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In 1917 H. M. Reilton made a judgment which has turned out to be remarkably far-sighted: 'There are many indications that the doctrine of the suffering God is going to play a very prominent part in the theology of the age in which we live.'^[1] The idea that God cannot suffer, accepted virtually as axiomatic in Christian theology from the early Greek Fathers until the nineteenth century, has in this century been progressively abandoned. For once, English theology can claim to have pioneered a major theological development: from about 1890 onwards, a steady stream of English theologians, whose theological approaches differ considerably in other respects, have agreed in advocating, with more or less emphasis, a doctrine of divine suffering.^[2] A peak of interest in the subject is indicated by J. K. Mozley's important study, *The Impassibility of God* (1926), which was commissioned by the Archbishops' Doctrine Commission in 1924 and which itself tells the story of English theological interest in the suffering of God up to 1924.^[3] Since then, a large number of English theologians have continued the tradition.^[4]

During this century, however, the idea of divine suffering has appeared in many other theological traditions,^[5] with very little influence from England.^[6] The Spanish philosopher Miguel de Unamuno developed a doctrine of the infinite sorrow of God.^[7] The Russian theologian Nicolas Berdyaev vigorously rejected impassibility in favour of a doctrine of 'tragedy' within the divine life.^[8] The Japanese Lutheran theologian Kazoh

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Kitamori published his famous and ground-breaking book *Theology of the Pain of God* in 1946.^[9] Other Asian theologians have subsequently followed him in emphasizing the divine suffering.^[10] For them, as for James Cone's black theology, God's suffering is a necessary part of his solidarity with the oppressed.^[11] American process theology, following A. N. Whitehead's oftquoted characterization of God as 'the fellow-sufferer who understands', has readily incorporated God's suffering into its reformulation of theism which makes much of God's receptivity to the world.^[12]

In Germany, Emil Brunner was prepared to abandon the philosophical dogma of the divine impassibility for the sake of a more biblical concept of God,^[13] while Karl Barth asserted, though without extensive discussion, that God can suffer, as a necessary implication of God's self-revelation in Christ and his cross.^[14] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, in his letters from prison, made his tantalizingly brief but suggestive remarks about God's weakness and suffering in 'the world come of age'.^[15] Some Continental Catholic theologians, including the rather conservative Jean Galot,^[16] have also attempted to speak of God's suffering.^[17] But especially Jürgen Moltmann has expounded a theology of divine suffering in *The Crucified God*, and more recently again in *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*.^[18] For Moltmann, the divine suffering is closely related not only to the theodicy problem and the cross, but also to the trinitarian nature of God.^[19]

In the rest of this article we shall first examine the basis of traditional theology's refusal to attribute suffering to God, and then attempt to isolate and discuss the various contributory factors in the widespread modern acceptance of a doctrine of divine passibility.

The Greek doctrine of divine 'apatheia'

The idea of divine impassibility (*apatheia*) was a Greek philosophical inheritance in early Christian theology. The great hellenistic Jewish theologian Philo had already prepared the way for this by making *apatheia* a prominent feature of his understanding of the God of Israel,^[20] and virtually all the Christian Fathers took it for granted, viewing with suspicion any theological tendency which might threaten the essential impassibility of the divine nature.

To say that God is incapable of suffering does not really convey the full meaning of *apatheia*. Nor does the English word 'apathy' help very much, but reflection on the connexions between the English words 'impassibility', 'passion', and 'passive', could bring us somewhere near the implications of *apatheia*, *pathos* and *pathein* (*paschein*). For the Greeks, God cannot be passive, he cannot be affected by something else, he cannot (in the broad sense) 'suffer' (*paschein*), because he is absolutely self-sufficient, self-determining and independent.

Pathos, which the divine *apatheia* excludes, means both 'suffering', in our sense of pain or calamity, and also 'passion', in the sense of emotion, whether pleasurable or painful. The connecting thought is passivity. Suffering is what comes upon one, against one's will. It is something of which one is a passive victim. Thus suffering is a mark of weakness and God is

necessarily above suffering. But, for the Greeks, one is also passive when one is moved by the passions or emotions. To be moved by desire or fear or anger is to be affected by something outside the self, instead of being self-determining. Again this is weakness and so God must be devoid of emotion. To suffer or to feel is to be subject to pain or emotion and the things that cause them. God cannot be subject to anything.

The divine impassibility is also closely connected with other aspects of the Greek understanding of God. Suffering is connected with time, change and matter, which are features of this material world of becoming. But God is eternal in the sense of atemporal. He is also, of course, incorporeal. He is absolute, fully actualized perfection, and therefore simply is eternally what he is.

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He cannot change because any change (even change which he wills rather than change imposed on him from outside) could only be change for the worse. Since he is self-sufficient, he cannot be changed. Since he is perfect, he cannot change himself.[21] Thus suffering and emotion are both incompatible with the nature of a God who never becomes, but *is*. Whereas for many modern minds this idea of God is unattractively 'static' (always a pejorative word in modern theology!), for the Greek mind it was an attractive ideal of stability. God's benevolent will cannot be swayed by passion and his eternal blessedness is unassailable.

