The created order expressed the perfect goodness of God. By doubting the identity of God man unaccountably granted existence to evil. In the midst of his fears and uncertainties his experiences became excruciatingly painful.

Many persons were led to believe that God's gracious restraints experienced as suffering, fully expressed His nature. Job discovered that God is far greater in grace than the impersonal arbiter of justice which some men believed Him to be.

God's covenant people, Israel, mistook His free election as some sort of inflexible privilege. The most severe suffering could not induce them to repent of their evil. Perceptive spiritual men came to see that God would have to act in a new way to reveal His identity and bind His people to Him. They also came to understand how intense suffering experienced by a righteous person or people could redound to the benefit of others.

Israelites in exile discovered new dimensions of God's grace when even in the midst of exilic suffering He visited them in His Glory.

Israel suffered because God refused to let them go. In and through Israel's suffering the radical nature of man's sin is revealed. But God's identity is also revealed as the One who loves so much that He will not be deflected from His purpose of effecting reconciliation with man.

The humanity of Jesus Christ as well as His solidarity with Israel are both evident from the circumstances of His birth and parentage. His will to solidarity with sinful mankind is clear in His baptism. His identity as Son of God is revealed in His acceptance of filial obedience.

Jesus Christ gives evidence of His sinlessness in the temptation in that He refuses to entertain doubt as to the identity of God. It is likewise evident that His way to ultimate victory will be along the path of suffering on which He will make no use of the usual resources associated
II

with kingship and power. On the cross He refuses to renounce His dependence on His Father and experiences the true forsakenness due to sinful men. But being Son of God He reveals once and for all the full dimensions of God's identity; demonstrating that God's gracious love for man is so unconditional that He Himself wills to assume the burden of punishment and suffering due to man. In His resurrection the permanence of His work is guaranteed.

Reflecting on the person and work of its Lord the Church felt obliged to assert the unity and the distinction between Jesus Christ and God the Father. Theologians persistently refused to allow any expression which would reduce the unity of God to polytheism or which would deny the reality of Jesus' manhood.

Jesus' suffering made it difficult for Christologians to state the mode of the existence of the divine and human in the one person of Jesus Christ; a truth which they knew it was essential to maintain. Room had to be left in statements describing the presence of divinity and humanity in Christ, so that neither was obscured or denied.

God the Father does not suffer as God the Son because He is not incarnate. But since He is a personal being He feels grief and vexation at man's sin and this "pain" of His is reflected in the sending of His Son and that Son's willingness to suffer in full expiation of man's sin. In this way Jesus Christ reveals the true nature of Godhead.

Jesus Christ has truly revealed the nature of the gracious God. With all of his doubt removed, man can now face life with new power. In solidarity with all men Jesus Christ has claimed human agony as His own. The Christian, the Jew and the unbeliever suffer after his determinative agony and whether they know it or not bear witness to Him and His salutary work.

Any theology of suffering must of necessity be centred in the person and work of Jesus Christ.
SUMMARY

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Any theology of suffering must of necessity be centred in the person and work of Jesus Christ.
Jesus Christ in Human Suffering
A THEOLOGY OF SUFFERING
INTERPRETED THROUGH THE INCARNATION

By
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INTRODUCTION

The path of suffering in revelation parallels the way of salvation. Repeatedly throughout the Scriptures the experience of suffering coincides with saving events. If it is true to describe revelation as a Heilageschichte it is likewise true to point out that it incorporates a Leidensgeschichte. If it is true to say that the unity of the Scriptural revelation and of theological thought is rooted in God's saving activity expressed in the life of Israel and the Church, but definitively in the person and event of Jesus Christ, then it is also true to observe that a thread of suffering is woven through the whole pattern, touching the central figure with the most fearful consequences but also linking the end to the beginning.

Frequently suffering seems to attend the gracious acts of God. A reprieve from the immediate effect of the death sentence incumbent on man for his rebellion against God is followed by painful consequences to woman, cursing of the soil, and burdensome yokes thrust on man's neck. The Exodus is followed by wilderness wanderings. The coming of God as Emmanuel immediately sets in motion forces that gather momentum and burst out with desperate vengeance on Golgotha. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit in a gathered and sent community results in storm clouds of affliction appearing on the immediate horizon. A Church history so charged with the martyrdom of Christians, right within the scope of contemporary events assures that the pattern of God's saving activity has not been broken nor has the thread of suffering dropped out of the design.

The references to grace and suffering made in this way are not intended to imply that both the acts of salvation and the afflictions, have the same source, are a part of the same plan or that the sufferings are bound by
inherent necessity to attend the outworking of God's will and intention. To leap blindly to the acceptance of that implication would involve the imputation of motives to God that would call His very being radically into question; His being at least as understood throughout the history of revelation. For God's motives are not mixed or confused as are those of men. There are not two faces of God, one offering the fatherly countenance of grace while the other breathes out vapours of wrath. God has one single intention and that is to elicit a response of childlike faith from man his creature. And to accomplish this He has demonstrated His fatherly nature in the communication of His Word decisively as it is made flesh in Jesus Christ. It is for this reason that suffering presents itself as so important a subject for theological inquiry. For if there were two or more gods each controlling various aspects of divine activity then suffering could be deemed the domain of one and grace of another. Or if God were seen to vary in a confusion of motives and intentions one event of grace might be construed to be the product of a certain mood of God; an occurrence of suffering merely the offspring of a different and opposite inclination. Or if God were suspected of weakness in that He could no longer exert full control over a rebelling creation then suffering might be seen to stem from such "divine incapacity". However, when God, as revealed to faith appears as the One sovereign being, with the single unalloyed purpose and intent of man's salvation, then the phenomenon of suffering poses itself as a topic worthy of investigation.

Very frequently when such an activity of enquiry is undertaken suffering is treated as a problem, as if to say room must be made in the theological structure to receive this jagged-edged piece. Early speculation created a niche by extending the place allowed to retributive punishment so that an indissoluble and completely reversible link was established - sin leads to
punishment (suffering) and therefore the occurrence of suffering unfailingly indicates the commission of sin. This of course threw doubt on the faithful purposes of the covenant-making God when glaring disparities seemed to appear between conduct and deserts in individual cases. Others reflecting on the nature of suffering found a place for it in close relation to divine instruction. Suffering is permitted to exist, therefore it must have a constructive and positive purpose. Individual afflictions, the corporate suffering of a nation, experience or observed, might well fill the role of an instrument in the hand of an all-wise God to direct and influence the life of His people. Here suffering almost escapes the problem category, but not quite. For why should an instrument of instruction be chosen that carries within it such potentialities for the growth of bitterness and rebellion? And further why should any instrument of instruction be necessary beyond that of the word uttered by God in His acts of grace? If that word is insufficient then surely its incarnation would be inadequate and the foundation of faith is swept away. Clearly Jesus Christ is not the incarnation of a will to inflict suffering whether with an end of retributive punishment or positive instruction. Though it may be the most natural way, looking out as it does, from the centre at which man stands, the problem approach usually made to suffering can only conclude with a surd, an insoluble remainder, a phenomenon in real and actual existence but one that cannot be fitted into a systematic structure.

Quite beyond these limits of the problem approach to suffering there is the fact that the very posing of a problem presupposes effort that will be effective in arriving at a solution. But in this instance such a solution would seem to call upon categories of evaluative judgment that lie quite above and beyond God Himself. Answer could only be given through appeal to levels of logic and reasoning that are apparently inaccessible to God or He would
certainly have employed them. To suggest a solution by way of response to a problem approach would subject God to the constraint of a system quite alien to Him or would at least pressure God into some form of being foreign to the nature we know in Jesus Christ, whose activity in the face of suffering was to exhaust himself in healing diseases of body, mind and spirit. Indeed, speculation about the problem of suffering is a barren intellectual exercise often undertaken by those who have not suffered themselves nor been in close proximity to real suffering. When affliction actually touches a life its impact is either swallowed up in faith or grows into a monster of resentment, bitterness, and rejection of God. In either case the solution has been reached, either by a word of grace accepted, or by rejection of the same grace, usually beyond the perimeters of assimilation into a logical pattern.

What avenue then, is still open along which a study can proceed, if the problem approach implying a formally logical solution has been effectively barred? The thesis herein proposed is that suffering can only be approached from the positive ground established in answer to the following questions. Is it not the case that the man in whom the Spirit of God dwells, will be, and is bound to be, subject to affliction? By the very fact of his existence in a world where good and evil are mixed in hopeless confusion, will the man in whom there exists something of God's own order not come into conflict with the disorder of his environment? Will he not be like a man of one peculiar race amidst a host of indifferent or actively hostile individuals of another? Because he is who he is, one in relation to I Am Who I Am, one dependent utterly on grace, a man "in Jesus Christ", will he not experience the hatred, envy, jealousy, distrust and affliction, possibly unto annihilation of those who misinterpret, misunderstand and misrepresent him?
His suffering may be physical, mental or spiritual but will there be any doubt of its reality? Is this affliction not inescapable for the man of faith? Could he hope to avert the spur of his peculiar affliction except by utterly and completely renouncing his relationship with God? What then keeps him from being overwhelmed by the onslaught of his agony? How is the suffering of man in whom the Spirit of God dwells related to the agony of the Jew and the unbeliever; and vice versa? Above all where do the sufferings of Jesus Christ, Himself a man, fit into this picture? When selected foci of reflection on suffering as revealed in the life of Israel, Jesus Christ and the Church are considered in answer to these questions, according to the logic of grace, certain illuminating conclusions may be drawn with regard to the topic of suffering.

Lest there be some fear that the bounds of suffering are too narrowly conceived when we view it from the perspective of "the man in whom the Spirit of God dwells", it may be necessary to point out that suffering only exists for such a one in the peculiar sense with which we are concerned. Certainly there is suffering among those who do not reflect upon it from the point of view of faith in God. But for such, though the pain may be just as physically acute there is not the same burden as that which falls on those who know God in faith, nor the same possibilities for redemption of that suffering. Certainly there is suffering in the rest of creation as the blood-red struggle for existence lurches along. No one can deny or would attempt denial of these objective facts. But again it is only when these events are viewed from the unique stance of the man who sees all of God's creation as revealed to faith imparted through the salvation history that reflection on the matter is of import for this study. Here is no attempt
to claim that some suffering is illusory but only to circumscribe more carefully the legitimate grounds on which this effort must proceed.
Suffering: In the Beginning

Perceptive men stood in the direct crossfire of real existence. They knew life at its cutting edge. They had experienced the iron fist of the elemental forces, in drought, famine, and pestilence. They were acquainted with the flesh rending travail that thrusts itself upon woman in childbirth. They themselves knew what it meant to have back-breaking physical toil as a constant companion. Brutality in foreign war and civil conflict was no stranger to their catalogue of experience. Death waited to claim them too, and they were aware of it. Life, existence, in all its poignant reality bound them to itself and they were acutely conscious of that fact.

They stood face to face with reality. But they also stood in direct confrontation with their God; the God who had established a history of gracious acts of deliverance executed on their behalf; the God who had declared himself in covenant relationship to their father Abraham and had consistently lived up to the Lordship of that agreement. So, confronted by their God who had established himself in truth, they refused to deal falsely with the substance of living that was thrust in their teeth. They devised no clouds of illusion to screen out the burning rays. Life, lived as they were forced to live it, could not be relegated to the region of mere fantasy. They refused to permit existence to disintegrate into a mere shadowy being or even non-being of nothingness and despair. God to them was God; and existence was existence. They were inextricably and often painfully involved with both. Nor could they ever flee far enough to escape either. And so, apparently transfixed at this agonising point, made excruciating by the glaring, immovable realities of life in the foreground, and their gracious God seemingly
in the background, they struggled in faith to hear and be true to the word which they were sure that their God was speaking to them.

Inspired insight came out of their reflection. Piece by piece it took form and became incorporated in the verbal traditions and then into the written accounts of this people. In the crucible of experience and true to His gracious nature, God revealed Himself to His people. In this revealing, God remained one with His gracious self. Man was not lifted out of contact with his thorny existence. Nor were the searching points of life's agonies blunted. But gradually the shape of the relationship between God, man, and the universe became apparent to the reflecting faithful.

The first focus of theological reflection on the nature of these relationships which will be considered, is that which appears in the early chapters of Genesis, specifically in the creation accounts. Throughout this investigation the Biblical materials will be regarded in the form that they presently appear — that is edited, redacted and translated. The emphasis proposed is theological reflection not as opposed, but as complementary, to the exercises of a purely exegetical nature in which the more critical considerations would, of necessity, take up so large a role that reflection might become secondary. This is not to underestimate the importance of scholarly findings which reveal the existence of various strata of material making up the complete scriptural profile, and the significance of these discoveries for theological interpretation. It is only to say that the vast bulk of exegesis has been done in the past on the basis of the materials just as they were received. In order to engage meaningfully in interaction with such theological works it seems to be necessary to honour the method used. Any other approach would mean involvement in complex considerations which would tend to obscure the purpose of this enquiry.
What is evident from the very outset is that for these men there could be no doubt that God stood as the very source of all being. "In the beginning God created . . . " (Genesis I). Such a conclusion did not necessarily follow from the state of their existence but could only arise in light of their faith in the promise and act of God as they had come to know him. Indeed it might have been a good deal easier to conclude that some other creative force had been at work and had produced this flesh and spirit rending environment. In light of their actual existence in the crossfire of life it is remarkable that they could have been made receptors of such a revelation.

What is even more astounding is that their mouths could be made to repeat the conclusion of faith that "... it was very good." How could men who knew barbarous slavery, wilderness habitation on the knife-edge of survival and who lived in constant struggle with apostasy from within and aggression from without, ever find a place in intellectual expression of faith, for such a naked declaration? And yet they stated that God had created this environment and that it was very good: not merely existing, not just habitable, not just "an" environment but "this" environment where provision had been made for all segments of the creation to exist in harmony so that it might be termed "very good". To be sure other revelations granted to their reflective inquiring would give the reason for the rupture that has occurred in this "very good" state of affairs and resulted in the existing circumstances, but it is a remarkable fact that in the very throes of life these men could voice their belief in a creation that was "very good" as conceived and actualized by God in the first instance.

Such a declaration makes it quite impossible, in light of what would
come to pass, to suggest that God might have chosen to create an order different in this or that respect. It is not permissible to propose that God, knowing man's response from the outset, should have ordered affairs more wisely to avert the impending disaster. Whatever this creation is, it is "very good". And it is this because it belongs to the order of God. It is established in compliance with the being of God. It is "very good" because it is an act of that being. If creation should seem "imperfect" according to the canons of judgement brought to its evaluation by man these judgements are but empty husks. For man has neither the knowledge nor the wisdom to estimate the worth of what God has done according to principles of personal action vested in His being and therefore quite unavailable to man except by revelation from God. Creation was pronounced "very good" as it came into existence at the word of Him who is its Creator. "That God's work is good in no way means that the world is the best of all conceivable worlds. It means that the world lives completely in the presence of God, that it begins and ends in Him and that He is Lord."¹ Men who might well have doubted the goodness of creation nevertheless made it clear from the outset that it was "very good".

Among the creatures thus owned and affirmed by God stands man. While he arises from out of the elements of the earth he is nevertheless specially formed by God and animated directly from Him. To account for this unique being of man his person was said to be in the "image" of God. What is certain is that though he is in the "image" of God, man is not himself God. He is not granted a being identical with that of God and therefore is not capable of functioning in the same capacity as God. Man is not God but only

a creature in the "image" of God. When we speak of man we do not speak of God. Man is granted a being that is a reality aside from God. His existence has been granted to him in such a way that he is a living personal self, a unity of personal factors constituting a whole. If God be described as "I Am Who I Am" then man, his creature, must at least be "I am who I am" always in direct relation to the infinitely greater "I Am."

These early reflections on the activity of the Creator suggest no apparent reason for His activity. Behind it all lies a free and sovereign will to create and to accomplish. There is no apparent compulsion from outside Himself. There is no apparent lack or imperfection in His personal being which is completed or perfected. What God the Creator does He does in His absolute freedom to be who He is, and do what such a being does. Thus He, in His sovereign freedom, creates and among His works is man.

Now if man be seen to be created in the image of God, then he must be granted possession of certain personal attributes which at least reflect those of God. He must be thus rendered capable of accomplishing certain actions in expression of that self given to him. And if a part of God's inner being is seen to be the possession of sovereign freedom than at least this must also be reflected in man. "That God makes man free ... is expressed in the fact that He created them as an earthly image of Himself."¹

The same thought may be expressed in the opposite order. "In man God creates His image on earth. This means that man is like the Creator in that he is free."² Man is free to exist and function in the image of God, and this freedom must be taken with the utmost seriousness. It is granted to

2. D. Bonhoeffer, op. cit., p.36.
man by the gracious act of God. Once granted it will not be rescinded. Whatever the outcome of man's expression of this freedom it remains his.

This freedom, it must be noted is seen to be a part of the image of God and is therefore to be defined only in terms of the sovereign freedom of God Himself and not according to categories of delineation brought from some external source. His creative act reveals the nature of His freedom. ".. His free grace only becomes real in relation to us and God does not will to be free for Himself but for man." God's freedom is only defineable in terms of His relation to His creatures, especially in His specific relations to man. Thus "... freedom is a relationship between two persons." And "Being free means 'being free for the other' because the other has bound one to him" To exist in the image of God means freedom for man. Freedom to be for the other. It is not possible to define this freedom in terms of existence and function that are directed toward self alone. "With regard to the origin of both his nature and his destiny man is completely referred to and understood from God." Man is free to live in an attitude of grateful response to the gracious God who has granted him his existence. Man is free to be for God as the corresponding image of God's being for him.

Towards the rest of the created order man's ordained freedom is translated into dominion. Man is the being who is capable of and dares to function as the "lord" of creation in reflection of Him who is "Lord" of all. Man is free also to be "for" the creation. Just as his freedom in the image of

1. ibid, p.36.
2. ibid, p.36.
3. ibid, p.36.
God must be taken with the utmost seriousness so must his delegated dominion. Man is to exercise his rulership. To be an effective ruling power an agency must be set free from and yet declare itself, or be declared, "for" the body over which it is to exercise its prerogative. Man could not function as the holder of dominion over the balance of creation if he were not by the uniqueness of his being, in his freedom, in the image of God, freed from the rest of the order to be at the same time "for" it. Thus man is not the plant rooted to its Creator in a "vegetable" obedience to its environment. Nor is he chained to the instinctive responses by which the beasts in their "obedience" praise their Creator. Rather, by the act of God in His grace, man is given freedom to have dominion over God's created works. There is this sphere in which man's free and legitimate exercise of authority must be acknowledged and in no way compromised by attempts to see in it shadows of later events in which this freedom is jeopardized.

Standing firmly in the image of God, free from God, and yet for Him, free from creation, and yet for it, man is equipped with all the knowledge necessary to be who he is to be and to function in his appointed capacities. There is nothing that he lacks. He too, in the unity of the sexes, is pronounced "very good." Man does not need to seek out any further knowledge to complete his being or to serve as the ground for any other function. As created in the image of God he too is "perfect" in the sense that he is in relational harmony with his Creator and his allotted dominion. His knowledge is complete in that he knows who he is and what he is to do. For him there can be no desire to know or experience anything other than what it has been given to him to know and experience. He need not search elsewhere for factors to complete the meaning of, or forge a fuller harmony for, his existence.
Man, as God has created him, is completed both in his grateful obedience to the Creator and in free functioning as the lord of His created dominion. He cannot know anything other, for he only knows how to exercise his dominion. Any departure from this knowledge or activity would be an adventure into nowhere, by an agency with no will, no authentic being, for a purpose of accomplishing nothing. The very prohibitions named by the Creator to assist man in his existing and functioning serve as gracious limitations founded on fatherly love to assist man in every conceivable way to be and do only that which it is possible for man to be and do. Even the threat of death is understood as a fresh gift, as the grace of God.¹

And yet it is this very unexplainable, this very unnecessary, this very "impossible" that does take place. Man seeks to augment his already complete being by adding further knowledge. Not content only to know and experience God he must needs know and experience all. If God knows the fullness of reality then he too must have that fullness of knowledge. But for man all of reality is God. There is nothing else for him to know. There is no other one with whom to become acquainted. For man to turn from God and seek reality elsewhere is to turn to no-one. For him to cry out for relationship with another is to demand to know no-one. For him to seek to know more is to seek to know nothing. And so with nowhere to turn to and no-one to turn to and nothing more to learn, man turns into himself.

It is in himself in his very freedom that man, not discovers the possibility for evil, for it is not there, not encounters the existence of evil, for it is not there, but, for the very first time, gives existence to evil by daring to doubt the word of God, the word that God is who He truly

¹ D. Bonhoeffer, op. cit., p. 52.
says He is in being and act. "... man's ancient folly is in thinking he can understand God better from his freely assumed standpoint and from his notion of God than he can if he were to subject himself to His Words."1 It must not be here suggested that man's freedom, taken in the utmost seriousness, provided so much as the opportunity for this questioning of God. It was as "natural" for man to turn from God to himself as for an emaciated infant to turn starving from its mother's full breast. It was as possible for man to doubt God's Word as it would be for him to disbelieve that dawn would bring the light of day. There is no logic to man's decision to make this stride out of the warmth of God's grace into the icy blast of his own determination; from utter confidence in God's Word that He is Who He is to that state of doubt in which God is either "He Who I Say He Is" or "He Who May Not Be Who He Says He Is". But once the first doubt becomes word and then act it is too late to deny the novel existence of evil.

Moreover, there is no longer any possibility of restraining its influence apart from utterly destroying man. For by willing evil into being, man has simultaneously willed himself to be the being, the only being, who is capable of harbouring evil. Created as a being only capable of obedience to God he now becomes one who is only capable of evil, for his new centre of love and therefore utter loyalty is himself. So man is a new self. But this new self is a leprous organism. The original tissue of his being is now re-shaped, distorted, and even tortured by the infesting roots of this malignant growth. He is not merely a "sport" of "mutation" that one would normally expect in a series of generations.

He is now a completely new "germ cell" which is bound to propagate its twisted self to all succeeding generations.

Thus it is that the harmonious flow of relationships within the continuum of creation is overthrown. If God can no longer be trusted to be who He says He is, then man must live in fear of God. He must hide his presence from his God. For if God should find him He would immediately diagnose the leprosy of man's evil being and act. Man can no longer trust the Word of God that his helpmate is just that, and so he must needs possess her for his own satisfaction instead of in mutual intercourse. Moreover he can no longer expose himself in frankness to her for there is now a power loose within him that he has willed into being but which he can no longer control. He is uncertain of himself and his actions. This dare not be revealed and so he must needs be hidden. Further, since he is no longer the one created in the image of the One, but some sort of monstrous being, he can no longer exercise his dominion over the other creatures in the fashion originally intended. He is no longer free within the scope of freedom allotted to him by God but he has challenged its circumference and re-oriented its centre to himself. He is no longer free "for" lordship over creation, but only sees in creation that which he can brutalize into service to himself. It is clear that man cannot cling to this leprous being forever and so he must be driven from the environment in which he might yet find and partake of the source of life. He is therefore driven into a region where he can give full sway to the action demanded by his new being.

Still he is man. Still he is God's image in freedom. Still he has the functions appointed to him by God from the beginning. Woman must bear offspring as she was intended to do. No physiological change has apparently
taken place. And yet she now accomplishes her appointed task in the throes of a severity of anguish which formerly was unknown. Questioning God she can only fear the unknown. Full of fear she is torn with doubt and uncertainty. In this state her suffering is multiplied and she brings forth in anguish and pain. Man was created to till. Surely he knew the ache of straining muscles, the extremes of heat and cold, and all the injuries common to his lot. But now living in doubt and fear of God, no longer certain that his task is precisely as God has led him to believe it is by His Word, man knows a bitterness and suffering that was unknown heretofore. Separated from God, man must now exist as the being he has willed himself to be, and the consequences of this is the living death of existence in suffering and pain. His monstrosity of a being cannot be permitted its own free sway or it would batter down the very boundaries of order. Man must be negated for he is now a being which God can no longer fully affirm in every respect. This negation, this suffering, this death though tempered by the grace of God, springs directly from the evil man has willed into existence. Though faith may and does understand it as a "No" spoken by God, nevertheless this "No" has no other ground than God's grace acting in response to the activities of a being gone out of control, a being that would otherwise bring itself and its environment to complete chaos and destruction.

This most instructive and insightful understanding of God and His Word granted to these men of faith leaves us with a rich endowment of interpretation bearing on the nature of suffering. Man continues to be. He is not cut off. He continues to exist but his very existence in malignant distortion con-
stitutes radical questioning of God. Who is God that He should act as He
does, toward man, the rebelling creature? Man, in his freedom to acknow-
ledge and affirm God, and only God, inexplicably granted being to the inter-
rogation of his God and Creator. Man must now live in the shadow thrown by
this event. In spite of repeated communications of His true identity by
God, man lives out his days and generations quite unable to accept that re-
velation through the thorny hedge of his own doubt, uncertainty, and active
evil. Quite confused as to the identity of the God whom he is to serve he
will orient and re-orient himself towards false gods of his own manufacture.
Attempting to flee the reality of the true God as it breaks through into
his existence and lays demands on him, man thrusts his own masks on the face
of God and so renders a tenuous co-existence temporarily possible. As by
man's harbouring of doubt regarding God's identity and intention he first
gave reality to evil and then suffering, so now he endures, never free to
stop asking the question "Who is God?" and never totally freed by his own
effort to render a true answer. As his questioning gave opportunity to evil
and cause for suffering so now man's existence in suffering, painfully and
unceasingly repeats the question, "Who is God?" The Scriptures are the work
of such men who, bound to the presence of God by His grace, and in suffer-
ing, strive toward a true expression of God's being in which they then may
have reconciliation with Him.
Suffering: The Job Experiment

The only persons available to bear witness to God are those who, having acknowledged certain truths regarding the being of God in encounter and relation with Him, are yet plagued in their understanding by their inherited nature so that they continue in suffering interrogation of God. Even in the lives of those ordained by God to bear Him Scriptural witness, there is still to be found struggling and striving as the distorted views of God are shattered like so many imperfect vessels, and individuals as well as a people are re-moulded into ever more accurate images, reflecting more perfectly in their understanding and expression the true nature of their God. Such persons suffer the "abandonment" by the false image of God in which they have trusted and they frequently encounter the wrath of those who refuse to acknowledge the empty husk of divinity which together they have traditionally glorified. This motif is a common one in the pages of Scripture and forms the backdrop to many scenes of intense agony.

Cross-sections of the book of Job reveal various strands of theological reflection on the activity of God and thus on the concept of His being. These profiles also show differing stages in the flow of one character's thinking regarding his God as his thoughts are sifted through the searing wires of personal suffering, suffering made intensely acute by the fact that he, Job, steadfastly refuses to acquiesce and call a god, God, contrary to his convictions, even though these "convictions" are "merely" the negative certainties of his developing faith. The intention of the poet is "... to show the divinity of God, the humanity of man, and the
specific nature of the relation between a God who is truly God and a man who is truly man - namely, one of grace alone apprehended by faith. ¹

The God whom Job willingly and assiduously worships at the start is He who is the source of all. Job will not be seduced into postulating a divided or multi-sided Godhead with a chameleon-like personality. All that takes place has its source in the one God. "... le récit accepte, sans discussion, le monisme absolu de la théologie hébraïque, d'après lequel le mal n'est jamais attribué à l'action d'un anti-Dieu..."² Whatever may have been Job's experience in observing the suffering of other persons apparently innocent, or the disturbing good fortune of evil persons, prior to his own disastrous experiences, he at least begins on the solid ground of unshakable trust in the God he believes he knows. Though this God would seem to be grossly inconsistent and Job would have cause to call Him to task and even appeal to God against Himself yet, never does he falter in the affirmation of the monistic nature of the divine Being.

It is this faith in which Job is so firmly planted that sharpens the pricks of his suffering and provides substance for their deep penetration. For when calamity falls upon him he is not permitted the relatively easy adjustment to it that would be available to the person immersed in evil by his own express will in open repudiation of God, or to that other man who willingly granted existence to a host of different gods reflecting his varying experiences. "Suffering is only a problem for the man who already believes in God."³ "There is no problem in the suffering of a bad man!"⁴ Thus it is that

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a character, very orthodox in his faith and astute in his religious practice is chosen as the hero of a struggle leading to a fuller understanding of, and deeper faith in, God.

