt should be made to do so), nevertheless Fosdick suggests that what psychologists "discover in the spirit's life (of such) transforming influences . . . (which they) ascribe to the subconscious," are indeed those which the New Testament attributes "to the Holy Spirit."[1] Then Fosdick adds:

> There should be no permanent misunderstanding here. (For just as) the tides that come into New York Harbor come . . . through the Narrows, (but) not from them, so we cannot solve the mystery of that divine help which great souls should know by giving names to substations in our own minds . . . (not recognizing that) God himself is trying through our best to find a channel for his Spirit.[2]

e. The Relation of Prayer to Law

Fosdick devotes a whole chapter in The Meaning of Prayer to the important matter of explaining the relationship of prayer to the reign of law.[3]

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1. Fosdick, The Meaning of Prayer, op. cit., p. 87.
2. Ibid., pp. 87-88.
3. Ibid., Ch. VI.

He insists that although

> . . . the world looks like a great machine, self-running and self-regulating, with God a very distant Sustainer . . . (that it is more true to see God) as the present living God - whose ways of action we have partially plotted and called laws.[1]

Thus, even a so-called miracle is to be viewed as the "fulfilling of a larger and higher law than we have yet understood."[2] Therefore scientific knowledge of the operation of natural law should not be allowed to destroy man's confidence in prayer, but should simply pave the way for "aworthier and larger idea of God to meet the new need."[3] So men should understand that God's Providence still reigns and that both God and man

> can utilize, manipulate, and combine the forces which laws control to do what those forces by themselves would not accomplish . . . (for) personality, even in ourselves, and how much more in God, is the master and not merely the slave of all law-abiding forces. Thus man's limited control of universal forces may be a counterpart of God's unlimited control. Then, all cause would be personal, and all procedure that men call natural would be God's regular ways of acting . . . the world is not governed by law; (but) . . . by God according to law . . . Prayer is the law of personal relationships. It is important to see clearly that all laws do not apply in all realms.[4]

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1. Fosdick, The Meaning of Prayer, op. cit., pp. 93-94.
2. Ibid., p. 97.
3. Ibid., p. 99.
4. Ibid., pp. 105, 107, 108, 109, 111.

As "personal relationship is the unique realm of prayer," prayer may be chiefly expected to accomplish changes in people. Prayer, therefore, is a legitimate activity of the church, bearing a definite relationship to the church's function.

f. Prayer in Relation to the Church

Dr. Fosdick wanted the church to become more relevant in meeting the needs of the people, less sectarian, and to assume a more decisive role of leadership in the affairs of men.[1] To this end, he felt that the church's worship should be more "inclusively generous," in utilizing liturgy, music, discussion, preaching, dramatic symbolism, and the "unprogrammed quiet of the Friend's Meeting, (as) media for making the divine real to men."[2]

g. The Values of Prayer

Dr. Fosdick's contributions to an understanding of the values of prayer may also serve to summarize what he has said with regard to the nature of prayer. Above all, prayer offers to men the unsurpassed blessing of continual fellowship with God. The fact that

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1. Harry Emerson Fosdick, "The Church of the Future," Ventures in Belief: Christian Convictions for a Day of Uncertainty, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1930, pp. 147-157.
2. Ibid., p. 156.

this "door is open so continuously" should not lead men to undervalue "one of life's great privileges."[1] Besides, "prayer opens our lives to God so that his will can be done in and through us."[2] Thus, prayer is an instrument by which God achieves his purposes. In sum, prayer is a normal, universal, timeless, psychologically necessary law and function of personality and personal relationships (including man's relationship with God). For prayer is grounded in the nature of man and the reality of God. The nature of prayer has many aspects, some of which Fosdick seeks to describe.

4. Aspects of Prayer

Dr. Fosdick considers prayer variously as communion with God, as cooperation with God, as dominant desire, as a kind of battlefield, as the claiming of sonship, and as conversation with God.

a. Prayer as Communion with God

To Fosdick, prayer is primarily a state of communion or "continuous fellowship with God," involving real friendship.[3] Fosdick believes that this

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1. Fosdick, The Meaning of Prayer, op. cit., pp. 26-27.
2. Ibid., p. 57.
3. Ibid., pp. 32, 35.

understanding of prayer "relieves us from the pressure of many intellectual difficulties" with regard to what are legitimate requests in view of the realm of natural law and God's eternal purposes, and why some petitions cannot be or are not answered.[1] A further "inevitable effect of this sort of prayer is that God becomes real . . . (For) the practice of prayer is necessary to make God not merely an idea held in the mind, but a Presence recognized in the life."[2] Fosdick further claims that this type of prayer is the prayer found in the New Testament, where

> The believer lives in God and God in him; the soul has immediate access into the divine presence and is, indeed, the very temple in which God's Spirit dwells; so that whatever else may be granted or withheld in prayer, the sustaining companionship of the Unseen Friend is constant and assured.[3]

Moreover as man so communes with God, he is led to cooperate with God.

b. Prayer as Cooperation with God

Fosdick states that "prayer is one of the three forms of man's cooperation with God."[4] In

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1. Fosdick, The Meaning of Prayer, op. cit., p. 34.
2. Ibid., p. 36.
3. Fosdick, A Guide to Understanding the Bible, op. cit., p. 256.
4. Fosdick, The Meaning of Prayer, op. cit., p. 65.

fact, the fulfillment of God's will itself depends upon man's thinking, working, and praying."[1] Moreover, "no man can (so) work for God . . . without growing in an assurance that he is working with God."[2] Fosdick seems to imply that this conscious cooperation with God derives from prayer, issues in prayer, and is a form of prayer. Moreover, communion and cooperation with God strengthen and are strengthened by prayer conceived as dominant desire.

c. Prayer as Dominant Desire

In this more inclusive sense, prayer can be construed as "the settled craving of a man's heart, good or bad, his inward love, and determining desire."[3] Furthermore, "one immediate result of this point of view is the clear perception that everybody is praying."[4] Moreover, such genuine desire will manifest itself in corresponding action.[5] So prayer becomes a driving force, which if Christian, both springs from and helps to mold Christian character.[6] Thus, "the

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1. Fosdick, The Meaning of Prayer, op. cit., p. 64.
2. Fosdick, Dear Mr. Brown, op. cit., p. 95.
3. Fosdick, The Meaning of Prayer, op. cit., p. 142.
4. Ibid., p. 143.
5. Ibid., p. 135.
6. Ibid., p. 138.

prayer of dominant desire always tends to attain its object."[1] Such praying also is costly. By engaging in it, man truly enters upon a battlefield.

d. Prayer as a Battlefield

Prayer as a battlefield, according to Dr. Fosdick, is the "innermost form of the fight for character."[2] As so conceived in the early church, prayer became "in part, a form of spiritual self-discipline, . . . a process of purification from which forgiven souls emerged cleansed, . . . the centering of attention on assets rather than liabilities, on the help of God rather than the troubles of life."[3] To modern man also prayer is meant to become

> . . . the inner battlefield where men often conquer most effectively false worries, trivial anxieties, morbid humors, and all the unwholesome specters of the mind that irritate the spirit and make the body ill.[4]

This battling for the inmost doing of God's will involves living as a son of God; and prayer thus becomes a means of claiming such sonship.

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1. Fosdick, The Meaning of Prayer, op. cit., p. 145.
2. Ibid., p. 152.
3. Fosdick, A Guide to Understanding the Bible, op. cit., pp. 255-256.
4. Fosdick, The Meaning of Prayer, op. cit., p. 159.

e. Prayer as the Claiming of Sonship

Referring to the eighth chapter of Romans (verses fourteen through eighteen), Dr. Fosdick understands that prayer is meant to involve "the claiming of our sonship, the appropriation of our heritage "as here described by Paul. In fact, Dr. Fosdick finds the whole New Testament replete with statements of the spiritual wealth available to Christians, remarking that

> . . . prayer is the active appropriation of this wealth. (Yet) of how many of us is it true that ( such) friendship with God is an unclaimed heritage. (Therefore we) . . . miss the daily guidance, the consciousness of divine resource, the sustaining sense of God's presence, which can come only to those who both believe that God cares for each and who in habitual communion with him are making earnest with their faith.[1]

This is the life of sonship, realized in prayer as "an abiding sense of divine companionship and resource . . ."[2]

f. Prayer as Conversation with God

Moreover this kind of prayer renders natural a continuing conversation, as well as communion with God, in which man listens as much as he talks. So

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1. Fosdick, The Meaning of Prayer, op. cit., pp. 45, 53.
2. Fosdick, Dear Mr. Brown, op. cit., p. 175.

prayer becomes "a means of securing divine guidance, so that a man . . . surrendering himself to a superhuman direction (can) know God's will and do it."[1] Indeed, there are"some things which God cannot say to" men, unless they pray. Therefore Fosdick laments the fact that men today so seldom listen.[2]

These various aspects of prayer as communion and cooperation with God, as dominant desire and a battlefield, and as the claiming of sonship and conversation with God all relate very closely to each other, sometimes so as to appear undifferentiated. Yet each helps to illuminate prayer as fundamentally a matter of relationship and with an attitude toward God. At this point, the study of the meaning of prayer in Fosdick's writings moves into a consideration of his understanding of the practice of prayer.

E. The Practice of Prayer in Fosdick's Writings

Dr. Fosdick decries the modern tendency to

> . . . decompose (prayer) into its psychological processes . . . (and) pick it to pieces as a boy might take his father's watch apart . . . (For, while it is useful

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1. Fosdick, A Guide to Understanding the Bible, op. cit., p. 255.
2. Fosdick, The Meaning of Prayer, op. cit., p. 66.

> to understand) prayer as a law-abiding, reliable, psychological activity, . . . if one's attitude toward prayer stops with analysis one has lost out of praying all that ever made it worthwhile.[1]

So, the value of prayer is found only in its practice. In considering Fosdick's teaching on the practice of prayer, it will be pertinent to examine his definitions of types of prayer, the sources from which he draws his teaching, his description of the method of prayer, and finally some of his own recorded pastoral prayers.

1. Definition of Types of Prayer

Like Wieman, Fosdick deals mainly with suggestions for private prayer which may be carried over into public and small group worship. His book, The Meaning of Prayer, is well adapted to either individual or group use (although Fosdick himself does not suggest this). In several places, Fosdick does allude to public worship as such; and A Book of Public Prayers demonstrates his own deep understanding of the art of pastoral praying. So this section will have regard to Fosdick's definitions of private prayer, small group prayer, public worship, and the pastoral prayer.

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1. Fosdick, The Modern Use of the Bible, op. cit., p. 176.

a. Private Prayer

Much that Fosdick writes about prayer as communion and conversation with God, as an intimate personal fellowship, and as a man's dominant desire and a battlefield where his purposes are aligned with God, or as the claiming of his sonship, indicates that Fosdick thinks of prayer primarily as a very private matter to be practised in solitude. This is mainly because it is in solitude that the voice of God is best heard.[1]

b. Small Group Prayer

However, Dr. Fosdick also observes that

> Jesus' words about praying together are quite as positive as his words about praying alone . . . Christ (indicates) . . . that he is especially present in a praying group. (Moreover) praying for another, especially an unfriendly man, is a searching test of our relationship with him. But praying with another - how much more intimate and penetrating a test is that! If there is unforgiven grudge or secret disloyalty or impenitent unkindness, we cannot do it. As Jesus said, we must agree . . . (Therefore) collective praying in the family circle, the college group, or the church . . . will help any who genuinely catch its spirit to say . . . our blessings, our sins, our needs, and our Father.[2]

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1. Fosdick, The Meaning of Prayer, op. cit., p. 57.
2. Ibid., p. 179.

Dr. Fosdick makes no further comment regarding small group prayer.

c. Public Worship

However, in A Book of Public Prayers, Dr. Fosdick alludes to the value of liturgical worship in "making the divine real to men,"[1] besides assuring that the main movements of prayer will be included "decently and in order," so as to meet the prayer needs of all members of the congregation.[2]

d. The Pastoral Prayer

In his brief introductory discussion of the nature of the pastoral prayer, Dr. Fosdick again mentions the congregational needs that it is the minister's responsibility to include in his prayer, whereas some extempore prayers become "a confused jumble of all sorts of requests, meditations, aspirations, and even homilies . . ." Under no circumstances, therefore, should the pastoral prayer receive little or no preparation. For it must never degenerate into that which is "narrowly self-centered, (or lacking) . . . any expressed awareness of the world's need, . . .

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1. Fosdick, "The Church of the Future," op. cit., p. 156.
2. Harry Emerson Fosdick, A Book of Public Prayers, New York, Harper & Brothers, 1959, p. 8.

(or couched) in vague generalities, (or merely) . . . a verbal formality." Rather it must always exhibit "the freshness, radiance, and challenge that genuine prayer should possess."[1] All prayer, whether private, collective, or pastoral must always be genuine. These and other thoughts on the practice of prayer, Dr. Fosdick derives from several sources.

2. Fosdick's Sources for Instruction on Prayer

Fosdick's ideas regarding both the meaning and practice of prayer have been gleaned from Scripture, from Jesus' example and teaching, from his own personal experience, and from the experience of others.

a. Scripture

As a Christian minister, Dr. Fosdick depended heavily on Scripture in his preaching, pastoral counseling and writing, both for inspiration and illustration. Of this dependence he writes:

> I had been suckled on the Bible, knew it and loved it, and I could not deal with any crucial problem in thought and life without seeing text after text lift up its hands begging me to be used. The Bible came alive to me - an amazing compendium of every kind of situation in human experience with the garnered wisdom of all ages to help in meeting them.[2]

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1. Fosdick, A Book of Public Prayers, op. cit., p. 9.
2. Fosdick, The Living of These Days, op. cit., p. xi.

Similarly, he notes in the preface to The Meaning of Prayer that this book "used Scripture as the basis of its thoughts", not however as "proof-texts" but "as descriptions of an experience which men actually had with God."[1] Accordingly every "Daily Reading"in this book contains a brief Bible passage and Fosdick refers to many other Scripture texts in each Comment for the Week. He so uses the Bible as a recording of "abiding truths and experiences in changing mental categories."[2]

b. Jesus' Life and Teaching

Likewise Fosdick was thoroughly familiar with and indeed wrote several books about the life and teaching of Jesus. In The Meaning of Prayer, he refers frequently to Jesus' own prayer-life and teaching on prayer, as well as to the spirit of his life, which was the essence and issue of his prayer-relationship with God. Elsewhere, too, Fosdick notes that

> When (Jesus) prays, he goes into the inner chamber and speaks to the Father in secret. Most of us in this are seeking to follow Christ (rather than Old Testament pray-ers). We find it more congenial to our ways of thinking to pray as he prayed and to conceive of God's immediate approach to our souls as he conceived it.[3]

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1. Fosdick, The Meaning of Prayer, op. cit., p. xi.
2. Fosdick, The Living of These Days, op. cit., p. 118.
3. Fosdick, The Modern Use of the Bible, op. cit., p. 128.