Although the general tendency of the Greek view of God was to remove him from any contact with the world, as adopted into Christian theology it did not mean that God was 'apathetic' in the modern sense. The Fathers have no doubt of God's love for the world, but his love is his benevolent attitude and activity, not a feeling, and not a relationship in which he can be *affected* by what he loves. Tensions in the patristic doctrine of God arose especially in the attempt to reconcile the immutability and impassibility of God with the Fathers' belief in a real incarnation of God in Christ and in the real sufferings of Christ, to both of which they held tenaciously as Christian theologians, in spite of the problems created by their Greek philosophical presuppositions about the divine nature. If the Fathers are to be criticized, it is not, of course, for the necessary attempt to make some connexion between the biblical God and the God of Greek philosophy, but for the insufficiently critical nature of their reconciliation of the two.[22] They retain the most important features of the biblical God, but do not allow these features sufficient scope for calling in question the philosophical notion of divine nature.

A few of the Fathers seem to have moved rather timidly towards the idea that, although God cannot be thought to suffer unwillingly or out of any lack in himself, he could be conceived as free to undergo suffering voluntarily for the sake of human salvation.[23] But the majority of the Fathers, even though constrained by Alexandrian Christology to attribute the sufferings of Jesus to the Logos, can do so only by a paradox (Cyril's 'he suffered impassibly'; Gregory of Nazianzus' 'the suffering of him who could not suffer'[24]), which usually means that the Logos, though aware of the sufferings of his human nature, is unaffected by them.[25]

A further implication of the doctrine of divine *apatheia* is very important: it had as its corollary *apatheia* as a human ideal. This occurs in varying degrees and forms in the Greek philosophical schools and in the Fathers, but the general Greek tendency was to see essential human nature as self-determining reason, which as such resembles God. Ideally the emotions ought to be subject to the reason, but in fact through them the flesh and the material world are able to influence and sway the reason, resulting in sin and suffering. Hence the Greek religious ideal of becoming like God is to attain, as far as possible, to the divine *apatheia*. [26] It should be noted that, although there is an anti-anthropomorphic motive in this tradition of thinking about God, there is also a sense in which the idea of divine *apatheia* is, in its own way, thoroughly anthropomorphic. It conceives God in the image of pure reason, abstracted from the human body and from the emotional aspects of human psychology, and it does so because this pure reason is what the Greek thinker himself aspires to be.

It is important to notice that most modern advocates of divine passibility recognize elements of truth in the patristic doctrine of divine *apatheia*. [27] At its best, the notion of divine and human *apatheia* as a moral ideal suggested moral constancy, in which the will is able to maintain its loving purpose without being deflected. God's love is 'apathetic' in the sense that it is free, generous, and self-giving, not a 'need-love' dominated by self-seeking desires and anxieties. [28] Moreover, it is true that God cannot be subject to suffering against his will, but that is not to say that he may not voluntarily expose himself to suffering. [29] As Moltmann points out, the Fathers made the mistake of recognizing only two alternatives: 'either essential incapacity for suffering, or a fateful subjection to suffering. But there is a third form of suffering - the voluntary laying oneself open to another and allowing oneself to be intimately affected by him; that is to say, the suffering of passionate love.' [30]

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Factors in the modern doctrine of divine passibility:

1. Context

It is certainly no accident that modern concern with the question of divine suffering has frequently arisen out of situations in which human suffering was acute. The English theological tradition on this issue seems to have received considerable impetus from the First World War, [31] which raised the problem of suffering for a generation of theologians recovering from nineteenth-century optimism. Kitamori's *Theology of the Pain of God* was published in Japan soon after Hiroshima. 'We are living in an age of God and pain,' he wrote. 'the world today seems to be stretched out under pain.' [32] It was in his Nazi prison cell that Bonhoeffer reflected that 'only the suffering God can help'. [33] Moltmann's theology of the crucified God has its earliest origin in his experience as a prisoner of war. [34] and eventually took the form of an attempt at a 'theology after Auschwitz'. [35] The black theologian James Cone is thinking especially of the history of oppression of American blacks when he writes of God's identification with the suffering world. [36]

A context of human suffering may itself sufficiently account for a doctrine of divine suffering. After all, the patristic doctrine of divine impassibility flourished in the great era of Christian martyrdom. There have been a whole variety of ways of relating God to human suffering. A doctrine of divine impassibility can encourage men and women to rise above suffering in the hope of attaining the unshakable blessedness of God, and in fact the martyrs were often seen as realising the ideal of *apatheia* in triumphing over pain.[37] However, it could be said that the sheer scale of innocent and involuntary human suffering in our century has posed the problem of suffering in a way which makes a doctrine of divine suffering very attractive (see section 5 below).