Sudden calamity befalls the prosperous man of faith. His earthly possessions are rapaciously wrested from him. His affliction is greatly intensified and personalized by the loss of his sons and daughters. And yet his faith remains firm. "... tout vient de lui (Dieu), la douleur comme la joie, la blessure comme la guérison, la richesse, comme la pauvreté."¹ He readily acknowledged that God owed him nothing, and he had no just cause for complaint. He thus maintained his uprightness and loyalty, justifying God's confidence in him and confounding Satan.² "... He not for a moment doubts the justice of the treatment he receives, nor utters a single word against God."³ Unlike Adam and Eve who readily entertained the serpent's question relating to the identity of God as expressed in His created relationship with them, Job steadfastly refuses to jeopardize his relationship with God by giving determinative place to such interrogation or by attempting to restrict God's freedom to conformity with Job's own image of Him.

A subtle shift in the hero's attitude is coincident with the arrival and participation of his three friends. With hopefully sympathetic ears to offer a hearing Job dares to curse the day of his birth (3: 1). Yet in this first complaint he nowhere shifts from his basic premises of faith. He does not seem to question the motive of God nor to accuse Him. He recognizes that

his affliction is from God but apparently accepts the 'justice' of this state of affairs, hoping that his friends will support him in their counsel. Up to this point "The only alternative he had to consider and reject was the crude one put forward by his wife, to the effect that God had now become his enemy."¹ Job could not abide such defective thinking and readily rebuked his wife. But now in the presence of his theological colleagues he begins to reveal the depths to which his personal circumstances have shaken him. The first question which he permits is that dealing with his own existence.

Now that Job has opened the way for discussion he has to endure at first hand the continued assaults of his friends as they unleash the brutal points of their theological thinking into the already tortured fabric of his physical and spiritual self. This is one of the crucial points of the entire drama. For had his friends become his advocates or paracletes their combined readiness for revelation might have hastened the theophany. But such supportive counsel from the friends was quite impossible considering their ironclad starting point - the doctrine of retributive justice. For the friends this is the first principle of divine dealing directly reflected in the circumstances of men. "... la rétribution ici bas l'équation entre les œuvres, d'une part, et la récompense ou le châtiment, de l'autre. C'est cette interprétation étroite de la justice divine que nous entendons ressasser constamment par Eliphaêz, Bildad et Sophar."² Nor is it clear that Job is entirely free from this narrow structured thinking. In chapter three he hints that his life has generally been one of anxiety. "For the thing that I fear comes upon me and what I dread befalls me." (3.25) His fear was justified.³ Whatever Job's reluctance to admit into operation

2. P. Dhorme, op. cit., p. CVIII.
this doctrine of retributive justice in his own case, he has it thrust upon him by Eliphaz whose "whole viewpoint and argumentation are based on the thesis that man can be just in the sight of God, who recognizes his virtue and will surely reward it."¹ It will now be necessary for Job to go farther than merely affirming his faith in one God and declaring that He is the initiator of all events both good and bad.

Three possible directions seem to be open. Job could choose to agree with his friends that the application of the principle of retributive justice by God in his own case is valid and that he now sees himself to be morally evil. Or Job might reject the accusations against himself, thereby re-affirming his own righteousness and casting doubt on the identity and activity of a God who would so unjustly conduct the affairs of men, and the friends could become their god's defenders. In the espousal of either of the above options Job would be giving wholehearted support to the wooden operation of the doctrine of retribution put forward by the friends. However, there still remains a third possibility and that is that he might suspend judgement by declaring that the matter has not yet been the object of proper litigation; that in the light of his own certainty regarding his moral virtue and recognizing God's infallible justice there must still be an encounter between himself and God in order to establish the truth. "Job has to admit the suffering; he denies the guilt; and since the Judge in question is infallible he must also deny that there has been a trial."²

This option leaves the situation open. In encounter with God, Job would be able to argue his innocence and hope for suspended sentence at least,

1. N. H. Tur-Sinai, op. cit., p.89.
if not outright acquittal, and God would not be shackled to the system of retributive justice laid upon Him but could conceivably reveal another principle providing guide lines for the conduct of His affairs with men. This third option Job selects. Even under the stress of defiantly defending his innocence, and pained by a sense of injustice, Job does not accuse God of unfairness without hope of a hearing.

For the friends the matter has already been settled, according to canons of judgement presumed by them and assumed to be rigidly applied by God. Job is subjected to a prolonged period of suffering in which these self-appointed crown attorneys attempt to break down the witness by offering various explanations of his suffering and Job is forced to maintain his moral innocence and repeat his pitiable but strident plea for an encounter with God, so that the matter might be settled in the only conclusive manner possible. What is remarkable is the similarity between the cross-examining friends and the Satan who is responsible throughout for the hero's suffering. "Satan connaît bien les théories régnantes. Il est persuadé que l'équation entre bonheur et vertue est tellement ancrée dans l'âme des fidèles que si le bonheur vient à manquer on peut s'attendre à une volte-face complète."¹ (I:11; 2:4-5) According to the Satan men do not love God as a person but as an impersonal agency which rewards them for well doing and punishes them for evil doing in strict accordance with His justice.

"But Job's religion is far more personal than theirs, based on filial affection rather than on the self-interested concept of a contractual do-et-des relationship - in which fundamentally their attitude is identical with that of Satan."²

1. P. Dhorme, op. cit., p. CIX.
Where the direct effort of Satan produced no results his agents now continue activity. The whole object is to determine whether Job will assent to a concept of God as being "... the impartial celestial administrator..." whom the friends see at work, a god who "... is but a depersonalized caricature of the God whom Job had served and Whom he had believed to take a personal interest in him"\(^1\) or whether Job will maintain his demand for personal encounter. In the midst of this intense quest after and questioning of the nature of God, Job understandably suffers immeasurably beyond the simple effects of his bodily affliction, which at first he had dealt with quite faithfully.

Part of the strategy of the friends is to offer reasons for or suggest functions of Job's affliction. Their hope is that by so doing he may be moved to acknowledge the validity of the principle of retribution and the way thus opened for acknowledgement of the impersonal god whom they present. Eliphaz urges that the virtuous do not perish but that only the sowers of trouble reap it and are consumed. Moreover he points out that no human being is just in the sight of God. And finally if God chastises a man he does it for his own good.\(^2\) Bildad "... propounds the unqualified doctrine of retribution: the just fare well, the wicked ill."\(^3\) Zophar attempts to prove that "...no man knows even whether he himself is just or not; this too, is part of God's all-compassing knowledge."\(^4\) Job continues

\(^{1}\) ibid, p.440.
\(^{3}\) ibid, p.153.
\(^{4}\) ibid, p.191
to demand "... that God Himself shall speak to the man whom he accuses and who is not told what is in God's mind." Furthermore Job contends that "... God does not punish the wicked". His three principal contentions may be summarised as (i) that he is blameless (ii) that God only seeks pretexts for harming him and (iii) that God gives man no chance to argue with him because man is afraid of God and cannot debate with his superior opponent. How much sense must have seemed to lie behind the friends' arguments! How much promise of ease to his tortured mind these rationalizations must have appeared to offer! How painful it must have been for Job to maintain his counter position!

With the coming of Elihu on the scene the threads of the discussion are drawn together. To Job's first contention that he is blameless, Elihu replies that by maintaining this position he has himself revealed his guilt. To the second of Job's arguments he replies that God's justice is beyond doubt and if he afflicts man it is because he knows man's sins. God does not withhold the reward of the just. This sinner is given an opportunity to repent and reform and then is saved from destruction. Elihu's main argument concerns Job's third contention. He replies

"... on the contrary God's invisibility to man is intended to obviate the error with which the sight of God would inspire him, that God who accepts the just and repentant, has no need for man's arguments, that God instructs and admonishes, man in various ways before punishing him, that he warns him frequently and signifies to him both his approval and disapproval."  

1. ibid, p.271.
2. ibid, p.336.
3. ibid. p.518.
4. ibid. p.518.
The arguments have run their course. The claims and counterclaims have been registered in a maze of controversy. But the author will not permit his hero to be dissuaded. He has built up a dramatic atmosphere by reviewing the popular theology of the day and expressing it upon the lips of his cast. What they have done theologically is to prepare the man Job to confront the divinity directly.

"Elihou ne réussit pas à communiquer les dimensions "prophétiques" du péché: c'est seulement l'audition des paroles de Dieu qui peut produire dans le héros la découverte hamartologique.

"... Elihou réussit à élever la pensée de l'auditoire. Il passe du niveau de l'égocentricité à un mode d'existence au centre duquel Dieu règne dans toute sa gloire."¹

Though his friends have not given Job the resources with which to meet his problem (and scarcely could they) they have indeed been of assistance in helping him to focus his search by revealing the closed doors of various possibilities. Job, still suffering acutely but clinging to his resolve not to put God in the stockade of retributive punishment, is now prepared for encounter with Him.

After what was an apparently interminable period of silence for Job, God finally encounters him face-to-face from out of the whirlwind. At last Job's position has been vindicated to the extent that he has been proven right in his contention that such encounter is vital for a satisfactory litigation of his case. And in communicating with Job God finally breaks the impasse in which Job and his friends have been locked. The very fact that God does not immediately condemn Job is of great significance to the resolution of the argument. "Enfin Dieu parle. Il n'accuse pas Job de fautes d'ordre moral mais il révèle par l'ironie de ses questions que l'homme n'a pas le droit de juger la divinité."²

¹. S. Terrien, op. cit. (Fr.) p. 245.
². ibid, p.246.
God is Who He Is and Job is not God but a creature. The irony makes it clear that God's attitude toward Job is not one of anger but a revelation of grace. In its tolerance, irony excludes anger. What is conveyed is the serene superiority of God Who can be gentle and indulgent with the ignorance, and even the unconscious pertinence of His human creatures. God's presence certainly involves correction and rebuke, but the presence of irony shows that it is as gentle as any divine rebuke can be. The attitude in which God approaches Job immediately thrusts the arguments of the friends into the circumference of consideration if not beyond.

The God who appears to Job is certainly not the God of the friends whose presence could only have resulted in swift and intensified punishment instead of ironic questioning, considering that there is as yet no evidence of any change in Job's attitude bordering on repentance or surrender. Job's selection of the courses available to him during his discourse with his friends is again vindicated. Wisely he left room in his pleas for encounter with God and for the God of that encounter to be and act as Himself without the imposition of any constraints upon His activity. In this Job is proved to have been quite correct though the position meant great suffering and agony in the midst of the puzzling circumstances.

"The content of the divine speech, which totally ignores any question of justice or retribution, and stresses instead the divine mystery so far justifies Job's bewilderment and rules out . . the friends' shallow explanations." "at least God's justice, as men conceive it, is not the complete explanation of His dealing with them."

Job stands justified at least to the extent that in despair he did call on

God and then waited with open ears. To have prescribed God's answer for Him prior to the encounter as the friends did would have automatically precluded any possibility of Job's exit from his state of utter bewilderment.

The position of the friends becomes quite indefensible. God has not acted according to the course laid out for Him in their theological imaginings so clearly set forth in their discussion with the sufferer. What they have presented is in opposition to Job himself because their starting point is other than his.

"Their representations . . . rest on the assumption that on the basis of their own experience and reflection, they have information about God to which they have only to refer back to be able to speak appropriately concerning Him, i.e. information about His nature; that He is always wise and righteous; and about the degree to which He is in fact always faithful to his nature of His in His action and rule and is thus to be feared and loved as God".  

By doggedly refusing to depart from these premises they subject Job to the worst kind of torture by addressing him as from God, for God's sake and in His name. They prefer to enclose their own relationship with God by their own knowledge and acceptance of what they believe to be permanently universal and valid statements concerning Him. They demonstrate the false nature of their position by binding their relationship with God between the narrow strictures of their fixed and orderly structure.

"... when men think and speak from this divine standpoint and therefore non-historically and within the framework of this orderly structure there is no place in their utterance for two factors, namely, the free God and the man freed by and for Him."  

By their rigid adherence to their established starting point the friends

3. ibid, Vol. IV, 3, 1, p.460.
automatically ruled out the possibility of God existing as He Who He Is. God has been set aside and they have assumed the prerogative of making His declarations for Him.

Job on the other hand, as noted above, remains firm in his determination to let God be God, whatever the cost. In this he vindicates God's initial confidence in him. Satan had contended that Job's faith was based entirely on the fact that he consistently received good at the hand of God and not evil. The whole drama of Job's suffering deals with the struggle in which he maintains his belief in the freedom of God.

"The question was posed from Heaven: "Does Job fear God for nought?" The attempt to answer it has become a counter question of Job to Heaven: "Who are you? my God. Are you, as the friends preach, the God of law, of rewards and punishments? Or are you my friend out of incomprehensible goodness and pure fidelity, precisely and wholly for nought?"

God's refusal to come only as a God of judgement makes it clear that He is Job's God"for nought". And Job's persistent, if sometimes tenuous adherence to the demand for God to make His appearance with its implication that God's final word has not yet been heard, indicates that within the sufferer there is the basis of a faith which at least hopes in the grace of God, and is maintained quite apart from the changing circumstances of existence. A conspicuous fact is that in God's speeches there is no reference to Job's moral and religious integrity. God completely ignores it. Job's loyalty to God is spontaneous and superior to merely interested motives and so is God's love for Job. The relationship is thus affirmed as a personal confrontation resting on spontaneous and free interchange, that is, on love.

One of the bars against which Job repeatedly buffeted in his search for faith was his confidence in his personal integrity and upright place before God. Though it was natural for him to declare this in opposition to his friends, and this was preferable to succumbing to their false theology in which he would have been irrevocably immersed, nevertheless his attempt to uphold himself can only be regarded as pride and an effective hedge between himself and God. Job's self-righteousness is itself a reflection of the belief in retributive justice which he holds in part and against which he struggles. For the repeated assertions of moral rectitude could only mean that it was on this basis that he was appealing for vindication. "Les attaques de Job contre la justice de Dieu ne sont que l'expression de son sens de sa propre justice, ce qui constitue à son tour le premier pas vers la déification de soi." 1 His was not a sin which offended against the moral order but a sin indeed "the" sin which manifests itself the moment when the creature judges the Creator. 2 But when Job finally experienced an immediate revelation of the infinite Creator he was grasped by a consciousness of his own finitude. 3 "Devant l'Étre qu'il reconnaît comme la source et le moteur de son existence, Job perd le désir de l'affirmation de soi." 4 In the very presence of the grace of God, affirmed by God "for nought", Job no longer has any need to assert his own righteousness. He is righteous. Even the right to declare himself free of moral evil has been taken from him. The self which Job felt obliged to magnify over against God has been fully affirmed by God. Freed of this obscuring factor Job becomes

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1. S. Terrien, op. cit. (Fr.), p.260.
2. Cf. ibid, p.250.
3. Cf. ibid, p.270.
4. ibid, p.270.
conscious of a new dimension of sin much more devastating than a moral or ritual fault. He understands that his crime is a monstrous accusation of the divinity. He does not receive a verdict of acquittal. It is enough that he has not been condemned and is accepted as he is. The divine words naturally include an implicit reproach and correction of the human hubris but they do not contain any hint of anger nor veil any arrogance.\(^1\) The drama of Job makes it clear "... que la religion et la moralité ne conféraient aucun droit au bonheur ..." and ends "... sur le seuil d'un nouveau royaume d'être, où la grâce est suffisante."\(^2\)

Men suffer. They suffer as beings saddled with the inheritance bequeathed to them, the leprous monstrous self, willed into being when men first permitted the nature and activity of God as revealed to them to be interrogated and dared to venture upon the quicksand of their own ascriptions to Him. Figuratively speaking the account of Adam and Eve symbolizes this event. Created free by God for worship and adoration of Him and dominion over a stated segment of creation they betrayed this freedom into servitude to themselves and their evil fantasies springing from their bold inexplicable calling into question of their Creator. The created harmony was irreparably damaged. Total chaos could only be prevented by God's restraint imposed on His created being, man, now quite beyond selfcontrol. So all men without exception bear the trade mark of an evil nature. So all men are placed under the restraint of God. So all men regardless of the relative level of their moral attainment live under the shadow of this negation by God and are therefore vulnerable to painful restrictions and buffetings as the created order, near to chaos, at once exerts itself upon them and is

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2. ibid, p. 36.
yet subject to the Creator's final word.

Evil men do suffer. And if their suffering presents no problem from the point of view of Christian theology it surely ought not to be for lack of sympathy. Nor ought the understanding of the suffering of evil men be made easy by a reckless application of the doctrine of retributive punishment. For such judgment only serves to direct attention to the hubris of the judge as in Job's case. The reason why evil men, (and all men fit into this category) do suffer, (and all men eventually suffer death), is because they bear within themselves that inexplicable leprous nature that must be negated by a gracious God in order to preserve them from temporal and eternal destruction, while at the same time they stagger under the blows of a mutinous creation. Job experienced the destructive attacks of alienated brethren, the blows inflicted by the disordered elements and finally the excruciating agony as the knife of interrogation of God is twisted in the age-old wound of man's propensity to evil speculation and questioning of God. To say "evil men suffer" is to say "all men suffer." There is no comparative goodness nor relative morality that exempts a person from suffering for all measures of rectitude before God are merely relative. And the reason for the universality of suffering lies in the unreasonableness of man's turning from freedom in God to slavery in himself.

Nevertheless a state of righteousness does exist by the grace of God, even for the person who perforce continues his existence in evil. That person is involved in the process of being freed from a state of total slavery to himself and his evil inheritance and is being freed for the unconditional adoration of God. Such a person dares to permit God to be totally free to be the God, who, in His grace He wills to be. Such a man played the lead in the drama of Job. The author has wisely concerned himself with a
question of faith and not with the suffering of the so-called innocent.

"... la signification théologique du livre de Job réside en dehors des problèmes de la souffrance du juste ... "¹

"Il ne demande pas ... le secret de la souffrance méritée; il veut plutôt savoir s'il existe dans les rangs de l'humanité un exemple de pur dévotion, de foi "pour rien", de religion gratuite." L'énigme de la misère sans cause est non le but mais l'instrument de sa recherche"²

Is it not true that Job portrays the just man, simply because in his devotion to God he struggles to permit God to be Who He Is?

Job suffers. Job is a man. All men suffer. From this point of view Job's plight is not at all surprising. But Job also suffers as a particular man, as a just man, and it is in this state that his agony takes on special significance. Indeed, and surprisingly, his pain is rendered all the more intense because of his cliff-hanging rectitude so that it falls into a range of suffering known only to the just. "The author has dared to formulate the paradox that God may inflict (or at least permit the infliction of) suffering on the most righteous precisely because they are the most righteous."³ A totally new dimension is added to the category of suffering by this reflection on the significance of real events as expressed in the drama of Job.

"... there stands in his (Job's) case a very different grief which millions of other sufferers have never experienced, let alone suffered."

"He is certainly afflicted by a mass of pain, but there is much more to it than that"

"... his true sorrow in all his sorrows, and therefore the primary object of his profound knowledge that in what has happened and what has come on him he still has to do with God, and has no less profound ignorance how far he has to do with God."

¹ ibid., p. 48.
² ibid., p. 55.
"... we see this knowledge and ignorance of God in headlong collision and unbearable tension. This is the depth and essence of the suffering of Job." ¹

In Job we do not have to do with the innocent suffering but the just in agony, in that excruciating pain peculiar to those who however tenuously, nevertheless struggle to permit God to be free to be Who He wills to be, and who are thus His servants. "for nought" and live in the developing consciousness of His justification "for nought", i.e. His grace.

Religious men stood in the active crossfire of life. In the midst of suffering they struggled to hear the self-identifying word of God. Unable to endure the prolonged agony some hastened to pronounce their verdict, and identified the lordship of God with the tyranny of retributive justice. Other men persevered, found personal fellowship with Him, the freedom to be for Him, and release from their captivity to themselves. In the process these latter pointed beyond themselves and their experiences to a hitherto unenvisioned outpouring of the grace of God.

The author of Job was not alone on this particular path in his pressing search for a theological revelation. The character which he so vividly portrays in the person of Job is related to other figures in the same tradition.

"He (Job) is unmistakably endowed with the characteristics of that figure of the suffering righteous which is formally so distinctive of the whole witness of the Old Testament and materially so constitutively important for it, which we also meet especially in the prophet Jeremiah and the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53 but also collectively in Lamentations and both individually and collectively in so many of the Psalms." ²

In Job a just man suffered that peculiar pain known to those who wrestle

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1. K. Barth, Church Dogmatics, Vol. IV, 3, 1, p.401.
2. ibid., p. 401.
   also Cf. P. Dhorme, op. cit., p. CXXII.
with their knowledge and ignorance of the true God — experienced only by those who steadfastly refuse to thrust masks of their own devising permanently on the face of God and thus live in more or less direct encounter with Him — not deigning to seek protection for themselves by de-personalizing God and parrying the thrust of His address. But it is not true to say that we are here dealing with the suffering of an innocent man for the hubris of Job is well authenticated in his speeches and is only finally dissolved in his utter surrender before ironic questioning of his God. Therefore should men of faith be moved to speak by the observation of the suffering of an innocent person then quite new insights might be expected legitimately. The consideration of the book of Job leads directly to reflection on other materials as similarities in thought give rise to theological expression.
CHAPTER III

Suffering: In History

Men reflected. They looked back to creation and saw there, in faith, their God at work. To this faith God revealed Himself as Creator and gracious preserver even in the volcanic disruption of man's rebellion against Him. Men reflected. And they gave expression to their belief in God who had shown Himself to be utterly gracious. In aseptic laboratory conditions, apart from history, the author of Job conducted an experiment. His findings were that God extended His favours to man for nought. Even his laboratory specimen, Job, injected with a potent dose of hubris, experienced a direct revelation from God. And though there was no sense in which Job merited this confrontation with God, it is true that he was a fit subject to receive the revelation because he had painfully clung to God's right to be Himself. That is, Job, however delicately, and with however slender a margin, yet refused to impose certain inelastic conditions upon God which would prescribe His activity. As far as it was humanly possible, Job demonstrated that he revered God, also for nought. In this relationship is reflected the freedom of God to be "for man", and the created image of God in which man exists, to be "for God." This is the freedom in which a relationship of love can exist. Love does not question or doubt the identity of the lover. Love provides the balm to alleviate all irritation and suffering that stems from shattered relationships in which identity is thrown into question.

Such theological advance was not made apart from concrete historical experience. These men of faith and vision lived in a matrix. Their expressions of faith did not arise "in abstracto." They were intimately involved
in the life of a people. Out of the experiences of this people individually and corporately, as they struggled to keep faith with their God, and yet were exposed to all the trials of man with his abnormal human nature, their inspired reflection gave form to their theology. They came to a knowledge of God. God revealed Himself to them in history and they perceived even if somewhat dimly, because of their own myopia, the outlines of His true form. Throughout this process they suffered the gracious restraints of God. Like the men they were they threw themselves ignorantly and also willfully at the walls enclosing them in protective custody only to suffer the bruising and battering of much irrational acts. Not at all sure of the true nature of their God, their suffering was magnified by uncertainty. In this complex interaction with history faith was forged.

What made history especially meaningful and significant to these men was the fact that they were "... given by history the consciousness of being chosen by Yahweh to be his people in a special sense."¹

This is the Israelite idea of election.

"This idea implied to the prophets that Yahweh in sovereign love, had chosen Israel out of all people of the earth to be His own people, an object of His special care, and education, destined to realize His divine will and make His name glorified in the world".²

"There is no doubt that this idea was central in the religion of Ancient Israel and in the thought of the prophets as well."³

God has acted. His action was in no wise dependent upon the worth or merit of the people, the object of His action. As an expression of His nature He chose and for no other reason. His choice implied a special

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² ibid, p. 326
³ ibid, p. 326.
relationship with this people. In historical events Israel was to discover the nature of God as, true to that nature, He acted within the confines of this relationship.

An act of election such as this could not stand stark and alone. To be election there must be a purpose more or less evident. This purpose would need to conform with the nature of the elector. The elected would need to be aware of their election and moved in the direction of the goal of that election. If God be free and sovereign and gracious and acting in accordance with this nature then His act is not dependent on the virtue of those whom He elects. He is not bound by the value to Him of the elected to elect them, or He is not free. He elects. The people whom He elects are thereby destined to be His. That is they are to live in accordance with the principles of relationship that mark them as being His possessions. Israel used the term covenant to describe their elected relationship to their God.

"When Yahweh the God of their fathers, on Sinai entered into the covenant with Israel by which He became Israel's God and they became His peculiar people, this involved Israel in an obligation at every point in all their doings and dealings to confirm the will of Yahweh, the incomparably superior partner."1

If the history of Israel demonstrated the Elector's faith to His elected in a succession of salvation events then surely He was their God. But they were also His people and constrained by the attraction of His grace to act as such. They were placed under the obligation of His free and sovereign love in their covenant fellowship.

If the history of Israel consistently revealed God as their gracious Lord in covenant it also became not by design, but in fact, a document cataloguing the rebellious acts of Israel. Even during the time when the relat-

ionship was being given clear-cut expression in the Sinaitic code the people chose to look away from their covenant.

'To the prophets and the 'Deuteronomists', the history of Israel is the story of the people's constant forsaking of this covenant their disobedience to the will of their master, with national catastrophe as the inevitable punishment.'\(^1\)

If God were to remain faithful to His covenant commitment He could not (that is He freely willed not to) renounce His lordship over His people. To renounce His lordship would be to undo the special relationship. The elect would then become the non-elect and like the other nations fall back into the man-made chaos of rise and fall. Thus Israel remains in the embrace of God's grace. But that grace, that personal relationship lays obligation upon the shoulders of Israel, obligation to revere the free and sovereign God who is their Lord. Unaccepted obligation imposed by the grace of God rebounds in the form of punishment. Grace cannot be what it is by nature, that is a reflection of the giver, in this case a personal attribute of God, unless it finds a receptor. A gift is not given if there is no one to receive or willing to receive. Grace unacknowledged or actively opposed by its object cannot be grace to that object. Nevertheless God continues to offer Himself to His people. This insistence by God on being true to His nature and Israel's stiff-necked refusal to enter whole-heartedly into the covenant turns His grace into punishment. The law, a gracious endowment to guide a people's expression of love to their covenant Lord turns into a monstrosity riding Israel into the dust of legalism. Gracious saving acts turn into supports for a people's hubris. Freedom to be "for God" in covenant turns into slavery to nationalism and self. The most unnatural

\(^1\) ibid, p. 89.
and irrational takes place. Instead of viewing their God as the gracious Lord of the covenant His identity is mistaken for that of a vindictive God, exercising only retributive justice even upon His chosen people as His primary function. The God of grace who loves His people for nought and seeks a like response from them slips into the background.

Israel suffered. In the wilderness, at the hands of enemies before and after the settlement in the promised land the people of Yahweh underwent excruciating agony. This suffering cried out for interpretation. The pre-exilic prophets laid bare the Word of Yahweh. They spoke out against a popular conception of election which was rife among the people and which implied a dangerous misconception of election.

"Yahweh is with us, Yahweh is in our midst; all is well."

"Against such popular fancies the prophets never tired of emphasizing that election and doom were not necessarily mutually exclusive."

An elected people might also be a doomed people. It was true that Israel became a privileged nation but this was only a wonderful evidence of an incomprehensible love. This love demanded love and gratitude from the people. That is Israel should own Yahweh alone as their God. It was the preaching of the pre-exilic prophets that presented these thoughts in a new way, cleansed from the popular concept that election was a self-evident guarantee of a happy future. In attempting to overcome the blinding and brittle concept of election popular among the people the pre-exilic prophets placed their emphasis on a demand for response while yet declaring the free grace of Yahweh.

"Il (Osée) voit lui aussi le salut non pas exclusivement dans la rétribution d'un effort éthique de l'homme mais dans un acte gratuit de la volonté divine, dans une apparition de Dieu en face d'Israël.¹

Man must change his ways. Israel is not destined only for good fortune because of her election. The rebellion of the people has turned grace into wrath and the events of history are an appalling demonstration of this truth. In order to induce man to change, God acts. He becomes the divine disciplinarian "... when punishment is interpreted as an opportunity to repent and is seen as evidence of God's goodness and love that is called divine discipline."² Suffering that overtakes the people is not merely a negative expression being the wrath of God, but since God is known for his love the suffering that He inflicts or permits must in some instances, have a positive purpose. "The divine intention, according to the prophets, is not primarily retributive, to impose penalty in consequence of wrong doing, but rather deterrent to discourage transgression by fear of punishment."³ If men understand the purpose of God in permitting or even in apparently inflicting suffering, then they might possibly be turned from their evil ways.

But if it be true of the prophets that "They assumed that their words could be immediately understood and accepted. ..."⁴ they were soon to discover the radical nature of their underestimate of Israel's stubborn and rebellious nature. For the response they had anticipated was never realised.