But Fosdick does not rely solely upon Scriptural examples and teaching for his understanding of prayer. He also draws heavily upon his own experience.

c. Personal Experience

Fosdick's own keen appreciation of prayer as transforming personal communion with the living God developed first in the depths of his nervous breakdown experience, when his own resources proved completely inadequate and he had to seek help from a Power beyond himself.[1] That this deep awareness of God's Presence never left him but further deepened during the course of his life is evidenced both by Fosdick's descriptions of prayer and its practice and by the quality of his own pastoral prayers. Fosdick does not offer any examples of his own private prayers, but does use many of the prayers of other churchmen.

d. Experience and Prayers of Others

In many of his writings on prayer, but especially in The Meaning of Prayer, Fosdick cites numerous examples of what prayer means to all sorts of Christian men and of how they prayed in words. His selection of these prayers and prayer experiences

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1. Supra, pp. 120, 121.

further demonstrates Fosdick's perception of the many-faceted nature of prayer and his own particular concern with prayer as living fellowship with God. In further describing the practice of prayer, Fosdick considers several aspects of its method.

3. The Method of Prayer

Dr. Fosdick in dealing with the method of prayer considers man's role and God's role in prayer, as well as the subject matter, movements, and effectiveness of prayer.

a. Man's Role in Prayer

Fosdick believes that man's part in the prayer relationship is of utmost importance. He treats in this connection the conditions for effective prayer, God's need of man's prayer, the element of purposiveness, and various hindrances to prayer.

(1) Conditions for Effective Prayer

For prayer to be effective there must be the felt need of prayer, faith, surrender, habitual self-discipline, specific preparation, persistence, and what Fosdick calls "individuality."

(a) Felt Need

A first condition for effective praying is to feel the need of the direction and power and fellowship

with God that is sought in prayer. For "in all great matters the sense of need must precede the discovery of the experience."[1] In all life, two experiences in particular call forth the conscious need of prayer: "being up against something too much for us, and undertaking something too hard for us."[2] Fosdick discovered this essential truth during his nervous breakdown.[3] The next condition is faith in the reality of God's concern.

(b) Faith

Dr. Fosdick thinks that the sense of unreality in prayer often springs from "a failure to grasp (or believe) the individual love of God" for each one of his children.[4] In such a condition there is no faith to claim the sonship offered by God nor to trust "that God takes interest in the individual who prays."[5] New vistas of science have indeed done much to disturb man's sense of individual worth in God's sight. But a Christian "prays to the God whose love for us (and nearness) Christ revealed."[6] So truly

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1. Fosdick, Riverside Sermons, op. cit., p. 124.
2. Ibid., p. 125.
3. Supra, pp. 120-121.
4. Fosdick, The Meaning of Prayer, op. cit., p. 41.
5. Ibid., pp. 45-46.
6. Ibid., p. 89.

"we must apprehend the fact that when we are alone we are not alone." Thus, too, it is very necessary at all times to "pray affirmatively."

> (For) prayer holds the object of its wish at the center of attention . . . (Indeed) the kind of prayer that . . . brings power always involves . . . positive affirmation, putting divine strength in the center of the picture and crowding apprehensions, anxieties, and fears off the edge.[1]

Then, in addition to faith, prayer demands utter compliance with the will of God.

(c) Surrender

Fosdick says that valid praying can be dangerous business in that it involves unreserved commitment to do "the compelling will of God" even unto death.[2] For,

> . . . it does cost to win a life that really can pray . . . (a man) must wear the candle of renunciation . . . (of) evil attitudes, cherished sins, (and) bad tempers . . . (Too, we must) surrender to (God's) search for us (letting) . . . every fine and ennobling influence which God is sending to us have free play.[3]

This kind of praying means too that a man will undertake the kind of self-discipline that molds character.

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1. Fosdick, Riverside Sermons, op. cit., p. 127.
2. Ibid., pp. 115, 137.
3. Ibid., p. 117.

(d) Habitual Self-Discipline

No effective praying is possible without disciplined prayer and disciplined living in accordance with the intent of the prayer as Fosdick sees it.[1] For certainly, "regularity is essential to a successful life of prayer" as is also "habitual self-discipline in thinking "pure and unselfish thoughts."[2] To attain this kind of control of mind and body in and through prayer also requires special preparation.

(e) Special Preparation

Men surely must not suppose that they can rush haphazardly into prayer with"unprepared thoughts, preoccupied minds and unexamined lives."[3] It is very necessary to deal first with any moods, irritated tempers and diverted attention before one can hope to enjoy communion with God in prayer. And,furthermore, to enter upon such a state of communion, much persistence is needed.

(f) Persistence

Fosdick says that men must learn to "pray undiscourageably" scaling their prayers to "long term enterprise."[4] There must assuredly be "persistence

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1. Fosdick, The Meaning of Prayer, op. cit., p. 73.
2. Ibid., pp. 75, 72.
3. Ibid., p. 73.
4. Fosdick, Riverside Sermons, op. cit., pp. 117-118.

in the face of difficulties, including the initial difficulty of keeping the mind on the things of God. And lack of attention to God may indicate littleness of affection.[1] Also, "successful praying costs . . . patience with commonplace hours."[2] One cannot forever enjoy the state of exaltation, but one must continue praying nonetheless.[3]

In order toachieve the necessary discipline, to make adequate preparation, and to cultivate persistent attention to God, which are conditions for effective prayer, each person must develop also his own individual prayer method.

(g) Individuality

Dr. Fosdick feels it essential to vital praying that "each man must be allowed to pray in his own way . . . for each has his own problems and his peculiar way of expressing the Spirit of Christ," and all ways are needed.[4] Indeed, "no one is expected to be a Christian in any other man's way," and this should be equally true for prayer. Certainly in the Bible, "there is no one mould of prayer into which . . . communion with God must be run."[5]

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1. Fosdick, The Meaning of Prayer, op. cit., p. 74.
2. Ibid., p. 77.
3. Ibid., pp. 76, 82.
4. Ibid., p. 84.
5. Ibid., p. 85

So, effectual praying requires a sense of need, faith, surrender, habitual self-discipline, special preparation, persistence, and individuality. Furthermore God has need that men pray in this way in order that he may accomplish his purposes through them.

(2) God's Need of Man's Prayer

Fosdick affirms that "the experience of the race is clear that some things God can never do until he finds a man who prays."[1] For one thing, "unless men pray there are some things which God cannot say to them."[2] For until man listens he will not hear God's voice. Also "until men pray, there are some things which God cannot give to them."[3] For unless gifts are taken they cannot be given. And finally, "unless men pray there are some things which God cannot do through them."[4] Many men try to work for God. But God cannot accomplish his purposes unless men become willing in the prayer-attitude to "let God work through them." Thus it is that prayer becomes one of the three forms of man's cooperation with God, which

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1. Fosdick, The Meaning of Prayer, op. cit., p. 64.
2. Ibid., p. 66.
3. Ibid., p. 67.
4. Ibid., p. 68.

God must have if he is to fulfill his will.[1] God fulfills his will on earth as man's power aligns men with the purposiveness of God.

(3) Purposiveness

As will or purpose is a distinguishing characteristic of God's being, so it is clear that it is meant to be an attribute of man's cooperation with God. And Fosdick wants it understood that God desires not resignation but cooperation. And therefore there must be this distinct element of dominant desire and purposiveness characterizing man's role in prayer.[2] So it is clear that prayer does become the"innermost form of the fight for character."[3] For man is meant to be "strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might."[4] So he is to resist the temptation to disobey God's will through prayer.[5] If he suffers or is sick, he is not to lose heart but to pray.[6] And above all, he is to come in prayer into a powerful alignment with the will of God, so that in this sense prayer is "the innermost decisive business of life."[7]

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1. Fosdick, The Meaning of Prayer, op. cit., p. 65.
2. Ibid., p. 65.
3. Supra, p. 154.
4. Fosdick, The Meaning of Prayer, op. cit., p. 154, (Eph. 6:10)
5. Ibid., p. 156.
6. Ibid., pp. 157-158.
7. Ibid., p. 159.

It is therefore of great importance to discover and remove any hindrances to effective prayer.

(4) Hindrances to Prayer

Among the hindrances to prayer recognized by Fosdick are spiritual unreceptivity, moods, temperament, false concepts of God and prayer, impatience, insincerity, over-emphasis on work, and sin. Men must learn to recognize and relinquish each of these obstacles.

(a) Spiritual Unreceptivity

"In true prayer we habitually put ourselves into the attitude of willingness to do whatever God wills."[1] Failure to do this will make one unreceptive to God's gifts and guidance. So also any unwillingness to let the transforming power of God work changes in one's life closes the door to the realization of God's effective power in prayer.[2] Therefore Fosdick urges men to "think of the things God wants to give and do through our lives, and consider how the prayerless, unreceptive heart blockades his will."[3] Allowing prayer to become a monologue is another form of

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1. Fosdick, The Meaning of Prayer, op. cit., p. 143.
2. Ibid., p. 133.
3. Ibid., p. 61.

unreceptivity, for how can God direct unless man listens? Likewise business leaves one little time for listening, so "the Spirit stands at the door and knocks."[1] Moreover, all these blocks are facets of a man's character. Indeed, "sincere praying is a revelation of character, and generosity in praying waits of necessity for magnanimity of spirit."[2] For "great character is essential to great praying."[3]

(b) Moods

Moods may also hinder the effectiveness of prayer. "We cannot always pray with the same intensity and conscious satisfaction."[4] But any man "who surrenders to (his) variable moods is doomed to inefficiency" in work as well as in prayer.[5] The best advice, therefore, is "if you are averse to pray, pray the more."[6]

(c) Temperament

Sometimes it is not so much the variability of moods that hinders prayer as certain consistent qualities of temperament. For instance, men of action

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1. Fosdick, The Meaning of Prayer, op. cit., p. 66.
2. Fosdick, A Guide to Understanding the Bible, op. cit., p. 237.
3. Fosdick, The Meaning of Prayer, op. cit., p. 138.
4. Ibid., p. 81.
5. Ibid., p. 82.
6. Ibid., p. 83.

do not find it congenial to meditate. Nor do undemonstrative people find it natural to praise.[1] This is another reason for individualizing the practice of prayer so that each man is able to pray in his own way. Then one has reckoned with temperament and it ceases to be an obstacle.[2] But many people are held back by a sense of guilt with regard to temperament, and also even more by false concepts of God and of prayer.

(d) False Concepts of God and of Prayer

One hindrance to effective prayer, according to Fosdick, "Is the ignorance of our asking, (for) piety is no guarantee of wisdom."[3] Men pray selfishly, or for things God must not give, because they do not understand that God is not some cosmic Santa Claus who suspends the laws of the universe in order to grant men their often conflicting requests.[4] Similarly, prayer should not be a "vague groping after a God outside oneself . . . or a straining after a realization of God's presence . . . (Rather) prayer is opening the life to Him," finding God within one's own heart.[5]

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1. Fosdick, The Meaning of Prayer, op. cit., p. 83.
2. Ibid., p. 84.
3. Ibid., pp. 124-125.
4. Ibid., Vid. p. 22.
5. Ibid., pp. 86, 89.

(e) Impatience

Another fault which obstructs a realization of God's present power in prayer is impatience for results. Men often think their prayers are unanswered because they do not give God time.[1] Or, again, they may not sincerely want what they have requested.

(f) Insincerity

Insincerity is likely to be one of the chief hindrances to prayer. Jesus, Fosdick says, "wanted people to pray, but above all he wanted moral reality in prayer."[2] Jesus wanted a man to back up his prayers with his life, to "make (his) life one that people cannot fully understand unless they understand (his) prayer."[3] Conversely, many prayers are

> . . . unreal because they do not represent what in our inward hearts we really crave. . . . We go through the form of entreating God to save us from our sin, but we do not want the answer enough to burn the bridges across which the sin continually comes.[4]

Also, some people will ask forgiveness without ever intending to right the wrong.[5] Or still others pray

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1. Fosdick, The Meaning of Prayer, op. cit., p. 119.
2. Fosdick, The Modern Use of the Bible, op. cit., p. 194.
3. Fosdick, Riverside Sermons, op. cit., p. 121.
4. Fosdick, The Meaning of Prayer, op. cit., pp. 133-134.
5. Ibid., p. 135.

for a friend's welfare without any thought of doing the unselfish thing that would implement the prayer.[1] Fosdick feels that such insincere praying is merely a "futile retreat from reality," whereas genuine praying "can turn the stream of centuries into new courses."[2]

(g) Over-emphasis on Work

At the same time, unlike thinking and working, real praying "cannot be achieved merely by trying hard . . . We put our wills into thought and work . . . (but) we cannot will . . . experiences of inner enrichment and power." These come only by the Spirit of God.[3] So Fosdick differentiates practical Christianity (which is necessary in its way) from prayer which is the only way to meet "situations that cannot be handled well merely by trying hard."[4] Fosdick notes that unfortunately "the prevailing temper of our generation . . . is marked by practical efficiency and spiritual shallowness,"[5] which may defeat the spirit of prayer.

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1. 1. Fosdick, The Meaning of Prayer, op. cit., p. 137.
2. Fosdick, Riverside Sermons, op. cit., p. 120.
3. Ibid., p. 126.
4. Ibid., p. 127.
5. Fosdick, The Meaning of Prayer, op. cit., p. 22.