2. The God of the prophets

A strong trend in modern theology has been towards the emancipation of the biblical understanding of God from the categories imposed on it by the influence of Greek philosophical theism, in particular the attributes of immutability and impassibility, which are by no means easy to reconcile with the biblical God's involvement with his people in their history.[38]

As far as Old Testament theology goes, the Jewish theologian Abraham Heschel has been particularly influential. Originally in his 1936 dissertation and later in his major work *The Prophets*,[39] he developed from the Old Testament prophets a theology of the divine *pathos*. From his own background in kabbalistic and Hasidic Judaism, Heschel was able to recognize in the prophets a quite different understanding of God from that of the Greeks, and in deliberate opposition to the doctrine of divine *apatheia* he used the word *pathos* to describe God's concern for and involvement in the world. The 'anthropopathisms' of the Old Testament, in which God is represented as emotionally involved with and responding to his people, are not to be set aside as rather crude ways of speaking of God which are not really appropriate to the reality of God,[40] but should be seen as a central hermeneutical key to the prophetic theology. 'The most exalted idea applied to God is not infinite wisdom, infinite power, but infinite concern.[41] 'Not self-sufficiency, but concern and involvement characterize His relation to the world.[42] 'In order to conceive of God not as an onlooker but as a participant, to conceive of man not as an idea in the mind of God but as a concern, the category of divine pathos is an indispensable implication.[43] Heschel is even prepared to say that the divine pathos shows that 'God is in need of man'.[44] He is not, it should be noted, guilty of the kind of naive dismissal of philosophical theism for which biblical theologians can sometimes be criticized. His account of the doctrine of divine *apatheia* is no caricature, but a serious and indeed illuminating treatment. Although the difference between Greek and Hebrew thought is a theme which has been much abused in biblical theology, Heschel's case for significant differences at this point is a good one.

God's suffering, of course, is an aspect of his *pathos*. He is disappointed and distressed by his people's faithlessness; he is pained and offended by their lack of response to his love; he grieves over his people even when he must be angry with them (Jer. 31:30; Hos. 11:8-9); and because of his concern for them he himself suffers with them in their sufferings (Is. 63:9). It is a merit of Heschel's exposition of the prophets that he finds the note of divine sorrow and suffering not only in the obvious proof-texts (cited above),[45] but in many parts of the prophetic oracles.[46] Cf. especially T. E. Pollard, 'The Impassibility of God', *SJT* 8 (1955), pp. 353-64. He also finds the divine pathos reflected in the pathos of the prophets themselves.[47] The prophets, by sympathy with the divine pathos, are themselves intimately involved in God's con-

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cern for his people.[48] Thus just as divine *apatheia* had its anthropological corollary, so does divine *pathos*: 'The ideal state of the Stoic sage is apathy, the ideal state of the prophets is sympathy.[49]

Finally, Heschel's treatment of the problem of 'anthropopathy' is of interests.[50] The Old Testament itself recognizes that God is not to be compared with humanity (Nu. 23:19; 1 Sa. 15:29; Is. 40:18; 55:8-9), but this does not mean that language about divine emotions is mere anthropopathism, not to be taken seriously. Rather, it means that, in Heschel's adaptation of Isaiah 55:8-9: 'My pathos is not your pathos.... For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My pathos than your pathos.[51]

Heschel's views have been followed by other Old Testament theologians,[52] and have also been taken up enthusiastically by Moltmann.[53] Another major exponent of divine suffering for whom the Old Testament prophets played a major role is Kitamori. For him Jeremiah 31:20 was of particular significance, because it 'literally agrees with the truth of the cross',[54] i.e. it expresses the pain of God's love for those who reject his love, the pain which 'reflects his will to love the object of his wrath'.[55]

3. The God of personal love

In modern theology it has often been said that if God is personal love, analogous to human personal love, then he must be open to the suffering which a relationship of love can bring. Traditional theology understood God's love as a one-way relationship in which God exercises purely active benevolence towards the world, but cannot be affected by the objects of his love, but this picture of the impassive benevolent despot[56] has tended to give way to pictures drawn from more intimate human relationships[57] in which a love which is unaffected by the beloved seems unworthy to be called love,[58] even if the term is applied analogically to God. The point that if God is love, he must suffer, is characteristic of the English (and Welsh) tradition,[59] strongly stated, for example, by Maldwyn Hughes: 'It is an entire misuse of words to call God our loving Father, if He is able to view the waywardness and rebellion of His children without being moved by grief and pity.... It is of the very nature of love to suffer when its object suffers loss, whether inflicted by itself or others. If the suffering of God be denied, then Christianity must discover a new terminology and obliterate the statement "God is love" from its Scriptures.[60] For Moltmann also, 'The theology of the divine passion is founded on the biblical tenet, "God is

love".[61]