Though "... the prophets assume that a man can change his way of life if he will ..." they came to "... realize that he does not so will."¹ Nor could they understand this disturbing fact "... it seemed to them wholly enigmatic and paradoxical that the people were deaf to their preaching."² "They saw in the unresponsiveness of the people something irrational, something mysterious."³ So acutely conscious of God's will were the prophets and so concerned were they for the welfare of their people that they were thrown into great distress by the failure of Israel to hear and apprehend so clear a message and so to repent and reaffirm the covenant with Yahweh.

It gradually became evident that Israel would not repent. The people repeatedly refused to give the pre-exilic prophets a hearing. The prophetic tradition had become so well-known for the failure of its preaching to evoke response that the prophets themselves came to acknowledge that man's will was corrupt. Men are so tied to their deeds that they cannot turn. In fact if there is to be any turning then it is God Himself who must turn the people (Hosea 11:17; Jeremiah 31:18).⁴ Isaiah is most deeply disturbed and led to the conclusion that this hardening and blinding has been sent by God on the Children of Israel as a punishment for their disobedience and reticence (Isaiah 6:9-13; 29:9 ff).⁵ "Such blindness results in pride, haughtiness, and arrogance."⁶ Isaiah is profoundly aware of this fact and declares

2. C. Lindblom, op. cit, p.313.
that "Yahweh hates all that is proud, exalted, high and lofty in the human world. One day it will be humbled and brought low by Him." (Isaiah, 2: 1off.)

Israel's hubris must be destroyed for it has blinded the people. They cannot see God. The only god of whom they are conscious is that idol whom they in their pride have elected to be their god. They, the elected ones, by the grace of God, have chosen to do some electing of their own. So they have produced a god who is in fact no God. In their haste to prostrate themselves before their god they have turned blind eyes and hard hearts to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

If Israel obstinately refused to turn to God in spite of the clear declaration of God's gracious intent by the prophets and in spite of the divine instruction offered by His grace inverted into punishment, then God Himself would have to take further action in accord with His nature and His intent for man. If, because of man's utter and unexplainable failure, the old covenant, firmly founded entirely on grace, had failed, then a new covenant would have to be sealed. All hope lost for effective reform, and, languishing in the no-man's land between the declaration of God's word and the irascible people, Jeremiah clearly saw the necessity for a new bond between God and man. Not a link forged of any other material than God's grace, but rather a covenant so intimately bestowed that all men would know without doubt the true nature of their God, became the only conceivable answer. Chastisement has proven futile. Punishment is no answer. (Jeremiah 5:3; 2:30). The "immense indifference, unyieldingness, sluggishness and inertia of the heart" baffles the prophets. (Amos 3:8; Jeremiah 23:29, Isaiah 5:20). Yet if calamity has not caused Israel to turn it has at

2. A. Heschel, op. cit., p.188.
least stripped his heart of its plumpness. With a naked heart and a mind stripped of false hopes Israel can now come into a relation in which he will see God as He first appeared to him in his youth in the desert. It will be a new relationship wherein everyone has da'ath elohim (Jeremiah 31: 31-34).

"As God was the One who brought about the calamity so it is He Who affects the new relationship" Other witnesses to the fall of Jerusalem and life in exile were driven to the same conclusion. "In Deutero-Isaiah Yahweh says that He is about to establish with Israel a new covenant which will not be moved." (Isaiah 54:10)

"In Ezekiel's words about the interior transformation of the people we find the culmination of the teaching on spiritual renewal." (36:25ff.)

"... the moral change is described as a fruit of the spirit of Yahweh poured into the souls of men. The result is that the people are made capable of unswerving obedience to all the commandments of the Torah. All this is thought of as Yahweh's wonderful work based upon His solicitude for His own name, not as a consequence of human efforts." To God the elect remain the elect. He has elected them for nought and it is nought that He has received. The adoration, praise, worship and obedience have not followed upon His gracious acts toward Israel. The leprous interior of man keeps him in fatal doubt about the identity of his God. Israel is blind and flint-hearted but God will effect a change.

How? This is the question that bursts upon the heads of the prophets who declare God's intention to establish a new covenant. How will He write His law upon every man's heart with an iron pen? How will He so pour out His spirit that ossified humanity will respond? How can God, just in

2. ibid., p. 66.
3. C. Lindblom, op. cit., p. 381.
4. ibid., p. 391
the sense in which men measure justice, bring about restorations to so guilty a people? How can God make straight that course which man has irrationally and inexplicably perverted into the way to destruction? Is it possible that there is a relationship between this thorny question and the mysterious purpose of God in permitting even those who wait upon and proclaim His word to suffer so cruelly? What is the nature of God revealed in His activity in the midst of this most perplexing situation of existence and promise?

God had named Jeremiah a bearer of His Word. Proclaiming the truth against the falsity of his day had brought the wrath of his contemporaries down upon him. Yet God's Word drove him on until it seemed to him that the Word itself was an affliction. The prophet knew greater agony than that of pit or stocks. So sensitive was he to God's purpose and so painfully aware of man's sin in counterpurpose that he felt the bitterest pangs of suffering. It is not at all clear that Jeremiah ever felt that any of the atoning virtues declared in Deutero-Isaiah could be applied to his personal afflictions.1 But

"He can hardly have failed to descry that his own spiritual agonies which brought him into so close a personal communion with God would show to every other man the way for his approach also to the Most High and Holy and his reconciliation with His God."

In addition, acutely sensitive man that he was, Jeremiah "... was weighed down with his people's sins; he bore on his heart the full burden of them." 3

"Just there, in his keener conscience, in his hot shame for sins not his as if they were his, in his agony for his people's estrangement from God, and in his own constantly wounded love - lay his real substitution, his vicarious offering for his people."4  

2. Ibid., p. 345.
3. Ibid., p. 345.
4. Ibid., p. 347.
In the throes of tumultuous historical events Jeremiah lived, proclaimed, suffered and vanished in exile. It is possible that in his experience, later concepts of the place of suffering in God's redemptive plan for man, find root and are nourished.

The love of Jeremiah for Israel, and his identification with and sympathy for them, sharpened his agonies almost beyond endurance. This fact led to reflection, not only on the way in which suffering strips the human heart of hubris and makes it ready for new covenantal relationships but also it led to reflection on the nature of God. If because of God's Word His prophet is subjected to such an agony by the sins of the people raging against the grace of God, what must be the response of God Himself to the rebellion of His son Israel for whom He cared so much? How must God feel when His grace extended toward man is inverted into the most bitter punishment through man's irrational conduct?

"Jeremiah must have seen in God the same condition of heart which the prophets and psalmists themselves experienced. What kind of condition? The pain. The pain of God!"

"We cannot possibly perceive what the "pain of God" is. But we know the meaning of 'pain' experienced in our human heart. Through this experience, God tries to reveal to us what is taking place in His heart. . . ."

"Thus Jeremiah used the word 'pain' in its most precise meaning, to describe the love of God toward sinners." (Jeremiah, 31:20)\(^1\)

". . . the pain of God reflects His love toward those turning against it"\(^2\)

God encounters mankind only in His word of grace. Rejection of that grace is the cause of suffering to man as he fights against being fully held in

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2. ibid., p. 156.
grace. But the unmerited favour of God so disowned brings pain to the heart of God. It is this "pain" which man encounters. It is this pain, which, however modified to accommodate human capacities that Jeremiah experiences.

"Because of this covenant-love Yahweh cannot punish without pain to Himself." (Jeremiah 12:7-11; 31:20, 45)¹

"...while thus delivering... the just wrath of God upon sin, he (Jeremiah) reveals at the same time that His people's sin costs God more pain than anger."²

It is this pain that cries out to be fulfilled for eternity in One yet to come, whose sensitivity to the sins of men, because of the uniqueness of His nature will be infinitely greater than that of Jeremiah. Would it be too great an act of grace for God to bring together in one Person the pain in His own heart caused by man's rejection and that experienced by His servants?³

Israel was carried off into exile. The cup of his sufferings was filled, to full and overflowing. In a foreign environment far from the land of promise Israel underwent the agony incurred by his rejection of the grace of God. No other destiny could have been expected than this. But now the voice of God's spokesman falls upon the ears of a chastened and humbled people. Gone is the hubris. Ready is the heart for a new act of grace. Was suffering necessary as an act of grace to prepare the way for a new exodus? Then Israel was fully prepared. Not only had their suffering caused them to reflect on the richness of God's grace that they had spurned, but it had been a double dosage. The suffering had seemed to go far beyond what was necessary to prepare Israel for fresh encounter with God. To what purpose then this surplus of affliction? With what end in

². G. A. Smith, op. cit., p.361.
view had the Lord of the covenant so afflicted His servant? The prophets of the exile reflected upon the history of the people and inspired by their knowledge of God gave utterance to these reflections.

Whether the Servant referred to in the "Servant Songs" be historical Israel, or a remnant, an ideal Israel, or a future figure, certainly the immediate conditions of existence in exile must have coloured and given form to the prophetic message. The apparent surplus of suffering must signify a meaning vital to the revelation of the nature of God. The prophets had no doubt at all that Israel merited the chastisement.

"It is impossible to suppose that Deutero-Isaiah believed that Israel's sufferings in the exile were innocent sufferings, which she had borne vicariously for the redemption of the nations".1

"The post-exilic prophets had declared in no uncertain way that the sufferings of the exile were the instrument of God's discipline of His own people for their folly and neglect of His will and there is every reason to believe that Deutero-Isaiah accepted this view".2

It is likewise clear that the prophet interpreted the heavy burden of suffering to have been more than enough to atone for Israel's sins. (Isaiah 40:2) If it were universally agreed that what befell Israel was fully merited by her refusal to hear the counsel of Yahweh as offered by His spokesmen then the whole historic event would have to be written down as retributive punishment and a closed matter. The very fact that anyone, Deutero-Isaiah, a later poet, the Gentiles, apostate Israel, whoever, does reflect upon the service rendered by an individual or a people in quietly accepting relatively undeserved punishment (Isaiah 52-53), indicates an appreciation of the severity of the historic suffering. If suffering does

atone for sin, then atonement is "available" because of the suffering of Israel. Whoever it was that paused to reflect on the catastrophe which befell Israel is moved to express a radically new insight about the nature and purpose of God.

The idea of one individual or group suffering not for their own misdeeds but for the sins of others is given expression in the fourth of the Servant Songs. This concept represents a new insight into the interpretation of suffering. The atonement thus made available is seen to be effective in the forgiveness of the sins of others. "... qu'un homme expie par ses propres souffrances les péchés d'autrui cette idée était inconnue dans l'Ancien Testament". However that atonement might be made for sins by sacrifice is not new. If the blood of one of God's creatures whose life had been first supplied by God then given back to him in sacrifice could atone for the worshipper's sins, then the suffering and death of a person might be seen to fall into the same pattern. At least there was a preparation for the reception of this idea in the sacrificial cult of Israel. But what must be rigorously asserted here is that the pain of the Servant is not his alone. He endures his afflictions undeservedly or in excess because he is who he is, that is a bearer of the Word of God, God's Servant. If his mission of gentle proclamation referred to in the "Servant Songs" has failed he is nevertheless still a bearer of that Word. His election as Servant does not become non-election, because the verbal proclamation has failed. He is still the Servant. He, then, in all that he is, becomes the personification of that Word. He is not the Word incarnate though his relation to the Word is such that he is inextricably bound up with it. Though

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he opens not his mouth, still, he suffers and dies as the bearer of the Word. Thus his suffering and pain is also experienced by God. Not that he himself is Son to God but that he certainly is Servant in covenant and so under the protection and with the sympathy of the Lord of that covenant. It is not the suffering of man, any man, that redounds to the forgiveness of many, but the suffering of this man, or this collective body raised up by God for this purpose. Is there merit here? Yes indeed! But it is merit that rests directly back upon the activity of God in impressing His Word upon this person and is thus due only to His grace. It is not the relative innocence of the sufferer nor the excess of suffering which he seems to bear over what he truly merits (if indeed such a measure is thinkable) that gives his suffering merit, though to the eyes of the observers this may well be what startles them to attention. In the final analysis it is who the person is, the Servant of the Lord, that makes him an effective agent.
CHAPTER IV

Suffering and the Presence of God.

Events took place -- concrete historical happenings -- in the life of Israel. The people lived in various geographic settlements. They tilled the soil. They shepherded their flocks. They commerced with neighbouring nations. They fought wars of aggression and defence. They were prosperous and they were oppressed. They experienced abundance and famine. They worshipped and sacrificed. They rejoiced and they sorrowed. They lived and they died. In these many ways Israel was exactly like other peoples. On the basis of what actually took place within their history a casual observer might well conclude that this people differed in no way from the other nations; that here was no peculiarity worthy of note.

However this people, Israel, was convinced that in these very real historical phenomena a purpose of decisive significance was being unfolded. They refused to view their past as merely another irregular piece in the chaotic puzzle of existence that mankind repeatedly fails to put together. Moreover, so convinced were they of the existence of this purpose that they dared to project it into the future often with the most terrifying results. In Israel we have not to do with a people supporting a deistic construct reflecting their own experiences, and upheld by devi¬ous contrived and laboured mythologies. In Israel we are dealing with a people whose entire history is significant because of the fact that that Geschichte was lived out in the full consciousness that a god, indeed God, whose identity was made known to Israel, dwelt among His people. It is be¬cause of this very presence of the living God that even the suffering,
especially the suffering of the people, takes on great significance. By relating the historical suffering to the conceptualization of God's presence this Leidensgeschichte becomes of notable importance.

Israel suffered like other people but not as other people. They were afflicted as the nation whose identity was fixed by the covenant that bound them to their God, Yahweh. And Yahweh was He who, by a mighty act of grace, had chosen a people to be His own. This people was not chosen because of any inherent worth, in fact they were proven to be a nation known for its intractable nature. Their selection was a sovereign act of their God expressing His own personal nature in a living way. Israel was then bound to its God in the Sinaitic covenant. God had acted. The covenant demanded response to His act. A code of conduct was directly involved as well as a definite form of worship. In His grace God supplied these as well. In Israel we have to do with an elect people.

To the Israelite the covenant with Yahweh implied His presence. Where then was that presence to be experienced? Early reflection led to the insight that the tent of meeting, the shrine for the receiving of oracles, had a definite relation to Yahweh's presence. Though He did not reside permanently there, He appeared whenever Moses entered the tent to inquire of Him. When Israel became a settled nation, and a permanent sanctuary was erected at Shiloh the tendency to associate Yahweh's presence with one particular shrine was strengthened. Later in the development of the nation's history when David had brought up the ark and set it in Jerusalem, his capital city came to be known as Yahweh's dwelling place. Up until

2. Cf. ibid., p. 39.
3. Cf. ibid., p. 55.
this time "... the main conception of Yahweh's presence with His people was on an enactment of His theophany, as it had once occurred at Sinai, so that Yahweh's coming to His people was His coming to them from this mountain."\(^1\) But with the building of the temple a subtle change took place. "The Temple was Yahweh's dwelling place, yet it was so because in its worship, He 'came' to manifest His presence there."\(^2\) As the result of the establishment of the temple Yahweh's presence came to be regarded as fixed and static, which concept was in fact a "... loss of the true significance of the temple."\(^3\) For the inclusion of the cherubim in the דֶּבֶר symbolised "... the celestial power and mobility of Yahweh, so that there is no reason for thinking of Him as though He were confined to the temple."\(^4\) In fact the temple in Jerusalem "... was intended to be a copy or symbol of the cosmic 'house' where He had His abode."\(^5\) "... far from conveying the belief that Yahweh was an earth-bound God, tied to His abode in Jerusalem, the whole outlook and purpose of the temple was to stress His creative and universal action."\(^6\) Nevertheless the crystallizing of thought that Yahweh's presence was confined to the temple went on apace until the point was reached that His gifts came to be looked upon as unconditional and were guaranteed by His permanent association with Israel's shrines.

"In particular the Jerusalem temple could become a token of a divine guarantee to bless Israel, irrespective of the people's conduct or loyalty to Him." "Israel could feel itself so sure of the immanent presence of Yahweh that it forgot His transcendent lordship!"

God's presence to His people at Sinai had coincided with His mighty saving

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1. ibid., p.63.
2. ibid., p.63.
3. ibid., p.64.
4. ibid., p.65.
5. ibid., p.65.
6. ibid., p.67.
7. ibid., p.79.
act in redeeming them from bondage. His Presence came to mean blessing, which included victory over enemies, the gift of a homeland and plenty. The withdrawal or removal of His Presence could only be associated with defeat, loss of domicile and want. As these afflictions began to loom on the horizon of Israel's national outlook a re-interpretation of His Presence had to be undertaken.

In the shadow of portending international upheaval the prophets felt constrained to proclaim a message that would utterly shatter the pleasant but false identification of Yahweh's presence and the sunlight of blessing upon the people. The covenant declared not only the acts of Yahweh but also the responsibility of the people. Thus God's presence and His blessing could only be experienced if the people themselves cared for good and not evil. This they had consistently failed to do. The result was that Yahweh's presence would mean judgment and not blessing. The prophets refused to regard His presence as being other than "... active and dynamic, both in judgment and salvation, whereas the temple was something static and so tended to present a notion of deity as static, and almost passive." Two emphases mark the early prophetic attitude -

"... Yahweh's presence means judgment as well as blessing. This judgment is not only upon foreign transgressors, but upon all wrongdoers in Israel as well." "... Yahweh's presence in Israel is a gift of grace bestowed in the covenant, and in the face of Israel's persistent breach of this covenant Yahweh will abandon His temple and His people."  

If the people are called upon to suffer, and the early prophets had no doubt that they would be, then the reason was clear. Persistent refusals to obey had breached the covenant from Israel's side. They had become

1. Cf. ibid., p.80;
2. ibid., p.86.
3. ibid., p.87.
a sinful people. Such being the case Yahweh, in His holiness, still faithful to His covenant, and therefore present to His people, would become to them a burning, cleansing and painful presence. Israel would suffer. An evil, leprous human nature could expect nothing else from the righteous God of the covenant.

Following on the heels of the eighth and seventh century prophetic protests comes the Deuteronomic reform. Yahweh's immanence had become so bound to the temple and this thought so consolidated in the minds of the people that a re-interpretation of worship true to Yahweh's revealed nature became necessary. The Deuteronomic legislators place "... a new emphasis on Yahweh's transcendence, stressing that the covenant of Sinai-Horeb was a gift of grace, and that Israel's obedience was to be motivated throughout by gratitude and love to Yahweh." 1 It was the intention of the reformers to eliminate once and for all the mistaken idea that the people's worship could in any way coerce God. Thus the divine dwelling-place was set apart from Mount Zion and Mount Sinai. Yahweh is the God of heaven who yet exerts His influence over all creation. His only abode is in heaven and there is no way in which He can be regarded as being bound up in the natural order. In what sense then might Yahweh be said to be immanent? The answer presented by the Deuteronomists was that the temple is the place where Yahweh would establish his name. 2 Thus "... the name of Yahweh was made the vehicle of His presence. It was His alter ego, by means of which He made Himself present to men, without ever leaving his heavenly dwelling-place." 3

1. ibid., p. 89.
2. Cf. ibid., pp. 93-94.
God's dwelling with His people was conceived as an outright gift of grace.¹ Yahweh chose to dwell with a people whose hearts were filled with hubris and He dwelt with them and maintained the covenant from His side absolutely for nought.

Concrete historical happenings were soon to reveal to Israel what was involved in being an elect but disobedient people. Jerusalem was destroyed and its residents carried into exile. A holy Yahweh could not continue to affirm in the same manner as before, an unholy and intractable people as His covenant choice. The people were abruptly brought to the end of their tether and forced to confront the reality of their rebellion as their God continued to reveal His nature. "The conquest of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple were not a denial of the presence of Yahweh in Israel's midst, but a confirmation of it, because the events that had happened were the consequence of His wrath."² Had the covenant God willed to forsake His elect ones the possibility of His wrath would have been precluded. Without the revelation of the events as the outworkings of the wrath of Yahweh only despair could have reigned full sway. Israel was unconditionally bound to their one God, and so could find no ease for their tortured understandings in allowing for disaster to be the activity of another deity beside or behind Yahweh. The prophets, active before the exile, made the onslaught of Yahweh's wrath against his people the main point of their message. "Their conflict is with the false security of the people founded on their consciousness of being chosen and felt to be protected from wrathful condemnation."³ Reduction of this illusion to the category of false prophecy

2. ibid., p. 101.
opened the way for an understanding of Yahweh's presence to be experienced not as blessing but as curse. Nevertheless the prophets repeatedly emphasize what Yahweh has done for Israel and proclaim His wrath against this background. The reason why Yahweh is moved to wrath is because of His wounded holy love. Moreover, Yahweh is not only wrathful, His forbearance is frequently mentioned. He does not give free reign to His wrath but holds it in check and patiently awaits Israel's penitence and repentance.¹ Israel came to know suffering not merely in prophetic vision but in the dread reality of siege, sack and exile. The presence of their covenant partner did not forsake them but in jealousy for His beloved people inflicted His wrath for the purpose of bringing them back unto faithful relationship with Him.

Existence in a foreign land demanded that Israel re-examine its concept of the presence of Yahweh. Had He indeed forsaken them entirely and removed His name from the face of the earth? Or, now that Jerusalem's holy place lay in ruins, would He forsake His former dwelling place and seek out His people in their new domicile? The prophet Ezekiel supplies the answer.

"Ezekiel in his vision saw the very presence of Yahweh in all its majesty coming to him in his distant place of exile. There is no suggestion, therefore, that Yahweh was simply the God of Jerusalem, or only of Palestine, but His power was shown to extend throughout the entire universe."²

Apparently there was nothing so alien in this new geographic location that it precluded the possibility of Yahweh's presence there. What is of importance is the identity of the people who have newly come to reside in the foreign lands. The bearers of a promise do not have that pledge rescinded by its gracious giver. Now, isolated from their land of promise, afflic-

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1. Cf. ibid, pp. 39-43.
ted in body and spirit, Israel is to come to know their Yahweh according to still another mode of revelation.

Yahweh does not dwell with the exiles in a fashion that may be easily misinterpreted to a rigid immanence, and yet He is there. It is His glory that now becomes the vehicle of His personal presence. The Deutronomic reformers had conceived of God's presence as effective in His name. Ezekiel describes his encounter with the "glory" of Yahweh.

"That Yahweh's glory was made manifest in the service of the temple was an ancient belief which is here exalted to a new significance. It is the mode of the divine presence, and, as such, it has a human form. Yahweh himself does not leave His heavenly dwelling to manifest his presence on earth, but He does this by means of His glory."¹

It is of paramount importance to relate this presence of Yahweh to His people to the situation in which they existed. Israel could be subjected to almost unbearable agonies without concluding that they had been forsaken by their God. In fact their faith could even be made to enclose the statement that Yahweh inflicted these sufferings, without the danger of that faith being shattered beyond repair. What is extremely significant is that a suffering people was not so repugnant to Yahweh that He would withdraw Himself or hide His face. His very presence in the midst of an agonised generation suggests the hitherto impossible conclusion that Yahweh Himself could remain identified with His covenant choice even while that people suffered. Though there is no suggestion that He Himself partook of the afflictions of Israel, nevertheless a fundamentally important insight is reached in that Yahweh can be personally present in the very midst of

suffering.

In the light of the historical developments and the faith of Israel in the identity of its God and their confidence in existing as a people granted a peculiar identity by His gracious act, it is not surprising that some perceptive spirits began to glimpse a relationship between the suffering of the people and the nature and purpose of their God. In Isaiah 63:9 we have the words "In all their afflictions he was afflicted." "Here God is presented as intimately bound up with the fate and suffering of His people Israel." God has not forsaken His afflicted son, Israel. He Himself is vitally involved. And yet His involvement is by means of the Angel of His presence. Knight discovers a relationship between the Presence and the Face of God by reference to the Shewbread which is literally, Bread of the Face. He concludes that this term Face of God is therefore just as significant theologically as the related term, the Word of God, and like the Name, represents the person of God. Knight feels that in this way it is established that it was God who suffered with His people. It is God and yet other than God, God repeating Himself, as Knight notes in Karl Barth's phrase 'the alter ego' of God. However, the Presence is conceived, it is there, where Israel is, and Yahweh chooses to involve Himself.

In spite of the presence of God Israel suffers. Or more correctly because of that presence Israel suffers. The events cannot be extricated from the purposes of God anymore than the promise and covenant can be rescinded. Yahweh's holy and gracious presence can only be experienced by a rebellious people as His wrath. Nevertheless, it is still Yahweh's wrath and the identity of the source of wrath makes that wrath's determination

2. Cf. Ibid., p. 31-32.
finally significant. It is the wrath of Yahweh and no other. "Wrath is but an expression of divine love in face of man's sin, and means that God punishes in sorrow." "The apparent conflict reveals suffering at the heart of God."\(^1\) Israel's affliction does not occur apart from Yahweh's presence. But it is still inflicted by His very own will.

"There can be little doubt that, since Deutero-Isaiah wrote in the Exile himself, the events of the year 587 B.C. were for him the climax and the symbol of all God's dealing with His people, that they were in fact the 'crucifixion' by God Himself of His own beloved Son."\(^2\)

The only chosen nation among men is Israel and that nation undergoes agonizing experiences. But again, this does not negate their status as chosen. Rather the affliction makes it clear that being the object of Yahweh's choice involves suffering. Since it is affliction undergone as an elect people who still experience the presence of God it is suffering in service to the unshakable will and eternal purpose of Yahweh.

"Steadfastly He seeks to shape an obedient people, forgiven, humbled and purified by their suffering, through whose witnessing the nations of the earth might turn, receive forgiveness of sins, and become God's people also (Isaiah 53). So Israel having atoned for her sins, through suffering rather than sacrifice becomes God's atoning agent for the healing of the nations."\(^3\)

Through Israel, Yahweh seeks to be at-one with all mankind. Rebellious men among the nations and among those Israelites still resident in Judah can, by the gift of Israel's vicarious agony, see their own rebellion, punished and set at nought by the very presence of God in and among an

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elect people. No greater good news could there be to the world of that day than this service of Israel.

However significant the presence in exile may be to our retrospective theological interpretation, it remained a burning hope in the hearts of the exiled that Yahweh would return one day to Jerusalem. "Ezekiel, as 'the father of Judaism', is the prophet of restoration and hope, and the central feature of this hope is that Yahweh, by means of the glory which effects His presence, will return to Israel and once again make His abode in Jerusalem."¹ Hope in the return of Yahweh to His rightful dwelling place was conditional. He would not abide in the midst of an unclean people. History had shown that Yahweh might dwell with a suffering nation but that He utterly refused to grant His presence to a rebellious people except as wrath. Before Yahweh could be expected to return preparation for His coming would have to be made.

"The aim for the future, as Ezekiel's programme had already outlined, must be to re-fashion the life and worship of Israel in order to make possible the return of Yahweh's presence so that Israel might once more in the fullest sense, become His People."²

It is with this reconstruction as a goal that the Priestly Writing proceeds. It must be made plain to the people just exactly how they are related to their God in order that they may understand and respond in appropriate fashion thus enabling the return of Yahweh's glory to their midst.

In order to accomplish the desired change the Priestly authors turned to a consideration of the foundations of Israel's faith. Israel is shown to owe its origin to a promise made to Abraham. Two covenants were recalled, one made with all of mankind through Noah, and the other with Abraham. The

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² ibid., p. 111.
Sinaitic covenant established through the mediation of Moses is but the ratification and fulfillment of the earlier covenant with Abraham.\(^1\) "The divine presence 'I will be their God' must be interpreted here, not merely in the sense of a formal covenant relationship, but in a sense that is of crucial importance for the Priestly authors, that Yahweh Himself will dwell in the midst of Israel."\(^2\) The hope of Yahweh's presence is confirmed as a legitimate expectation. In order for Yahweh to dwell in Israel He must be provided with a dwelling place. A desecrated ruin could scarcely house a holy God. Without His presence Israel could have no hope of being a people for their identity was so closely bound up with their covenant God. "It is the doctrine of the Priestly Writing that Israel's true existence is only possible when Yahweh's glory is dwelling in its midst, and that this can only be achieved when Israel possesses a tabernacle."\(^3\) The use of the tabernacling concept is significant for it expresses a felt need to guard against a belief in the permanent and unconditional indwelling of the divine presence.

"Their conclusion is that the cloud of the theophany is not merely a temporary manifestation of the divine glory, but is a permanent mode of his activity, and as such is the way in which He comes to settle within Israel. This abiding in Israel, however, is neither unconditional nor unchangeable, but is only a 'tabernacling', and may be withdrawn in the face of national disobedience."\(^4\) The conditional nature of the presence of God is emphasized so that it could no longer be associated with a particular place but must needs be related to a cultic community. In spite of the felt need for a sanctuary in Jerusalem

\(^1\) Cf. Ibid., p. 111-112.
\(^2\) Ibid., p. 112.
\(^3\) Ibid., p. 116.
\(^4\) Ibid., p. 118.
the Priestly theology never assumed that Yahweh's presence could be restricted to that city but would be the gift of grace to obedient Israel. The immanence and transcendence of God was thereby maintained, and the way open to experience that would reveal His presence in radically new and different ways.