(h) Sin

But the greatest hindrance to prayer is unrepented sin. Certainly any selfish spirit will block prayer. For "prayer at its best always refuses the impossible task of separating the I from the we." Instead prayer repents of any communal sins for which all have shared responsibility, and sets itself to intercede for the sins of all mankind.[1] Furthermore, "a man can (and must) pray unselfishly for himself," since upon his own character improvement the welfare of some segment of society may depend.[2] On the contrary, sin persisted in definitely obstructs the effectiveness of prayer. Indeed, "not for lack of a satisfying philosophy do our prayers run dry, but for lack of love."[3]

So to pray effectually, one must work to eliminate spiritual barriers set up by unreceptivity, moods, temperament, false concepts of God or prayer, impatience, insincerity, over-emphasis upon work, and sin in any form. This task together with that of establishing the right conditions, recognizing God's

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1. Fosdick, The Meaning of Prayer, op. cit., p. 177.
2. Ibid., p. 183.
3. Ibid., p. 184.

need for man's cooperation and maintaining a high purposiveness constitute man's role in prayer. What then is God's role?

b. God's Role in Prayer

Dr. Fosdick takes a very high view of the role of God in the prayer relationship. Not only does God take the initiative and bless prayer by his continual presence, but he works through prayer to exercise his providence, his reign of law, his sovereignty, his omniscience, and his grace.

(1) His Initiative

Fosdick believes that the deepest necessity of a fruitful life of prayer is "the recognition that God's search for men is prior to man's search for God . . . (Therefore) our finding of him is simply our response to his quest for us."[1] Indeed, anything less would be hopeless. Nor is this truth confined to God's search for man in the historical Christ. For"God is forever seeking men . . . (so that) prayer is not groping after him. Prayer is opening the life up to him," - consenting to be found by God.[2]

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1. Fosdick, The Meaning of Prayer, op. cit., p. 88.
2. Ibid., p. 89.

(2) His Continual Presence

Moreover, not only is God continually seeking man. He is also continually present. Therefore real prayer communion with God "involves the vivid consciousness that someone is present, with whom we are enjoying fellowship."[1] However, the practice of God's presence is not easy, for "God is compelled to minister his blessing to us through our own capacities to receive and appropriate."[2] Therefore,

> . . . no man should ever grope outside of his best self to find God . . . (However) men insist on waiting for God to send them blessing in some supernormal way, when all the while he is giving them abundant supply if they would only learn to retreat into the fertile places of their own spirits . . . (for) the only way one can learn to commune with God is in his own heart.[3]

But a man is thus communing with God, not with his own thoughts. As Fosdick comments,

> Can you imagine (Jesus) upon his knees . . . talking to himself? . . . Surely when the Master prayed, he met somebody. His life was not monologue, but friendship . . . For prayer is . . . that loftiest experience within the reach of any soul, communion with God.[4]

(3) His Providence

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1. Fosdick, The Meaning of Prayer, op. cit., p. 79.
2. Ibid., p. 87.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., p. 32.

Fosdick shows further that God manifests his presence not only in moments of high communion, but in his providential care of all creation. Moreover, awareness of the reality of this care is essential to faithful, effectual praying. Because, "for prayer, at least, a God who does not care does not count."[1] But nothing is more certain than that "the God of the Bible cares for individuals ."[2]

(4) His Laws

Dr. Fosdick maintains that while God works in and through his laws to bless man, he is by no means bound by them. In fact,

> . . . before men can really pray, God must be seen as the present living God whose ways of action we have partially plotted and called laws . . . (and) prayer is the law of personal relationships,[3]

through which the sovereign God transforms life.

(5) His Sovereignty

In all operation of law, then, God exercises the sovereignty of personal will. Fosdick thus rejects all theories of absolute determinism, believing that

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1. Fosdick, The Meaning of Prayer, op. cit., p. 40.
2. Ibid., p. 46.
3. Ibid., p. 111.

> . . . what we call natural cause may not be impersonal cause at all, (but) that our limited control of universal forces may be a counterpart of God's unlimited control . . . (So, God is) the Indwelling Presence in the world, as our life in our bodies, controlling all . . . (and) more free than we can guess, to use the forces he has ordained . . . (Therefore) we may share with the Bible that utter confidence in the power and willingness and liberty of God to help his children.[1]

So men can continue to pray in the faith that "there are no good prayers which God cannot answer."[2]

(6) His Omniscience

Furthermore, men may pray in perfect confidence that this God who has all power to answer prayer also "perfectly understands and cares for every minute detail of their lives, having moreover a specific purpose for everyone of his children.[3] Prayer simply"opens our lives so that God can do in us what He wants to do."[4] Thus prayer becomes the personal appropriation of this faith that God cares for each individual.

(7) His Grace

It is interesting that the term "grace" does not occur in the index of any of Fosdick's books,

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1. Fosdick, The Meaning of Prayer, op. cit., p. 108.
2. Ibid., p. 109.
3. Ibid., pp. 50-52.
4. Ibid., p. 56.

nor can it be found in Fosdick's own words in The Meaning of Prayer. Yet the word abounds in his A Book of Public Prayers both in the theological sense of unmerited favor and love, and in the practical sense of God's power, presence, and guidance of daily living. It is also used in the latter sense in Fosdick's own hymn, "God of Grace and God of Glory."[1] Moreover, his other writings most certainly refer to what is meant by "grace" in Christian literature. Fosdick is very sensitive, partly as the result of his own spiritual experience, to the transforming power of God's grace operating in his life and in the lives of others.[2]

c. The Subject Matter of Prayer

In Dr. Fosdick's thinking, there is nothing that man may not legitimately ask in prayer, provided the request is in submission to God's will, He distinguishes at this point between "faith in prayer"(as a kind of shibboleth) and "prayer in faith," (which) desires never to force its wish on the Eternal Purpose but always to align its will with the Eternal Purpose."[3]

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1. Supra, p. 115.
2. Supra, pp. 119-120.
3. Fosdick, The Meaning of Prayer, op. cit., p. 110.

In any event, "God will not remake the world for our asking," nor coerce the free-will he has given to men.[1] But he will "always answer any good prayer," in line with his will. What Fosdick considers to be good prayers will become more fully apparent when the study turns to an examination of his public prayers.

d. Movements of Prayer

Dr. Fosdick in the course of his writing mentions all the customary movements of prayer including adoration, confession, petition, intercession, thanksgiving, consecration, and communion. He does not, however, treat each of these at equal length.

(1) Adoration

Fosdick defines the prayer of adoration as one in which man blesses and praises and worships God just for himself,[2] not seeking gifts or answers.

(2) Confession

In this movement of prayer, a man owns to shame before God over his sin and guilt.[3] Biblically the sense of guilt was national before it became deeply personal. Dr. Fosdick cites the prayer of the publican in the New Testament as "summing up the best

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1. Fosdick, The Meaning of Prayer, op. cit., p. 109.
2. Ibid., p. 123.
3. Ibid., p. 123.

of the race's teaching on the true spirit of confessional prayer."[1] Such confession allows prayer to become "a process of purification from which forgiven souls emerge cleansed from old stains of unpardoned guilt."[2]

(3) Petition

The prayer of petition is the original and most common of all the movements of prayer. It will continue to be basic as long as men have desires. But petitions that try to "make God a mere means to serve some selfish, external end (are) a result of ignorant, unspiritual immaturity."[3] On the other hand, those petitions which "well up out of man's deep desires for real good are an integral part of prayer."[4] Nor will the latter ever attempt to "make supplication a substitute for devotion." Real petition will be implemented in action.[5]

(4) Intercession

Intercession may go beyond petition in extending the prayer beyond personal requests to the needs of others. Dr. Fosdick notes that Jewish

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1. Fosdick, A Guide to Understanding the Bible, op. cit., pp. 241-242.
2. Ibid., p. 255.
3. Fosdick, The Meaning of Prayer, op. cit., p. 124.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid., p. 138.

religious history bequeathed to Christianity a "growing universality of interest and care, . . . as the corollary of monotheism . . . (and) in the New Testament, the whole world as the subject of redemption is continually present either in the foreground or in the background of recorded prayers."[1] Moreover,

> . . . the genuine intercessors who in costly praying have thrown their personal love alongside God's and have earnestly claimed blessings for their friends have felt that they were not playing with a toy, but that they were somehow using the creative power of personality in opening ways for God to work his will . . .[2]

So, intercessory prayer may be another area of life in which God waits for man's assistance.

(5) Thanksgiving

According to Fosdick, there should be moments in every prayer when grateful acknowledgement is made to God for his many blessings and gifts to men.[3] So prayer involves "the joyful overflow of gratitude and hope, even amid difficult or desperate circumstances.[4]

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1. Fosdick, A Guide to Understanding theBible, op. cit., p. 239.
2. Fosdick, The Meaning of Prayer, op. cit., p. 187.
3. Ibid., p. 123.
4. Fosdick, A Guide to Understanding the Bible, op. cit., p. 255.

(6) Consecration

Or, in prayer, a man may ask to be instructed in God's will and promise utter and enthusiastic obedience.[1]

(7) Communion

But the ultimate goal and high privilege of prayer is the blessing of communion - of friendship with God, of God's highest gift of himself.[2]

It is partly because there are so many various movements in prayer that all good prayer is in some way always effective, according to Fosdick.

e. The Effectiveness of Prayer

Fosdick therefore tries to show the many ways in which prayer is answered, why some prayer may appear to lack an answer, and what are some of the effects of prayer.

(1) How Prayer is Answered

A "good prayer" may be answered in many ways, as Fosdick sees it. God answers prayer through his daily providential care.[3] God answers prayer by working out his will in and through men. Or God may

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1. Fosdick, A Guide to Understanding the Bible, op. cit., p. 255.
2. Fosdick, The Meaning of Prayer, op. cit., p. 123.
3. Ibid., pp. 40-41, 50, 52.

answer prayer by giving guidance for daily living or by transforming life.[1] For "prayer is simply giving the wise and good God an opportunity to do what his wisdom and will want done.[2] And God uses natural means to do the answering in prayer, just as man naturally prays. God works in the human mind and personality, and in the natural universe through his laws.[3] God further works to answer prayer when men cooperate with his purposes by their earnest and persistent thinking, working, and praying.[4] Above all, God answers prayer by the gift of himself in communion.[5] Sometimes God answers in such a way as may appear to negate the request. This possibility leads to a consideration of Fosdick's treatment of unanswered prayer.

(2) The Problem of Unanswered Prayer

Dr. Fosdick often wrestled in behalf of his congregations and clients with the problem of so-called unanswered prayer. Before offering several possible explanations Fosdick asserts his faith that "every

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1. Fosdick, The Meaning of Prayer, op. cit., p. 60.
2. Ibid., p. 63.
3. Ibid., pp. 102, 108.
4. Ibid., p. 65.
5. Supra, p. 185.

good prayer is answered."[1] A "good prayer" however must sincerely represent a man's desire and be in accord with the will of God. Therefore, if a prayer seems to be unanswered, either the prayer was unreal, because it didn't represent the "inward set and determination of our lives."[2] Or, God may have said "No" which is just as much of an answer as "Yes." Or, again, the real prayer may have been answered. On the one hand, "the Bible is full of answered prayers that ruined men" because their real desires were evil.[3] On the other hand, sometimes "if God granted the form of our petition, he would deny the substance of our desire."[4] So God answers the real desire rather than the spoken words.[5]

Or, finally, in some instances, the prayer must not be answered because it is not in accordance with God's over-all purpose.[6] The prayer may be spoken in ignorance, or from selfish motives, or against natural laws.[7] But "God does not remake his world for

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1. Fosdick, The Meaning of Prayer, op. cit., p. 109.
2. Ibid., p. 146.
3. Ibid., p. 148.
4. Ibid., p. 125.
5. Ibid., p. 117.
6. Ibid., p. 109.
7. Ibid., p. 125.

the asking, not because he cannot but because he must not."[1] Or sometimes, a man may be seeking to "make prayer a substitute for intelligence and work."[2] But God must not do for a man anything which the man could possibly do for himself. Rather God depends upon man's cooperation in answering prayer.[3] Or again, God may delay an answer to prayer because the man may not be ready to receive the requested gift.[4] And God never forces his gifts upon unwilling hearts.[5]

Or, finally, it may be necessary for God to deny the request in order to fulfill his ultimate purpose, as in the case of Jesus' prayer at Gethsemane.[6] But where in such cases God must deny the petition, he does "answer the man."[7] So Fosdick maintains that

> God always answers true prayer in one of two ways: . . . either he changes the circumstances, or he supplies sufficient power to overcome them.[8]

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1. Fosdick, The Meaning of Prayer, op. cit., p. 109.
2. Ibid., p. 126.
3. Ibid., pp. 126-127.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid., p. 129.
6. Ibid., p. 122.
7. Ibid., p. 130.
8. Ibid.

Thus, even when specific petitions may not be granted, Fosdick would feel that prayer is effective. What, then, are some of the specific effects of prayer?

(3) The Effects or "Fruits" of Prayer

According to Fosdick, the ultimate value of prayer appears clearly in its "fruits." So one like Paul found himself "strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inner man," in his prayer relationship with God.[1] And Fosdick himself found resources to recover from his breakdown.[2] Also, while "prayer cannot change God's intention, . . . it does change God's action, . . . by offering God the opportunity to say to us what he wills."[3] Again, although prayer does not often set aside God's laws, it enables God the better to use these laws to effect desirable changes in men.[4] Prayer brings the peace of communion and the self-conquest of character.[5] Prayer develops the social spirit among men.[6] Prayer is indeed "a most effective cleanser of personal relationships" everywhere.[7] Not least of all, prayer opens the way

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1. Fosdick, The Modern Use of the Bible, op. cit., p. 176.
2. Supra, pp. 120-121.
3. Fosdick, The Meaning of Prayer, op. cit., p. 69.
4. Ibid., pp. 104, 106-107.
5. Ibid., pp. 161, 164-165.
6. Ibid., pp. 176-177.
7. Ibid., p. 179.

for God's redemptive love to work its healing, and for God's will to have its way. Moreover, Fosdick notes a dual effect of intercessory prayer both "on the one who prays . . . (and) in the lives of those on whose behalf prayer is made."[1] Indeed, "many lives have been kept by the knowledge of intercessions continually offered for them . . ."[2] Prayer may, in fact, open ways of personal influence even at a distance . . . (for) personality is creative . . . God has so ordained psychological laws that vicarious praying by a group of earnest people does bring results."[3] Truly, "the man who prays changes the center of gravity of the world of persons."[4] But the most important effect of prayer lies in its realization of a vital cooperative friendship with God which transforms the life of the pray-er and radiates outward to all who come within the sphere of his influence.

Quotations from some of Dr. Fosdick's own public prayers will now serve to illustrate what he means by the nature, content, and spirit of effective praying.

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1. Fosdick, The Meaning of Prayer, op. cit., p. 185.
2. Ibid., p. 186.
3. Ibid., pp. 189-190.
4. Ibid., p. 190.