From the assumption that real love is vulnerable to suffering, Moltmann also argues that, so far from impassibility making God superior to humanity, 'a God who cannot suffer is poorer than any man. For a God who is incapable of suffering is a being who cannot be involved. Suffering and injustice do not affect him. And because he is so completely insensitive, he cannot be affected or shaken by anything. He cannot weep, for he has no tears. But the one who cannot suffer cannot love either. So he is also a loveless being.'[62]

The kinds of suffering which are involved in human personal relations include compassion, in which the lover suffers sympathetically with the beloved who is suffering, and it is the divine sympathy which comes to the fore especially in discussions which focus on the problem of human suffering. A stronger form of sympathy is active solidarity with the suffering person, where the lover actually shares the situation from which the beloved is suffering.[63] The cross has often been understood along these lines. But human relationships also involve the pain of being hurt by the beloved, the suffering of rejected love, and the pain involved in forgiveness and reconciliation. These kinds of divine suffering come to the fore where the doctrinal focus is on human sin and rebellion, and have entered extensively into modern treatments of the atonement.

For some writers, especially Kitamori, the special character of the divine pain arises from the fact of God's wrath, a theme which fits well with the emphasis of the prophets, as expounded by Heschel (above), and also with the interpretation of the cross in the Lutheran tradition (to which Kitamori belongs), where the cross is seen as a victory of the divine love over the divine wrath. For Kitamori, God suffers because his love for fallen humanity cannot be the kind of love which liberal theology attributes to him, which envisages no real obstacle to his immediate love of humanity. Rather, in the face of sin, God's immediate love turns to anger, but since he continues to love those who should not be loved,

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he suffers the conflict of love and wrath within him. In the victory of his love over his wrath God's pain mediates his love to sinners.[64]

The analogy of the suffering of human personal love can lead not only in the direction of the theology of the cross, but also to a trinitarian interpretation of the divine suffering: 'To us the bitterest pain imaginable is that of a father allowing his son to suffer and die. Therefore God spoke his ultimate word, "God suffers pain," by using the father-son relationship.'[65]

4. The crucified God

The cross is the point at which every genuinely Christian theology has found itself obliged to speak in some way of the suffering of God, even if, as often in traditional theology, the statement is highly qualified.

The English tradition has made much of the cross as the central revelation of God's nature, and therefore of the sufferings of Christ on the cross as revealing the divine passibility. The cross is the expression in this world of the suffering in the eternal heart of God.[66] In this respect, the tradition stems from the American theologian Horace Bushnell who, in a famous passage, frequently quoted in the literature, wrote: 'It is as if there were a cross unseen, standing on its undiscovered hill, far back in the ages, out of which were sounding always, just the same deep voice of suffering love and patience, that was heard by mortal ears from the sacred hill of Calvary.'[67] One of Bushnell's English followers, C. A. Dismore, continued the thought: 'there was a cross in the heart of God before there was one planted on the green hill outside of Jerusalem. And now that the cross of wood has been taken down, the one in the heart of God abides, and it will remain so long as there is one sinful soul for whom to suffer.'[68]

It should be noted that this view of the historical sufferings of Jesus as a kind of temporal revelation of eternal truth is not necessarily tied to incarnational Christology, but can be adopted by writers, such as H. R. Rashdall[69] and Frances Young,[70] who do not see the sufferings of Jesus as actually experienced by God as his own human sufferings (as in orthodox Christology), but see the divine suffering revealed by the human suffering of Jesus.

Writers in the tradition of Luther's *theologia crucis*, such as Kitamori and Moltmann, are more inclined to emphasize the cross as not just an illustration of the divine suffering, but itself the decisive event of divine suffering, without confining God's suffering to the cross. Although he does not establish the point very clearly, it appears that for Moltmann this is so because the cross is not just a revelation of the divine sympathy for those who suffer, but an act of divine solidarity with 'the godless and the godforsaken', in which the Son of God actually enters their situation of godforsakenness. Only as the godforsaken man Jesus and as the Father of the godforsaken man Jesus, could God suffer in the way that he did in the event of the cross. It is important to establish this point if a theology of divine suffering is not to have the effect of reducing the cross to a mere illustration of what God suffers throughout history. Further clarification is still needed as to how the cross, understood in this way as a unique event of divine suffering, relates to God's suffering at other times.

Traditional theology, afraid of the ancient 'patripassian' heresy,[71] confined the suffering of the cross to the Son, but in recent theology writers as diverse as Barth,[72] Kitamori,[73] Galot,[74] and Moltmann have affirmed that the Father also, in his love for the Son, must be understood to suffer in the event of the cross.[75] For Moltmann, this is essential to his understanding of the cross as the event which necessitates trinitarian language about God,[76] and to his claim that 'we can only talk about God's suffering in trinitarian terms'.[77] For Moltmann, the cross is the event of God's love for the godless, in which the Father forsakes his Son and delivers him to death. The surrender of the Son to death is the action of both the Father and the Son, and in the suffering of the Son both the Father and the Son suffer, though in different ways. The Son suffers abandonment by the Father as he dies; the Father suffers in grief the death of the Son.