The post-exilic community finally succeeded in erecting a temple, a meagre accommodation for Yahweh when compared to Solomon's structure, nevertheless real grounds for renewed hope for the return of His glory. Much of the programme declared necessary as a preparation for His return had been implemented. But the presence of Yahweh amongst His people remained largely an unrealized and therefore eschatological hope. There was no alternative for Israel but to think increasingly of Yahweh's presence in eschatological terms. The only conclusion possible seemed to be that a sufficient level of obedience had not been attained and would not apart from a supernatural transformation of the world. There was still hope that one day His presence would be experienced in its fullness. With the increased emphasis on the divine transcendence there arose the necessity for mediating powers to make the presence of the heavenly person effective on earth while protecting inviolate the monotheistic faith. So did Israel come to the point where Rabbinic theology developed a doctrine of the Shekinah.

G.A.F. Knight finds in the Shekinah concept a very significant development for the relation between presence and suffering. "... the really important point about the Shekinah is that it is actually thought of as entering into the cares and sufferings of men, and as sharing these cares

1. Cf. ibid., p. 121.
Considering the very real sufferings undergone by the post-exilic community it is no surprise to find reflections of this type coming to expression. Israel could in no wise be separated from her covenant God. She was bonded to Him in an inseparable fashion. And yet she was not God, nor could she manipulate Him, she discovered from bitter and painful experience. His presence abode in her midst by His grace, bringing at all times the unmerited reward of affirming Israel by continuing her in existence. Blessing came to the nation as she undertook her covenant responses in faith. His presence was there in blessing. Curse came to Israel when she forsook her faith and prostituted herself to other loyalties. But His presence was there too, declaring Him in painful judgment while at the same time employing His people's agony for the purpose of fulfilling the covenant made to all mankind. Reflecting on all of this it seemed to the Rabbinic interpreters that the very presence of the transcendent God was afflicted along with the people.

The concrete events transpired. They were arranged and recorded for a specific purpose, to reveal the identity of God to men who had unilaterally declared His true personality to be in question. Along with the revelation of the knowledge of this Saviour God we encounter a persistent strand of affliction and suffering, seldom far from the main thread and repeatedly imposing its colour dominantly on the pattern. What ultimate divine purpose could be in process which brought with it such pangs?

CHAPTER V

Suffering: Intertestamental Interpretation and Conclusion

The hymns of Qumran indicate something of the thought regarding suffering in that community living in the later era. "... les Hymnes voient dans la souffrance des impies la conséquence et la punition de leurs crimes..."¹

But to what end beyond mere punitive action will this suffering be inflicted? The hymns suggest several reasons. "... les châtiments seront un avertissement, pour les justes."²

Further -

"... les châtiments procureront la libération des justes. La destruction de tous les peuples ouvrira pour les justes une ère de paix inaltérable."³

The sufferings will also reveal something of the nature of God.

"Ces châtiments manifesteront la justice et la puissance de Dieu ... Dieu fera éclater "en présence de tous les enfants des hommes" (Hymnes 2:25 et 5:11, 15) ... l'immensité de Sa justice et de Sa puissance ..."⁴

But two vital concepts of Biblical thought on suffering are absent.

"La prospérité actuelle des impies apparaît souvent dans la Bible comme un véritable scandale ... (Psaume 72, Job) alors qu'a Qumran et dans le Nouveau Testament ce problème n'est pas même envisagé.

"La conversion des impies, grâce à des épreuves médicales qui les conduiraient au repentir, ne vient jamais à l'esprit des gens de Qumran".⁵

² ibid., p. 372.
³ ibid., p. 372.
⁴ ibid., p. 372.
⁵ ibid., p. 373.
What is apparent is a certain narrowing of thought not at all surprising, considering the historic circumstances of the community. Of particular significance is the absence of suffering effective for the conversion of the Gentiles.

However in the hymns of Qumran the sufferings of the just are accorded significance. When the just do suffer it is because of their sins. Unlike Job, the author never thinks of protesting against suffering in the name of justice. He readily recognizes himself a sinner and his sufferings the just chastisement of his faults. This chastisement incurred by sin is the execution of a positive will of God even when it is brought about by the maliciousness of the wicked. The suffering of the just is seen to have value. The hymns do not say explicitly that the sufferings of the sinner blot out or atone for his transgressions but several times they associate the ideas of suffering and purification as if to establish some relationship between them without however affirming that purification is obtained by suffering. In addition, the suffering of the righteous has two goals. It profits the righteous by being a trial and by obtaining a salutary correction. Especially do sufferings end finally in the triumphal rehabilitation of the persecuted. Further, suffering redounds to the glory of God who afflicts in order to console, who only tries in order to deliver. He uses His servants to reveal in them His power and to bring praise to Himself in proportion to the degree to which he lifts the lowered. The hymns surprisingly enough never speak explicitly of a recompense attributed to the righteous after death. Nor are they clear on the value of reparation, or expiation or purification, in suffering. The famous chapters of Isaiah known as the "Servant Songs" do not seem to have been specially noted in Qumran nor by the other Qumran writers. Often and at great length the
sufferings of the Teacher of Righteousness are described without ever imagining that these trials would be able to serve as compensation for the sins of the author or of the people. The Qumran literature does not provide a link between the Old and New Testaments for the thought of vicarious suffering.

The tradition of synagogue teaching refuses to countenance the possibility of a suffering Servant-Messiah.

"While the Targums . . . discover the Messiah abundantly on almost every page of the Old Testament, and while the Targum on the prophets on several occasions (Is. 42:1; 43:10; 52:13; 53:10) expressly identifies him with the Servant, the same authority in its paraphrase of Isaiah 53 definitely signs away the element of suffering from the Messiah to the nation of Israel or to the heathen peoples."2

In fact by its interpretations it specifically repudiates any idea that suffering should be associated with its Messianic redeemer. "The disfigurement, the oppression, the humiliation, and the penal suffering for guilt of which the passage speaks, are transferred from the Servant-Messiah. . ."3

The synagogue tradition at least came into being during the time of the exile. Its roots lie firmly embedded in historical moments marked by intense suffering. Not only was Israel afflicted in a variety of physical ways but their faith in Yahweh was severely strained. He had permitted them to become again a slave people. He had apparently undone all His saving work on which their faith depended and on the basis of which He Himself summoned them to belief. Yet in the midst of these dire straits, and with prophetic promises of restoration ringing in their ears Israel could find no place in their thought about God that would give suffering a legitimate or redeeming place.

3. Ibid., p 170.
They or other people might suffer but the deep insight that suffering might be shared by a divine redeeming agent lay beyond the scope of their perception. If suffering implied guilt then it was appropriate that certain ones among men ought to be afflicted - they and others. But surely it would be unthinkable that their Messiah should share their personal fate with them, even vicariously. And so the prophetic insight of so great promise, recorded in Isaiah, is frozen only to be thawed in the later and decisive events that are to occur still within the very context of this people's life.

If it be true to conclude that later pre-Christian Judaism did not relate the suffering motif to the person of the Messiah, it is nevertheless a fact that suffering was seen to play an important role in relation to the life of the righteous.

"In the Old Testament as well as in later Judaism humility and self-humiliation, or acceptance of humiliation from God's hand were expected of a pious man and thought indeed to be praiseworthy."

"The righteous man is always the man who is lowly, humble, suffering, rejected by the world."

Later Judaism had apparently assimilated the idea that the righteous are bound to undergo experiences of suffering at the hand of God. That this teaching found wide acceptance is not surprising in the light of historical events which led down to this insight. Certainly the people had suffered, sometimes seemingly far beyond the measure required by the accepted canons of retributive justice. And in their history the focal points of the most severe agony appeared to rest on those who were charged with the proclamation of Yahweh's word. Small wonder that perceptive minds were compelled to the conclusion that the righteous do suffer and at the hand of God.

2. ibid., p. 23.
The suffering of the righteous as regarded in later Judaism is not in vain. It does have value, very specific value. The sufferings of the righteous brought benefit by way of atonement for their own sins. "Of particular importance is the atoning power of suffering, first of all for one's own sins; the righteous suffer on account of their sins . . ."\(^1\) It is possible then for a person, by his own suffering, to be re-established in fellowship with Yahweh. He has deserved his punishment, he has borne what is due to him, and so has made satisfaction for his transgressions. But the efficacy of righteous suffering is declared to extend beyond the person of the sufferer. "The idea that the suffering and death of the righteous also atone vicariously for the sins of others is so widespread that we will only mention where to find the evidence . . ."\(^2\) The judgment of Yahweh can be satisfied by the suffering of one for many, "... in later Judaism all innocent suffering was regarded as atoning often vicariously for all Israel . . ."\(^3\) Only in this way could men of faith reconcile a national history so replete with agonising experiences, with their compelling faith in the fatherhood of their covenant partner. The foundation was laid, on which, in the fulness of time, God Himself might build the structure of His own personal atoning work for all mankind.

Post biblical Judaism continued to develop the thread of thought suggested in the Old Testament

"The idea of reaping benefits from others' suffering takes on a prominent place in the later literature which is only suggested in the Old Testament."\(^4\)

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1. ibid., p. 25.
3. ibid., p. 50.
4. J. Sanders, op. cit., p. 185.
Nevertheless the biblical concept of suffering did not drop from view. It was maintained alongside the newly developing emphasis. "The idea that God's discipline of His people had the purpose of teaching repentance remained a constant facet of post-Biblical faith."\(^1\) God does afflict other nations as well but with them He is much harsher. "He permits their sins to accumulate without checking them, then in a final moment He destroys them completely."\(^2\) In addition, post biblical times saw the rise of the notion "... that afflictions carried with them corresponding compensations which tended to offset the pain and hardship suffered."\(^3\)

"Those who suffered could be sure that because they did endure God's disciplinary afflictions their sins were forgiven them. They knew... that successful endurance held out the promise of special favours from God."\(^4\)

The post biblical era saw a steady maintenance of biblical concepts with regard to suffering along with the relatively newer emphasis on eschatological reward.

Conclusions:

In all that Israel experienced, one thing is pre-eminently clear and that is the immutable purpose of God. Many essays may be attempted in interpretation of the various and sometimes seemingly diverging views of the place of suffering in the context of Israel's existence but the plan of God remains the same. That purpose is to bind man back into unity and community with their Creator. It is against the background of this constancy

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1. ibid., p. 108.
2. ibid., p. 108.
3. ibid., p. 109.
4. ibid., p. 110.
that suffering is only to be viewed.

"In Israel He prepared a way of covenant love in which He established a union between himself and Israel; within that covenant relation of love God manifested himself as the Truth, bringing Israel into communion with himself; through union and communion God bound Israel to himself as the Lord, the Giver of life, and so set up his Kingdom in the midst of estranged humanity."¹

No hope existed for any segment of the human family apart from this activity of God within the nation of Israel. The atoning purposes of God are to be served and only in His way can they be brought to fruition.

Israel's agonizing experiences belong therefore within the purposes of God. That is not to say that God takes any delight whatsoever in the suffering of Israel His Son, or that mankind was created to serve the sadistic desires of a tyrannical deity. Rather it is to say that even this that God does not directly will for His children yet falls under the sovereignty of the One and Almighty God.

"In that covenant relation of truth and love Israel had to suffer, for it shattered itself on the unswerving persistence of the divine purpose of love. Israel suffered inevitably from God, for God would not let His people go. "He used the suffering and judgment of Israel to reveal the terrible nature of sin as contradiction to God's love and grace, to uncover the enmity of man, in his persistent self-will, toward God in His self-giving. But transcending all, God used this nation in the ordeal of history and suffering to reveal His own infinite love, and the undeflecting persistence of His will to bring forgiveness and reconciliation, until His love achieved its purpose of final union and communion of man with God in Jesus Christ."²

The suffering of Israel cannot be the mere punishment of the people for punishment is only blinding apart from a certain knowledge of the nature

of the one inflicting the punishment and the true identity of those being
afflicted. In this case man's identity becomes crystal clear. He is the
rebel against God. God's identity is no longer in doubt. He is the One,
and the only One, who unflaggingly wills love and reconciliation for His
wayward children. He is the true Father whose activity points clearly to
the coming of a Son.

If it be true then that Israel's suffering reveals the true condi-
tion of man in blatant contradiction to the true identity of God it becomes
necessary to ask who it may be that benefits from this revelation? Israel
itself has much, indeed all to gain from this painful association.

"Israel suffered most throughout its history as bearer in
its existence and life of the divine Revelation. It suf-
fered from the mighty arm of the Lord, that is at the hands
of the Word of God, because it had ever to be broken and
remade, reshaped, and realigned with the covenant-will of God."¹

A re-constructed Israel, one in whose heart God had written His law, would
indeed be a blessed people. But this nation could not be united with their
God in covenant without showing forth their new identity to their neighbours.
Israel would then be the Servant of God, actually entering into His will to
be at-one with mankind. Yet it is true that Israel had been selected by God
and bound into covenant fellowship. This relationship was not optional. In
spite of who Israel willed himself to be, a rebel. And in spite of the suf-
fering this brought upon him, nevertheless the purpose of God is still being
served, that is to gather all nations unto Himself.

¹. ibid., p. 309.
"God insisted on giving Himself to Israel in spite of its enmity to him, and insisted on assuming Israel in its sinful contradiction into partnership with himself - hence the profoundest agony of psalmist and prophet alike, and hence also "the identity by assumption" of the suffering of Israel with the suffering of the Messiah so poignantly described in Isaiah 53."¹

Should a Messiah actually appear on the scene, a true servant of God, he would of necessity have to be at-one with this people Israel, in solidarity with them, and yet a faithful Israelite, true to the covenant. Such a one would have to know the sufferings of Israel as he existed in solidarity with the people's contradiction. But He would also be the one and only true Israelite in true covenant unity with His Father.

There is no Geschichte of greater and more universal importance than this Leidensgeschichte for it is a keystone in the whole Heilsgeschichte structure. In the drama of the history of suffering the two characters, God and man are portrayed in the sharpest focus. The identity of the creator God is no longer in doubt. He is Who He Is, the One in whom all of creation has its source, in whose will the entire cosmos has its meaning, and the One who intends only that fellowship with man appropriate to Creator and creature. It is also clear who man is. He is that creature who has willed himself to be for himself and not for God. He is filled with hubris. But he is likewise that one whose being is fully included in the elect body of Israel, Israel whose sole purpose for its existence is to glorify their covenant God in joyful obedience and so prepare a path for all mankind to tread.

¹. ibid., p. 310.
CHAPTER VI

Suffering: Jesus Christ, Son of Man and God

A. THE SON OF MAN

A male child was born. He did not come into being through some process of spontaneous generation from inert matter. Nor was His existence the product of some celestial union consummated between two gods or even god-like beings. He was born of a woman. He had been umbilically nourished in the womb. The process of parturition was exactly like that of countless babes before His time and since. His breathing passages had also to be cleared of mucus before He could draw one single life-giving breath. His body needed warmth and the care of His mother. He needed nourishment at her breast. A man had been born.

His mother was a young Jewish woman; her husband a Jew too. Both were natives of Palestine. Each was acutely aware of the presence of the God of their people; so much so that they had experienced communication from Him relating to the birth of this Son. Therefore it is not conjecture to say that they both lived according to the Torah graciously supplied by their God. The society in which they had been culturally nourished was more or less influenced by faith in that God. Moreover at least one of them could claim direct descendence from the very core stock of the Jewish people, the family of David. The child born into their home would be completely one with that great tradition which had been determinative for them. This Son was fully human and completely a Jew. Later experience might demonstrate that He was more than this but never would it be possible for Him to cease being both man and Jew without the suspension of His entire being.
The birth of this child, like any other, had been fully expected. Normal foetal development caused the usual physical accommodations in the body of His mother. The date of His birth had been anticipated and unfortunately coincided with the demand for the conduct of a fatiguing journey to Bethlehem. There the birth event took place. But the element of expectation connected with the birth of this particular infant could not be fully accounted for by the customary experiences of prenatal process. For some few persons, with especially sensitive spiritual perception, were strangely moved at the time of His birth in Bethlehem, and when the solidarity of this infant with the whole Jewish people was irreversibly declared in religious ceremony. In flashes of lucid insight He was seen to be the very individual whose coming had been accompanied by signs of cosmic significance, and whose appearance in the temple fulfilled the long expected return of the presence of God to effect the salvation of His own particular people, the Jews. Expectation did not cease with the appearance and growth of this child but it did lie hidden in the heart of His mother; almost certainly unknown in the earliest stages of growth and maturation experienced by the growing boy. Only fragmentary scriptural evidence is offered suggesting a knowledge of this expectation in the mind of the developing youth.

With the passage of time, bringing growth and maturation, a young Jewish man took His place in the life of His family and society. Perhaps only in the fact that He did not marry at the usual age is He in any way apparently different from His contemporaries. Very probably He engaged in a trade in order to support His share of the family needs. Day by day His appearance in the customary role of young manhood would have attracted little special attention. Possibly His person was marked by an unusual bent toward matters of faith in the God of His people; obedience and devotion rendered
toward God, care and sympathy toward men may well have been especially apparent in His activity. Nevertheless to all observers He could have been known only as a Jewish man.

'Only as a Jewish man' is however to say a great deal. Being a Jew He could claim the whole history of His people as His own. His existence stood in an unbreakable bond with the salvation history in which His people had played a determinative role. The promise made to Abraham was as firmly lodged in Jesus of Nazareth as it was in Isaac and Jacob. The Lord of hosts who had led His people in Exodus from Egypt was the same Lord to whom He directed His own prayer. The Holy One who had given His presence to His people even while that nation suffered exile, that same Father would be present with, indeed, in this Son. The demand for covenant obedience in response to the gracious history of deliverances wrought by God would be laid fully upon the shoulders of this One. This man stood in the fullest possible solidarity with the parents who gave Him birth and nurtured Him, and through them with the whole of the nation Israel. A man He was; a Jew. Not the passing of time nor the occurrence of the most cataclysmic events would ever alter these facts.

'Only as a Jewish man' is however to bring to the fore certain negative connotations. Being a man, in the fullest sense of all that manhood, humanity, human nature implies, suggest that He too is thereby made a part-taker of that leprous state in which all men share. It is at least to be expected that at certain points, very probably throughout His lifetime He will be obliged to declare in His Person and His acts who it is that He believes God to be: and that though He may never fail to be true in asserting the authentic identity of God, and in this way differ from other men, yet within Him will be that propensity to declare in favour of a false image of
God. If this were not true then He could scarcely be a man; one with that class of beings whose perpetual bent it is to name God other than He truly is. Specifically as a Jewish man, the child of His own age, He will be involved in the struggle of His people to clearly distinguish the kind of Messiah through Whom God will effect the salvation of His people. To misconceive the nature of God is to ensure that the identity and mission of His Servant will be mistaken and misunderstood. This Jew, like His fellows, will be faced with the task of differentiating between the true expression of the God who has revealed Himself in the saving events of the nation Israel and that ever-changing, faceless, chameleon-like deity whose imposed being is but a reflection of the ambitions and needs of successive generations. The life of this Jewish man will be fraught with the same dangers as those faced by other searchers after God in His age, however different the end result of His struggles may be ultimately.

These several paragraphs may appear to be so elementary and basic that time and space have been wasted. This is manifestly not the case. For time and again the solidarity of Jesus of Nazareth with Jewish manhood has been ignored or purposely set aside to the weakening or neutralizing of the message of the Church. Without His complete and continued existence as man there is no touch point with humanity in this or any age and His existence and action are bereft of significance. Without His 'Jewishness' His being and action are rootless and foundationless. Apart from the history of His people there is no context in which to understand and interpret His words and activities. If He were not a man it would not be possible to say that He lived or died. If He were not a Jew all that could be stated is that He lived and died, whatever the circumstances, unusual or mundane of that life and death. To say that Jesus of Nazareth was and continued to be a Jewish man is to establish His identity on an immovable foundation. Whatever else is stated must, of necessity be in addition to
It has already been observed that certain persons did utter sayings which appended significance to the identity of the person of Jesus of Nazareth. The adoration of the Magi and of the shepherds, the prophetic utterances of Anna and Simeon, at least to the minds of the writers of the gospels, revealed expectations implying a unique identity. Luke's record of the temple visit hints at the fact that the growing boy was at least conscious of a close relationship with the God of His people even if that awareness was only in the rudimentary stages, and even if there is no accompanying elucidation of the nature of that special identity. However, up to the moment when Jesus forsakes His parental home and embarks on His itinerant ministry there is no public evidence of who He truly is. All responsible materials dealing with His early years suggest that whatever insights various persons may have had into His full identity, these glimpses remained private and secret and in need of the further evidence which His ministry would present.

B. THE SON OF GOD

With the baptism of Jesus by John there commences that period in which observers may witness and make declarations dealing with the identity of Jesus of Nazareth; declarations which will ultimately depend upon preconceptions of what sort of person the Messiah must be and how He ought to act, and whether these preconceptions are, either shattered and remoulded through fellowship with Jesus, or, are reaffirmed, crystallized, and expressed in actions counter to Him. For in the end it will become public knowledge even to Gentiles, that in dealing with Jesus of Nazareth, men are not dealing only with a Jewish man, but also with the Son of God.
By presenting Himself for John's baptism Jesus begins His public declar-
lation. The submission to this particular baptism implies an acceptance
of the message preached by John, a response to that communication, and thus
a solidarity with the procession of responding persons seeking baptism.
Jesus of Nazareth does not go down to the Jordan and into it alone. By his
acceptance of the ministry of John He publicly declares His unity with a
group of persons who having heard John's declared word, have accepted it as
pertinent to their own lives, have responded to it, and are giving this rec-
ognized public witness of all that is therein entailed. Jesus goes to Jor-
dan as one of them. His action must be considered in the light of John's
message, what is implied by the acceptance of that word in His own case,
and also in light of the unique events that are reported to have transpired
upon His visit to Jordan's bank.

Anyone, willing to draw public attention to himself by undergoing
the rite of baptism at John's hand must have been impressed by the Baptist's
proclamation. Several emphases went to make up the import of this message.
The call was issued to repent. The approach of the kingdom of Heaven is
cited by St. Matthew as one of the reasons John gave to encourage his hear-
ers to repent. While there is no direct suggestion that he strongly empha-
sized the sinful state of his hearers other than that of the Pharisees and
Sadducees, still the candidates for baptism were moved to confess their sins
implying that this ministration was seen to be instrumental in forgiveness.
This baptism at John's hand bore with it a future reference as well. To sub-
mit was an act of preparation for the coming of One who could endow men with
a wholly other spirit fulfilling the mood marked only by repentance for sin
and the receiving of forgiveness. And this One to come would finally, effec-
tively, and decisively accomplish the cleansing of the people and the separa-
tion of the impure from purified elements. Streams of people heard John, acknowledged that his message applied to them, and undertook to be baptised by him. Jesus of Nazareth was one of them.

What precisely did Jesus declare publicly when He elected to join the throng seeking baptism by John and then by undergoing baptism at the hand of that wilderness preacher? Clearly He is classifying Himself as one "of" them not merely one among them. Since this baptism is one of repentance at which men confess their sins and presumably are pointed toward forgiveness, it would be natural to assume that Jesus of Nazareth is an example of sinful manhood. It has already been pointed out that He is a man and so is exposed to the influence of corporate manhood, that compulsion to deny the true nature of the revealed God and arrogate to oneself the right of electing a more "satisfactory" image to worship. Whatever the later events that are destined to occur to modify this assessment of the man Jesus, nevertheless it cannot be denied that here and now He is identifying Himself with men and women who are self-acknowledged sinners.

"Se faire baptiser est donc, pour Jésus, un act de soumission à la volonté de Dieu; non à sa volonté codifiée dans une Loi écrite ou orale (qui ne contenait aucune prescription sur un tel baptême); ni à la volonté divine révélée par Jean à tous les Juifs de son temps mais à un dessein particulier de Dieu pour Jésus et le Baptiste. Ce dessein est que Jésus soit rendu solidaire, dans le baptême, du péché de son peuple." 1

In his acceptance of John's baptism Jesus is manifestly declaring that He is a man, that He belongs inextricably to the human situation and that He will to be considered one with even sinful humanity. Here is no attempted

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also K. Barth, Church Dogmatics IV, 1, p.172
evasion of the implications of manhood, nor an appeal of any sort to some kind of purity or righteousness on the basis of identity or action. If a purifying cleansing fire is to be ignited it seems likely that He too will experience its searing flame and acrid smoke, with, or at least on behalf of, those with whom He is henceforth to be fully and completely identified.

The Baptist's message speaks not only of sinful man in need of repentance and forgiveness, and the danger involved to the unrepentant, but he also tells of the near approach of the kingdom of Heaven and of One who will establish that rule in judgment. This side of the proclamation cannot be ignored. To others this part may have meant simply an extension of the call to repentance. In the case of Jesus it must be bent around and brought to bear from another side. However much the category of manhood may have seemed to totally envelope all that He was, nevertheless there were hints right from His birth of that which would transcend mere humanity. Now, at the moment of His baptism these strands are brought together and thrust into expression. To Jesus and possibly also to John objective evidence is given of His full identity.

The descent of the Spirit upon Jesus like a dove was a sign, a portent of profound significance to Jesus Himself, possibly to John also, but certainly to the young Church as the report of this event became generally known and interpreted in retrospect.

"In view of the evidence for the expectation that the Messiah would be specially endowed with the Spirit of God and would actually bestow the Spirit, it is reasonable to suppose that the early Church saw a messianic significance in the descent of the Spirit on Jesus - and also that Jesus himself did so."

Whatever may have been the reason for Jesus' wait until His late twenties or early thirties to take up His mission, it is certain that the very moment

1. C.E.B. Cranfield, op. cit., p.53.
when He declared Himself publicly one with mankind, His messianic future becomes certain. His true identity is made known to Him. If He doubted the nature of His mission His reservations are now set aside. Though the full implications of existence as the Messiah among those expecting Him, may not have been clear to Jesus' mind as yet, and perhaps only gradually came to light even for him who is the Messiah, nevertheless the direction has been set. John had spoken of the One to come in Messianic terms. Now He has arrived.

At His baptism not only His identity but the nature of His functioning is revealed. Messianic expectations had taken specific forms and definite activities were presumed to be indications of the Messiah's presence to the minds of His contemporaries. Many of these expectations grew up around the concept of a warlike figure who would finally end foreign domination and usher in the Messianic Age when the sons of Abraham would be justified and their enemies judged in defeat. But the voice that speakers at Jesus' baptism reverberates with other echoes. It identifies Him in terms of sonship. "The words of the voice suggest that this event was a final and complete realization by Jesus that God was father to him in a uniquely intimate way ..."¹ The concept of obedience is inherent within the scope of filial relationship, and by His obedient self-identification with the throng at Jordan Jesus has made it possible for God to make this declaration. He is Messiah and He is Son and by His obedience to the Father He will fulfill the Messianic function.

Jesus being a Jewish man it is inevitable that sonship will be given its significance out of the complex of interpretation and meaning already

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bound up in vital concepts of sonship employed in Israel's traditions.

"In the Old Testament Israel is frequently spoken of as the 'son' of God."¹ The role of Jesus is therefore cast in terms of the covenant established by Yahweh with His people Israel, a relationship in which the grace of the Lord of the covenant heightened the responsibility of obedience into inescapable demand. In His acceptance of John's baptism and the significance which it entailed Jesus of Nazareth makes clear His will to obedient response to His Father and thus embarks upon His career of service as Son. He will be towards His Father all that the nation Israel, with whom He is in the fullest possible solidarity, should have been.

All of this involves a certain kind of approach to His ministry. As Son He will function in certain ways and not in others. The voice at the baptism refers to the way that He will take in order to be both Son and Messiah.

"The later words of the voice according to one reading are reminiscent of the opening of the first of the 'servant songs' (Isaiah 42:1) and other passages in Isaiah where the prophet pictures Israel as a 'servant' called by God to a special task which involves humiliation and suffering but ends in triumph."²

Jesus' free and willing acceptance of oneness with those who sought John's baptism makes it clear that He is already on the path of filial obedience. The implications of this unity with the baptismal candidates were already drawn out in terms of the judgment to be brought by the promised judge. The suffering servant motif is not misplaced therefore when it is combined with the act of Jesus in submitting to John's Baptism.