4. The Prayers of Harry E. Fosdick

Although Dr. Fosdick has furnished no examples of his personal private prayers, A Book of Public Prayers affords many helpful insights into what prayer meant to Dr. Fosdick as a minister of the Gospel. Most of these prayers begin with adoration, then dwell upon the initiative and present Reality of God, as well as man's need to be receptive to God's power. The petitions are large and unified about some central theme or movement. There is a definite sense of confident reliance upon God's power and willingness to fulfill the requests. A few excerpts will show the spiritual tone of these prayers.

> Eternal God, thou Light that dost not fade, thou Love that does not fail, we worship Thee. We seek thee not because by our seeking we can find thee, but because long since thou hast sought us . . . So may our hearts be responsive to thy coming . . . We have tried to content ourselves with worldly goods . . . (but) man cannot live by bread alone, and so we turn to thee. We have tried to satisfy ourselves with sin . . . But, O God, there is no happiness in hell . . . and we come to thee. . . From all endeavors to live without thee we return evermore to thee.
>
> Take our lives into thy keeping and transform them . . . Make us more compassionate, more sympathetic, more useful, because thou hast saved us from our sins.
>
> Take our sufferings we beseech thee . . . Canst thou not use them? . . .

> Take our bereavements, we pray thee. Make life eternal more homelike because of friends whom death has taken from us . . . Take our powers, we pray thee. Lift up our eyes to see the needs of this crucial generation. . . So we beseech thee, Almighty God, . . . thou wilt do high business in our souls. Mold us, transform us, encourage us, inspire us, empower us . . . We ask it in the name of Christ.[1]

Many of these prayers Fosdick addressed to the "Eternal Spirit." Nearly all he closes "in the name" or "in the Spirit of Christ." Most call for God's redemptive activity in the lives of the pray-ers and the larger activity in the world community. There is also an experiential tone to these prayers. So,

> Eternal Spirit, to whom we belong, and in whom we live, we worship thee, seeking a fresh consciousness of thy reality, and thy penetrating presence . . . This day we would not debate but experience thee . . . we pray against our own reluctance, not against thine . .
>
> . . . Beget in us a new love for people . . . Beget in us a new hatred of sin . . . Strengthen our churches, we pray thee . . . Save us from pettiness, triviality, and sectarianism . . .
>
> Beyond the power of any voice to present our varied needs, do thou meet them, Spirit of the living God. AMEN.[2]

Or,

> . . . Gather us into the catholic and comprehending arms of thy mercy, O God . . .

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1. Fosdick, A Book of Public Prayers, op. cit., pp. 18-19.
2. Ibid., pp. 16-17.

> Grant that we who came in dismayed may go out with fresh courage, the faithless with renewed trust, the fearful strengthened with might by thy Spirit in the inner man. . . . grant, we pray thee, that Anti-Christ may be put down and peace bless our family of nations.
>
> To that end, we pray for thy Church. Make her a truer representative of her Master, Make her more fit to be the conscience of the nation and the world.
>
> Come to us one by one to meet those inner needs where we face disaster of mind, body, or estate . . . Thanks be to thee for the Cross, for without the Cross, there would have been no Christ . . . Grant us that grace . . . which has made all character, that we may, even by those things that withstand us, grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. AMEN.[1]

Perhaps two more examples of Fosdick's pastoral prayers will now suffice to see what prayer meant to him:

> Eternal Spirit . . . Grant us more sensitive consciences . . . Grant us appreciative souls . . . As thus we pray for ourselves we present in our vicarious intercession all spirits everywhere who pray to thee . . . We pray for those who cannot pray for themselves . . . We repent before thee because of them . . . Especially we beseech thee for the peace of the world. Save us not only from our sins but from our follies. Teach us the futility and the insanity of violence . . . We pray in the Spirit of Christ.[2]

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1. Fosdick, A Book of Public Prayers, op. cit., pp. 62-63.
2. Ibid., pp. 118-119.

And,

> Holy Spirit of God, who at Pentecost didst descend with power upon Christ's disciples and didst send them out to preach the Gospel . . . inspire us also to sustain what they began. O Most High, mean to us what thou didst mean to them: the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, Enrich our souls with that threefold experience . . . of the Almighty Creator, the Saving Character, the Indwelling Comforter . . . Spirit of the Eternal, make us more than ourselves, because we have thee for our ally and reinforcement . . . Enlarge our capacities for joy . . . that we may live not only with integrity but with radiance . . . We pray for another Pentecost, another outpouring of thy Spirit upon thy Church . . . O God, awaken thy Church . . . Save us from our timidities and fears, from the reluctance and paralysis of our uncertainties and doubts . . . Nerve us, we beseech Thee, that with noble tasks to be enterprised and done, we may be strong to endure, to sacrifice, to achieve . . . We pray in the name of Christ. [1]

Although there are many more examples that might be quoted to advantage, the foregoing excerpts of Fosdick's pastoral prayers give sufficient insight into the content and spirit of his prayers to see their relation to both his theology and to his theory of prayer, and to glimpse the depth of Fosdick's personal experience with prayer.

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1. Fosdick, A Book of Public Prayers, op. cit., pp. 140-141.

## F. Summary

In the examination, now completed, of Dr. Fosdick's religious experience, basic theology, and writings on prayer, several observations should be brought into focus by way of conclusion. First, it has been seen that Fosdick's vital, liberal Christian background and education, together with his own deep personal experience of a renewing, sustaining fellowship with God, prepared him well to undertake the reinterpretation of fundamental Christian verities and experiences to a confused and disturbed materialistic, scientific age. Secondly, it has been noted that as a preacher, Dr. Fosdick's primary concern in his preaching, writing, and counseling has been to meet specific human needs with divine resources. Therefore his theology is less technical than practical, less defined than inclusive. The living God is to be known in human experience, mainly through prayer. Man experiences God in history, in his own best living and thinking, and through the revelation of both God and perfect humanity in Jesus Christ. Religion embraces all life in alignment with God's will. The Scriptures record abiding truths and experiences in changing mental categories, representing man's search and God's

self-disclosure. In Christ, Deity is revealed most fully as God of grace and glory, indwelling and transforming the lives of men, especially through the prayer relationship. God works in and through nature (including human nature) to bring men, made in his image, into an eternally purposed, vital fellowship with himself. Thus men are saved through the knowledge and spirit of Jesus Christ, partially in this life and ultimately in perfection.

In this process prayer is seen as the intended, wholly normal means of fellowship with God and the channel of God's grace. It must become a regular, strongly purposive activity in cooperation with the will of God. God fulfills his will through man's praying, thinking, and working in conjunction with the operation of his natural laws. So prayer may be conceived as communion and cooperation with God, as both dominant desire, and a battlefield in which character is won, as the claiming of divine sonship and as simple conversation with God. For the practice of prayer both private and collective worship are essential. It is evident that Dr. Fosdick derives these understandings of prayer from a thorough knowledge and use of Scripture, with emphasis upon the

life and teachings of Jesus, as well as from his own personal experience and the experience of others. From these sources Fosdick realizes that men must approach prayer from a felt need, in an attitude of faith and with special preparation, persistent self-discipline, individual integrity and a high purposiveness. God always answers such prayer by granting the specific request, by fulfilling a man's domiant desire, by meeting the man's deepest needs, or by denying the request in order to achieve the ultimate divine purpose. But man's spiritual unreceptivity, moods, temperamental vagaries, ignorance, impatience, insincerity, self-effort, or any form of unrepented sin may obstruct God's free way in prayer. On the other hand, the effectiveness of prayer is God's work, who takes the initiative in seeking man with present power and both natural and supernatural provisions for man's welfare. A man may legitimately ask God for anything that accords with the divine will. His prayer will ideally include movements of adoration, confession, petition, intercession, thanksgiving, consecration, and, above all, communion. Such prayer always receives an answer in the sustaining and transforming of human conditions - both individual and

social. Any seemingly unanswered prayer points to a deficient understanding of God's purposes or a state of spiritual unreceptivity. But all genuine prayer bears "fruit" evidenced in some work of redemptive love, including the sense of vital fellowship with God. In his own prayers, therefore, Fosdick evinces a deep consciousness of God's presence and a high expectancy of redemptive results.

# CHAPTER FOUR

## A COMPARISON OF THE WRITINGS OF FOSDICK AND WIEMAN ON PRAYER

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## A. Introduction

Dr. Henry Nelson Wieman was born in August, 1884, and published his first book in 1927.[1] Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick was born in May, 1878, and published his first book in 1913.[2] This chronology indicates Dr. Fosdick's seniority over Wieman, especially as a writer. Moreover, Dr. Fosdick has now retired from the active ministry, while Dr. Wieman is still teaching at Southern Illinois University, with a new book about to be published in answer to John B. Cobb Jr.'s recent chapter on his theology.[3]

Dr. Wieman's life has been principally involved in teaching and writing on the philosophy of religion at leading American schools of higher education. Dr. Fosdick taught practical theology for many years at New York's Union Theological Seminary, but has been primarily devoted to the Christian ministry of preaching and pastoral counseling - a ministry reflected in his books. Both men have been prolific writers, deeply

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1. Supra, pp. 34, 38.
2. Supra, pp, 115, 122.
3. Cobb, op. cit., p. 101.

concerned with meeting the needs of the contemporary world for a lucid, credible, demonstrable faith, and for an experiential knowledge of God. Both writers have seen the many crises of this generation as serious threats to the survival of man as a moral being living in social harmony and integrity of personal character. Both men have considered the hope of the future to lie in a renewal and strengthening of a vital faith in God. And both have believed that such a faith may best be won and cultivated through the understanding and practice of prayer.

Accordingly, throughout the works of Fosdick and Wieman, there may be seen points of comparison and contrast which illuminate the central problem of this thesis: "What," according to Wieman and Fosdick, "is the character, function, and validity of prayer in an age which is largely dominated by materialistic, psychological, and scientific concepts of the meaning and nature of life?"[1] It is believed that enough material has been examined in the preceding chapters now to make a useful comparison of the religious experience, basic theology, and writings by Wieman and Fosdick on the meaning and practice of prayer. It is hoped that such a study will pave the way for a valid answer to this

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1. Supra, p. 5.

central problem in light of the solutions suggested by these authors. The procedure now is to follow in somewhat less detail the outline governing the material of the preceding chapters in order to focus attention on the most meaningful areas of comparison in the life and writing of these authors.

## B. A Comparison of the Religious Experience of Wieman and Fosdick

In comparing the religious experience of Wieman and Fosdick, from which developed much of their theological thinking and understanding of prayer, attention will be given to their home background, education and religious influences, work, and objectives in writing.

### 1. Home Background

Dr. Wieman and Dr. Fosdick each pay tribute to the simultaneously dynamic and liberal religious atmosphere of their homes.[1] Wieman's father was a Presbyterian minister. Fosdick's father was a Latin teacher and later the principal of the Buffalo High School. Both mothers were deeply religious. The freedom and vitality of religious life in their respective homes subsequently made it possible for Fosdick and

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1. Supra, pp. 34-35.

Wieman to engage in theological inquiry without lasting prejudice to their faith,[1] as well as to adopt a tolerant, inclusive attitude towards people whose views differed from their own. As a further result of home training, both Fosdick and Wieman came to lay particular emphasis upon an experienced relationship with God, partly also because they had experienced it.[2] In addition, Fosdick ascribes much of later active social concern to the influence of his parents.[3]

2. Education and Religious Influences

Dr. Wieman and Dr. Fosdick each enjoyed an extensive and intellectually unrestricted education. Their liberal childhood upbringing enabled them to face new theories (such as Darwinian evolutionism and Hegelian philosophical idealism) unafraid.[4] Wieman, in fact, made "adjustments" in his beliefs without "any religious distress."[5] Fosdick experienced some boyhood disturbance over an overly legalistic doctrine of salvation and perdition, and subsequently in college underwent a period of intense skepticism when he felt the credibility of the Christian faith challenged by modern

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1. Supra, pp. 36, 116-117.
2. Supra, pp. 83, 120-121.
3. Supra, p. 117.
4. Supra, pp. 36, 118.
5. Supra, p. 36.

scientific modes of thought.[1] In their college and seminary education, Fosdick and Wieman both came under the influence of outstanding twentieth-century theologians, philosophers, teachers, and preachers.[2] Both Wieman and Fosdick elected to pursue theological studies with a view to teaching,[3] but found themselves in small church pastorates in connection with or following seminary training.[4] Then, Fosdick and Wieman held professorships in leading institutions of learning, beginning about the same time. But Wieman now began to specialize in teaching philosophy of religion, while Fosdick emphasized preaching and pastoral counseling. Wieman speaks of his knowledge of God and prayer as evolving not merely from study but from vital religious experience.[5] Fosdick attributes much of his ongoing experiential knowledge of God to the crisis of his nervous breakdown.[6]

One cannot fail to note the strong similarity in home backgrounds, educations, and religious influences of these two writers - the main difference lying in the central emphasis of their work and approach to religious

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1. Supra, pp. 117-118.
2. Supra, pp. 37, 119.
3. Supra, pp. 36, 118.
4. Supra, pp. 36-37, 120.
5. Supra, p. 83.
6. Supra, pp. 120-121.

truth, and in the definite crisis experience which Dr. Fosdick relates.

3. The Work of Wieman and Fosdick

Dr. Fosdick and Professor Wieman were prolific writers, each having at least a dozen books to their credit which evolved out of their vocation and covered the entire span of their life-work.[1] Many of Fosdick's writings further reflect his deep personal involvement in major political and social issues of the twentieth century. Nothing is said of Wieman's similar involvement. Yet both men found themselves in the center of public debate: Wieman arguing his concept of God with Professors MacIntosh and Otto,[2] and Fosdick defending his liberal theological stance in the Fundamentalist Controversy of the 1920's.[3] Certainly in their writings both men issue strong summons to their contemporaries to relate their lives in genuine commitment to the creative work and purpose of God as their one last best hope of salvation.[4]

4. The Writing Objectives of Wieman and Fosdick

In accordance with such a conviction, Wieman and Fosdick addressed their writing to the intellectual

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1. Supra, pp. 38-41, 121-126.
2. Supra, p. 38.
3. Supra, p. 126.
4. Supra, pp. 6, 41, 126.

uncertainties, moral evasions, and social and spiritual crises of their generation (which have been noted in Chapter One), with a view to showing how religion could meet the needs of the social predicament of man and at the same time satisfy the deep longings of the human spirit for self-fulfillment. Pastor Fosdick writes very practically in popular language addressed to the people in scientific modes of thought to help them find the redemptive resources for every day living of a vital fellowship with the living God. Philosopher Wieman writes to demonstrate the reality of God on scientific empirical grounds and to urge the necessity for a cooperative relationship with the imminent divine process. Both men place religious experience, rather than doctrinal or philosophical speculation at the center of their thinking and consider prayer basic to any vital or growing experiential knowledge of God.