'The grief of the Father is just as important as the death of the Son.'[78] But the painful gulf of separation between Father and Son is still spanned by their love, and so the Holy Spirit is the powerful love which proceeds from this event to reach godforsaken human beings.[79] Essential to Moltmann's position is the view that the cross is an event of suffering internal to God's own trinitarian being. It therefore determines the Christian doctrine of God, and also makes possible Moltmann's treatment of the theodicy problem (see below), in which he sees the whole history of human suffering taken by the cross within God's own trinitarian history.

5. Divine suffering and theodicy

It is part of the character of the specially modern awareness of the problem of suffering that any attempt to justify human suffering, in all its enormity, is ruled out. An authentic human response to suffering must always

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retain an element of protest against suffering which cannot be justified. Hence the autocratic God of absolute power who simply presides over this suffering world and cannot himself be reached by suffering appears a cosmic monster. It seems possible to justify God ('theodicy') only if he too suffers. 'The only credible theology for Auschwitz is one that makes God an inmate of the place.'[80]

Though this is a widespread motive for reflection on divine suffering,[81] again it is Moltmann (in *The Crucified God*) who has made this the central feature of his approach to the issue and focused it on the cross. He sees the theology of the crucified God as opening a way forward in relation to the problem of suffering, beyond the unsatisfactory alternatives of 'metaphysical theism', with its impassible God, and 'protest atheism', with its rebellion against a world in which innocent suffering happens. Theism cannot explain suffering without justifying it, but nor can atheism keep up its protest against suffering without the longing for God's righteousness in the world. The crucified God, however, shares in the suffering of the world, and in Jesus' dying question he himself takes up humanity's protest against suffering and the open question of God's righteousness in the world.[82] Thus for the sufferer God is not just the incomprehensible God who inflicts suffering, but 'the human God, who cries with him and intercedes for him with his cross where man in his torment is dumb'.[83] God himself maintains the protest against suffering.

However, if God were only 'the fellow-sufferer who understands' (Whitehead), it is arguable that the problem of suffering would be, not alleviated, but aggravated. It is no consolation to the sufferer to know that God is as much a helpless victim of evil as he is himself.[84] In answer to this, Moltmann can argue, first, that the divine solidarity with sufferers does help in that it transforms the character of suffering: it heals the deepest pain in human suffering, which is godforsakenness.[85] But secondly, and characteristically, Moltmann will not isolate the cross from the resurrection: 'Without the resurrection, the cross really is quite simply a tragedy and nothing more than that.'[86] The resurrection is God's promise of liberation from suffering for all those with whom Christ is identified in his cross, the godless and the godforsaken. In the cross all human suffering is taken within God's own 'trinitarian history' in hope for the joy of God's eschatological future.[87] God 'is vulnerable, takes suffering and death on himself in order to heal, to liberate and to confer new life. The history of God's suffering in the passion of the Son and the sighings of the Spirit serves the history of God's joy in the Spirit and his completed felicity at the end. That is the ultimate goal of God's history of suffering in the world.'[88] The message of divine suffering would be no gospel without the message of the divine victory over suffering.

Conclusion

It seems increasingly obvious that the Greek philosophical inheritance in traditional theology was adopted without the necessary critical effect of the central Christian insight into the divine nature: the love of God revealed in the cross of Christ. For the Greeks, suffering implied deficiency of being, weakness, subjection, instability. But the cross shows us a God who suffers out of the fullness of his being because he is love. He does not suffer against his will, but willingly undertakes to suffer with and for those he loves. His suffering does not deflect him from his purpose, but accomplishes his purpose. His transcendence does not keep him aloof from the world, but as transcendent love appears in the depth of his self-sacrificing involvement in the world. Finally, if Christians know anything about God from the cross, it is that 'the weakness of God is stronger than men' (1 Cor. 1:25). The cross does not make God a helpless victim of evil, but is the secret of his power and his triumph over evil. This is why 'only the suffering God can help'.[89]

The anthropological corollary is, as always, important. The man or woman who lives within the *pathos* of the crucified God becomes capable of real love, which is concerned for others, sensitive to their suffering, ready for the pain of loving the unlovable, vulnerable to sorrow and hurt as well as open to joy and pleasure.[90] If a cold and invulnerable self-sufficiency is not the divine ideal, it is a foolish idolatry to make it the human ideal.[91]

References

[1] H. M. Reltton, *Studies in Christian Doctrine* (London: Macmillan, 1960), p. 79. (Ch. 2 of this book was first published in the *Church Quarterly Review* in 1917.)

[2] Mention should also be made of the earlier work of the American theologian Horace Bushnell, *The Vicarious Sacrifice* (London: Alexander Strahan, 1866), which had a good deal of influence on the English tradition. On Bushnell, see F. W. Dillistone, *The Christian Understanding of*

Atonement (Welwyn: James Nisbet, 1968), pp. 243-6.