Many Jewish men were baptized by John as a sign of their repentance, of the forgiveness of their sins and in recognition of the promise of a

¹. ibid, p.49.
². ibid, p.49, also P. Bonnard, op. cit., p.40 and C. Cranfield, op. cit., p.55.
coming judgment. One Jewish man was baptized and declared to be the Messiah in virtue of His announced filial relationship to God and thereby directed into and established in a way that would lead through suffering to victorious fulfillment of His servant mission. From this moment forth His life will be full of events in which His true identity will be fully established and His Messianic function fulfilled.

C. THE SUFFERING SON IN CONFLICT

With His true identity so clearly revealed to Himself and with His course apparently laid out before Him, it is no surprise that these insights, now affirmed, must be immovably acknowledged at the very centre of His will. Nor is it surprising that there should be conflict involved in the crystallising of His personhood and purpose, for it must be remembered that He too had to deal decisively and finally with the universal human proclivity toward idolatry. The presentation of the temptation immediately following the narrative of the baptism requires no artificial adjustment of logic but follows naturally upon the events just described.

It was not by chance that Jesus wandered into the wilderness. That very Spirit that descended upon Him and affirmed His Messiahship is the agency by whose operation He feels compelled to submit Himself to the wasteland environment. It is therefore in expectation of further revelation bearing upon His true Person that the account is read and studied. Out of the experiences that He undergoes and His reaction to them will issue a more complete portrait of this Man and a more detailed sketch of His mode of operation.

To fast is to voluntarily put one's own existence into jeopardy. It
is to declare that for certain reasons one's being as it is, is to be called into question. To fast is to state in no uncertain terms the willingness to undergo suffering and even death, the final negation of being, in order to establish one's identity in solidarity with a cause, and to uphold the process by which that cause may attain to completion. If one of the candidates for John's baptism were to feel compelled to fast immediately upon the receiving of the Baptist's ministry, such fasting would direct certain reflections on the baptism experience. This is the case with Jesus of Nazareth. "Fasting expresses man's knowledge of his unworthiness to live, his readiness to suffer death which he has merited for his sins and therefore the radical nature of his repentance."¹ That the Son of God, the appointed Messiah should fast seems grossly incongruous for He was manifestly worthy, not unworthy; He has maintained His Sonship in total obedience; He has not sinned and merited death, and He stands in no need of radical repentance. But it must be recalled that here in Jesus we have the Person of the Son who bears with Him the throngs of sinful men who were baptized for forgiveness in anticipation of His coming. How are their sins to be set aside unless they be incorporated in Him who voluntarily declares them to be His own? There is no forgiveness for them unless He should fast on their behalf and thereby declare His readiness to suffer and die for their transgressions. Thus is the fast a fulfillment of the implications of baptism.

Temptation assails Jesus because in the fulness of His being He is not only Son of God as designated at His baptism, but also a Jewish man. In His manhood there is that which provides an entry point for uncertainty as

¹. K. Barth, Church Dogmatics, Vol. IV. 1, p. 260, also C.E.B. Cranfield, op. cit., p. 57.
to the identity of God and thus for delusion about the identity of the self.
The attack launched against Jesus is first of all in terms of His own per-
sonal identity and through Him a radical questioning of the being of God Him-
self. "If he was to help man, who is flesh, he had to take upon himself the
whole temptation experience of the flesh. Even Jesus Christ ἸΣᾶς Ἰσσων
was born with the question 'Has God really said'? - yet without sin.'¹
'If you are the Son of God ...' in these terms temptation is hurled upon
Jesus. Is the experience in which He was designated Son really true after
all? Is God the God who He declares Himself to be in word and act in the
ancient scriptures? Is it a final act of evil deception to imagine that
the power of God could be vested in a lonely starving man without visible
means of help and support, tottering on the brink of extinction? These
questions Jesus must answer. His entire life of obedience and devotion to
His Father is, in a brief moment, set on the auction block. Will He barter
His state of filial Sonship, of perfect obedience, for the certainty that
God has designated Him Son in power; an empty certainty arising from the
exercise of His divine power with the end of satisfying His own personal
needs? Will He attain to the ends for which He has been sent by the exer-
tion of His divinity in such a fashion?

The answer is "No." And it is a "No" uttered not in His own strength
but in utter dependence upon the word of God. In this He is yet without sin.
Nowhere is He more fully Son to God than He is here. Had He elected to turn
the stones into bread He would have immediately denied His being as a man.
He would have reversed the act of God accomplished through John declaring
Him one with the Baptist's throngs of sinners. He might have continued in ex-

istence but not as Jesus of Nazareth. That person born of Mary would have ceased to be. For it is not within the power of sinners to accomplish such deeds. Nor is it within the scope of the power given over to the obedient faithful to serve their selfish needs by the employ of divinely given powers. To have been a partner to Satan's suggestion would have been to sever obedient manhood from the person of the Son and thus to have damaged the Person beyond repair. But Jesus did not yield to this demonic onslaught. Instead "He willed to live as one of the sinners who have no hope apart from God."  

Satan's first attack looks to success within the context of Jesus' suffering begun in fasting. His suggestion to turn loaves into bread is given to a man undergoing an experience of exceedingly painful existence. For far too long He has been without bread. Now the opportunity seems to present itself to escape the pain of starvation.

"Satan tempts Jesus in the weakness of his human flesh. He wishes to set his Godhead against his manhood. He plans to make the flesh rebellious toward the Spirit. Satan knows that the flesh is afraid of suffering."

"Were Jesus in the power of his Godhead to withdraw from suffering in the flesh, all flesh would be lost."  

If Jesus were to declare Himself free from the same suffering in which man is all too deeply immersed then again He would cease to be, in the fulness of His Person. "The flesh, too, belongs to the Word of God, and if it must suffer, this means that man does not live by bread alone. Jesus has preserved his manhood and His way of suffering in temptation."  

The temptation to abandon the way of filial obedience has been overcome for the moment. Jesus elects to depend entirely upon the Father to whom He is the beloved Son. As Son He wills not to expend any energy or exert any power to maintain

2. ibid., p. 18.
His sonship, - His own life, but rather entrusts that sustenance to His Father thereby relinquishing any claim to any sonship springing from within Himself. He wills to be that Person whose only vitality comes from the nurture provided by the Father. Though this may, and does mean in His case, painful fasting and suffering, as the flesh cries out for food, nevertheless He wills not to invest all that He is in satisfying mere flesh, though this flesh be that without which He can know no existence as the Word of God born of woman.

Now that Jesus has established His identity in concrete action, named the God of Israel, He whose grace demands unconditional obedience, as His Father, and rigidly set the direction of His own action in terms of filial obedience, Satan himself takes his stand upon the very ground named by Jesus in the first temptation. Matthew places the temptation to hurl Himself from the pinnacle of the temple in the second position. Satan is saying, "If you be who you believe you are, Son of God, and God is who you believe He is, the One on whom you can place unconditional filial trust, why then, demonstrate these truths. While you suffer the pangs of hunger at least assure yourself that He will ultimately minister to your needs by conducting this experiment which I suggest. You may do this without giving away your trust in God for you have a proof on which to base your action." Jesus is quick to see that Satan is still attacking that basic premise on which He has elected to take His stand, though this thrust is more of an ambush than a frontal assault. To put God to the test even on the basis of faithful assumptions, is, in the last analysis, to make a mockery of faith and thus of God. For it is to say that God is finally not to be trusted to be who He has declared Himself to be, even to the man of faith; that He is
not Father after all unless He is willing to be Father according to terms laid down by a man.

"Satan fait un usage littéraliste du Psaume 91: Jésus lui répond par un procédé que nous appellerions aujourd'hui d'exégèse théologique: il est bon d'avoir confiance en Dieu, encore faut-il que cette confiance ne déguise pas une intention secrète, ou même inconsciente, d'asservir la puissance de Dieu à l'ambition religieuse de l'homme."  

In moments of intense anguish when no visible means of satisfying His hunger was at hand and it would have seemed only right to have asked God for an assuring sign, Jesus will not permit His confidence in God to be shaken though His urgent need could quite conceivably have terminated in death.

On behalf of all those with whom He identified Himself in baptism Jesus here affirms again the true identity and function of God. Had Jesus failed at this point His action would have constituted a denial of His own being for it was none other than a voice from heaven which named Him Son of God. To have denied the true being of the source of that voice would have been to place His own identity in jeopardy. To have declared in favour of the possibility of something other in God would have been tantamount to naming another God and offering him worship which is precisely what Satan intended. But Jesus will not be moved. God is He who demands repentance and obedience. Jesus is the One named by God to enter into the fullest solidarity with man possible, and to present that sacrifice of repentance and obedience as He incorporates the baptismal candidates in Himself.

"If He had given way to this . . . temptation He would have committed the supreme act of tempting God Himself, i.e., under the appearance of this most robust faith in Him demanding that He should accept this Jesus who believes so robustly instead of sinful man by Him and in His person."  

1. ibid, p. 45.
2. K. Barth, Church Dogmatics, Vol. IV, 1. p. 263.
He does not separate Himself from God nor does He will to deny that Jewish manhood which He manifestly is.

Satan's final thrust is no longer cloaked in subtlety of any kind. There are no hidden implications behind the course of action here suggested to Jesus. He is given a direct invitation to worship Satan who will in turn give over into His hands unlimited earthly power. No longer would the sufferer need to maintain filial obedience, denying the potentialities inherent in His being. He could have bread and more than bread. He could have unlimited resources put at His disposal for the satisfaction of all his bodily desires. The world would give over the store of its treasure entirely to Him. The only price that He would have to pay is to worship Satan, to become Son of Satan, to transfer His filial obedience to an entirely other and different person. In so doing He would be altering His own identity and undertaking a radically different course of action. Being Son to Satan would mean that that manhood incorporated in Him at baptism would become subservient to Satan. The message of John calling for repentance and pointing to forgiveness for sin would be utterly betrayed and the repentant ones bartered back into slavery to Satan having been sold out by the very one who took their humanity upon Himself. It is this that Jesus rejects in foiling the final bid to subvert His loyalty.

Jesus had to choose between two quite different ways in which to express that Messiahship which had been conferred upon Him and which He had thus far willingly undertaken. His mission was to incorporate mankind into a willing unity with Himself and His purposes, and to present the faithful obedience of man to His Father so that man and God might be reconciled in Him. But how is He to establish Himself in this office of kingly reign? Is it to be through the exploitation of such resources that the world can
put at His disposal? That is, will He employ those powers that men recognize and submit to? Or will He elicit the loyalty of His subjects-to-be through the exercise of another power the nature of which is only being revealed to Him and is yet quite unknown to men?

Possession of earthly resources in abundance brings power, the kind of potent influence that would turn men's heads towards Him. Furthermore what would be wrong with the exertion of ownership over that very realm declared to be good by the creating God? Would it not be validating the creative intent of God to so use His good gifts? The attraction of this pattern of thinking is all too clear. It must be noted however that while "... la puissance et la gloire humaine ne sont pas détestables en elles-mêmes ..." nevertheless "... le diable les tient actuellement en son pouvoir et en dispose ..."¹ There is nothing innately wrong with the contents of the kingdoms of the world. It is a fact however that consistently they have been sold out to the service of Satan so that to lean upon them for support or to take them up as instruments to be employed in a certain cause is to effect a dependence upon Satan, in fact to declare a solidarity with the one whose avowed purpose it is to sow doubts as to the nature of God and thereby woo men into his service.

Lordship exercised in terms of the possession of the kingdoms of the world would be most alluring to human eyes, accustomed as they are to measuring potentiality in these terms. Jesus had to confront this fact. "... Jésus est placé devant un choix radical: le Pouvoir ou le Service filial."² In His submission to the baptism of identification with sinners, Jesus has been glorified by being named Son to God. His way is thereby declared to be

¹. Pierre Bonnard, op. cit., p.45.
². Ibid., p. 46.
one of filial obedience in which there is no apparent compelling power. His way does not lead logically to anything but loneliness, despair and forsakenness. His Messianic career is the very antithesis of the expectations of His people whose conceptualizations of Messiahship were in bondage to evil. He appears as One absolutely without power and means of accomplishing His set task or of even protecting Himself.

"In the temptation Jesus is robbed of all his own strength, he is left alone by God and man; in anguish he must suffer Satan's robbery, he has fallen into the deepest darkness. He is left with nothing but the saving supporting enduring Word of God, which holds him firmly and which fights and conquers for him."¹

From this moment forward it is this concept of Messiahship which alone pertains. Other ideas of what constitutes Messianic personality and activity may persist but it is only by observing the one and only Messiah that false images are shattered and true Messianic personhood granted primacy. This is the Messiah. As He is, and how He acts, are Messianic. Beside Him there is no other. Henceforth His progress toward the goal of His vocation will be marked by this unique kind of power. "His defencelessness belongs to the inmost essence of His calling."² "... Jésus a renoncé à la force messianique, à la volonté de puissance, pour servir et mourir avec le seule autorité qu'il tenait de son Père ..."³ God is surely and certainly identified as the One who is Father to this Son. It is His nature to be and His destiny to act, as this, His Son, acts in true obedience. No longer is it possible to be duped by that propensity innate in fallen humanity to mis-identify God. He is He who is here revealed in Jesus Christ, as

¹ D. Bonhoeffer, op. cit., p.20.
³ P. Bonnard, op. cit., p. 46.
new and strange as this concept may be. Men may utterly refuse faith and loyalty to Him but in so doing they themselves will be splintered against the rock of truth that is Jesus Christ. In Him the power, the only true omnipotence is revealed, for by Him, and in Him alone, is leprous human nature freed of its ancient and malignant taint.

The entire ministry of Jesus Christ the Messiah is most properly interpreted when seen in these terms. The power which He displayed never contradicted the terms of submission in which His might had been granted to Him. Wonders He certainly did perform. And many were attracted by the superficial appearance and interpretation of these acts. He did command a type of popularity for a period of time which was accorded to Him on the basis of an estimation of power in accordance with fallen man's view of what constitutes power. His actions seemed to bring a kind of salvation that coincided with what many expected of Messianic might. Jesus Himself seemingly had to struggle with the temptation to let this assessment of His person and activity pass as that willed by God. In the course of the conflict brought upon Him in this way He stood to suffer a good deal. At Caesarea Philippi in the encounter with Peter there is revealed the inner workings of that struggle followed immediately by the prediction of suffering. Yet there is no record of Jesus seeking recourse to a pattern of interpretation of His acts or of teaching that would deny the true source and meaning of Messianic might. He remains utterly and completely at one with the will of His Father.

In the garden of Gethsemane the question of filial obedience comes to a climax. Up to this point the life of Jesus, the Son of God had been lived in complete oneness with the will of His Father. For this voluntary obedience He had to pay a high price. In the wilderness He had suffered
but emerged from that experience with His identity intact and His purpose coincident with the continued saving activities of the God of His people. He bound the presence of Yahweh to them. At no point did He renounce His Jewish manhood by alleviating the contingencies inherent in being a man nor did He succumb to the tendency to pervert the true divine power by exerting His might in activities pandering to men's concepts of omnipotence. He served and He suffered that which was inescapable for One who lives as a Jewish man and the Son of God.

In Gethsemane, however, there is a sharpening of the pangs of anguish that could not have been anticipated until the way of the Father was known to its most involved turning. Satan had been present throughout the entire life span of Jesus. That is to say He was repeatedly tempted to act under the constraint of a god other than Him whom He knew as Father. At the time of the wilderness experience He had gained a victory that would never be reversed and yet the old temptations lingered on. Always, though, there had been a way open for the true expression of His Sonship which pointed toward the light. Satan might be oppressive in His assaults but always there were deeds of healing, words of teaching and counsel that might be given. Never was there the prospect of unrelieved gloom. Always there was the possibility of activity, which when undertaken obediently could be seen to reveal the nature and purpose of God. Under these circumstances the ultimate in temptation had not been reached.

In Gethsemane new depths of suffering and temptation are plumbed. "It was one thing to contradict and withstand the tempter, it was another to see him actually triumphant as he necessarily would be in the world, in the humanity ruled by him, to be reflected by him in the hard language of facts."  

1. K. Barth, Church Dogmatics, Vol. IV, 1. p. 266.
What might Jesus of Nazareth, Son of God now do to faithfully reveal the nature of His Father? Only one possibility remains and that is to submit to the overbearing, engulfing stream of events. It is now apparent that this flow is leading Him directly into total darkness, into a realm where all that He will undergo will be according to the will of Satan. Submission here is not evidently in terms of submission to the will of the Father unless perchance His will coincides exactly with that of Satan. In the baptism He had freely identified Himself with men under the dominion of Satan. He will now have to undergo that which is due to Him according to the identity which He has voluntarily made His own. "In His identification with sinful men He is the object of the holy wrath of God against sin, and in Gethsemane as the hour of the Passion approached the full horror of that wrath is disclosed."\(^1\) And yet He is Son to God and realizes that His is charged with Messianic duties involving the salvation of His people. Is it possible that the bitter cup that looms near His lips is the will of God? Is it possible that by imbibing of its contents He can conceivably accomplish that which He has been out to do? In the midst of this kind of acute conflict and suffering Jesus offers His prayer to God.

The answer to that anguished cry as given unmistakably in the events that follow immediately upon the visit to Gethsemane. Whatever light the removal of the cup proffered to Him might have given, is denied. The final victory is to be attained in only one terrifying way. The horror of that way lies not so much in the fact that it entails physical suffering but rather in that the will and so the identity of God will be thrown into radical question by its apparent identification with the will and activity of Satan.

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The death of Jesus Christ would seem to be the ultimate victory for evil. Could it be anything but defeat for God? Is it not true that even filial obedience here loses all of its value if it leads only to extinction? Does this not mean the end of the existence of the person of Jesus Christ if He is forsaken by the very Father who has willed Him into the unique being that He is? If His sole support during the time of temptation, the Word of God, is stripped from Him, will there be anything at all left but a corpse? These questions Jesus had to face and did so in a state of shuddering horror. "... the dreadful thing that He saw coming upon Him ... the night ... in which the good will of God will be indistinguishable one with the evil will of men and the world and Satan." If God's will seemed to enclose within it an endorsement of these impending events then His Son could only utter one thought - "Thy will be done."

Satan is given full freedom to exercise the power which is his own. Every evil device is at his disposal including the capability of bringing about situations in which the hellish forsakenness of death would grip One who had only known divine intimacy with His Father. Nothing of the glory that will later be attributed to these moments is anywhere evident. What is clear is simply terrible obedience rendered by a faithful Son utterly and completely without hope or promise, utterly and completely for nought. Like Job He is offered no support from His companions who sleep in ignorant oblivion to the decisive battle that is being fought within earshot. Like Job He must await a bright morning without any assurance that such is to dawn, indeed under strong compulsion to believe that if there is a sunrise it will not be the work of His Father but the outcome of evil processes.

D. SUFFERING OF THE SON OF MAN AND GOD

The night of evil descended on Jesus of Nazareth in the form of execution as a slave - crucifixion. Following a type of judicial procedure which only served to mock the best religious and civil judgments of men, and after brutal treatment the like of which would have been accorded to the meanest of criminals, He was affixed to His cross. The young Jewish man designated Son of God in His submission to identification with men, hangs thus suspended in this hopeless position, His only company, two thieves, like Him in the most desperate of circumstances. Whatever may have been feared in previous moments of dread is now reality. However alone He may have been He is here in deeper solitude. Whatever men may have said of God they hereby declare that this man is certainly not to be identified with God. Whatever idols they may have served before, men here declare in favour of another god than the person revealed in Jesus Christ. Whatever men's concepts of power, glory and kingship none of these are evident to their eyes and minds in the condition of this crucified man. He is cast out and in their eyes fit only to have His existence terminated in death. The triumph of evil is apparently complete in this outworking of men's diseased natures.

Some few, not out of understanding of Him, but rather much as they would drag an injured dog out from under the wheels of a chariot, offered Him drugged wine. The agony of the flesh would be eased as the central nervous system was dulled to the violent separation of flesh and nerve endings. But even this ministry is refused. He was a man—a being whose totality included existence in flesh. To deny the existence of His flesh even in this small way would be to flee from unity with other men like Him who had
known and would come to know a death like His. Not even in this way does He will to repudiate the humanity which has been incorporated in Him. "His refusal to drink may be explained as due to His vow recorded in 14:25. Another motive was probably also present - the will to avoid nothing of the cup His Father had given him." As in the wilderness and in Gethsemane we have here to deal with the man who is also Son of God. Even under the most dire of compelling circumstances He will not remove Himself from that classification of being that is not only subject to suffering but to whom suffering is indeed due - whose very being by its existence draws agony upon itself. Jesus elects to suffer crucifixion and in filial obedience to drink to its dregs that cup proffered to Him by His Father.

In the garden of Gethsemane there was no one who would remain alert and watch with him. The three men who had shared most intimately in the events of His ministry, whose relatives had been recipients of His gifts of healing, who had watched while He restored diseased flesh, who had been firsthand witnesses to the resurrection of the dead, were unable to stay awake and demonstrate a unity of compassion and empathy with Him in His need. Nor were they gathered at the foot of His cross. But two men were with Him. On either side hung thieves, firmly fastened to crosses. There was no possibility of them fleeing from His presence. They were not liable to be overcome with sleep. In sharp contrast to the supportive vigil that the disciples might have kept, two others flank the Lord. In Gethsemane there might have been a spirit of unity that would have bound Master and disciple into a corporate unity. They might have chosen to be identified with Him as He sought to have them as His own. But such unity never developed. The disciples first withdraw themselves in sleep, then in flight.

1. C.E.B. Cranfield, op. cit., p. 455.
Here, at Golgotha, the unity is established and maintained by the brute force of the situation. These two men cannot flee. They are literally nailed in the presence of Jesus Christ. Against their will they struggle, they thirst, they suffer, they expire with Him. Quite apart from Luke's record of conversation between Jesus and the thieves, there is still that which identifies Jesus of Nazareth with two seasoned criminals. As at Jordan, so at Golgotha, the Messiah is fully and completely man, quite inextricably associated with all that man is, even the grossly sinful man. He is Son of man, the inheritor of all that man is. Their plight He has made His own. None can separate themselves from Him. Even those who willfully flee will be brought face to face with Him at last.

Others are gathered at the foot of the crosses. They attend not out of compulsion but by choice. They are spectators. They separate themselves from Him as observers stand back to view a spectacle. In spite of their wish to establish a gulf between themselves and this dying one there is that which draws them magnetically toward the figure on the central cross. They are Jewish men. He is a Jewish man. He has declared by word and deed that He is their Messiah, their ruler, their king. This they cannot ignore. His cross is their repudiation of Him in the role in which He has identified Himself. Yet, He is named "The King of the Jews" by command of Pilate and the title is posted for all to see. The spectators reveal their own subconscious state of mind by simply being there and mocking Him in terms of that title. Is this man King of the Jews? Certainly not! - is their answer. For to them the term King could never be associated with the curse of the cross. To them the king figure has outstretched arms, but with a sword clenched in His fist. The spectators could not possibly conceive of king-
ship in terms of the defenceless, pinioned arms of Jesus of Nazareth, and so they mock. They demand a compelling sign of His kingship but that sign must be consistent with their concept of what rulership involves. They demand that Jesus conform to an identity by performing this act that is not a true reflection of the God whose Son He is. They demand that He come down from the cross, the very thing that He must not do if He is to remain true to His Person, if in filial obedience He is to continue as Son of man.¹ Though it is screened from their eyes, this scene on Golgotha is the very sign of true kingship.

What constitutes true kingly power is that which Jesus Christ does. There is no other person or activity which can be used as a comparable standard. Other kingships and powers wax and wane but this one will not. There is nothing more kingly, more potent than for the Son of God to submit to this identification with men. This is kingship. This is rulership. This is power. This is that peculiar illogical power of God by which He overcomes the world. Beside these other expressions of might are weak and pale and in no way substitutes. All power from this time forward must be measured against this definitive standard. The cross is His throne.

"Jesus was never more King and Saviour than on the cross."² Out from here will be directed that might which will utterly conquer and subdue all other force. In offering perfect filial obedience to His Father He fulfils all that had been intended for Israel, the covenant partner of God. This is the fullest evidence of the effectiveness of that power which is His.

The cry of dereliction is that final and full evidence establishing once and for all the nature of God and revealing the true state of man.

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"The burden of the world's sin, his complete self-identification with sinners, involved not merely a felt, but a real, abandonment by His Father. It is in the cry of de-reliction that the full horror of man's sin stands revealed. But the cry also marks the lowest depth of the hiddenness of the Son of God. When this depth had been reached, the victory had been won."

The abandonment by the Father had to take place or the identification of Jesus with mankind thrown into question. It is as the Son of man that He knows the hideous depths of forsakenness. How else could it be unless God's grace were to be withdrawn? It is very much a function of God's grace to reveal to man the true nature of his condition and to default here by offering a glimpse of man in his sin, still partly worthy of fellowship with God, would be to obscure the situation by presenting to men a false image of himself and of the righteousness of God.

"God must die on man's account so that man may learn his heart and that he may see tested and unveiled those things which he does not know about himself or only dimly suspects."

"God must die for man, so that man may simultaneously - and transcending all this - know the heart of God and be allowed to understand that it is completely open to him and is full of Good News. That is the mystery of the defencelessness of God"

"God's grace is defencelessness . . . "

As Son of man Jesus Christ is utterly forsaken by God. In Him all men are thus judged and condemned to death and the execution carried out. The act and the word thus proclaimed are final. There is no possible appeal. There is no hope of pardon except to plead this accomplished act. The judges are judged and condemned and executed in their own judging, condemning and executing.

The righteousness of God is fulfilled in the suffering of Jesus Christ. It is right of God to judge and to painfully punish by the constant exercise of the granting of His sifting, purifying, gracious presence to His people. God is truly portrayed as an arbiter of retributive justice as that function serves His overall purpose of graciously winning men into covenant fellowship with Himself. But here in the cross the demands of retributive justice are completely fulfilled. In order to accomplish this fulfillment God has made man's suffering His own.

"... an act of God which is coincident with the free action and suffering of a man... in such a way that this human action and suffering has to be represented and understood as the action and therefore the passion of God Himself... man's situation objectively and decisively changed whether they are aware of it or not."

"We are not merely dealing with any suffering but with the suffering of God and this man..."

"... the decisive thing is that in the suffering and death of Jesus Christ it has come to pass that in His own person He has made an end of us as sinners and therefore of sin itself by going to death as the One who took our place as sinners."

It is no longer possible for man to refer to his painful experiences as the retributive action of God for his sins. All retribution has been caught up and borne for man in exactly the same way as His identification with sinful and forsaken men, Jesus Christ fulfilled the judgement standing against sin. It is not possible for man to suffer for his sins except that he stupidly, foolishly, unaccountably, illogically and irrationally rejects that One who has already drunk to the dregs the bitter cup of suffering on behalf of all men. In Jesus Christ God has Himself suffered and died on behalf of men to the completion of His very own plan of reconciliation with man.

In His very dying the identity of Jesus Christ is revealed. The 
titulus on His cross may have been ignored. Men may have demanded another 
sign of His true identity. Some may not have troubled their minds to ponder 
the person on whom they heaped slurs and insults. But the secret of His 
nature is nevertheless made public.

"The centurion's confession . . . may have been a spon-
taneous recognition of divinity in a man of outstanding 
greatness . . . but Mark read much more into the words 
regarding them as a parallel at the end of his Gospel to 
vios Oeou at the beginning (1: 1) i.e. as a confession 
of deity of Jesus in the full Christian sense."¹

This recognition of superhuman greatness by the centurion must be seen in 
the light of the centurion's concept of God. It is scarcely likely that 
he was under the influence of Jesus Christ prior to this moment and so 
his confession could not have had the import of that made by Peter at 
Caesarea Philippi. Still, for the Evangelist this unexpected ejaculation 
serves to clinch the point that in Jesus Christ men encounter the revelation of God. This revelation can and does break through, however incompletely at first, to individuals whose preconceptions of divinity are not 
so firmly fixed that they are blind to what happens before their very eyes. 
For Mark, Jesus Christ is the Son of God and this he affirms through the recorded statement of a Roman centurion. By no means is His identity of 
Son to God to be jeopardised by the Golgotha events. Rather God is hence-
forward to be thought of only in terms of the activity undertaken by His 
Son. In Jesus Christ it is demonstrated once and for all who God is in re-
lation to sinful mankind and what He wills to do in effecting their recon-
ciliation. Man's propensity toward idolatry is here finally uprooted for

also Cf. C.E.B. Cranfield, op. cit., p.460.
a Jewish man has named God, giving Him His true identity and with the authority of the Son of God. In Him the radical monotheism of Israel is fulfilled. The cross is the answer to the ancient and perennial question on the lips of man - "Who is God?" The only One who is "I Am Who I Am" is revealed on Golgotha to the eternal silencing of any further enquiry. Satan is effectively gagged in this final declaration. The ancient question is rendered meaningless in the complete obedience offered on behalf of man by the Son; accomplished by One whose authority is that of the true God.