### C. A Comparison of the Basic Theology of Wieman and Fosdick

Both Dr. Wieman and Dr. Fosdick consider that a clear, maturing concept of God is important to effective praying, even as false concepts of God and prayer may render praying ineffectual.[1] Fosdick, however, seems to feel that it is better to experience God

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1. Supra, pp. 47-48.

than to define him, [1]whereas Wieman, the philosopher, is concerned to give an intellectually acceptable and scientifically verifiable definition of God.[2] Also, both men have changed in their understanding of religion in the course of their life-work: Fosdick in the direction of a higher Christology[3]and desire to conform the world to Christianity, and Wieman toward trying to find a more universal language by which to communicate fundamental experienced truths.[4] In their theological writing both men are concerned to relate how men come to know God, the basic nature of religion, a lucid doctrine of God and man, and how and when men are saved.

1. Epistemology

Basic to prayer is an understanding of how God may be known and met. Indeed, in Wieman's thinking, the only knowledge of God which is either reliable or valuable must be experiential. He feels that such Reality is fully perceptible in the structure of created life by an apprehension of highest values and the experimental testimony of these values through the commitment of faith.[5] Revelation consists only in the domination of the

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1. Supra, p. 132.
2. Supra, p. 41.
3. Supra, p. 136.
4. Supra, pp. 38-40.
5. Supra, p. 45.

creative event (supremely manifest in Christ), rather than in any access to supernaturally given knowledge.[1] Dr. Fosdick shares Wieman's feeling in respect to the sole practical validity of an experiential knowledge of God,[2] and also finds the truth of God in all life, but supremely in Christ.[3] However, Fosdick lays greater stress than Wieman upon the divine self-disclosure in history which supplements human knowledge, and is most fully recorded in Scripture.

2. Concept of Religion

Fosdick and Wieman agree that it is impossible to divorce the thought of religion from life. To Fosdick religion is "life motived by ideas of God's will," while Christianity involves "first-hand personal experience . . . of a **vital**, sustaining source of spiritual power."[4] Dr. Wieman identifies religion with supreme values and says its' function is to cope constructively with human problems through a dependent relationship with "some actual conditioning." He prefers to interpret the Christian myth in terms of "creative process" or the "source of human good," and religion

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1. Supra, p. 44.
2. Supra, pp. 129-130.
3. Supra, p. 130.
4. Supra, p. 131.

becomes basically "man's endeavor to adapt himself to the facts of existence."[1]

3. Doctrine of God

In describing the nature and work of God, Wieman and Fosdick proceed first to correct any false concepts, and then to interpret the definition of God in terms of human experience.

a. Nature of God

Both writers agree that God works through natural law and the laws of personality but is not to be identified with any purely human or natural process, that is, with any "created good."[2] Dr. Wieman would not restrict his concept of God's redemptive activity to the Jewish-Christian tradition;[3] and Fosdick wants it understood that God is non-sectarian.[4] In this both men seem to be responding to the contemporary atmosphere of tolerance fostered by the comparative study of religions, the breakdown of Biblical authority, and the application of scientific method to all areas of knowledge,[5] often to the detriment of faith in God and the prayer relationship. As an active Christian pastor,

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1. Supra, pp. 46-47.
2. Supra, pp. 48-49, 133-135.
3. Supra, p. 59.
4. Supra, p. 133.
5. Supra, pp. 25-27.

Dr. Fosdick speaks of a personal God.[1] Wieman, however, while insisting that Deity operates within human life, prefers to regard God as supra-personal, suggesting that the Christian doctrine of the Trinity is but an attempt to explain the nature of God as beyond personality, humanly conceived.[2] Fosdick also allows that all descriptions of God in human terms must be symbolic, utilizing anthropomorphisms to suggest that which far transcends them.[3] In attempting to translate doctrine into experience, Dr. Wieman speaks of God in Christ as the creative event, the Holy Spirit (which is also the grace of God in the living Christ) as creative interchange or communication, and God as creativity.[4] To Fosdick, God is the Father of all mankind, and Christ is the divine son whose "spirit" of love ruling the hearts of men is the essence of Christianity, while the experience of the indwelling Holy Spirit is the climax of New Testament Christianity.[5] Both writers conceive of Christ revealing God,[6] and Fosdick also stresses Jesus' revelation of perfect manhood.[7]

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1. Supra, pp. 133-135.
2. Supra, pp. 40-41. Vid. Wieman, The Issues of Life, op. cit., p. 220.
3. Supra, p. 134.
4. Supra, p. 55.
5. Supra, pp. 136-137.
6. Supra, pp. 56, 137.
7. Supra, p. 137.

b. The Work of God

According to Wieman and Fosdick the nature of God may be perceived in his work. Wieman describes this work in terms of the doings commonly ascribed to God in Scripture, namely, creation, salvation, judgment, government, and revelation (through creative events).[1] Fosdick describes God's work as creation, providence, judgment, guidance, imparting of power, redemption, and the fulfilling of his will.[2]

4. Doctrine of Man

While underscoring God's activity in human life, Fosdick and Wieman also hold a high concept of man's nature and essential cooperation with God, if God's will is to be done. Central to Fosdick's thinking is the concept that "personality is the one infinitely valuable treasure in the universe."[3] Man's value lies in his capacity for moral living and for fellowship with God. Fosdick feels that such a high view of man has been productive of the best elements in civilization.[4] Wieman, too, considers that religion arises out of human nature and esteems man's personality

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1. Supra, p. 56.
2. Supra, p. 139.
3. Supra, ibid.
4. Supra, p. 140.

as his religious attribute intended to grow in a dependent relationship to the creative process which is God. "Civilization," Wieman says, "is the work of man; growth of community is the work of God . . . (whereby) something magnificent is being done in cosmic existence by means of human nature."[1]

5. Soteriology and Eschatology

For all man's potential greatness, he is yet a sinner in the opinion of both Wieman and Fosdick. Evil or sin is that which prevents whole-hearted devotion to God(Wieman).[2] So, the basic need of man is for salvation from "his destructive propensities."[3] According to Fosdick, that which saves is the fellowship of the Spirit realized largely through prayer. The cross of Christ is important as a supreme act and symbol of vicarious sacrifice without which there is never any redemption. Christ's saviorhood is a lifelong revelation of God's love to be continued in the atoning work of his disciples. Redemption progresses here, but will be completed only beyond history.[4] In Wieman's thinking, on the other hand, man is saved by

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1. Supra, p. 57.
2. Ibid.
3. Wieman, Intellectual Foundation of Faith, op. cit., p. 2.
4. Supra, pp. 142-143.

"whatever the individual may believe has the power to save from evil," if he then cooperates with this in absolute commitment.[1] Jesus' injunction that to save life one must lose it contains the best prescription for salvation. And man's ultimate commitment is to the transforming power of creativity manifested supremely in the life and death of Jesus. The cross (or simply Jesus' death) was necessary to release Christ into the world. Education, government, industry, and technology must all join forces to meet the conditions necessary for the appropriation of salvation.[2] The ultimate triumph of creativity is not assured if these conditions are not met, and the transforming process itself is an ordeal which will destroy the weak.[3] So, to both Fosdick and Wieman, man's salvation is a cooperative enterprise between himself and God, to be consummated beyond history, and with God playing the major role.

Thus, emerging out of a similar family background and Christian tradition, exposed to similar liberal educational stimuli, in the attempt to show their humanistically and scientifically oriented contemporaries how to know and experience and cooperate with the living

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1. Supra, p. 58.
2. Supra, pp. 58, 59.
3. Supra, pp. 59-60.

God, Dr. Fosdick and Dr. Wieman have given expression to a theological framework for the understanding and practice of prayer in terms and concepts that bear the imprint of their different vocational orientation and purpose, while reflecting the similarities of their background and historical environment. The question needs to be asked at the conclusion of this study as to what degree these writers are expressing in often different terminology a similar or even identical human experience of God. And it is desirable also to inquire as to the nature of the God involved in the experience. The answers to such questions may come clearer as this study proceeds to a comparison of Fosdick's and Wieman's understanding of the meaning and practice of prayer.

D. The Meaning of Prayer to Wieman and Fosdick

The foregoing questions may also serve to focus the comparative study of Wieman's and Fosdick's writings on the meaning of prayer, dealing in turn with their preliminary definitions, treatment of false concepts of prayer, and explication of the nature of prayer.

1. Preliminary Definitions

Prayer to Dr. Wieman is basically a means of man's responsiveness to creativity, which is the very

"heart of religion."[1] It consists of "worship plus petition," directed toward the establishment of co-operative habits whereby the personality is adjusted to the transforming work of God.[2] To Fosdick also, prayer is "the soul of religion," defined mainly as a "cumulative life of friendship with God."[3] Thus, in both of these preliminary descriptions of prayer, there is emphasis upon the element of relationship, with the principal difference lying in the impersonal language of Wieman as contrasted to the more personal terminology of Fosdick. Both men stress the centrality of prayer in vital religion and proceed to underscore the damage done to man's relationship with God by false concepts of prayer.

2. False Concepts of Prayer

Fosdick and Wieman alike have emphasized that many false concepts of prayer derive from a misunderstanding of the nature of God.[4] So Fosdick asserts that if God is misconceived as a cosmic Santa Claus or as a distant artificer, then prayer too will be misconceived as selfish begging, or as a rather futile activity.[5]

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1. Supra, pp. 61-62.
2. Ibid.
3. Supra, p. 144.
4. Supra, pp. 62, 143.
5. Supra, p. 143.

But God is not distant, and prayer is neither a magic formula, nor a "good work," nor must it ever seek to "manipulate God to do man's will." Likewise prayer is not auto-suggestion, nor a way of getting results without requisite work or thought.[1] Wieman, too, wants to remove any misunderstanding that prayer is simply auto-suggestion.[2] He argues instead that prayer does not consist of the words spoken, nor does the pray-er simply talk to himself. Wieman says that prayer should never become "mere petition without worship," nor degenerate into empty ritual or perfunctory habit.[3] Finally, he does not think it essential for men to believe that God is personal in order to pray. It is enough for men to relate themselves in the commitment of faith to "what saves and transforms creatively."[4] So, both writers are agreed that prayer is more than begging and is neither magic nor auto-suggestion, but is addressed to an imminent objective reality functioning through human cooperation.

3. The Nature of Prayer

In their positive description of the nature of prayer, Fosdick and Wieman deal with its origin,

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1. Supra, p. 143.
2. Supra, p. 63.
3. Ibid.
4. Supra, p. 66.

justification, objectivity and subjectivity, together with the relation of prayer to psychology, law, and the life of the church.

a. The Origin and Need of Prayer

Both Fosdick and Wieman hold prayer to be a natural, elemental, functional activity of mankind which has been universally and spontaneously practiced in all ages.[1] Wieman further underscores the psychological necessity of prayer as a means of maintaining the right relationship with one's environment.[2]

b. Justification for Prayer

Prayer, then, in the opinion of both writers is justified by its very universality, essentiality, and utter normalcy. Fosdick further defends the need of prayer as the chief means of man's vital communication with the God of all being,[3] while Wieman claims that prayer is absolutely necessary to human growth and salvation through ultimate commitment to creativity.[4] Wieman finds the ritual of worship indispensable for the sustaining and strengthening of this commitment, and Fosdick says that "only to one who prays can God make

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1. Supra, pp. 64, 146.
2. Supra, p. 66.
3. Supra, p. 144.
4. Supra, p. 66.

himself vivid."[1]

c. The Objective and Subjective Reality of God

Fosdick offers as proof of the objective reality of the God encountered in prayer the natural phenomena that wherever there is need, there exists a corresponding source of supply, and man needs to pray to God.[2] Wieman concurs in Fosdick's observation that functions correspond to environmental conditions even as breathing presupposes air and eating requires food. He also feels it proper to call the reality that responds to man's spiritual need "God", defined as "the growth of meaning and value in the world" and self-validating its existence.[3] He further agrees with Fosdick in feeling that such an objective reality is subjectively known to men through normal psychological processes, since "the personality prays." In fact, God can only be known subjectively.[4]

d. The Relation of Psychology to Prayer

Wieman and Fosdick are agreed that God operates within the conscious and sub-conscious faculties of man, utilizing auto-suggestion, normal growth processes, sub-conscious or "pre-conscious" drives, and

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1. Supra, p. 147.
2. Ibid.
3. Supra, p. 67.
4. Supra, pp. 68, 147-148.

the influence of inter-personal relationships, as all these are understood by psychology. Both men acknowledge the value of psychological insights into these phenomena, but insist that it is God as Holy Spirit, or creativity, that effects all personality developments and transformations - not simply the subjective or interpersonal processes at work in human nature.[1] Therefore, it is God, not just mental-culture nor group dynamics, that operates to integrate and uplift life in prayer.

e. The Relation of Prayer to Law

Similar observations are made by Wieman and Fosdick respecting the relation of prayer to the functioning of natural law. There is no conflict between the divine answering of prayer and the operation of law, since God works through the laws of personality and of the physical universe to accomplish his purposes. Fosdick explains that there is a sense in which all cause is personal. So personality controls nature; and"prayer is the law of personal relationships, (as) . . . natural laws are simply God's way of doing things."[2] Both God and man "can utilize, manipulate, and combine the forces which laws control to do what those

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1. Supra, pp. 69, 148-149.
2. Ibid.

forces by themselves would not accomplish."[1] Wieman fully concurs that God uses and works creatively through the prayer relationship "for the growth of mutually sustaining and meaningful connections" in all areas of life, and the resultant growth of meaning and value is superhuman in that it "is a doing which man cannot himself perform."[2] Such is the resolution proposed by Wieman and Fosdick to the contemporary problem of an apparent conflict between science and faith in the realm of prayer.

f. Prayer in Relation to the Church

Both Wieman and Fosdick see the church as primarily responsible for inducing and cultivating attitudes of worship that are then to be translated into socially transforming action, as men renew and deepen their commitment through prayer. Wieman underscores the need of fellowship and inspiring conditions for vital praying.[3] Fosdick emphasizes the desirability of broadening the contents of worship as "media for making the divine real to men."[4]

Thus, both writers conceive the nature of prayer as a life-relevant, life-transforming, naturally

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1. Supra, p. 150.
2. Supra, p. 70.
3. Supra, pp. 70-71.
4. Supra, p. 151.

operating process through which God and man direct the course and relationships of human life in its effect upon the environing world. So, the thought of the two writers is basically in agreement here. What, then, is the relation of their understanding of the aspects of prayer?