[3] J. K. Mozley, *The Impassibility of God: A Survey of Christian Thought* (Cambridge: CUP, 1926), ch. 2. Mozley's survey does not, however, include all important contributions within his period: he misses, e.g., H. R. Rashdall, *The Idea of Atonement in Christian Theology* (London: Macmillan, 1919), pp. 450-4. Cf. also A. M. Ramsey, *From Gore to Temple* (London: Longmans, 1960), pp. 58-9, who comments: 'Equally characteristic of Anglican divinity have been both the move towards patristicism and the drawing back' (p. 59)

[4] E.g. B. R. Brasnett, *The Suffering of the Impassible God* (London: SPCK, 1928); H. M. Relton, *A Study in Christology* (London: SPCK, [2]1929); W. R. Matthews, *God. In Christian Thought and Experience* (London: Nisbet, 1930), pp. 246-9; *idem*, *Essays in Construction* (London: Nisbet, 1933), ch. 17; E. S. Jones, *Christ and Human Suffering* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1933); *Doctrine in the Church of England* (London: SPCK, 1938), pp. 55-6; O. C. Quick, *Doctrines of the Creed* (London: Nisbet, 1938), pp. 184-7; H. W. Robinson, *Suffering human and divine* (London: SCM, 1940); L. Hodgson, *The Doctrine of the Trinity* (London: Nisbet, 1943), p. 71; T. H. Hughes, *The Atonement* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1949); D. Jenkins, *The Glory of Man* (London: SCM Press, 1967), pp. 106-10; K. J. Woollcombe, 'The Pain of God', *SJT* 20 (1967), pp. 129-48; L. Paul, *First Love: A Journey* (London: SPCK, 1977), pp. 187-9; W. H. Vanstone, *Love's Endeavour, Love's Expense* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1977); F. Young, in J. Hick (ed.), *The Myth of God Incarnate* (London: SCM Press, 1977), pp. 36-7; *idem*, *Can These Dry Bones Live?* London: SCM Press, 1982); G. W. H. Lampe, *God as Spirit* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), pp. 209-10.

[5] For a very brief survey, see D. D. Williams, *Interpreting Theology 1918-1952* (London: SCM Press, 1952), pp. 113-7.

[6] Moltmann's doctrine of divine suffering was first developed apparently in ignorance of the English tradition, of which he later became aware from Mozley's book: see *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God* (ET: London: SCM Press, 1981), pp. 30-6. He admits: 'In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries it was English theology which carried on the theological discussion about God's passibility. Continental theology passed it by unheedingly' (p. 30).

[7] *Tragic Sense of Life* (ET: London: Constable, 1954). The original work in Spanish appeared in 1912. On Unamuno, see Moltmann, *Trinity*, pp. 36-42.

[8] N. Berdyaev, *The Meaning of History* (ET: London: Geoffrey Bles, 1939), and other works. *The Meaning of History* originated as lectures in Moscow in 1919-1920. On Berdyaev, see Moltmann, *Trinity*, pp. 42-7.

[9] ET: London: SCM Press, 1966. For a brief summary of Kitamori's views, see W. McWilliams, 'Divine Suffering in Contemporary Theology', *SJT* 33 (1900), pp. 43-7.

[10] E.g. K. Chung-Choon, 'God's Suffering in Man's Struggle', in J. C. England (ed.), *Living Theology in Asia* (London: SCM Press, 1981), pp. 15-21. Cf. now V. Samuel and C. Sugden (eds.), *Sharing Jesus in the Two-Thirds World* (London: Marshalls, 1983). See also J. Y. Lee, *God Suffers for us* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974).

[11] On Cone, see McWilliams, *art. cit.*, pp. 39-43.

[12] See, e.g., D. D. Williams, 'Suffering and Being in Empirical Theology', in B. L. Meland ed., *The Future of Empirical Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), pp. 175-94.

[13] E. Brunner, *The Christian Doctrine of God: Dogmatics I* (London: Lutterworth, 1949), pp. 268, 294. For a negative comment on Brunner's treatment, see Woollcombe, *art. cit.*, pp. 130-1.

[14] E. Jungel, *The Doctrine of the Trinity: God's Being is in Becoming* (ET: Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), pp. 83-8, makes the most of Barth's statements on this, most of which were missed by Woollcombe, *art. cit.*, pp. 131-2.

[15] D. Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison* (London: SCM Press, [3]1967), pp. 348-9, 360-1, 370.

[16] J. Galot, *Dieu souffre-t-il?* (Paris: P. Lethielleux, 1976). For a brief account of Galot's position, see E. L. Mascall, *Whatever happened to the Human Mind?* (London: SPCK, 1980), pp. 87-93.

[17] H. Mühlen, *Die Veränderlichkeit Gottes als Horizont einer zukünftigen Christologie* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1969); H. Kung, *Menschwerdung Gottes* (Freiburg/Basel/Vienna: Herder, 1970) Exkurs II; *idem*, *On Being a Christian* (London: Collins, [2]1978), pp. 434-5.