St. Paul clearly saw and stated (Romans 1:4) that the resurrection event set the final seal to the Person and Work of Jesus Christ. His being and activity is declared eternally valid by being accorded the status of perpetuity by means of a mighty act of God. The evidence of the empty tomb is intended to establish beyond doubt, the unity of the manhood and Godhood. He continues to be both Son of man and Son of God, in that resurrected being. His persistent refusal to accept any role other than this incarnate Sonship is finally and eternally ratified. The Jewish man named Son of God lives on forever bearing in His very being that which He was from the all eternity and that which He assumed to Himself in His existence in the flesh. All the implications of this existence are given determinative significance in the resurrection.

E. THE SUFFERING NATION AND THE SUFFERING SON

The crucified and resurrected Jesus Christ does not cease to be the Jewish man, Son of Mary. In this, His being, He is irresistibly bound to

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2. Cf. K. Barth, Church Dogmatics, IV: 2, p. 145.
   also K. Barth, Church Dogmatics, III: 1, p. 384.
   also K. Barth, Church Dogmatics, III: 2, p. 454.
the people of Israel. The events of His life, suffering, death and resurrection are very much a part of the continuing history of that covenant people. He does not exist beside or beyond but squarely in the midst of that continuum of events which surrounds Israel. In this context, therefore, His history must be interpreted. When this interpretation is carried forward the reality of His identification with Israel is reinforced and His life history takes on the most profound significance.

The history of Israel is one long rehearsal of blessing and calamity. But its catastrophes are never regarded as merely being a part of that perpetual and inescapable confusion of good and evil to which all men must submit in a compromised human situation. Nor does Israel's tradition ever sell out wholly to the worship of a fickle, arbitrary deity or deities who might share among themselves or among its moods the responsibilities of blessing and curse. Rather, in the midst of intense pain Israel yet clings to Yahweh as the sole source of all that history, even painful history, brings upon the people. Even more, they are led to declare that in that stream of events their covenant God is working out a pre-determined plan of salvation for their benefit, and in moments of lucid insight, for the benefit of the nations.

As Jesus of Nazareth is one of them his life is a part of their history. Being the one Israelite who accepts the implications of true Sonship to God His history takes on determinative significance. All that Yahweh had sought to accomplish through Israel the nation as His only chosen people, but could not because of their rebellion, He now does attain in the person of His only Son, who is His Son and declared to be that Son in obedience. It is therefore valid to look back on Israel's history in the flood of light thrown upon it by the person and activity of Jesus Christ. This is the only procedure possible now that the event of Jesus Christ has transpired.
Israel's history as has been noted is a suffering history. But it is not a mute catalogue of events and their empty interpretation. This people's history is abundantly productive of revelational truth pointing directly to God. It is expression and communication; it is the word of God spoken to men.

"The history of Israel takes place, and as it does so it also speaks, not additionally and subsequently, but in and with the fact that in its totality and interconnection it takes place, and does so in the way that it does."

"... the history of Israel in its totality and interconnection is universal prophecy."¹

A lot happened in the life of Israel and the given interpretation of the events bears not only on the life of an insignificant people but flares out and illuminates the whole of human history.

"... the history of Israel is a paradigm or model for the history of all nations, and to the extent that it is prophecy, and is known as such, it is the key to the understanding of world history. Hence it is mediatorial history in the sense of exemplary and therefore representative history."²

What takes place between Yahweh and Israel is of universal significance. The word spoken by Him to His People is for all ears. Israel the nation is the representative of all the nations in its dealing with Him who is the Creator and wills to be the Redeemer of all peoples.

Jesus Christ belongs centrally in this history. His own personal experience resembles that of His people. The suffering history of Israel now appears in its true light as that train of events pointing directly to Jesus Christ. "... the history of Israel is the "pre-history" of Jesus Christ and its word His "fore-word."³ Who He is and what He is to do are

2. ibid., p. 64.
3. ibid., p. 66.
already evident in what transpires before His coming. The Old Testament history "... faithfully proclaimed the prophecy of Jesus Christ, saying already everything that He would say and thus preparing the way for Him.

. . . "1 The word of God does not change with the advent of Jesus Christ. It is the same utterance declared down through the halls of time by the voice of God to the ears of a recalcitrant people. In this way Jesus Christ is unassailably one of His people.

It is particularly important to note that being one with Israel, He too suffered. His agony has its prefigurement in the Old Testament.

"... the whole figure of the servant" in Isaiah 53 - and Isaiah 5 is only a recapitulation of what is to be found in almost every chapter of the Old Testament - typifies the suffering and crucified Christ."2

The events of the life of Jesus Christ resonate harmoniously with the tones sounded by the word of God addressed to His people Israel. His suffering stands as the apex of fulfillment in relation to Israel's sufferings.

"... the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus revealed the pattern of experience adumbrated all through the long ordeal of Israel's suffering. In its completion the pattern is seen to be essentially cruciform, but now in the light of its full manifestation, it is not difficult to see how the pattern of the recurring death and resurrection of Israel through its history was bent forward by the finger of God to point to the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, the Israelite in whom there was no guile but the Israelite who took upon Himself the role of Israel recapitulating in Himself the ordeal of the Servant in order to "stand in the gap", to be made a curse for the atonement of Israel, and in the midst of Israel for the atonement of all mankind."3

1. ibid., p. 67.
Behind the agony of Israel and the Israelite lies the eternal will of the Father to be at one with humanity. The birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ are the certain seal with which God has certified His intention revealed in the life of Israel and finally accomplished in Jesus Christ. His sufferings of temptation and dereliction clearly identify Him in solidarity with Israel and present the action of God in monolithic continuity.¹ The sincerity of God's eternal purpose and His means of accomplishing that end are revealed. Through the suffering of His Son on the Cross He brings about the successful termination of His redemptive plan begun amidst His chosen people, Israel.

¹ Cf. Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, Vol. IV, 1, p. 166.
CHAPTER VII

The Suffering Son and the One God

Jesus Christ completed His task and gave His followers the responsibility of faithfully relating His Person and work to their own existences and to the lives of their contemporaries. He did not leave them without resources but continued to abide with them, granting His resurrected, active living presence in the person of the Holy Spirit. Having experienced the objective reality of His saving power these men could not be deterred from their task. In the Graeco-Roman world they confronted a variety of traditions of religious thought. Some of these schools were open to the Apostles' teaching and converts were made to the faith. Others were frankly and actively in opposition to the Christian message and sometimes violently attacked the teachings grounded in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Occasionally, believers came even out of these ranks. In order to be true to the objective revelation granted to them, the Apostles, in all cases were required to name a suffering, if also risen and ascended Jesus Christ as their Lord. The peculiar nature of this victory accomplished through suffering proved to be a stumbling block, a scandal to many otherwise sympathetic listeners. For suffering implied the real humanity of the person of Jesus Christ. And yet the objective and completed salvation effected by Him required the presence of deity in His person. How these two foundational truths could be established and accepted into the conscious confession of the Church became the subject of much discussion, debate and division in the early centuries.

The first witness to Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour was presented to persons living in the milieu of Judaism. Whatever may be said of the
formalism and infidelity to the true Hebraic traditions of these generations, nevertheless they are not attacked on the basis of an alleged belief in more than one God. The monotheism that had characterised Hebrew worship for many centuries had not degenerated into polytheism. So the Evangelists, themselves monotheists, had to relate the person and work of Jesus Christ their Lord to the continued existence of the Creator and Covenant-making God of Israel, to their own edification, and to the persuasion of their Jewish auditors. The belief in One God, always the hallmark of Judaism in contrast to paganism, had to be maintained, while at the same time adequate recognition was accorded to the reality of divine power and personhood in Jesus Christ. The Apostles met these challenges in the fullest fidelity to the truth as it had impinged itself upon them, not at first finding it necessary to elaborate their arguments into lengthy systematic treatments. But in their utterances, fragmentarily stated and preserved, they laid the groundwork for later more formal structures of thought that were required to preserve the deposit of truth experienced and confessed by the Church.

One of the first doctrines therefore, to require explicit formulation was the Church's teaching on the relationship between the Lord of the Church, Jesus Christ, and God the Creator. Already in the pages of the New Testament a relationship is declared to exist. By accepting and preserving the relational titles of Father and Son in respect to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and to Jesus of Nazareth, the New Testament tradition directed attention toward the existence of two distinct beings. Throughout its

history Israel was utterly convinced of the existence of Yahweh and came to the certain conclusion that He was the only God. Now in Jesus Christ, groups out of Judaism, see, in reflection, the presence and activity of the one true God in the person of Jesus Christ. On guard against the encroachments of pagan thought these early interpreters protected their monothestic faith by recognising the existence of a Father-Son relationship between their covenant God and Jesus of Nazareth. In so doing they recognised the need to declare both the unity, at least in relation, yet also the distinction between these two realities which they had experienced. The Father-Son relational concept is a basic building block in the structure of teaching attempting to give accurate if analogical expression to the experienced reality of the person and activity of God.

"In the primitive period there were no stereotyped creeds of a kind that later became regular, but it is clear that, as in the apostolic age, the main theme of the Church's propaganda, as of her worship, was that God had sent His Son, the Messiah Jesus, who had died, risen on the third day, ascended to heaven, and would return to glory."

"... the triadic pattern, affirming belief in the Father who created the universe, and in His Son Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Spirit, gradually becomes normal." ¹

The fact that the Son suffered as this very being in relation to the Father does not threaten the relationship at least to the minds of these early interpreters. Suffering, existent within the complex of these suggested relationships, does no more effect an interruption than the acknowledged humanity of Jesus Christ. Just as the presence of Yahweh did not shrink from active association with suffering, exiled Israel, just so, here, His presence is acknowledged to be with a suffering, and accursed Israelite.

¹ ibid., p. 88.
The Church moved out from its Judaistic environment into a world where the fulness of time was reached through quite a different preparatory process of thought. The Apostles constructed bridges of interpretation to span the gulf between the thought worlds in order to declare their all important and transforming doctrines. For Saint Paul the person and work of Jesus Christ are mutually interpretative.

"In reality person and work define each other. The exalted Lord known from the first as such, would not be Lord unless He had died "for our offences" (Romans 4:24); on the other hand, what Christ inherently is to God accounts, in the apostle's view, for the supreme religious value of his acceptance of the Cross."¹

Here the suffering of Jesus Christ takes a positive place in the interpretation of Father-Son relations. His Cross becomes that which reveals His very being, an integral part of His manifestation. Without His suffering and death Jesus Christ would not, indeed could not be, the same focal point of revelation that He truly is. For while He is surely to be regarded as true man² nevertheless to Saint Paul He is also "Son of God." "... Son of God. ..." "It is no longer a Messianic name of honour merely; it has been assigned the loftier function of expressing the original and inherent unity of life by which Christ is conjoined with God."³ The Apostle appears to heartily welcome and affirm the existence of Jesus Christ as both Son of God and Son of man, in breakable unity, while yet the sufferer, who chooses to work out the implications of His personhood in the bitterest agony of the Cross.

In the thought of the author of the book of Hebrews, "His person is

² Cf. ibid, p. 63.
³ ibid., p. 65.
contemplated throughout as the source or presupposition of the work accomplished by Him as the High Priest of men."\(^1\) In order to function effectively in this unique capacity He must be both God and man and carry through a pattern of activity which will finally deal with the sin of man that separates him from God.

"In the exordium of the first chapter, accordingly, Christ is set forth as "Son", a name which defines His nature as in essential relation to the Father."\(^2\)

"He assumed flesh, not only that He might be apprehensible, but in order to suffer by tasting death for every man, and there is more than one pathetic reference to the ignominy of the Cross."

"Thus He became High Priest (5: 5) and His complete and perfect priesthood is the outcome of His having been made like men in all things, in suffering, in self-oblation (7: 27) - all leading up to and culminating in that death and victory by which He overcame the devil and accomplished an eternal salvation (9: 12)"\(^3\)

Suffering is here seen to be the very means by which the salvation of man is accomplished. It is therefore very appropriate to state that without His divinity and His manhood and His suffering in that personhood no one could have experienced the new life so abundantly lived and witnessed by the early Church. The constituent elements of His person and His work are inseparable.

The Johannine Christology maintains the emphasis on the relation between Father and Son. "The Christology of St. John, then, may be condensed in the truth that the Father is personally in the Son, the Son in the Father" (10:38; 14:10). \(^4\) This direct relationship between Son and Father does not

1. ibid., p. 78.
2. ibid., p. 80.
3. ibid., p. 81.
4. ibid., p. 112.
preclude the possibility that the same Son might also be related to mankind.
"... as Christ dwells in the believer, so the believer who dwells in Christ, is incorporated or transplanted into the sphere of His supernatural life."¹ Through the very being of the Person of Jesus Christ and His activity of incorporating mankind in Himself He becomes the wellspring of new vitality to man. No intensity of suffering interrupts the life-giving function of Jesus Christ, or forces a separating wedge between His Sonship to God and man. He moves through agony to resurrection, the winning of new life for man, and to ascension, the eternal preservation of that source.

Elements in later Palestinian Judaism provided a basis for further reflection. Divine hypostases began to be considered. In the Old Testament itself there is a tendency to personify Wisdom and to give it creative functions.² The Word of God, it is suggested, came to have some such status. "Instead of making God act upon the world directly, the Targum of Onkelos makes God act by means of His Memra or Word, which thus becomes almost personified."³ With this mentality in the background Philo began to speak of the Logos.

"... the Memra under the name of Logos became identified with that Mind which according to Greek ideas, was the manifestation of the Supreme God. Philo uses this word in its twofold sense of reason and speech."

"When God manifested Himself in creation the Divine Logos went forth and became the revealed Word..."⁴

Only the Logos reveals God to man. Philo refers to the Logos as a being distinct from God taking up the figure of a Son. But the Logos can also be

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1. ibid., p. 111.
4. ibid., p. 155.
a second God or merely a manifestation of the Divine Mind. What later
writers will have to say with regard to the Logos will depend on this founda-
tional work by Philo; and the Logos doctrine is, in subsequent discussion,
related to the suffering of Jesus Christ.

There are points of agreement between Philo's Logos teaching and the
central affirmation of the Christian faith.

"The Christian religion holds fast to the doctrine of
the spirituality and perfection of God, and denies
that He is comprehensible by the human understanding.
It agrees with Philo in making the Logos the means
of revelation of the Father to man; but goes farther
in declaring that the Word of God was revealed in
him by Jesus Christ."  

"With singular felicity its theory of the conjunction
of the Divine and human natures, each preserving
separate attributes, enabled the mind to preserve in-
violate the pure conception of the deity and yet to
approximate it as it were, to human interests and
sympathies."  

Christians, therefore acknowledged that Christ had revealed God to man and
that His Person was indwelt by a Divine spirit from the innermost sphere
of Divinity. Just as the unity of God was fixed and established so was
Jesus' Divinity. Having accepted this, one problem still remained – to
specify where this Divinity resided. Whatever answer was given in re-
sonse to this question it would reflect directly on the Church's teaching
regarding the suffering of its Lord, and the implications of that agony
for His followers in their affliction.

The Apostolic Fathers carried forward the work of witness to the
experienced reality of the Person and work of Jesus Christ. Kelly suggests
that in the main they witnessed to the traditional faith rather than becom-

1. Cf. ibid., p. 156.
2. Ibid., p. 156.
3. Cf. ibid., p. 156.
They did develop the thought of the pre-existence of Jesus Christ. Clement of Rome takes Christ's pre-existence prior to the incarnation for granted. The main interest of the theology propounded by Barnabas is in the emphasis it lays on Christ's pre-existence. Ignatius could say "... Jesus Christ who was with the Father from all eternity ..." (Magn. 6,1). Hermas stated "The Son of God is older than the whole of His creation ..." "He was assessor to His Father in the creation of the world ..." (Sim. 9,12,1-5) Ignatius spoke in such terms as "There is only one physician - of flesh yet spiritual, born yet unbegotten, God incarnate, genuine life in the midst of death, sprung from Mary as well as God, first subject to suffering then beyond it - Jesus Christ our Lord." (Eph. 7,2) The very difficult problem of relating the commonly accepted impassibility of God to the Person and work of Jesus Christ is here approached. But this impassible pre-existence of the Son was apparently not an insurmountable barrier to His full participation in humanity. For it is sufferings, the conclusive mark of that humanity, that could be regarded as the sufferings of God. This statement was not based directly on the premise of a full blown doctrine of the Trinity with three distinct Persons since there really is no sign of such a developed Trinitarian concept. But the triadic formula of the Church is everywhere evident and may be assumed to be the basis on which statements about impassibility - passibility and suffering are founded.

If, up to this stage, thought on the relation of the Person and work of Jesus Christ to God the Father and Creator was primarily witness, there did come a time when, in response to attacks, formal statements were called for, giving more intellectually satisfying explanations of the relationship. The Apologists, vigorous monotheists, were pressed into this role. They had to give an account of their faith in terms intelligible to their contemporaries. "The solution they proposed ... was, that, as pre-existent, Christ was the Father's thought and mind, and that, as manifested in creation and revelation, He was its extrapolation or expression".¹ That which binds Son to Father is the fact that the Son belongs to the essential being of the Father as His intelligence and rational thought. And yet He was distinct from the Father not only in name but 'numerically' as well. Justin Martyr holds this position on the basis of his belief that the otherness of the Word is implied in the Old Testament where God allegedly appears, where God is represented as conversing with another who must Himself be a rational being and by certain texts as Proverbs 8:22 ff. where Wisdom is emphasized.²

The unity and the distinction are preserved intact and made more easily

¹ ibid., p. 95.
² Cf. ibid., pp. 96-97.


"... there both is, and that we read of, another God and Lord under the Creator of all things, Who is termed an angel ..." (Dial. 56.4)

"... I will recount the words of Moses himself, from which we may be assured indisputably, that He spoke to One different in number from Himself, and Who was possessed of reason." (Dial. 62,2)

"... the Scripture declares that this Offspring was begotten of the Father before all creatures whatever, ... that which is begotten is another in number from that which begets, everyone will be ready to acknowledge." (Dial. 129,3)
conceivable to the minds of thinkers accustomed to using such thought forms. It is important to note that all the Apologists use the phrase 'God the Father' in reference to the one Godhead, and not to the first Person of the Holy Trinity.\(^1\) God, being essentially rational, possessed His Word or Logos from all eternity and this Word was One with God on the basis of their communication and counsel. "That the Logos was one in essence with the Father, inseparable in His fundamental being from Him as much after His generation as prior to it, the Apologists were never weary of reiterating.\(^2\)

Thus did the Logos concept of Philo prove to be a useful tool in relating the developing doctrine of the relationship between Father and Son. The life, agony and death of Jesus Christ did not deter the Apologists from maintaining the unity of God revealed as Father and now as Logos or Son.

Irenaeus continues the trend of thought established by the Apologists with certain distinctive modifications. God certainly is and remains ineffably one. But within Himself He encloses His Word and His Wisdom. When He chooses to make Himself known, He 'extrapolates' or manifests them as the Son and the Spirit. There is one God, but in 'the economy is where Irenaeus goes beyond the Apologists.\(^3\) Like other contemporary interpreters of the Christian faith Irenaeus was intensely concerned with the basic monotheistic tenet of the faith. But his approach in order to do justice to the required monotheism tended to relativise the place

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2. Ibid., p. 101.
"Et ainsi, selon l'essence et la puissance de sa nature, un (seul) Dieu apparaît, et il est d'autre part, en tant qu'administration de la dispensation de notre salut, et Fils et Père." (Dem. 47).
of the Son and the Spirit as 'Persons' before their functional appearance.¹

"The whole point of the great illustrative image which he like all his predecessors employed, that of a man with his intellectual and spiritual functions was to bring out, however inadequately, the fact that there were real distinctions in the immanent being of the unique indivisible Father, and that while these were only fully manifested in the 'economy' they were actually there from all eternity."²

This concern to maintain the distinction between the Persons, however it may have been inadequate in terms of the pre-existent state, nevertheless does allow Father and Son to be regarded as existing and functioning together without losing their individual identities. If, later, reference is made to the suffering of One, its implications for the Other will have to be considered in the light of this established distinction.

It was inevitable that some formulators of doctrine who were more cautious and sensitive to the danger of a slip back into pagan polytheism, should be put to flight by this Logos doctrine that was developed in terms of an economic view of the Person and function of God.

"And so (people) put it about that by us two or three (gods) are preached while they, they claim, are worshippers of one God - as though unity irrationally summed up did not make heresy and trinity rationally counted out constitute truth. "We hold", they say, "to the monarchy..."(Against Praxeas 3)³

The term used to describe this movement was monarchianism and its adherents insisted that "... there was one divine source and principle of all things."⁴

The concept of suffering was to play an important role in shaping monarchian thought patterns.

The term dynamic monarchianism was applied to one school of this

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2. ibid., p. 108.
thought patterned after the teaching of Theodotus. He held that Jesus Christ was merely man but one on whom God's Spirit had descended. Adoptionism is another title applicable to this form of monarchianism.  

Theodotus held Jesus to be a man abnormal only in being born of a virgin, though distinguished from others by exceptional holiness and fidelity. At baptism He was filled with a Divine influence or power (δυναμις, hence the name Dynamic), and exalted after the resurrection as "Divine".  

Another leader of this brand of thought was Paul of Samosata who taught "that the Son and the Spirit were merely the Church's names for the inspired man Jesus Christ and the grace poured upon the apostles..."  

Clearly, teaching offered in this vein sabotages the Church's doctrine of the work of Christ. The suffering activity of a mere man, only adopted by God, could scarcely be of saving consequence. The entire experience of the Church's re-vitalised existence was thrown into radical questioning by this restriction of Divinity to the existence of the Father and the post resurrection man Jesus.  

A second type is styled modalistic Monarchianism. Adherents of this school believed in "... the oneness of God and the full deity of Christ." As held by Noetus of Smyrna this position enclosed important implications for the relationship of Father and Son especially in reference to the suffering undergone by the Son. For if as he said there was only one God, and He the Father, then the only conclusion that could be drawn was that the

1. Cf. ibid, p.115.  
4. ibid, p.119.
Father suffered. This Noetus seems to have accepted.

"He alleged that Christ was the Father Himself, and that the Father Himself was born, and suffered, and died." (Against Noetus I)¹

Where the Person of the Son is confused with that of the Father it is obligatory to blend their work as well. The clear distinction suggested by the terms Father and Son has dropped out of the consideration. The distinction implied in the Logos apparatus is eliminated and the fear of tritheism supposedly allayed but at the prohibitive cost of denying the ground which the Church has named as the foundation of her unique experience of salvation. This patripassianism was not to be endured.

Still another attempt to save the Father-Son relationship from the dreaded 'tritheism' was made by Sabellius. He "... counted the names of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, as almost nonentities; maintaining that they were not used to mark out some distinction but that they were different attributes of God, like many others of a similar kind."² The unity of God was thus maintained by the reduction of the Son and the Holy Spirit to mere attributes of God. The distinction within the Divine Being is reduced to one entity involved in process. For Sabellius "... God is not Father, Son and Spirit simultaneously; only as one aspect ceases to be does another rise into existence."³ Assuming this position it is difficult in the extreme to see how the humanity of Christ, His identity of being with man, is anything but a husk to be shed at a certain stage of metamorphosis. His re-

³. H.R. Mackintosh, op. cit., p.152.
surrected existence would then have no bearing or relation to mankind for His bond of unity with humanity would not be just severed but cast right off. Secondly the historic person of Christ is not equipped to do the work said to have been accomplished by Him. For He is reduced to "... a mere transitory exhibition of God's power ..."¹ He is not the necessary "... eternal determination of the essence of God."² This is not merely an unacceptable confusing of the Persons and work of the Father and the Son or Logos, but rather such an alteration in the revealed identities that divinity must now be restricted to "... a transcendent Godhead which remains immutable behind them all."³ The God of Israel whose Person and work was recognised in the history of Israel and adumbrated in the Person of the Son is declared non-existent and Deity is pushed into transcendent isolation out of contact with humanity. This deity is not at all the God of the Apostles who identified Himself with sinful mankind in the Person of His obedient Son and effected, through suffering the salvation of His brethren.

While the Monarchian positions were in the process of being elaborated the tradition of thought established by the Apologists was also being carried forward. Hippolytus and Tertullian belong to this school. Both considered monotheism to be of great importance. Their approach was to consider God as "He exists in His eternal being" while at the same time regarding Him "as He reveals Himself in the process of creation and redemption."⁴ They used the term 'economy' to describe this latter aspect. It gradually came to mean incarnation as the final aim of God's purpose; and was used to signify the "... distinction of Son and Spirit from the one Father, as dis-

¹. F.J. Foakes-Jackson, op. cit., p. 165.
². ibid., p. 165.
³. H.R. Mackintosh, op. cit., p. 152.
closed in the working act of God's redemptive plan. Both were in solidarity with the predecessors.

"Beside Him there is nothing, but He, while existing alone yet existed in plurality. He was neither without reason, nor wisdom, nor power, nor counsel." Tertullian adds new dimension to the concept of relation between the Father and Son by declaring more definitely than any of his predecessors the otherness or individuality of the immanent reason of God. Hippolytus maintains that for the end of effecting the world's salvation, God, at the incarnation, rendered the previously invisible Word visible. That distinction is established which cannot be obscured. Still the oneness of God was carefully guarded. Tertullian could say

"Therefore . . . I say that God and His Word, the Father and Son, are two; for the root and the shoot are two things, but conjoined; and the spring and the river are two manifestations but undivided; and the sun and its beams are two aspects, but they cohere." (Against Praxeas 8)

He gave this distinction further elaboration speaking in terms of substance and person.

"And these three are one (thing), not one (person), in the sense in which it was said, "I and the Father are one", in respect of unity of substance, not of singularity of number." (Against Praxeas 25)

"... both Father and Son . . . are one and the same . . . by unity of substance..." (Against Praxeas 2)

1. ibid., p. 111.
4. Tertullian, op. cit., p. 139.
5. ibid., pp. 169, 132.
The Father and Son by these terms are one substance but two Persons.

"...When he speaks of the Son as being 'of one substance' with the Father, he means that They share the same divine nature or essence, and in fact, since the Godhead is indivisible are one identical being. On the other hand, the terms πρὸς Λύκωμον and persona were admirably suited to express the otherness, or independent subsistence of the Three."\(^1\)

The Persons of Father and the Son are related in such a way that each is equipped in His Person to carry out the functions attributed to Him. There is no need to confuse the Person of the Father with the Son in order to explain the effectiveness of His saving activity. He is that Person whose very substance, being identical with the Father's, supplies all the necessary weight of authority to make His suffering an efficacious work. Tertullian strongly affirms this "... was not God truly crucified? did He not as truly die? ... " (No. 5)\(^2\) His distinction between Father and Son enables him to make this kind of statement while at the same time rejecting the Patriformianism of the Monarchians.

For Origen the relationship between Father and Son was one which could only be described as an eternal begetting, issuing in a "second" God. "And although we may call Him a "second" God ... " (Against Celsus 5, 39)\(^3\) The setting forth of this position represents a move beyond that of Tertullian and Hippolytus. "... each of the Three is a distinct hypostasis from all eternity, not just ... as manifested in the 'economy' ... "\(^4\) It is important to note the change in connotation which Origen effects in

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the term hypostasis. Originally hypostasis and ousia meant

"... real existence or essence, that which a thing is; but while hypostasis retains this connotation in Origen he more frequently gives it the sense of individual subsistence, and so individual existent."

"The true teaching, on his view, is that the Son is 'other in subsistence than the Father' (τ και Θ' ὑποστάσεως), or even that the Father and the Son 'are two things in respect of their Persons, but one in unanimity, harmony and identity of will'. .."1

This real recognition of individuality in the union of Divine and human in the one Christ makes it possible to say that "... the man Jesus alone suffered and died,"2 - so real was the distinction envisaged.

It is this "pluralistic strain" which in the opinion of Kelly is the "salient feature" of Origen's trinitarianism.

"The Three, on his analysis, are eternally and really distinct; They are separate hypostases or even, in his crude sounding language, 'things'. But he attempts to meet the most stringent demands of monotheism by insisting that the fulness of unoriginate Godhead is concentrated in the Father, who alone is the fountainhead of Deity .. "3

Thus did Origen wrestle with the data in an attempt to enunciate a more satisfactory doctrine of the relationship within the Trinity and thus between the Father and the Son. It does appear that with his emphasis upon the distinction, however dangerous this may have been, he nevertheless has

1. ibid, p.129. also Origen, ANCL, op. cit., p.500.