4. The Aspects of Prayer

Wieman and Fosdick are each concerned to make the activity of prayer understandable to the contemporary mind. And so, each undertakes to describe prayer in terms of human attitudes, habits, and basic relationships with reality. Dr. Fosdick stresses prayer as a continuous vital communion with God,[1] while Wieman speaks of prayer as an habitual attitude of commitment whereby "the personality adjusts to God."[2] When prayer is conceived as fellowship, according to Fosdick, this lessens the problem of seemingly unanswered petitions and of the relation of prayer to natural law, besides serving to make God real.[3] Such communion also involves co-operation, or the alignment of man's dominant desire with the divine will, which in turn often requires a real struggle for character.[4] Wieman similarly finds

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1. Supra, p. 152.
2. Supra, pp. 71-72.
3. Supra, p. 153.
4. Supra, pp. 154-155.

that the intense concentration upon God's nature and purpose demanded in prayer will produce a growth of meaning and value which is creative.[1] He further believes in using prayer to solve specific problems through relaxed exposure to the divine influence, insight, and way.[2] Prayer ideally should become a kind of continuous creative worship, issuing in ultimate and absolute commitment to the operation of divine creativity or creative process in the life of the pray-er.[3] Fosdick describes a similar process whereby a man lays hold of his divine sonship in prayer thus entering into a continuing conversation with God in which he receives guidance to know and power to do God's will.[4] In both Wieman and Fosdick's understanding, these various aspects of prayer are woven into the one basic concept of prayer as an attitudinal and volitional obedient relationship with God, defined as Father of mankind (Fosdick) or as creativity (Wieman). The examination of such vital aspects of prayer then naturally lead these writers into a consideration of the practice of prayer.

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1. Supra, pp. 73-74.
2. Supra, pp. 74-75.
3. Supra, pp. 75-76.
4. Supra, pp. 156-157.

## E. The Practice of Prayer in Wieman's and Fosdick's Writings

The practice of prayer is viewed by both writers in terms of the various types of prayer, the method of prayer, and personal examples of private or public prayer. Each writer devotes an entire book to this subject, with Fosdick also publishing a collection of his pastoral prayers. Fosdick introduces this subject by decrying the modern tendency to analyze prayer instead of practicing it.[1]

### 1. Definition of Types of Prayer

In defining the types of prayer, Fosdick deals with private, small group, public, and pastoral prayer; Wieman with private, cooperative, and public worship. Both writers underscore the attitude of solitary private worship as fundamental to all praying.[2] But Fosdick also calls attention to the value Jesus placed upon the fellowship of prayer, partly because of its fostering a community spirit.[3] Wieman also advocates a kind of cooperative worship in which each participant supports the other in developing his own private religious living.[4] Fosdick feels that public worship

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1. Supra, pp. 157-158.
2. Supra, pp. 78-80, 159-161.
3. Supra, p. 159.
4. Supra, p. 79.

is helpful in making God real to men and in providing for the inclusion of all movements of prayer.[1] But Dr. Wieman suspects the acute suggestibility of mass psychology that may be operative in public worship unless there is unanimity of experience and purpose as in cooperative worship. Dr. Fosdick deeply appreciates the responsibility of preparing every pastoral prayer so that it may always be life-relevant, comprehensive in scope, objective, carefully ordered, and genuine, as indeed all prayer should aim to become.[2] If these various conditions are met, both writers feel that congregational worship can supply a plus quality of inspiration and mutual assistance that is impractical or impossible to private worship.

2. Sources for Instruction on Prayer

Dr. Wieman and Dr. Fosdick have both gained their understanding of prayer from Scripture, the life and teaching of Jesus, their own experience, and to some extent the experience of others. Dr. Wieman underscores the experiential derivation of his method of worship.[3] Dr. Fosdick's breakdown experience also led him into a deep, dependent relationship with God An

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1. Supra, p. 160.
2. Ibid.
3. Supra, p. 83.

in prayer.[1] But, in addition, Fosdick emphasizes that he "used Scripture on the basis of (his) thoughts" concerning prayer, referring often to great prayers of the Bible and to the prayer-life and teachings of Jesus.[2] Wieman relates his own prayer method to the first two sentences of the Lord's Prayer.[3] But, he quotes from Scripture far less than Fosdick, and more generally conceives of the Bible as a mythical expression of underlying human predicaments met by corresponding divine redemptive action, which he interprets in terms of creativity or "the source of human good."[4] This orientation affects Wieman's concept of prayer as a basic attitude of adjustment to the creative process.[5] Fosdick also treats the Bible as a record of "abiding truths and experiences in changing mental categories."[6] However, in his repeated emphasis upon the spirit of Jesus and the Master's reverence for personality, prayer with Fosdick becomes more of an intimate, personal fellowship with the Eternal Spirit, who is also the Father of all mankind.[7]

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1. Supra, pp. 120-121.
2. Supra, pp. 161-162.
3. Supra, p. 94.
4. Supra, pp. 81-82.
5. Supra, p. 84.
6. Supra, p. 162.
7. Ibid.

Furthermore, Dr. Fosdick draws rather heavily upon the great prayers of the Church as well as citing noteworthy experiences of prayer within the Christian fellowship as illustrations of this essential nature of prayer, whereas Wieman simply alludes rather briefly to certain prayer-experiences of the mystics.[1] Thus, while the prayer-teaching of both Fosdick and Wieman appears to be derived primarily from experience, Dr. Fosdick's understanding may be described as more Biblically and Church-oriented than Dr. Wieman's. It now becomes pertinent to see how this basic orientation may affect their relative description of the method of prayer.

3. Method of Prayer

It has been noted that in explicating the method of prayer, Wieman and Fosdick first treat man's role and God's role in prayer, and then discuss the subject matter, movements, and effectiveness of prayer.[2]

a. Man's Role in Prayer

Both Fosdick and Wieman appreciate the importance of man's cooperation in prayer. Fosdick says that there are some things which God cannot give or say or do without human cooperation.[3] And both writers also

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1. Supra, pp. 163-164.
2. Supra, pp. 84, 164.
3. Supra, p. 169.

agree that it is purposive cooperation, rather than mere resignation, which is required.[1] Likewise, each writer describes certain conditions which man must fulfill for effective praying. They both stress the need for faith, leading to the prayer of affirmation. For Wieman, faith is a daring self-giving to what one believes to be of ultimate value.[2] With Fosdick, faith results in commitment but is based upon the apprehension of God's beneficent concern for each individual.[3] Commitment to Fosdick is a confident surrender to the will of God.[4] To Wieman, commitment involves utter relaxation, the choice of a serving and saving vocation, and the gift of the total self (including one's faults) to creativity.[5] Fosdick emphasizes the felt need to pray as one of the first requisites for effective prayer, and then also stresses the necessity for a man's life to conform to his prayer.[6] Both writers call for regularity in prayer. Wieman urges absolute honesty of self-analysis and intent, together with a clear statement and frequent repetition of the desired reconstruction.[7] Fosdick similarly sees the

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1. Supra, pp. 88, 170.
2. Supra, p. 45.
3. Supra, pp. 165-166.
4. Supra, p. 166.
5. Supra, p. 87.
6. Supra, pp. 164, 167.
7. Supra, pp. 87-88.

need for special preparation to enter God's presence and also for patient persistence in the face of difficulties and monotony.[1] Moreover, while Fosdick stresses the need for individuality in method suitable to the temperament of the pray-er, Wieman calls for solitude in which full confession may properly be made.[2] However, both writers approach a rather broad definition of prayer when Wieman asserts that "a man does not need to believe in God in order to worship," provided only that he "still believes that something is most important";[3] and Fosdick at one point describes prayer as "the settled craving of a man's heart, good or bad."[4]

Besides fulfilling these various conditions for effective prayer, according to Fosdick and Wieman, men must also cooperate with God by removing obstacles to prayer. Wieman points particularly to man's fearful and obstinate idolatry of created good as opposed to creative good, including here any preoccupation with materialistic standards of success or fragmentation or mechanization of life.[5] Fosdick alludes to

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1. Supra, pp. 166-167.
2. Supra, p. 86.
3. Wieman, Methods of Private Religious Living, op. cit., p. 18.
4. Supra, p. 154.
5. Supra, p. 89.

such hindrances as spiritual unreceptivity (the holding of a wrong attitude), business (with no time for listening to God), an ungenerous or unwilling spirit, irate or morbid moods, certain temperamental difficulties, selfish or foggy concepts of prayer, impatience, insincerity, over-emphasis on work, and any form of unrepented sin.[1] Both writers agree that only when such obstacles are removed can God operate freely in and through the prayer relationship.[2]

There is thus much similarity in the requirements which men must meet for prayer to be effective as seen by Fosdick and Wieman. Elements of difference are largely linguistic and derive from the theological orientation of these two men. Again, at the close of this study it may be pertinent to inquire whether indeed these writers are describing the same prayer experience, and/or what difference is made by the nature of the God to which prayer is addressed in the conception of Wieman and Fosdick? The study turns now to their conception of God's role in prayer.

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1. Supra, pp. 171-176.
2. Supra, pp. 90, 176.

b. God's Role in Prayer

Dr. Wieman and Dr. Fosdick each take a very high view of the role of God in prayer. Only there may be some question as to what is the nature of this God, in each case.

Dr. Fosdick emphasizes the divine initiative in seeking men long before their search for him begins. In fact, "our finding of God is simply in response to his quest for us." If this were not true, man's search for God would be hopeless.[1] Not only does God eternally seek man, but God is also continually present with him in man's own best self. But God's being within does not mean a man is communing with himself in prayer, anymore than Jesus knelt to talk to himself.[2] No, God is both objectively and subjectively present in human life as evidenced by his loving providence and personal fellowship. God works through his laws but exercises the sovereignty of personal will over them.[3] Indeed, God knows man's need before it is spoken, according to Fosdick, so that prayer simply opens the channel

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1. Supra, p. 177.
2. Supra, p. 178.
3. Supra, p. 177.

to his grace which undergirds, directs, and transforms life.[1]

Dr. Wieman's description of God's creative work in life is couched in very different terms alluding to the operation of environmental stimuli, "a growth of connections of mutual support," an "increase of meaning and value," a "creative synthesis or integration of life," and a growth in greatest good, or love.[2] God, so conceived, works through the "persistent desires and past experiences of the individual."[3] Besides reorganizing and unifying these creatively, God produces results through the fully awakened personality so that there emerge in the mind "new ideas, extended brotherhood, and higher ideals," that were not there before.[4] When men have become involved in the creative process of God which generates and develops all transforming values, "God has found us, and we have found God." God's role in prayer, therefore, is to "do what man cannot possibly do for himself."[5]

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1. Supra, pp. 180-181.
2. Supra, pp. 91-92.
3. Ibid.
4. Supra, p. 91.
5. Supra, p. 92.

Here again, while the actual experience that is being described does appear to contain similar elements (such as man's responsiveness to the divine search and yielding to creative transformation), it may be questioned whether Wieman and Fosdick are actually talking about the same activity or process on the part of the same God? Suffice it to say for the present that both writers do most earnestly feel that the Reality at work is more than human and is accomplishing things in and through human life which human ingenuity and effort could never accomplish. What then, may a man legitimately and expectantly ask in prayer from God, when the divine activity is so conceived?

c. The Subject Matter of Prayer

In respect to the subject matter of prayer, Wieman and Fosdick agree that there is nothing which men may not fairly ask in prayer.[1] Fosdick adds that of course the prayer should be in accordance with God's will in order for it to be granted. Elsewhere, however, he is suggesting that God sometimes answers an evil prayer with disastrous results.[2] Certainly

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1. Supra, pp. 93, 181.
2. Supra, p. 187.

no one should pray selfishly, expecting God to remake the world to suit the whims of men. But Fosdick maintains that God always answers every good prayer.[1] Wieman too suggests that any things asked for must be such as "are needed to conserve or increase the connections we have."[2] Furthermore, it is not the words men pray to which God responds but rather to their basic attitudes.[3] Now these attitudes may be expressed in various movements of prayer, some of which correspond to those practiced in the tradition of the church.

d. The Movements of Prayer

Dr. Wieman and Dr. Fosdick both utilize several of the traditional movements of prayer such as adoration, consecration or commitment, confession, petition, intercession, and communion. However, it is not at all certain each means the same thing by these movements as practiced in church tradition.

For instance, adoration to Dr. Wieman is relaxing in the consciousness of the all-encompassing, sustaining, integrating reality which a man may call

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1. Supra, p. 187.
2. Supra, p. 93.
3. Ibid.

"God" if he can use this term. He parallels this act with the first sentence of the Lord's Prayer.[1] Fosdick describes adoration as the worship of God for himself.[2] Dr. Wieman then moves prayer into commitment to creativity which he relates to the next two petitions of the Lord's Prayer. Here, one makes the required adjustment between himself and "the cosmic process which is God."[3] He then notes that this commitment will involve the confession and forgiveness of sins. Whereas, Dr. Fosdick does not suggest this act of personal consecration until the prayer has moved through confession, the purging of guilt, petition and intercession, and thanksgiving for blessings received.[4] Wieman's description of confession and petition moreover exhibits certain unique characteristics. In the former, one first squarely faces the problem with which he is struggling in terms of what is needed for a solution. Then he makes a searching inventory of his own habits and attitudes to see how these need to be changed to effect a solution. This righted attitude then issues in constructive behaviour (as in the church's teaching of confession and reparation).[5] Petition then

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1. Supra, p. 94.
2. Supra, p. 182.
3. Supra, p. 94.
4. Supra, pp. 182-185.
5. Supra, p. 95.

becomes the verbally formulated reconstruction of attitude whereby the required readjustment is effected through repetition supported by purposiveness. Ultimately all the movements of prayer work toward establishing communion (which is responsiveness to creativity).[1] Wieman epitomizes these movements of prayer as exposure, diagnosis, and reconstruction.[2] Both men treat petition more fully in connection with the subject matter of prayer.[3]

Dr. Fosdick moves very rapidly through an enumeration of the movements of prayer, pausing to remark how prayer is so much more than petition.[4] He notes also that intercession represents the maturing of the Biblical concept of prayer and is another area where man's cooperation is necessary for the fulfillment of God's will.[5] Wieman on the other hand doesn't mention intercession as such, except insofar as his suggestion for cooperative prayer might be conceived as intercessory.[6] Both writers seem to consider communion (the actual vital relationship of man with God) as the height of prayer.[7] Again one notices the difference

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1. Supra, p. 96.
2. Supra, p. 103.
3. Supra, pp. 92-93, 181.
4. Fosdick, The Meaning of Prayer, op. cit., p. 124.
5. Supra, pp. 183-184.
6. Supra, p. 79.
7. Supra, pp. 96-97, 185.

of terms and reference in comparing Wieman's and Fosdick's treatment of the movements of prayer. Does this same distinction carry over into their description of prayer's effectiveness?

e. The Effectiveness of Prayer

Dr. Wieman believes that "when man's prayer and worship are directed to the real God, they contribute enormously to the good of the world, "and are a practical"way of doing things." Indeed "history may be transformed by prayer."[1] Both he and Fosdick discuss how prayer is answered, the problem of unanswered prayer, and the specific effects of prayer.