[18] Ch. 2. See also 'The Crucified God and Apathetic Man', in *The Experiment Hope* (ET: London: SCM Press, 1975), pp. 69-84; 'Anxiety', in *Experiences of God* (ET: London: SCM Press, 1980), pp. 37-54.

[19] On Moltmann's view of divine suffering, see J. J. O'Donnell, *Trinity and Temporality* (Oxford: OUP, 1983), ch. 4; R. Bauckham, in P. Toon and J. D. Spiceland (eds.), *One God in Trinity* (London: Bagster, 1980), pp. 121-4; M. Welker (ed.), *Diskussion Über Jürgen Moltmanns Bach 'Der gekreuzigte Gott'* (München: Kaiser, 1979).

[20] On Philo, see J. C. McLelland, *God the Anonymous: A Study in Alexandrian Philosophical Theology* (Cambridge, Mass.: Philadelphia Patristic Foundation, 1976), pp. 37-40.

[21] See R. B. Edwards, 'The Pagan Doctrine of the Absolute Unchangeableness of God', *Religious Studies* 14 (1978), pp. 305-13.

[22] Cf. W. Pannenberg, 'The Appropriation of the Philosophical Concept of God as a Dogmatic Problem of Early Christian Theology', in *Basic Questions in Theology* vol. 2 (ET: London: SCM Press, 1971), pp. 119-83.

[23] Cf. especially Gregory Thaumaturgus' treatise on divine impassibility, summarized and quoted in Mozley, *Impassibility*, pp. 63-72; and comments in C. E. Gunton, *Yesterday and Today: A Study of Continuities in Christology* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1983), p. 95; McLelland, *God*, pp. 141-2. Gregory anticipates Barth's view that God is 'not his own prisoner', i.e. his impassible nature cannot be a constraint on his freedom. But Gregory still seems to think that the wholly voluntary 'suffering' of God in Christ is not experienced as suffering, i.e. it is not unpleasant in any way, since he triumphs over his sufferings in the act of suffering them. Cf. also the much less reflective comments of Ignatius, *Pol.* 3:2; *Eph.* 7:2; Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* 3:16:6.

[24] *Theol. Or.* 4:5.

[25] On the problem of impassibility in patristic Christology, see W. Elert, *Der Ausgang der altkirchlichen Christologie* (Berlin: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1957); Gunton, *Yesterday*, pp. 94-6. On the meaning of Cyril's paradox, see F. M. Young, 'A Reconsideration of Alexandrian Christology', *JEH* 22 (1971), pp. 112-3.

[26] On this theme in Clement of Alexandria, see McLelland, *God*, p.78-92.

[27] Cf. M. Jarrett-Kerr, *The Hope of Glory* (London: SCM Press, 1952), ch. 2, for a nuanced appreciation of the basic concerns of the traditional position. Other examples of recognition of elements of truth in the divine *apatheia* are W. Temple, *Christus Veritas* (London: Macmillan, 1924), pp. 269-70; McLelland, *God*, p. 160; Moltmann, *The Crucified God* (ET: London: SCM Press, 1974), pp. 269-70; *Experiment*, p. 74; *Trinity*, p. 23.

[28] Moltmann, *Crucified God*, pp. 269-70.

[29] Cf. Mozley, *Impassibility*, pp. 145, 152, 153, 163; Brasnett, *Suffering*, p. 12; Galot, *Dieu*, pp. 154-5.

[30] *Trinity*, p.23.

[31] Cf. F. House, 'The Barrier of Impassibility', *Theology* 83 (198, pp. 409-10, though he incorrectly thinks that concern about the issue subsequently faded; Mozley, *Impassibility*, p. 160, on Studdert-Kennedy.

[32] P. 137. (The original Japanese work appeared in 1946.) Cf., however, England (ed.), *Living Theology*, p. 34, for other Japanese theologians' criticism of the book as showing 'little awareness of the suffering known by many of his fellow Japanese'.

[33] *Letters*, p. 361.

[34] *Crucified God*, p. 1; *Experiences*, pp. 7-9.

[35] *Crucified God*, pp. 277-8; *Experiment*, pp. 72-3.

[36] J. H. Cone, *God of the Oppressed* (London: SPCK, [2]1977), pp. 139, 172-7.

[37] For a moving modern example of the same thought, see Kim Malthe-Bruun's words quoted in Woolcombe, *art. cit.*, 146-7.

[38] Cf. especially T. E. Pollard, 'The Impassibility of God', *SJT* 8 (1955), pp. 353-64.

[39] A. J. Heschel, *The Prophets* (New York/Evanston: Harper and Row, 1962).

[40] For the deficiencies of the traditional treatment of anthropopathisms, see L. J. Kuypers, 'The Suffering and Repentance of God', *SJT* 22 (1969), pp. 257-77.