"... le verbe qui est en chacun des êtres raisonnables a avec le Verbe demeurant dans le principe auprès de Dieu, qui est le Verbe Dieu, les mêmes rapports que le Verbe Dieu a avec Dieu. Car celui qui est Dieu en soi et vrai Dieu, le Père est à l'égard de son image, et des images de son image ... le Verbe en soi l'est à l'égard du verbe qui est en chaque." (2,3,20)
grasped the reality of the personal being of Jesus Christ as man. The work of Jesus Christ, specifically His suffering and death, need not be repressed for there is that within Him that provides the very real possibility of accomplishing His peculiar saving work.

The explicit relationship implied in the Father-Son terminology occupied the best efforts of theological thinkers. In the biblical period the Apostles appeared to be quite at ease in their thought-world of Father-Son relationships, interpreting the Person and work of Jesus Christ in terms of their Judaistic heritage at first, then later taking up the language tools offered in their non-Judaistic surroundings. The objective act of God effected in Jesus Christ and announced as the Gospel in terms of humiliation, suffering and exaltation seemed to carry its own unchallenged authority. The distinction between Father and Son was fully acceptable as part of that kerygma. In subsequent years the situation altered so that the Apostolic Fathers had to assert the Father-Son relationship in the face of other concepts of deity from those inherent in the Judaistic community. These theologians put forward the pre-existence of the Son while still using the idea that Christ existed prior to His earthly era as the Father's thought and mind. Nevertheless they held strictly to the inseparability of His relationship with the Father. Irenaeus speaks of an 'economy' of redemption in order to make room for both the Father and the Son. In all of this there appears to be sufficient distinction within the Father-Son relationship to allow for the suffering of the Son without involving the Person of the Father, yet such a measure of unity that the distinction is not resolved unto separation. Out of fear for the basic monotheism of their faith certain Monarchians essentially eliminated the Father-Son distinction making God into a monad
and the Son and Spirit into manifestations. The suffering of the Son becomes also that of the Father and the traditional distinctions of Person and work are glossed over. The unacceptability of this position was recognised and the Patripassians declared out-of-bounds. The Father-Son relationship had to be stated in such a way that the Person of each was adequate to the Church's experience of His accomplished effect upon their common life. While maintaining that there was no separation between the Father and the Son Tertullian spoke of them as being of one substance yet used terms such as *persona* and *φύσις* indicating the distinction. It thus became possible to speak of God the Son being crucified, while yet denouncing Patripassianism. The Person of Jesus Christ is thereby declared to be not merely a suffering man but one to whose agony belongs unique significance. Origen on the other hand seems to have emphasised the individuality of the Father-Son relationship so that suffering could be related alone to the manhood. It thus becomes possible to see that the Son's work actually does touch upon the very human situation of any age and was not an activity carried on in abstraction from humankind. If the distinction is dropped out of the Father-Son relationship the suffering work of the Son flows entirely into the Father and fails to touch upon man, or it flows entirely manward, and the Son must be adopted by the Father in order to salvage a salutary issue. If the monotheistic tension is relaxed the entire system of thought centrifuges into emanations and degenerate polytheism. It is evident how important this complex of thought is for the effective integration of the Person and work of Jesus Christ into accord with the experience of the Church.
CHAPTER VIII

Suffering and The Divine and Human Natures

With the distinction between the Father and the Son gaining growing acceptance within a monotheistic context, it became possible for theological reflection to direct attention to the Person of the Son. A particular work of great significance had been accomplished by Him. Nothing could convince the Church that its experience was merely transitory or unstable. It continued to exist in the confidence that it was the object of a saving activity effected by God in the Person of His Son Jesus Christ. Therefore the nature of His Person became of great importance. If the Church was to declare its peculiar 'Christian' belief it had to give intellectual content to that event centred in Christ which it claimed was determinative for its very life. It had to name its Lord and identify Him to the world. The need for Christological reflection was pressed upon the Church both to guard the deposit of truth enclosed in its traditions against heretical misinterpretation and misunderstanding as well as to serve the needs of its missionaries who carried the Word into new areas. Christological reflection was not undertaken merely as an activity to provide grist for otherwise unoccupied minds, nor merely to complicate the 'simple Gospel.' Christological interpretation was part of the very substance of its faith, grounded as it was in the Person of Christ; this faith experienced with such compelling power. Nothing could be more fruitful than for the Church to enunciate as clearly as possible the basis of its faith in the Person of Jesus Christ so that the significance of His work might be related to the lives of men both within and outside the Church.

The problem of Christology is to make as explicit as possible the
relation existing between the divine and human elements in Jesus Christ. His very title implies that He can only be properly understood from out of a dual reference. In the New Testament Christ is looked upon as having been pre-existent. New Testament writers "... attribute to Him a twofold order of being, 'according to the flesh (฿ατλί θαυμάσιον), i.e. as man, and 'according to the spirit' (తίτοπος θεοποιημένος), that is as God."1 The results of the endeavour to understand the relationship between the Father and the Son overflowed with implications for the Person of the Son. These indications pointed in the same direction as the twofold emphasis in the New Testament. Apostolic Christology admits "... the double promise ... viz. that Christ as a person was indivisibly one and that He was simultaneously fully divine and fully human. ..."2 This was taken as the springboard for further reflection and theology undertook the task of showing how these "... two aspects could be held together in synthesis."3 The solidarity of the Son with the Father is maintained by the divine nature seen to be existing in His Person. The distinction between Father and Son remains real in spite of the solidarity and is seen to consist in His being human as well as divine. The divine-human predication is a corollary of the established Father-Son relationship. The work of the Son must now be seen in the light cast upon it by the accepted interpretation of existence of these two realities in the one Person; and the Person can only be One who is capable of such activity. That is to say, whatever conclusion is reached on how the two entities are related it dare not jeopardise that effectiveness of the work, while at the same time the peculiar significance of His work is due to the quality of the Person.

2. ibid, p. 138.
3. ibid, p. 139.
involved in the activity.

One of the solutions put forward in answer to the question of how the divine and human were related in Jesus Christ was to deny the divine reality altogether. It will be recalled that the Monarchians, out of concern for the unity of God, attempted to eliminate any distinction between the Father and the Son. In Christological terms this resolved itself into Adoptionism. The divinity of Christ was completely denied. Paul of Samosata believed that the Word was not a Person having no οὐσία or ὑπόστασις. Therefore Godhead could not be united to manhood "... in any concrete or substantial sense."¹ On this basis Jesus Christ is merely a man. Whatever may be said about His progress toward divinity or of His adoption into divine status, Ebionism threatens the work of Jesus Christ. His obedient Sonship certified in suffering and death loses its saving significance becoming merely the agony of another righteous one but not of the Righteous One. He is man, individual man, but only that, and there is no possibility of Him accomplishing anything beyond which any other man could do. Ebionism had to be repudiated.

The very opposite was proposed and came to be referred to as Docetism. According to this thesis "... Christ's manhood, and hence His sufferings were unreal, phantasmal. ..."² Weighing the balances in this direction tended toward the elimination of the human side of Christ's Person. It was an attitude that influenced Christological thinking when, out of fear that the assumed impassibility of God might be impugned, formulators of doctrine shifted the emphasis toward the divinity of Jesus Christ. The great dan-

1. ibid, p. 140.
2. ibid, p. 141.
ger evident here is that the firm anchor set in humanity might begin to slip and all of history be set adrift from its established centre in the Person and work of Christ. If He was not authentically human as well as divine, then of course His work is carried out in isolation from the very beings the Church confessed that He had come to save. Mankind is insulated from the judgment and barred from the redemption which is offered through His work. Specifically, human suffering is utterly bereft of any connection with the suffering of Jesus Christ and sinks back into the formless chaos of good and evil that marks existence apart from Him. Like Ebionism, Docetism had to be repudiated, but both were destined to live on and still do, directing the flow in this and then that direction along the course of Christian tradition.

Mainstream Christology was not drawn into either of these tributaries. Proponents of the orthodox position maintained that the Son of God had really become man. By doing this they maintained the New Testament position of flesh and spirit in terms of simultaneous humanity and divinity.¹ Justin maintained that

"... He is God pre-existing, and that being incarnate according to the will of God, He was made man through the Virgin..." (Dial. 37,2)

"... as by the Word of God, Jesus Christ our Saviour was made flesh, and had both flesh and blood for our salvation..." (I Apol. 66,2)

"... Christ... first as becoming subject to suffering, then as going up into heaven..." (Dial. 34,2)²

Much devolves around this matter of Jesus' sufferings. The fear that God the Father might become involved in suffering drove some toward Docetic or

1. Cf. ibid, p.142.
Ebionite answers. To affirm the sufferings of Jesus Christ as real is to grasp a thorny problem but to flee from that difficulty by denying their reality is to destroy both the Person of the Savior and to relegate His efficacious work to the realm of the illusory.

Irenaeus patterned his Christology on the central affirmation.

". . . he insists almost monotonously on the unity of the Godman . . ." " . . . it was the eternal Word Himself Who became incarnate; and he never tires of applying the formula 'one and the same' to the Lord Jesus Christ."

". . . only if the divine Word entered fully into human life could the redemption have been accomplished."¹

The whole life and witness of the Church depended directly upon the unimpaired unity of the divine and human in its Head.

"For if He did not receive the substance of flesh from a human being, He neither was made man nor the Son of man; and if He was not made what we were, He did no great thing in what He suffered and endured. But every one will allow that we are (composed of) a body taken from the earth, and a soul receiving spirit from God. This, therefore, the Word of God was made, recapitulating in Himself His own handiwork . . ."⁴

". . . if the Lord became incarnate for any other order of things, and took flesh of any other substance, He has not then summed up human nature in His own person, nor in that case can He be termed flesh."

". . . the Word has saved that which really was (created viz.) humanity which had perished, effecting by means of Himself that communion which should be held with it, and seeking out its salvation. (Heresies, 5,14,2f) ²

In this way the Incarnation was protected from being subsumed either into Ebionism or Docetism. However the possibility of a separation between the divine and human does appear when Irenaeus is driven to regard

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¹. J.N.D. Kelly, op. cit., p. 147.
the sufferings of Jesus Christ.

"Car de même qu'Il était "homme" afin d'être éprouvé, ainsi était-Il "le Verbe" pour être glorifié: "le Verbe" d'un côté suspendait son action pour qu'Il put être "éprouvé, déshonoré, crucifié, mis à mort"; "l'homme" de son côté était absorbé dans le Verbe qui le faisait vaincre, supporter les souffrances, ressusciter, monter au ciel."¹ (C. Hérésies 3, 19, 3)

If, in the Person of Jesus Christ, the possibility existed of different work being accomplished by the different poles of His Person, "cooperating" with one another then it is difficult to see how His essential unity can be firmly held. Unless Jesus Christ's suffering is seen to have occurred in the fulness of His being it is hard to avoid a tendency either toward Docetism or Ebionism.

The concept of divine and human united in the one Jesus Christ held sway in the west as well. Tertullian preferred to speak of the Saviour as being composed of 'two substances'. In his system the divinity was affirmed by stating that the Word had "... existed alongside the Father from all eternity, a distinct Person at any rate from His generation, but one with Him in essence."² But he is likewise concerned to define the reality of the humanity and refer it to His work. "He became man, however for man's salvation, since only as man could He accomplish His work on our behalf."³ However when it comes to integrating the suffering of Jesus Christ with his concept of His Person, there is a certain reticence to permit the whole Person to be baptised in the suffering.

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1. Irenaeus, in S2., op. cit., p.337.
3. ibid, p.150.
"He was obliged to put up with the passiones humanas, such as hunger and thirst, tears, birth and death. The governing principle in His make-up however was always the Word; Tertullian leaves one in no doubt that it was He, the divine spirit, Who 'took the man to Himself' (suscepit hominem), and 'mingled God and man in Himself'."

The marked superiority of the Word's place in the union, as the primary active agent need not be interpreted as a Docetic tendency especially in the light of Tertullian's strong emphasis on the reality of the flesh assumed and its continuous existence as real flesh. But he does maintain that Christ's sufferings and death must be referred to the human substance for God does not suffer, not even with the flesh. When Christ cried out in dereliction that cry came out His human flesh and soul. His death must be referred to His human and not His divine substance. Is there a danger here of too low an estimate of Christ and His work? For how could His efforts be effective unless they bore within them the equal participation of the divinity as well as the humanity? Still Tertullian could say,

"... was not God truly crucified? did He not, as truly crucified, truly die? ..." (On the Incarnation 30, 29)

Kelly sees in this language the hint or foreshadowing of "... the 'interchange of characteristics' (communicatio idiomatum) which later counted as orthodox." Kelly does not see that Tertullian's hesitation at the point of

1. Ibid, p.150
3. "... since in Jesus Christ there are assessed two substances, a divine and a human, and it is admitted that the divine is immortal, as that which is human is mortal, it is evident in what respect he says he died, namely in that He is flesh and man and Son of Man, not in that He is spirit and Word and Son of God." (Against Praxeas 30, 29)
According to this estimate Jesus Christ is fully divine and fully human, and capable of functioning in true expression of each without endangering the existence of the other nor presenting a witness that can be misconstrued and productive of a wrong identification. Even His sufferings are rooted in some integrated fashion in the fulness of His Person.

Origen held firmly to the teaching about the divine and human in Jesus Christ but his thought reflects a certain amount of difficulty when these two aspects of His being are considered in the light of His suffering.

"... both Jesus Christ Himself and His disciples desired that His followers should believe not merely in His Godhead and miracles, as if He has not also been a partaker of human nature, and had assumed human flesh which "lusteth after the Spirit", but they saw also that the power had descended into human nature, and into the midst of human miseries, and which had assumed a human soul and body, contributed through faith, along with its divine elements to the salvation of believers, when they see that from Him there began this union of the divine with the human natures in order that the human, by communion with the divine might rise to the divine, not in Jesus alone, but in those who not only believe, but enter upon the life which Jesus taught, and which elevates to friendship with God and communion with Him every one who lives according to the precepts of Jesus." (Against Celsus, 3,26)²

From this it would seem that the Incarnation was fully appreciated since Ebionism and Docetism are effectively ruled out. Further, the singleness or unity of the Person of Christ is carefully affirmed.

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"... the soul and body of Jesus formed, after the
\( \Delta \kappa \theta \nu \delta \nu \) \( \Delta \kappa \theta \nu \delta \nu \) \( \Delta \kappa \theta \nu \delta \nu \kappa \alpha \), one being with the Logos of God"
\( (\text{Against Celsus 2,9}) \).

But when Origen comes to relate this Person to His work the problem raised
by His sufferings again appears. If Jesus Christ suffered then His two na-
tures must be seen in separate lights. "For the Son of God is said to have
died in reference, viz., to that nature which could admit of death ..."
\( (\text{Of Princ. 2,6,3}) \)
If his death was in respect to one nature then is not
His work divided up between two separate active identities or at least very
distinct poles of being? Is it possible thus to divide the work without
postulating a change within the Person? Kelly suggests that Origen has in
fact failed to witness successfully to the reality of the Incarnation.

"The mediator between the only true God, i.e. the in-
effable Father, and man is not, in the last analysis,
the God-man Jesus Christ, but the Word Who bridges
the gulf between the unoriginate Godhead and creatures." \( ^3 \)

"The exaltation of the Son of Man consists precisely in this, that He has
ceased to be other than the Logos and has become identically one with Him." \( ^4 \)

If the sufferings of Jesus Christ are merely the distress of His humanity,
then again, it is hard to regard Him as an integrated Person and His work
as effecting a single end, however much this humanity of His may be said to
be united with the active personal subject, the Logos. A position must be
arrived at where adequate space is left in the Person of Jesus Christ for

1. ibid, pp. 12-13,
   "Jesus who has recalled our minds from all sensible things, as being not
   only corruptible but destined to corruption and elevated them to honour
   the God who is over all with prayers and a righteous life, which we offer
   to Him as being intermediate between the nature of the uncreated and that
   of all created things ..." (\text{Against Celsus 3,34})
His two natures to be fully existent and active, without separating them or mixing them even if the acceptance of that final position should entail a reverent confrontation with deeper mystery.

Throughout it has been the intention to keep the various doctrines of the Person of Christ in very close contact with His saving work, particularly His sufferings, which are of central interest. It has been evident that the early formulators of doctrine tested their concepts of the Person by reference to the work of Jesus Christ. Having experienced the impact of His Person and work they were constrained to abide by statements that did not conflict with the reality of their experience. To the mind of Ignatius "... the essence of salvation seems to consist in union with Christ, through Whom new life and immortality flow into us."\(^1\) Here the very fact that there is humanity in the Person of Christ ensures that unity of man with God which overflows with new vitality for man. Others saw the work of Jesus Christ as a more distinct reality, not separated from His Person but very much a factor to be considered in the evaluation of the total event. The Apostolic Fathers regarded the Lord's passion, death and resurrection as suffering for our sakes.\(^2\) The entire significance of Christ is not only that He has united God and man in Himself but His work as this Person has specific vicarious value. "More often, however, the suggestion is that His sufferings should challenge us to repentance."\(^3\) The subjective aspect of the atoning

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"Let us look steadfastly to the blood of Christ and see how precious that blood is to God, which, having been shed for our salvation, has set the grace of repentance before the whole world." (I Clem. 7, 4).
work is emphasised in these two concepts of His work. Irenaeus offered an interpretation which saw the work of Christ very much in relation to His Person.

"Because of His measureless love", he writes, 'He became what we are in order to enable us to become what He is'. The method, he outlines in the oft-repeated assertion that what we lost in Adam we recovered in Christ; its premise is the idea, that, if we fell through our solidarity with the first man, we can be restored through our solidarity with Christ. The key-conception which Irenaeus employs to explain this is 'recapitulation' (ἐναρμονίζειν), which he borrows from Saint Paul's description of the divine purpose as being 'to sum up all things in Christ'.

His sufferings are therefore the agony of One who is 'what we are' and His humanity is affirmed. But we become 'what He is' on the premise of His divinity. Because He suffers as the One who He is, both divine and human, through His recapitulation human sufferings become bound up with His own sufferings and from this moment forever related. On the basis of the Incarnation there is redemption for the sufferings of men. The concept of vicarious substitution or propitiatory sacrifice comes to the fore in Origen's approach.

"Si le Seigneur Jésus-Christ Lui-même porte le nom d'Agneau, ce n'est pas qu'Il ait été en apparence changé, métamorphosé en agneau; c'est qu'Il a voulu, dans Sa bonté apporter aux hommes la réconciliation avec Dieu et ainsi jouer à l'égard du genre humain le rôle de l'agneau, victime sans tâche et sans faute, par lequel on croit apaiser le courroux de Dieu contre les hommes." (Nom. 24, 1.)

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1. J.N.D. Kelly, op. cit., p. 172. Also Irenaeus, in ANCL, Vol. II. p. 55. "... following the only true and steadfast teacher, the Word of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, who did through His transcendent love, become what we are, that He might bring us to be what He Himself is." (Against Heresies. 5 Pr.)

The objective nature of the work of the Son takes on great significance according to this view, a significance which could only be accorded to the sacrifice of One who was utterly and completely one with man and yet bearing within His Person those attributes which would make His sacrifice of far-reaching import; indeed One who was also Son to God. In these ways the work of Jesus Christ was evaluated sometimes almost as if subsumed under the category of His Person, sometimes as if effected, not apart from His Person but as events enclosing their own weight of significance.

Throughout its history the Church was far from being monolithically united in its formulation of doctrine as has already been seen in the Monarchian dispute. One of the major differences arose over the distinction between the Father and the Son. The Church had arrived at a place where it could affirm "... the Son's unity of essence with the Father. ...", "... His eternal generation ..." and "... His personal distinction from the Father." But according to a position put forward by Arius this relationship between Father and Son was thrown into question. He felt strongly compelled to affirm "... we acknowledge One God, alone In generate, alone Everlasting, alone Unbegotten, alone True, alone having Immortality, alone Wise, alone Good, alone Sovereign ..." (de Syn. 16) That which marks God as this being, this essence (*οὐσία*), cannot be shared.

"But if the terms 'from Him' and 'from the womb', and 'I came forth from the Father, and I came' (Rom. XI, 36; Ps. CX, 3; John 16, 28) be understood by some to mean as if a part of Him in essence or as an issue, then the Father is according to them compounded and divisible and alterable, and material, and, as far as their belief goes had the circumstances of a body, Who is Incorporeal God." (de Syn. 16)

1. H.R. Mackintosh, op. cit., p. 175.
3. ibid, p. 458.
Arius agreed that there was a distinction between the Father and the Son but "Starting from the essentially pagan concept of God as a Being absolutely apart from His creation..." he came to the conclusion that the distinction was more a matter of the isolation of the Son from the Father. For Arius the Son must have come into existence by an act of creation. The Word in his system becomes a creature. The Son may very well be God's Word and Wisdom but

"He of course as well as others, must be called Son and God and Wisdom only by participation, for thus all creatures consist, and by sanctification are glorified."

(Against Ar. I, 5)

The distinction between Father and Son becomes separation. Encounter with the Son is not meeting with the true God, but with One who is like others, the Object of His grace. If the degree of distinction between the Father and Son be admitted to extend to this point, then "God stands outside the world, and the chasm cannot be bridged." The Person of the Son is bereft of any intrinsic qualities of being which would make His work effective. If, by chance, He has accomplished something on man's behalf, could it be for any reason other than because of an additional act of grace on the part of the Father, an act parallel to, but done outside the Person of Jesus Christ? If the sufferings of Jesus Christ have any saving significance for mankind can this be true on the basis of anything else but a special extension of grace to His agonies beyond anything that would accrue to the sufferings of any other creature?

What was required to combat the Arian heresy was a restatement of

the relationship between the Father and the Son which would re-establish the distinction-in-union so necessary to the experience of the Church. The Nicene Creed was formulated in order to state the relationship of Father and Son in such a way that the Father could not be isolated from the Son. It speaks of the Son as begotten, "'out of the Father's substance" (ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ Πατρὸς ), and that He is 'of the same substance as the Father'. (οὗ Ουσίαν τῷ Πατρὶ )."¹ Since the Word derives His being from the Father He necessarily shares the same divine nature. And "... since the divine nature is immaterial and indivisible, it follows that the Persons of the Godhead Who share it must have or rather be, one identical substance."² The Creed fully repudiates any attempt at establishing a cleavage between the Father and the Son. By using the term ὁμούσιος they expressed, "... their conviction that the Son was fully God, in the sense of sharing the same divine nature as His Father."³ The Person of Jesus Christ is distinct from the Father but in such a way that He shares fully in the divine nature of the Father. When He accomplishes His work He is grace, not merely a means of grace. No other channel of grace need be built parallel to this one and only stream flowing in His Person. Whatever He does is fully in the Name of His Father for He and the Father are one in substance.

For Athanasius the certainty of redemption was the primary principle. Redemption demanded a redeemer with specific personal attributes. "... Whence, if He was Himself too from participation, and not from the Father, His essential Godhead and Image, He would not deify, being deified Himself." (de Syn. 51) ⁴

1. J.H.D. Kelly, op. cit., p. 233,
2. ibid, p. 234.
3. ibid, p. 235.
In that Jesus Christ is God Himself there lies the possibility of His effective redeeming work. Though divine and 'essential Godhead' He is not at the same time the Father.

"But They are Two, because the Father is Father and is not also Son, and the Son is Son and not also Father. . . ." (Against Ar. 3,3) 1

There is in existence, that Person distinct from the Father, who may accomplish a work fully done in the Father's Name, while not limiting the existence of the fulness of the Godhead only to that Person. Athanasius stands for the fullest possible identification between the Father and the Son while at the same time holding the Two apart lest the One became swallowed up by the Other, and His distinction lost, and so the possibility of His distinct work.

"His (Athanasius') fundamental position is that the divine ousia, infinite, simple and indivisible, is at once Father and Son. The distinction between Them is real and lies in the distinction between the Godhead considered as eternally activating, expressing and begetting itself, and the self-same Godhead considered as eternally activated, expressed and begotten. The Son is the self-same Godhead as the Father, but that Godhead manifested rather than immanent." 2

"... 'Whatever works the Son accomplishes are the Father's works for the Son is the manifestation of the Father's divinity, which accomplishes the works'." 2

If, during the course of His earthly life the Son suffers, this is manifestly not the Father suffering, for there is that distinction between them which allows a peculiar work to be accomplished by this One who is not the Other. Still it must be affirmed that the suffering of Jesus Christ is, nonetheless, the suffering of God for He manifests the Father's divinity and so works effi-

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1. ibid, p. 395,
"Thus what things the Son then wrought are the Father's works, for the Son is the Form of the Godhead which wrought the works." (Against Ar. 3,6)
cacies. The first of these two points is of importance in refuting any tendency toward Patriformism. The second is significant for only if Jesus Christ's work is the accomplishment of God Himself does it have redeeming consequences. If His suffering work were to be allowed to slip over into becoming an act of the Father it would be of no value to man for when has it ever been stated that the Father in contradistinction to the Son was the Incarnate God? - and without the humanity the suffering even of God goes for nought. Or, when has the Christian Church ever held, that the agony of a mere man, however intense, has brought about the salvation of humanity? God Himself has entered fully into the human situation but only in the Person of the Son. "Indeed the Father achieves nothing except through the Son, Who is the Godhead regarded as active in the work of divinising and illuminating."¹

These further reflections on the relationship between the Father and the Son were important as they prepared the way for, or arose along with, additional doctrine defining the relationship between the two natures in the Incarnate Son. "... the Arians had taught that in Christ the Word had united Himself to a human body lacking a rational soul, Himself taking the place of one."² This position is a logical outgrowth from their emphasis on the separation between the Father and the Son. True Godhead would have to de-humanise man in order to become related to it and this is precisely the Arian point. Athanasius, had insisted "... that only God can save the fallen race..." and that "... the Word is ... fully divine."³ It now remains to be seen how he will define the Person of Jesus Christ in order to

². ibid, p. 281.
³. ibid, p. 284.
allow for this plenitude of divinity which He has postulated. The Son's divinity was first of all guaranteed by the fact that in becoming man He surrendered none of His attributes. "... it is possible in the Lord's instance also to understand aright, that He did not become other than Himself on taking the flesh, but being the same as before, He was robed in it."
(Against Ar. 2,8.) Moreover the Logos continued to exercise His customary functions.

"... even while present in a human body and Himself quickening it, He was, without inconsistency, quickening the universe as well, and was in every process of nature, and was outside the whole ..." (On the Incarnation 17)

In spite of this transcendence of the Word, so carefully guarded, Athanasius regarded Him as entering into the sufferings of Jesus Christ.

"It was ... one and the same Word Who performed the miracles and Who wept and was hungry, prayed in Gethsemane and uttered the cry from the Cross, and admitted ignorance of the date of the last day."3

Nevertheless Kelly sees the divinity and the humanity of the Word as set apart within the context of suffering. "But these affections were not proper to the nature of the Word, as far as He was the Word; but in the flesh which was thus affected was the Word ..." (Against Ar. 3,55)4 According to this scheme the Word, the Incarnate One, possessed a human nature all right, but only in order to function as the recipient of His suffering. "... his thought simply allowed no room for a human mind."5 In the last analysis Kelly maintains that Athanasius surrenders something of the complete humanity of the Person in order to affirm fully His divinity. And yet there are pass-

2. ibid, p. 45.
ages in which he makes it quite clear that it is the whole man that has been assumed by Jesus Christ. "... the Word of God was made man in order to sanctify the flesh, and, though He was Lord, was in the form of a servant; for the whole creature is the Word's servant, which by Him came to be and was made." (Against the Ar. IV) If Athanasius envisages the entire creature as being the object of the assuming act, it seems likely that he would have included the mind as well.

"... the Word of God took a body and has made use of a human instrument, in order to quicken the body also, and as he is known in creation by his works, so to work in man as well, and to show himself everywhere, leaving nothing void of his identity and of the knowledge of him." "... the Son did this in order that, as he fills all things on all sides by his presence, so also he might fill all things with the knowledge of him." (On The Incarnation 45.1)

Does this universality of operation include the mind? It would seem so.

"For it was not as if another man had been created other than he who from the beginning was made in God's image. But he (Apostle) was counselling them to receive the mind that was remade and renewed in Christ ..." This latter emphasis on the totality of the humanity assumed by Christ must be asserted for if the sufferings of Jesus Christ are very much those of the Word clothed in flesh they must also be very much the agony of an undiminished manhood, or they lose their point of bearing in humanity and so their efficacy.

Apollinarius put forward a view which jeopardised the fullness of the humanity of Jesus Christ. His thesis did not arise out of any lack of concern for the humanity or the divinity, nor because of any desire on his

part to establish a cleavage between them.