(1) How Prayer is Answered

First, both writers stress that the answer to prayer is in changed human life, accomplished through human means by divine power.[2] Fosdick notes evidences of this power in providence, in the guidance men receive for daily living, in the operation of the laws of nature and human personality cooperating with God, and above all, in God's gift of himself in prayer. Wieman's view is of God answering prayer through a growth of meaning and value, via the creative interchange between

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1. Supra, p. 98.
2. Supra, pp. 98-99, 186.

people whereby society becomes better integrated, and through the transforming influences of creativity upon the human conscious, sub-conscious, and pre-conscious faculties.[1]

(2) The Problem of Unanswered Prayer

Dr. Wieman and Dr. Fosdick tackle the problem of unanswered prayer along somewhat different lines. Wieman concedes that since attitudes cannot be so easily changed, prayer "is by no means almighty."[2] Likewise,since men cannot always control their environment or personal associations, and certainly not their ancestry, the answer to prayer is often obstructed. Nor will God set aside natural law or divine purposes to answer every prayer. Prayer must cooperate with God, not seek to change the divine processes.[3] Dr. Fosdick, on the other hand, asserts unequivocably that every good prayer is answered in some way. The answer may be "no" or "wait." Or the real prayer may be answered while the specific petition is denied. Or God may answer the person while denying the particular request, because the latter ran counter to God's overall purpose. At times, an answer may seem to be withheld, because the prayer was insincere, ignorant, or

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1. Supra, p. 100.
2. Ibid.
3. Supra, p. 101.

offered as a substitute for work, or because the prayer is not yet ready to receive the answer. So Fosdick insists that God always answers true prayer either by changing the circumstances or by giving sufficient power to overcome them.[1] In addition to such answers what are some of the specific effects of prayer?

(3) The Effects of Prayer

In both Wieman's and Fosdick's writings these specific effects are what the Bible would call grace-gifts. Fosdick says that prayer brings strength of spirit, the peace of communion, the self-conquest of character, and a spirit of social cooperation and concern.[2] Above all, prayer opens the way for God's redemptive love to work its healing, and for God's will to have its way, so bringing life into vital transforming fellowship with God.[3] Again, in different terminology, Wieman speaks of certain arts and improvements that are effected in prayer. He mentions specifically the arts of using time, loafing, overcoming fear, withholding judgment, overcoming a

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1. Supra, p. 188.
2. Supra, p. 189.
3. Supra, pp. 189-190.

sense of failure, and mental concentration that may be developed in the practice of prayer.[1] And furthermore, prayer improves personality, personal relationships, health, and social conditions.[2] Both Dr. Wieman and Dr. Fosdick are extremely practical in their list of "fruits." And any difference between their lists seems to lie in the character of prayer being used, as well as in the concept of the God to whom prayer is addressed. Finally, it is helpful that both Wieman and Fosdick have given some examples of their personal (or pastoral) prayers which may afford further insight into their relative understanding of prayer and its practice.

4. A Comparison of the Prayers of Wieman and Fosdick

Wieman has given only a few instances of actual prayers. Each of these represents a specific need which Wieman has analyzed, formulated in words, and then voiced the prayer of reconstruction, which in accordance with Wieman's own prescription is to be repeated many times.[3] Some seem like pure auto-suggestion: "I am simple, lowly, sensitive, and sympathetic toward . . . "(a certain person); or "God, every

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1. Supra, pp. 102-104.
2. Supra, pp. 104-107.
3. Supra, p. 96.

impulse of my nature is attuned to his, to learn of him and to minister to his need."[1] On another occasion, he prayed: "God, help me to remember everything instantly, the moment it is needed," and this prayer was answered. Or again, in the endeavor to achieve benefits from the art of loafing, Wieman asks, "God, quicken every cell of my body, and all the love of my heart, and every impulse of intellectual and artistic achievement."[2] And in all of these Wieman feels that the results are produced not by the words uttered but by the power of creativity answering the attitude of the prayer.[3]

Dr. Fosdick's pastoral prayers have, of course, been written for use in leading congregational worship and are therefore of a very different order from these brief personal petitions of Wieman. Indeed there is great beauty, and inclusiveness, and spiritual sensitivity in these prayers. Fosdick's aim seems to be not simply to voice certain petitions (which look beyond the local situation to the needs of the whole world), but also to establish a sense of God's presence and concern and glory, together with attitudes of praise

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1. Supra, p. 108.
2. Supra, p. 109.
3. Supra, p. 110.

and thanksgiving, confession and consecration, and a deep sense of communion with the living God. There is further a sense of real empathy with the needs of the congregation, and a sincere concern to awaken them to the vital appropriation of the wealth of resources in the Christian faith. There is ascription of eternal blessedness and holiness and power to God, and recognition of weakness and dependence and deep yearning on the part of men. These are prayers which, though, public, can teach individuals much about the meaning and spirit and power of prayer. Moreover, there is a definite sense of love in the heart of the pray-er for the God to whom he prays, and for the people in whose behalf he lifts his voice.[1]

F. Summary

In comparing the religious experience, basic theology, and writings on prayer of Wieman and Fosdick, this chapter has sought to bring into focus the essential similarities and differences in the backgrounds and writing of these two men. Their family, home, and educational background was found to be quite similar. Then it was seen that their separate

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1. Supra, pp. 191-194.

vocational orientation to a large degree influenced both the expression and content of their theological framework and understanding of prayer. Any similarity in these often derived from the fact that it was the same world to which they were writing, or from their common experiential approach to man's knowledge of and prayer-relationship to God. Fosdick's and Wieman's treatment of the nature, aspects, method and movements of prayer was likewise conditioned by their concepts of the God being addressed in prayer, and of the ways in which this God works in human life. Several questions were raised in the course of this comparative study which will now be dealt with more fully in the final summary and conclusion of this thesis.

# SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

# SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In the comparative study of Henry Nelson Wieman's and Harry Emerson Fosdick's writings on prayer, a major objective of this thesis has been to discover what these writings contribute severally to an understanding of the character, function, and validity of prayer in an age largely dominated by materialistic and scientific modes of thought. It was felt pertinent to such a study first to survey briefly the twentieth-century historical environment (with its nineteenth-century antecedents) to which these writers addressed their expositions of prayer, and then to become familiar with the individual religious background and theological framework within which each writer developed his particular concept of the meaning and practice of prayer. In terms of procedure, the plan has been to examine separately the personal background, basic theology, and writings of Wieman and Fosdick on the subject of prayer, before undertaking a comparison of this material which would then make possible some concluding evaluation of their writings in the light of the focal question proposed for this study and, to a lesser degree, in the light of the prayer example and teaching of Jesus to which both writers allude.

## A. Summary

The historical framework for the writing of Fosdick and Wieman considered in Chapter One, underscored the political, social, economic, intellectual and religious factors of nineteenth-century America that produced the scientific, liberal, materialistic thinking of the twentieth century to which Fosdick and Wieman addressed their explanation of the reasonableness and value of prayer. It was observed how various economic and social dislocations, accented by moral-political complacency and the weakening of former intellectual, religious, and ethical foundations, prepared the way for the adoption of materialistic standards of success and the application of scientific criteria and method to the evaluation of truth in all areas of life. The resultant prevailing attitude to which Wieman and Fosdick spoke was one of skepticism, religious tolerance, a pragmatic or empirical approach to the understanding of reality, and a primary dependence upon reason, effort, education and perfectability for the ultimate improvement of society. Then, however, two World Wars converted much of this optimism into moods of indifference, or despair, or a deep recognition of man's need of redemption from some extra-human source of power which yet might be expected to operate within history. In the thinking of Fosdick

and Wieman prayer becomes the primary means of ground-human life in a responsive, vital relationship with such a supra-natural power and process working recognizably to affect human goals, problems, and the inter-relationships of daily life.

It was found in Chapter Two, that Dr. Wieman became equipped for the task of thus attempting to meet the spiritual needs of contemporary Americans through the influence of a Christian home, an extensive liberal philosophical and theological training, some two and a half years in the ministry, more advanced study, and the life-time vocation of teaching philosophy of religion in leading American colleges and universities. It was also seen how Wieman's own religious development and predominantly philosophical orientation led him to seek a universally comprehensible vocabulary whereby to foster a saving relationship with God - the creative source of all human good - as both a real and an actively appropriated experience in the lives of his compatriots.

Wieman came increasingly to feel that the reality of such an experienced relationship was most clearly communicated to scientifically-minded men in terms of the concept of creativity operating through

creative events by a kind of creative process or interchange to uplift and transform individual personality and social relations. Wieman considered such philosophical terminology to be more expressive of the basic truth and experience which is set forth in Christian myth by the symbolical description of a personal God revealing himself historically, and saving mankind in and through the work of Christ by the energy and direction of the Holy Spirit, which indwells the life of the Church and its' membership.

Furthermore, Wieman thinks that a man can enter into a more realistic prayer-relationship with God when God is understood in terms of creativity operating through natural and human processes, than when God is viewed as a supernatural (though personal) Being, who, by very virtue of his inscrutable transcendent perfection, cannot, according to Wieman, really be known in human terms. Prayer, in Wieman's conception, becomes an habitual, trusting, committed attitude of personality, established through creative worship by means of the auto-suggestion of reconstructive words that lay man open to the transforming influence of creativity. Such prayer may be properly directed to the solution of specific problems, to the achievement of certain arts and improvements of living

conditions, or simply to the cultivation of a co-operative relationship with creativity, which is essential to personal growth and to "the welfare of collective humanity."[1]

There are, interestingly, certain aspects of the home background, education, basic theology, and writings on prayer of Dr. Fosdick, as examined in Chapter Three of this thesis, that bear strong resemblance to Dr. Wieman's religious experience and writing. Dr. Fosdick also enjoyed the advantages of a liberal yet vital Christian family upbringing, a free and intensive college and theological training, and considerable teaching experience (at Union Theological Seminary in New York). Dr. Fosdick was further almost forced to discover the dependable resources of prayer by way of recovering from a severe nervous breakdown which interrupted his first year of seminary. This experience contributed to his subsequent thought and writing.

Confronting the spiritual needs and problems of his generation as a Christian minister, Dr. Fosdick has sought to find a popularly understandable linguistic expression for vivifying and communicating the eternal religious verities and experiences which he

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1. Supra, p. 6.

felt to underlie the Biblical and doctrinal formulations of these experiences by the Christian Church. Accordingly, the God whom Fosdick advises his people to seek in prayer is the personal Father of Jesus Christ and of all mankind, who is deeply concerned with and involved in the lives of all his children through the present guiding, upholding, and transforming power of the Holy Spirit that indwells the lives of men. So God works in and through all natural means and laws of human personality and the physical universe to establish his kingdom of love in human history. Prayer is, above all, a saving fellowship with this living God, in which man learns to cooperate enthusiastically and intelligently with the will of God. Man's part in prayer is to remove all spiritual unreceptivity and sinful obstructions to the divine working, through tenacious self-discipline, special preparation, and a persistent struggle for character that reflects the spirit of Jesus. Fosdick believes that there are many things which even Almighty God cannot give, or say, or do unless men pray. So that the salvation of individual men and of collective society is largely dependent upon man's sincere and zealous cooperation with God through the prayer relationship which must then be carried into appropriate conduct and thought.

In comparing Wieman's and Fosdick's religious background, theological framework, and writings on prayer in the fourth chapter of this study, it was found that many observed similarities stem from their similar background and similar empirical or experiential approach to the understanding of God's nature and of the relationship of God to man in prayer. Then, too, there is the basic sameness of the contemporary American scene to which both men are speaking. Conversely, the differences in their treatment of prayer derive largely from their respective vocational orientation, which is also responsible to a marked degree for the theological frameworks and modes in which their thought is expressed.

Thus, where Wieman speaks of God as "what rightfully commands the devotion of man,"[1] in the philosophical language of creativity, creative events, and creative interchange, by way of describing the basic religious experience that men may have with God, Fosdick prefers to utilize the traditional Christian terminology of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, which he considers to be a trinity of experience. It does need to be asked at the conclusion of this study whether in making prayer-contact with Wieman's philosophically conceived,

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[1] Supra, p. 50.

impersonal God of creativity, men are indeed communing with the living God, whom Fosdick describes as the Father of the human-divine Christ, whose life and death reveal both God's and man's nature in perfection? Or, perhaps the question should be phrased, are both men equally in fellowship with the Reality which is God?

Again, Dr. Wieman conceives that prayer may legitimately be addressed to whatever a man believes is important (whether or not he calls it"God");[1] and that man is actually saved by committed cooperation with "whatever the individual believes has power to save from evil."[2] Whereas Dr. Fosdick feels it desirable to address prayer to a consciously conceived heavenly Father; and that men are saved by a transforming personal fellowship with this God who is intimately concerned with every detail of each individual human life.[3]

Neither Fosdick nor Wieman condone the idea of trying to manipulate God in prayer. At the same time, both writers want to make it clear that prayer is far more than auto-suggestion, since the Reality contacted in prayer is objective and transcendent as well as

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1. Supra, p. 228.
2. Supra, p. 58.
3. Supra, pp. 140-141.

working subjectively and immanently. Thus, God does for man what he could not possibly do for himself, although operating through natural and human laws and processes.