[41] Heschel, *Prophets*, p. 241.

[42] *Ibid.*, p. 235.

[43] *Ibid.*, p. 257.

[44] *Ibid.*, p. 235.

[45] For earlier use of the more obvious texts to support divine passibility, see, e.g., Bushnell, *Vicarious Sacrifice*, p. 31.

[46] Note especially his treatment of the theme in Jeremiah (*Prophets*, pp. 109-13) and Second Isaiah (pp. 151-2).

[47] Note especially Hosea (pp. 49-56) and Jeremiah (pp. 114-27).

[48] *Prophets*, ch. 18.

[49] *Ibid.*, p. 258.

[50] *Ibid.*, ch. 15.

[51] *Ibid.*, p. 276.

[52] E.g. E. S. Gerstenberger and W. Schrage, *Suffering* (ET: Nashville: Abingdon, 1980), pp. 98-102; E. Jacob, 'Le Dieu souffrant, un theme théologique vétérotestamentaire', *ZAW* 95 (1983), pp. 1-8.

[53] *Experiment*, pp. 75-7; *Crucified God*, pp. 270-2; *Trinity*, pp. 25-7; J Moltmann and P. Lapide, *Jewish Monotheism and Christian Trinitarian Doctrine* (ET: Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981), pp. 47-9.

[54] Kitamori, *Pain*, p. 59; cf. also p. 156.

[55] *Ibid.*, p.21.

[56] For the political overtones of the traditional view (God as absolute monarch), see Studdert-Kennedy, quoted in Mozley, *Impassibility*, p. 159. It could also be argued that there are sexist overtones: the purely active god of traditional theism is a masculine God, from whom the more 'feminine' characteristics of receptivity and capacity for suffering have been excluded.

[57] For this development as characteristic of nineteenth-century atonement theology, and related to divine passibility, see especially Dillistone, *Atonement*, ch. 6.

[58] Cf. Jenkins, *Glory*, pp. 106-7, on God as compassionate rather than condescending.

[59] Most recently, Vanstone, *Love's Endeavour*.

[60] H. M. Hughes, *What is the Atonement?* (London: James Clarke, n.d.), pp. 93-4.

[61] *Trinity*, p. 57.

[62] *Crucified God*, p. 222.

[63] This seems to be the point of Lee's distinction between 'empathic participation' and 'sympathetic identification': God's suffering, he claims, is the former, not the latter (*God Suffers for us*, pp. 10-13).

[64] Kitamori, *Pain, passim*, especially ch. 10. Cf. also Lee, *God Suffers for us*, pp. 15-17.

[65] Kitamori, *Pain*, p. 47. The point has a specially Japanese appeal, see p. 135. See further, below, on Moltmann.

[66] Cf. Mozley, *Impassibility*, pp. 146-9, 153.

[67] Bushnell, *Vicarious Sacrifice*, p. 31.

[68] *Atonement in Literature and Life* (1906), quoted Mozley, *Impassibility*, p. 148.

[69] *Idea of Atonement*, pp. 450-4.

[70] In J. Hick (ed.), *The Myth of God Incarnate*, pp. 36-7.

[71] See Mozley, *Impassibility*, pp. 29-36.

[72] *CD IV/2*, p. 357.

[73] *Pain*, p. 115.

[74] *Dieu*, ch. 2.

[75] The New Testament does not speak in so many words of the Father's suffering in the cross, but arguably implies it in Rom. 8:32; see Moltmann, *Crucified God*, pp. 242-3.

[76] *Crucified God*, p. 207.

[77] *Trinity*, p. 25.

[78] *Crucified God*, p. 243.

[79] Moltmann's trinitarian interpretation of the cross is found in *Crucified God*, pp. 240-9, and with some further reflection in *Trinity*, pp. 75-83.

[80] K. Surin, 'The Impassibility of God and the Problem of Evil', *SJT* 35 (1982), p. 105.

[81] See also S. P. Schilling, *God and Human Anguish* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1977), ch. 11.

[82] *Crucified God*, pp. 219-227.

[83] *Ibid.*, p. 252.

[84] Cf. E. L. Mascall, *Existence and Analogy* (London: Longmans, 1949), p. 142.

[85] *Crucified God*, p. 46.

[86] *Experiences*, p. 53.

[87] *Crucified God*, p. 278.

[88] *The Church in the Power of the Spirit* (ET: London: SCM Press, 1977), p. 64 (my italics). Cf. C. E. Rolt, quoted Mozley, *Impassibility*, pp. 155-6.

[89] Bonhoeffer, *Letters*, p. 361.

[90] Cf. Moltmann, *Experiment*, pp. 69-84.

[91] In my thinking about the subject of this article, I have been helped not only by the books referred to, but also by Dr Paul S. Fiddes' lectures on 'The Suffering of God', given as the Whitley Lectures for 1980, at the Northern Baptist College, Manchester. These lectures, when published, will be a very important contribution to the subject.



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