Dr. Fosdick and Dr. Wieman alike describe the aspects of prayer as involving habitual attitudes, focused attention, committed cooperation with God, worship as well as petition, dominant desire or purposiveness, and above all, communion with God, although the terms in which these concepts are expressed may differ. Furthermore, where Wieman speaks of prayer as a growth of meaning and value, Fosdick refers to the claiming of sonship; and where Wieman speaks of using prayer to solve problems, Fosdick alludes to it as a battlefield for character. On the whole, Fosdick's terminology is more personal, whereas Wieman's is more philosophical. It is possible that in this area, they may mean very much the same thing.

Similarly also, both men consider the attitudes of private prayer or worship as underlying collective and public worship, and in this connection emphasize the value of mutual support in prayer. Likewise, both men derive their views of prayer primarily from experience, with Fosdick acknowledging more dependence than Wieman does upon Scripture, and also

quoting more extensively from it, as might be expected of a minister. Both men more specifically relate their methods of prayer to the teaching and example of Jesus, particularly as regards the movements of prayer through adoration, confession, petition, consecration, and communion. Wieman epitomizes these movements as exposure, diagnosis, and reconstruction, in such a way as to suggest a mental exercise designed to focus attention and to develop right attitudes. Fosdick's descriptions, on the other hand, suggest more of an intimate conscious fellowship with a personal, loving divine Father. Fosdick, too, lays rather more stress than Wieman upon the importance and effectiveness of intercession.

Both writers emphasize God's initiative in prayer, and the need for man's cooperation in meeting the conditions of faith, surrender, patient perseverance, self-discipline, attentiveness, and the like. However, Fosdick gives a more vivid description than Wieman of God's activity in prayer as consisting of his continual presence, his providence, the natural operation of the laws under his control, his omniscience, and his unfailing grace. Wieman's explication of God's prayer-role in terms of "growth of connections of mutual support between the individual and his

environment "evinced in an increase of meaning and value, or an integration of life with man's own "persistent desires and past experiences"[1] conveys an impression of a definite plus-factor in human development, without as clearly defining it to the point where all men might intelligibly call this factor "God."

Then, in delineating the effectiveness of prayer, Wieman and Fosdick again stress that prayer is answered through normal channels of natural law, personality growth, and a kind of group dynamics in cooperation with God. But Wieman allows for unanswered prayer due to the difficulty of changing personal attitudes, or controlling environment, or bucking natural law. Whereas, Fosdick maintains that all good prayer is answered either by changing the circumstances or by giving sufficient power to overcome them. Both men refer to the transforming effects of prayer upon personality and social relations. Wieman speaks also of improved health and specific arts of concentration or the use of time, or the overcoming of a sense of failure, that may be cultivated in prayer. Finally,

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1. Supra, pp. 90-92.

Fosdick's and Wieman's own prayers - while addressed to different specific situations - serve further to illustrate the effect of their theological and vocational orientation upon their understanding and practice of prayer.

## B. Conclusion

Several evaluative comments may now be made by way of concluding this comparative study of the writings of Fosdick and Wieman on prayer. In the first place, it should be observed that there is much that is helpful and worthwhile to modern man in both the explanations of prayer and in the suggestions for the practice of prayer as offered by these two writers. Moreover, their common view of prayer as a basic attitude and committed fellowship with God, in which God takes the initiative and effects the results, seems to be quite in line with Jesus' teaching and prayer-example, as is their stress upon a worshipful dependence upon God's present power. Likewise, Fosdick and Wieman underscore in a meaningful way the need for man's cooperation in prayer. Fosdick contributes the significant thought that a man's life must reflect his prayer to the degree that it cannot be understood apart from his prayer. Wieman's description of the act of prayer as consisting

of the three essential movements of exposure, diagnosis, and reconstruction, adds meaning to the more traditional concepts of adoration, confession, absolution or forgiveness, reparation, and petition with intercession. The conditions which man must fulfill for prayer to be effective, according to Fosdick and Wieman, are not dissimilar to those in traditional Christian writings on prayer. The same may be said with regard to their summary of the effects of prayer. However, with respect to the ways in which prayer is answered, there is a noticeable divergence of opinion between Fosdick and Wieman which may be traced to their respective concepts of God. Fosdick conceives God as the sovereign, providential ruler of the universe, whereas, notwithstanding several statements to the contrary, Wieman seems to view God's power as confined to an operation through natural processes and laws. To Fosdick therefore, God always answers a good prayer; while Wieman allows that many uncontrollable physical, human, and social factors may temporarily delay or permanently obstruct God's answer to prayer. To the scientifically-minded man of this generation, with his firm belief in the inviolability of natural law, the latter qualification of prayer's power is probably more satisfying than the former dictum that

good prayer is always answered . . . somehow.

But, at this point, an important question needs to be raised. Since the value of prayer must increase or decrease in proportion to the functioning validity of contact established with an actual, sustaining, and life-saving or transforming Reality, one may appropriately question the effectiveness of an exclusively or primarily experiential or empirical approach to knowledge of and fellowship with the Living God - in short, with the God whom Christ reveals (for both Fosdick and Wieman accept Christ's revelation of God as supreme).

Now, Dr. Fosdick and Dr. Wieman each exhibit considerable familiarity with Scriptural texts and themes as sources for their teaching about God and prayer. At the same time, both men state that they base their understanding largely, if not primarily, upon experiential evidence. Wieman does not treat the Bible as revelation but as a record of mythically expressed historical experiences. Therefore, there is no absolute or supernatural knowledge of God, but only that which comes through experiencing the domination of creative events in history. Wieman finds saving power in the fellowship initiated by God's working in and through the historical Jesus, but the Word of God

that operates in this fellowship is the Creative Event or Living Christ, rather than any verbal record of Scripture.

Fosdick, on the other hand, lived and worked as a minister of the Gospel. Therefore, it is natural for him to make frequent use of the Bible, while yet insisting that it be used as a record of "abiding truths and experiences in changing mental categories."[1] Fosdick aims to help this generation come into a similar direct experience of God through the relationship of prayer in the spirit of Jesus. Indeed, Wieman and Fosdick are both concerned to translate what they feel to be the universally available religious experience of God into such contemporary, scientific, psychological, and practical language as may be perfectly clear and helpful to the average twentieth-century American with little or no religious training. It has been asked as a central question for this study whether the resultant concepts of God and prayer actually do serve to make prayer meaningful to the contemporary age, and to lead men into a vital, valid prayer-relationship with God, as

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1. Supra, p. 162.

revealed by Jesus Christ?

It should be admitted at once that only a pragmatic test for the answer to such a question would be allowed by Fosdick and Wieman, and that the evidence presented by such a test would probably be considered inconclusive, except to faith. Nevertheless, since both writers have appealed to common sense and experience, as well as to the prayer-life and teachings of Jesus, these criteria may afford some basis upon which to draw several tentative conclusions with regard to the relative validity and contemporary relevance of the prayer-relationship with God which each writer has sought to describe.

In the first place, returning to an earlier and most pertinent question, with regard to the concept of God that evolves from a basically empirical approach to the understanding of Reality, it is certainly significant that Wieman and Fosdick have described the God they address in prayer in such different terms. Fosdick, as a Christian minister deeply interested in personal counseling, teaches men to pray to the loving Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, who works in human nature and relationships through the abiding influence of the Holy Spirit to redeem men from sin. Fosdick strongly emphasizes the importance of personality, and

both living and praying in the spirit of Jesus. Philosopher Wieman, on the other hand, greatly concerned that men should think clearly and almost scientifically about God, advocates the greater effectiveness of prayer to creativity, working through creative events by means of creative interchange to transform committed human life. The results of such praying, as described by Wieman and Fosdick, are not at all dissimilar. Personality, health, personal relationships, and social conditions are in both cases improved. Furthermore, some of the phases or movements of prayer which each writer has explicated not only resemble those of the other writer, but also are similar to those prescribed by the Christian Church, and by the prayer-teaching of Jesus. Still further, both men state that the act of praying itself involves keen attentiveness to God, an attitude of the whole personality in relationship to God, definite alignment of man's will with God's will, and the outworking of the sincere purposes of the prayer in the life of the pray-er. At first sight, it would seem that the concept of prayer held by Wieman and Fosdick is much the same, and not at all out of line with Jesus' teaching on prayer. For Jesus, too, lays stress upon the holding of right attitudes in prayer, upon looking to God in obedient dependence and

cooperation, and upon the living of the prayer.

But can the nature and validity of the prayer be the same when the concept of God seems so different? Is the difference just one of language, resulting from the difference in vocational orientation? Or has a primarily experiential approach to God led to an overly humanistic, or one-sided, or incomplete understanding of God's nature and mode of communicating with men? In particular, is God as conceived and addressed in prayer by Wieman and Fosdick the One to whom Jesus prayed and taught men to pray?

Wieman affirms that God conceived as creativity does fulfill the same functions of creation, salvation, judgment, the government of history, and the doing of revelation and creative events that are ascribed to God in the Bible. Fosdick even uses Christian terminology in all that he says of God, while finding at the same time new scientific and practical analogies to render the Biblical modes of expression more meaningful. In their prayer teaching both men follow, to a degree, the pattern of the Lord's Prayer. Moreover, both look upon prayer as a saving and empowering fellowship with God, very much as Jesus viewed it.

Yet, Wieman is suggesting prayer to an impersonal God, a God of "connections of mutual support,"

of an increase in meaning and value, an integrating and creative process in life. Is this the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ? Also, Wieman's prescribed method of prayer, in following the pattern of exposure "to whatever the individual may believe has power to save from evil," then self-diagnosis of the particular problem or need, and finally a self-directed reconstruction of the solution to the problem does not quite reach the depths of Jesus' intimate, trusting dependence upon the loving heavenly Father, and his utter commitment to seek and do his Father's will. Notwithstanding the fact that Wieman believes that it is divine creativity which effects the results of prayer, Wieman's prayer method involves much self-effort in fostering the right attitudes and adjustments to environment. One wonders if the creative interchange which Wieman sees at work in this process is therefore much more than a self-projection and/or inter-communication among men?

Fosdick also prescribes much self-effort in prayer in the direction of dominant desires, in the battle for character, and in the cooperation of human thought, work, and prayer with the divine energy. It is helpful to see God as working through human personality and natural laws, provided that somehow the Holy

Spirit's work is not identified with these personal and natural processes. When Fosdick, however, teaches that a man should never attempt to find God "outside his best self," some such humanistic (or naturalistic) identification does tend to follow.

There is this difficulty, then, with a purely empirical or experiential approach to the understanding of God and man's relationship with the divine activity in life. When God's working is seen only in terms of natural, or personal, or historical events and processes in the immediate human environment, and when this activity is described in broad, universal, all-inclusive terms, God tends to become almost undifferentiated from the laws of the universe, and natural-human forces or operations. And while it may be allowed that some of these laws and forces act as creating, or creative good, rather than created good, still the human spirit finds difficulty in finding an intimate, personality-motivating, and directive relationship with a law or a force; and even less is it able to call such a force "God." Rather, a man will inevitably seek to comprehend and control or utilize such natural laws and forces, at which point they cease to exercise the sovereign, providential role of God in his life. Indeed, to the degree that he attempts so to

use what he conceives as God, man becomes his own god. It should be stated that both Fosdick and Wieman decry such a tendency at the very same time that they are bringing God down to earth in their treatment of his nature and work.

But, perhaps most significant of what appears to be a weakness in Fosdick's and Wieman's treatment of prayer, is the fact that while both men view prayer as a saving relationship with God, neither Fosdick nor Wieman devote much attention to the saviorhood, or redemptive work, of Christ whereby prayer attains its' dynamic saving status. To Fosdick, the Cross of Christ remains a supreme example of vicarious suffering (without which there is never any redemption). To Wieman, Jesus' death was necessary to release the creative event into the world. In their teaching on prayer, neither author has sufficiently attempted to extract the deep meaning from Jesus' own words about giving his life a ransom for many,[1] or that "no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him,"[2] or that "if you abide in me and my words abide in you, ask whatever you will and it shall be done for you . . . for apart from me, you can do

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1. Mark 10:45(RSV).
2. Matthew 11:25-27(RSV).

nothing."[1] Indeed, all of Christ's teaching of and relationship with the disciples emphasizes the need of this continual grounding of their lives in his, if genuine reconciled and reconciling fellowship with the Father and with each other is to be established and maintained. Therefore, it seems valid to comment that the prayer-teaching of Wieman and Fosdick is weakened by their under-emphasis upon the atonement of man with God which was effected by the life and work of Christ, and is now applied through faith by the Holy Spirit.

So, to return to the central question posed in this thesis with regard to Fosdick's and Wieman's contributions to an understanding of the character, function, and validity of prayer in this twentieth-century America, three observations will serve to conclude this study.

First, Dr. Wieman has succeeded in presenting his teaching on prayer in terms that are both intellectually acceptable and, to some extent, scientifically verifiable. For no one would need to search far to discover elements of growth in values, and integrating connections, or creative processes in life. If this is what is meant by God, then Wieman has shown that

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1. John 5:7,5.

God exists and is active in human history, and that it is possible to establish some form of meaningful contact with such a reality in prayer. It may indeed further be demonstrated that certain specific changes in attitude, a focusing of attention upon spiritual values, and a committed purposefulness of activity do result from the practice of private devotion, or creative worship, directed to God as so conceived.

Secondly, Dr. Fosdick's broad, scientifically and pragmatically-oriented interpretation of the God of Scripture and his prayer-relationship with men offers much that is helpful to modern men in reconciling their scientific and humanistic modes of thought with Biblical theology and experience.

So that, depending upon how well a man already understood and had accepted by faith the Word of God in the Bible, thereby enjoying a personal relationship with Christ, both Fosdick's and Wieman's explanations and methods of prayer could be meaningfully adapted to a Christian context. Without such a prior foundation, it is not inconceivable, however, that a person might follow either of these prayer-instructions without coming into a full, vital, saving prayer-relationship with the living God as revealed by Christ. And this can be said insofar as these writers have chosen to

depart from, or to overlook, the Christian teaching that God is the personal Father of Jesus Christ in whom he came into the world to reconcile the world to himself. One cannot but question the full effectiveness of any teaching of the meaning and practice of prayer that does not center upon this saving truth. And this truth is fully discoverable by faith in the Word of God as revealed in Scripture and experienced in personal relationship with the Living Christ, not by an unaided empirical, or logical, or pragmatic approach to the apprehension of Reality.

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