"He was convinced that, if the divine is separated from the human in the Saviour, our redemption is imperilled. Considered merely as man, Christ had no saving life to bestow; He could not redeem us from our sins, revivify us, or raise us from the dead."¹

But what did disturb Apollinarius was the duality, thus postulated, which he found unacceptable. He set about eliminating this apparently dangerous aspect of Christology by stating that, "The Incarnate is, in effect, 'a compound unity in human form' . . . and there is 'one nature . . . composed of impassible divinity and possible flesh'!² In order to accommodate His Person to suit his teaching" . . . Apollinarius was obliged to deny the entirety of Christ's human nature." " . . . the human spirit, source and seat of mutability, is replaced by the immutable Divine Word."³ "In becoming man, the Son of God took possession of only a partial or mutilated humanity."⁴ Gone is Christ's solidarity with mankind and so the effectiveness of His work. In place of this Apollinarius,

"... accepts and exploits the communio idiomatum stating that 'the flesh of the Lord, while remaining flesh even in the union (its nature being neither changed nor lost) shares in the names and properties of the Word; and the Word while remaining Word and God, in the incarnation, shares in the names and properties of the flesh'.⁵

Such a rigorous affirmation of the divinity of Jesus Christ at the expense of His human nature upsets the balance in a docetic direction and leaves humankind isolated from the Person of Christ and eliminated from His saving

2. ibid., p. 291.
4. ibid., p. 199.
work. The entire experience of the Church is bereft of its foundation and its structure collapses without an adequate Christology.

In sharp contrast to Apollinarius, Gregory of Nyssa affirmed the full humanity.

"... and having become what we were, He, through Himself again united Humanity to God" (Against Eunomius 12)

No half humanity will suffice. Likewise, Gregory of Nazianzus supports a full humanity in the Incarnate One.

"... the Father's Definition and Word, came to His own image and took on Him flesh for the sake or our flesh, and mingled Himself with an intelligent soul for my soul's sake, purifying like by like; and in all points except sin was made man." (Orations 38, 13)

"What He was He laid aside, what He was not He assumed; not that He became two, but He deigned to be One made out of two." (Orations 37, 2)

"... wherever the Natures are distinguished in our thoughts from one another, the Names are also distinguished..." (Orations 30, 8)

There is no displacement of anything essentially human from the manhood of Christ. In Jesus Christ there is a rational soul and this provides a meeting-place for the two natures. There is a 'natural affinity' between the Word and the human soul and so this "mingling" is possible. He did not hesitate to work out the implications of this relationship in a very concrete way.

"His conception of the union ... permitted him to exploit the communicatio idiomatum to the full, and to speak, for example of the birth of God from the Virgin and a 'God crucified', as well as to in-

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sist on the propriety of calling Mary 'the mother of God.' (Ὅτι ἐνόωσι."\(^1\)

Christ's experience of suffering was a factor in Gregory of Nyssa's maintenance of a distinction between the two natures.

"... when Christ endured suffering or other human experiences, it was not His divinity which endured them, but 'the man attached by the union to the divinity': they belonged 'to the human part of Christ.' The Godhead, being impassible, remained unaffected, although through its concrete oneness with the humanity it directly participated in its limitations and weaknesses."\(^2\)

To his mind the Logos was active and the manhood passive. In this way he tended to hold the two natures apart.\(^3\) These teachers and many of their contemporaries believed that Christ possessed two natures and they were convinced, against Apollinarius, that His humanity was complete. This true and full humanity offered an acceptable explanation of His sufferings and weaknesses.\(^4\) The communicatio idiomatum was frequently appealed to as the principle of the Incarnate union. "Epiphanius ... while insistent that the Lord's divinity was in no way affected by His sufferings, argued that they could nevertheless be predicated of it ... "\(^5\) The strength of these statements lies in the fullness of Christ's humanity which they predicate. His solidarity with man is thereby affirmed and He, by His works, is capable of directly affecting man's situation. Wherein they hold the

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1. ibid, p. 298. Also Gregory Nazianzus, SLNPFCG, op. cit., p.183. "Many indeed are the miracles of that time: God crucified; the sun darkened and rekindled..." (Orations 45, 29)
2. J.N.D. Kelly, op. cit., p. 299. Also Gregory of Nyssa, SLNPFCG, op. cit. p. 183. "... whatever suffering is asserted concerning Him in the Gospel, He assuredly wrought by means of His Human Nature which admitted of such suffering." (Against Eunomius 6)
4. Cf. ibid, p. 300
5. ibid, p. 301.
two natures apart, making the human the only element present in suffering, there is the danger of the disinvolvelement of the divinity from full participation in the Incarnation (though His full participation is apparently often emphasised) and so the loss of the efficacy of His work.

The question of the relationship between the divine and human natures in the Son continued to be a difficult one in spite of the gains that seem to have been made by way of more accurate representation of the objective truth of His Person and work. Nestorius would not admit that divinity could spring from humanity. Thus "... Mary bore a man, the vehicle of divinity and not God."1 The two natures must remain unchanged and distinct within the Person. No confusion or mixture marks the existence of the Godhead in the man and the man in the Godhead. The impassibility of the Word is to be maintained without change or suffering. Any fusion of humanity with divinity would have made the necessary authentic human experience impossible, so the two natures must each retain its own properties and functions unimpaired, while they exist side by side.2 The end result was the "... impression of two Persons artificially linked together."3 But what he was really

"... striving to convey was the idea, not of two Persons juxtaposed in a loose connexion, but of one Person, or prosopon, Who combined in Himself two distinct elements or ousiai, Godhead and manhood, with all the characteristics proper to the Word, and a man, complete and united in Him."4

1. ibid, p. 311.
2. Cf. ibid, p. 313.
3. ibid, p. 314.
Apart from the interpretation appended to his thinking by later theologians, Nestorius stands to a large degree in the mainstream of acceptable Christological thought. Only in his zeal to protect the impassibility of God and the consequent emphasis on the distinction between the two natures is there any apparent danger. He certainly stands for the reality of the divinity and the humanity of Jesus Christ. But the distinction is so pronounced that when the sufferings of Jesus Christ are considered they may be attributed only to the human nature and to the 'common prosopon'.

"... since the natures remained quite separate and neither was identical with the 'prosopon of union', the human attributes, actions and experiences should be predicated of the divinity; but in virtue of the union both could be predicated indifferently of the 'prosopon of the economy', i.e. the God-man Who united both natures in His single prosopon."

The question is whether Nestorius' concept of the union was sufficiently strong to bear the weight placed upon it by the attribution of both the divine and human sides of His Person and work. Kelly feels that this 'common prosopon' principle of union "... was at best an artificial device." If this be true then the whole construct is liable to disintegrate when the attempt is made to relate the sufferings of Jesus Christ to this 'common prosopon' in which there is already abiding an impassible divine nature.

Cyril of Alexandria rejected what he felt was Nestorius' "... merely external association between the Word and an ordinary man." He

   "If then the distinctions of the natures have not been annulled, the nature of the flesh appertains solely to the nature of the humanity. But that which is Son consubstantial with the Father and with the Holy Spirit uniquely and solely appertains to the divinity."
pressed for an expression of the divine-human relationship that would do justice to their real if mysterious union. In order to attain his end he made the Word the active subject. Thus

"For in order that we may not suppose that the Nature of the Word, that is, His Godhead, has a beginning of being that it was in the flesh and of the flesh, the phrase in the flesh must be taken cautiously and in its necessary meaning. For being God by Nature, and Very Son of God the Father, He was made in likeness of men and made His own flesh which was of the holy Virgin."¹

The artificial unity of Nestorius's system is replaced by one which brings the divine and human together in the Word. Care was taken not to imply any confusion or mixing. The distinction was maintained while the union was declared indissoluble.

"For that of Manhood and Godhead most vast is the difference or interval I myself too would allow . . . ." "But when the mystery Christ-ward is brought before us, the plan of the union ignores not indeed the difference, but puts aside the severance, not confounding the natures or immingling them but, because the Word of God, when He partook of flesh and blood, even thus is conceived of and called One Son."²

For Cyril the Incarnate One was "... the divine Word living on earth as very man."³ The two natures were seen to be mutual participants in the properties of each other but "... the Word did not actually suffer in His own nature. He suffered as incarnate ... i.e. in respect of the human nature which was truly His."⁴

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4. Ibid., p. 322.
were attributed to His flesh.\(^1\) On the basis of the Word's vital union with the flesh and the mutual participation, the suffering becomes a part of the experience of the total Person. So much so that "... the suffering is the suffering of God."\(^2\) There is no room to doubt the divinity of Jesus Christ. His humanity is such that it includes "... the qualities and attributes of human nature."\(^3\) So it is not simply "... the person of a man that the Logos had assumed, but man ..."\(^4\) Jesus Christ is therefore both divine and human. As the Word who has assumed flesh His activity is at once that of God and of man. When He suffers, His agony is continuous with that of all mankind, and yet, borne by One who is capable of endowing suffering with a transcendent divine reference. His work is therefore that unique deed which accounts for the singular experience of salvation confessed by the Christian Church. Cyril's emphasis on the Word as the active subject and his consequent reticence about the two-nature statement does not seem to jeopardise the value of his contribution.

The importance of the two-nature assertion was highlighted when the attempt was made to introduce a single-nature concept. "Eutyches ... refused to concede the orthodox belief that two natures existed in Christ after the incarnation had taken place."\(^5\) He was fully aware that two natures were involved but he held that the basis of their relationship was that "... the Lord's humanity was totally absorbed by His divinity."\(^6\) In spite of this he did not rule out the real humanity allowing "... that

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1. Cf. ibid, p. 322.
3. ibid, p. 207.
4. ibid, p. 209.
Christ took flesh of the Virgin, and added that it was complete incarnation . . . and that the Virgin was consubstantial with us. ¹ Eutyches could not be placed in the Docetist or Apollinarian camp since "... nothing could have been more explicit than his affirmation of the reality and completeness of the manhood."² Still he felt compelled to uphold the doctrine of one nature after the incarnational union. Of course if this be true then the whole life and work of Jesus Christ loses its reference to man, and indeed its entire value. If all was accomplished at the instant of Incarnation then the whole of the atonement gravitates to that point and the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ are but the empty anti-climax. From this angle it is hard to see how the whole of human life is redeemed and how, in particular, human suffering is anything but the outworking of man's lost and abandoned estate.

In the west Hilary, along with his orthodox predecessors and contemporaries, attempted to account for the existence of the divine and human in One Person by suggesting that the Word accommodated Himself to the humanity without thereby ceasing to be the Word. "Christ is true man and true God, one but comprising two natures in His unity. Each nature is complete, the humanity possessing a rational soul . . . and the union entails no change or confusion."³ The divine and human are affirmed. In order for the

1. ibid, p. 332.
2. ibid, p. 333.

"When He emptied Himself to become Christ the man, while continuing to be Christ the Spirit, the changing of His bodily fashion, and the assumption of another nature in His body, did not put an end to the nature of His eternal divinity, for He was one and the same Christ when He changed His fashion, and when He assumed our nature." (On the Trinity 9,14)
Word to become man without any change He does not surrender any of His powers, instead He limits or restricts Himself to the human condition. "... He relinquishes, during His earthly career the glory appropriate to 'the form of God'." It is by a process of humiliation that the Incarnation becomes possible. When the sufferings of Christ are brought into the picture, however, Hilary is driven to say that "He had a body to suffer, and He suffered: but He had not a nature which could feel pain." (On the Trinity, 10, 23)

Once again the question must be asked as to how the divine and human natures can be maintained in hypostatic union in the light of this assertion. The acceptance of the reality of His work causes damaging strain within the Person of Jesus Christ. Though he was certain of the human nature, Hilary's thought enclosed a Docetic strand.

Augustine is certain of both the divinity and humanity of Jesus Christ. "Homo verus, Deus verus: Deus et homo totus Christus." "Qui confitetur Deum aequalem Patri Christum et hominem verum... Catholicus est." (Sermones 92, 3, 3) His Person is the result of the activity of the Divine Subject upon the human object. "For the Truth Himself, who was the only-begotten of the Father, not by grace, but by nature, by grace took our humanity upon Him, and so united it with His own person, that He Himself became also the Son of man." (Enchiridion) But this act does not destroy either of the constituent elements. The humanity remains just that and the Divinity continues unchanged.

2. St. Hilary of Poitiers, in SLNPPCC, op. cit., p. 188.
"... neither by that taking (i.e. the form of a servant) is the one of them turned and changed into the other: the Divinity is not changed into the creature so as to cease to be creature."¹ (On The Holy Trinity)

This Christological structure makes it possible for Augustine to speak of the reality of the sufferings of Christ without threatening the existence of the Divinity within His Person. "... it is... correct to say that God was crucified, seeing that there is no question that He suffered this death in his human nature, not that in which He is the Lord of Glory."² (Letters 169, 2, 8) Because Jesus Christ is Who He is, that is both divine and human, and remains this, He is qualified to accomplish certain special works.

This work of His stems from the two poles of His Person. "Ergo quod est mortuus, de nostro mortuus est: quod vivimus, de ipsius vivimus."³ (Sermones 127, 9). There is therefore a negative and a positive aspect to His work. He is the Incarnate One, associated with sinful men, and so enabled to do something about sin and the results of sin. "Christ, though guiltless, took our punishment, that He might cancel our guilt, and do away with our punishment."⁴ (Reply to Faustus The Manichaean) That which was necessary to the fulfilment of judgment has been accomplished. Man is no longer under the shadow of God's negation. Rather, positively he is now God's possession through the process of redemption. "The pouring forth of innocent blood blotted out all the sins of the guilty: so great a price paid down redeemed all captives from the hand of the enemy who captured them."⁵ (Psalms) Through the act of Christ positive reconciliation to God

3. Augustine, in CC, op. cit., p. 710.
is accomplished. And this deed has universal significance. "... aposto-
lica et vera sententia est, quia Christus salvator omnium hominum."¹ (Ser-
mones 292, 4). In this way Saint Augustine bears witness to the mainstream
of Christological interpretation, laying the customary foundation in the two
natures of Christ then interpreting the effectiveness of His work on that
base. His humanity makes possible the suffering without damaging the Divin-
ity and His Divinity makes the suffering effective without severing the bond
between Him and all humanity.

Leo's Tome spoke more in terms of the communicatio idiomatum.

"... the divine natures coexist in this one Person
without mixture or confusion."

"... in uniting to form one Person each retains
its natural properties unimpaired. . . ."

"... the redemption required that 'one and the
same mediator between God and man, the man Jesus
Christ, should be able to die in respect of the
one and not to die in respect of the other'."²

The mutual communication of properties is essential to this postulation and
stands in answer to the mode of the divine human interaction. But is this
principle of communication a sufficiently strong bond to maintain the per-
sonal union over against the cleavage suggested by the dying "in respect of
the one and not . . . in respect of the other?"

The task which the Christologians set for themselves was to enunciate
as clearly as possible the mode of the existence of the divine and human in
the one Person Jesus Christ. This relationship had to be defined in such a
way that the work accomplished by Him was not in any way sabotaged. In at-
tenpting to state the mode some were led to emphasise either the divine or
human to a greater or less degree at the expense of its counterpart. The

¹. Augustine, CC, op. cit., p. 1322.
². J. N. D. Kelly, op. cit., p. 337.
evaluation of Christ's work varied directly with these shifts. On the other hand when the reality of His work, in particular His suffering, was integrated with the various proposed personal structures the weaknesses of these constructs were invariably revealed. What was needed was a statement which firmly declared both the divinity and humanity of Jesus Christ, within the one Person, and yet refrained from so specifically stating the mode of this relation that His Person and the efficacy of His work were damaged. A certain amount of room had to be left in the definition of the relation between the divine and the human to allow for the functioning of His Person. Any residual questions could only be set in abeyance or shelved indefinitely thus giving place to the unquestionable mystery of His Person and work.

The Chalcedonian formulation with its "without confusion, without change, without division, without separation," sought to provide the necessary Christological definition. The divinity is protected by the fact that the divine Word is regarded as the "... unique subject of the Incarnate..." The humanity is likewise guarded by the formula's insistence that "... as incarnate the Word exists 'in two natures', each complete and each retaining its distinctive properties and operation unimpaired in the union." The human is not absorbed by the Divine in spite of the fact that the divine Word is the active agent. Still the two are one and the terms hypostasis and prosopon are used to express the oneness of the Person as over against physis which is reserved for the natures. He, Jesus Christ, is one Person with two natures so related that the confusion of Eutychianism is refuted and likewise the separation of Nestorianism. If the union is inexplicable.

1. ibid, p. 341.
2. ibid, p. 341.
3. ibid, p. 341.
beyond these terms, well may it be, for in the end it is, to be sure, an act of the Godhead who is not ultimately accountable to the logic even of Christologists. Let it suffice to say at this point that Jesus Christ so defined is able to accomplish His saving work through suffering and death as the God-man, bringing the necessary weight of divinity to His activity while at the same time incorporating mankind into salutary solidarity with Him.
CHAPTER IX

The Suffering Saviour And The Atonement

If the concept of the Person of Jesus Christ in the early Church, varied from time to time and place to place, its experience of His saving power remained intact. Men and women confessed Jesus Christ as Lord and found that when they did new vitality flowed into their personal and corporate lives. The authentic event must always have been directly dependent upon a proclamation which identified the Person of Christ within the spectrum of orthodox belief. Soteriology moved parallel to Christology interacting at every stage with the developing concepts of the Person of Jesus Christ. Reflection on the Person of the Saviour necessarily involved reflection upon His redeeming work accomplished through suffering, death and resurrection. Since the suffering of the Son is an integral part of His redeeming work it is of value to see how the early formulators of Christology viewed His saving activities.

No one theory can be said to have predominated. In some schools of thought the emphasis was placed upon the Person of Christ and His work seen to consist primarily in His uniting of human nature with divine in His Person. When not pushed to an extreme which jeopardised the significance of His life, suffering, death and resurrection, this emphasis was acceptable. On the other hand His work was brought to the fore. Reconciliation was seen to centre in His sacrificial death, Christ substituting Himself for sinful mankind. Again, no serious dislocation occurred providing the efficacy of this work was related to the Person accomplishing it. Behind the various theories attempting to accurately represent the work of Jesus Christ there
is one main strand.

"This is none other than the ancient idea of recapitulation which Irenaeus derived from Saint Paul, and which envisages Christ as the representative of the entire race. Just as all men were somehow present in Adam, so they are, or can be, present in the second Adam, the man from heaven. Just as they were involved in the former's sin with all its appalling consequences, so they can participate in the latter's death and ultimate triumph over sin, the forces of evil and death itself. Because, very God as He is, He has identified with the human race. Christ has been able to act on its behalf and in its stead; and the victory He has obtained is the victory of all who belong to Him."1

Both emphases are caught up in this basic theme. Christ's solidarity with sinful mankind is upheld as being in itself a salutary relationship to the very Godhead, while His saving work is declared effective because He is God Himself in Incarnate union with humanity.

Athenasius' thought on the relation between Person and work of Jesus Christ is instructive as an example of the developed soteriology.

"For being over all, the Word of God naturally by offering His own temple and corporeal instrument for the life of all satisfied the debt of His death. And thus He, the incorruptible Son of God, being conjoined with all by a like nature, naturally clothed all with incorruption, by the promise of the resurrection." (On the Incarnation of the Word,9)²

The salutary embrace of humanity by God in the Person of His Son does effect a restoration. But that restoration must be worked out by Him who is man, in solidarity with mankind, and so He is involved in act as well as being. It is "His" death only that can bring about man's freedom to be "for God."

"But since it was necessary also that the debt owing from all should be paid again, as I have already said, it was owing that all should die, for which especial cause, indeed, He came among us: to this extent, after the proofs of His Godhead from His works, He next offered up His sacrifice also on behalf of all yielding His Temple to death in the stead of all, in order firstly to make men quit and free of their old trespass, and further to show Himself more powerful even than death displaying His own body incorruptible, as firstfruits of the resurrection of all." 1

(On the Incarnation of the Word, 20)

Because, in Jesus Christ, mankind is included, the human situation is redeemed. What He accomplished, becomes man's inheritance and graciously given right. The Son is the effective Saviour for He is God and man and only because He wills not to deny the reality of His personhood, and chooses to live out life as this Person under human conditions, suffering, dying, and rising again, is He that Saviour.

The proclamation of this very good news continued to astonish men, to drive them to repentance, and, when finally acknowledged, to bring about new life in grateful, adoring worship. The astonishment was due, in part at least, to the fact that the Saviour's humanity was said to enclose even sinful human nature. He did not shrink from associating Himself in the most firm solidarity with mankind taking to Himself human nature, the only kind there is, with all its qualifying terms. Gregory of Nazianzus writes,

"But in the character of the Form of a Servant, He condescends to His fellow servants, nay to His servants, and takes upon Him a strange form, bearing all me and mine in Himself, that in Himself He may exhaust the bad, as fire does wax, or as the sun does the mists of the earth; and that I may partake of His nature by the blending." 2 (Orations 30,6)

1. ibid, p. 47.
2. Gregory of Nazianzus, in SLNPFCC, op. cit., p. 311.
His human nature was not just the good which could be salvaged from the hopeless mixture of good and evil in mankind, nor was it a somehow previously cleansed humanity. What Jesus Christ took to Himself is that very nature, that only nature that is man's, his sinful nature.

"Christ appropriated our sins . . . and accepted the punishment we deserve; His death is a substitutionary sacrifice. And He was able to identify Himself with our sins and the penalties attached to them because a very man, He shared our nature."¹

so taught Eusebius of Caesarea. Not being like man or as man but a true man, Jesus Christ was said to stand in man's place. Gregory of Nazianzus used the concept of representation.

"But, as I said, He was in His own Person representing us."² (Orations 30, 5)

Hilary, along with others, employed the first and second Adam framework in order to convey Christ's solidarity with sinful human nature. "He has assumed the nature of the first Adam, so He can identify Himself with us and save us."³ Kelly interprets Augustine's soteriology in a similar vein.

"What this doctrine seeks to establish is that in Christ's humanity fallen man and his Creator have a common meeting-ground where the work of reconciliation and restoration can take effect."⁴

Cyril of Alexandria held the concept of sinful human nature in close proximity to the divine value of the Incarnate One. "Cyril grasped the fact . . . that what enabled Christ to achieve this . . . "(i.e. His saving work) "... was not only His identification of Himself with sinful human

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2. Gregory of Nazianzus, in SLNPECC, op. cit., p. 311.
4. ibid., p. 391.
nature, but the infinite worth of His Person."¹ There is an abundance of
evidence which points to the established belief that the humanity integral
to the Person of Jesus Christ was very much branded by its identity with the
only humanity there is, sinful human nature, and that this fact made it pos-
sible for Him to exercise a substitutionary function in place of, or cer-
tainly, representative of, man. In this way as very man did Jesus Christ
suffer, and in His suffering, not only identified Himself with suffering
sinful mankind, but effectively triumphed in humanity, and made available the
benefits of His work to His brethren.

The Church carefully worked out its thought on the relation between
the Father and the Son and delineated as clearly as possible the Personhood
of the Son. In this all important task it remained faithful to its given;
the Person of its Saviour and the experienced efficacy of His work. Questi-
ons, sometimes in the form of heresies were posed, and the Church, subject
to the given Word of God in His Son, gave answer. It became necessary for
theology in the ever more exacting task of defining the Christian faith to
continue to look more closely at the work of its Saviour, not in isolation
from His Person, but in the attempt to more clearly enunciate its mission-
ary message. His presence and activity among men had culminated in a drast-
ic transformation of the human situation. Of this the Church was certain.
This had been its sure experience. But just how had He been effective in
accomplishing this? How could His work be described? Respecting the myst-
ery and the revelation enclosed within Him how could the Church say exactly
what He had done? His work had been accomplished through suffering and it
is in the light of this that it must be evaluated.

¹. ibid, p. 399.
The alteration in the human situation effected by the suffering activity of Jesus Christ, however objectively complete and transforming it was conceived to be, was not presented as a reversal or invalidation of the judging and punishing activities of God revealed throughout the Old Testament. Man is not named as He who is other than the one who is guilty and deserving of punishment. God is not identified as the One who suspends sentence or reverses His judgment. The wrath of God against sinful mankind is preserved as a reality.

"It need not be underlined that the problem of the punishment of sin is constantly to the fore . . . even in the speeches and parables of Jesus, in the instructional and hortative developments of the kerygma, in the epistolary literature and in the Apocalypse. In the same way even the disciples and the Christian communities constantly stand in the shadow of it, a shadow which for darkness has increased rather than decreased in comparison with Old Testament parallels."¹

However the change may be conceived as having been effected, neither the reality of the Person of God nor the true identity of Man is blurred or glossed over. In fact the enmity existing between God and sinful man is sharpened and brought to bear in a most excruciating way in the Person of Him who is the God-man.

The Old Testament had been uncompromisingly consistent in its association of the suffering of Israel with the activity of its holy God. Israel refused to give allegiance to any other God and thus alleviate the sharpness of its agony by splitting off the function of distributing retributive punishment from the Person of Yahweh. In spite of the fact that glaring inconsistencies seemed to appear in the exercise of His justice, Israel strove to integrate even these phenomena with its faith in the saving God who re-

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vealed Himself in His people's history. Thus suffering conceived to be inflicted by God came to be interpreted as instruction offered by Yahweh to His people. Or it was looked upon as revelation to others who might pause and observe Israel clasped in the covenant hand of God. Or in moments of inspired insight suffering was seen to be vicarious, being heaped upon Israel to the salutary benefit of the nations. But in all of these viewpoints there is merely the preparation for the suffering of Him who is the true Israel, the true and only Son of God and of Man, Jesus Christ. For in His suffering the accusation, judgment and punishment of God are brought to a climax.

"Now for the first time and from this standpoint the accusation against man becomes fundamental and comprehensive. Now for the first time the threat of judgment becomes the threat of eternal judgment. Now for the first time and from this standpoint the meeting of a holy God with sinful man, to which the Old Testament bears witness, ceases to have the appearance of a rather unsatisfactory attempt at paedagogy, and acquires instead an ultimate seriousness and, in its whole mysterious course, an inner necessity — since Golgotha was a direct sin against God and since that is the very spot where God Himself bears the punishment of sin."

The suffering which God inflicts may well be an instructive deterrent. Because Israel suffers the nations may have reason to pause and observe that Israel's suffering is for their sin. But here in Jesus Christ the final act of judgment, sentencing and execution is completed once and for all in the bearing of suffering by Jesus Christ. "In Jesus' death we behold the absolute judgment and condemnation of sin."

1. ibid, p. 109.
"Here God is wholly and unreservedly and in full seriousness against man. Here God metes out to man the kind of treatment he has deserved at His hand."

"Here He treats man as a transgressor with whom He can only deal in His wrath. Here He treats Him in accordance with the enmity which man has merited from Him."

"Here the alienation from God becomes an annihilatingly painful existence in opposition to Him. Here being in death becomes punishment, torment, outer darkness, the worm, the flame - all eternal as God Himself in this antithesis and all positively painful because the antithesis in which God here acts cannot be a natural confrontation, but must inevitably consist in the fact that infinite suffering is imposed upon the creature which God created and destined for Himself, when God reacted against this creature as it deserves. It is, of course, true that this man is the Son of God. In Him God Himself suffers what guilty man had to suffer by way of eternal punishment. This alone gives the suffering of this man its representative power. But it is the Son of God, this man who in His death as the Representative of all men, as the revelation of what was due to them, endured this suffering and bore this punishment. And it is this character, this quality of human death as eternal punishment, which the Church of Jesus Christ contemplates in His crucifixion."

All attempts to interpret the meaning of suffering must now be given significance by their referral to this one central event in which the judgment of God against sinful man is completely fulfilled, and in which the sentence pronounced is already carried out. There remains no residue of judgment, punishment or execution of sentence still to be actualized. All is complete in this one act accomplished in suffering by Jesus Christ, the bearer in His Person of sinful human nature and therefore the legitimate object of punishment.

To say that the judgment of God has been actualised and humankind still exists is already a saving note. For were God's judgment to have fallen on man himself apart from Jesus Christ the only outcome could have

been utter and complete destruction for man. "In face of a real outburst of God's avenging and smiting wrath, the creature would be annihilated. God's real judgment would mean the end of us." ¹ Since He is both divine and human He is a fit object for the wrath and judgment of God. His solidarity with man and His assumption of true manhood make Him liable to the judgment even if it be a voluntarily assumed nature. His perfect obedient Sonship to the Father is that which enables Him to bear the whole terrible burden without being finally, utterly and eternally obliterated. What is terminated in His suffering and death is the possibility of the existence of that sinful humanity upon which eternal judgment would be bound to descend. In bearing eternal judgment He has borne within Him the death of that sinful human nature which He bore in His intimate solidarity with mankind. He bore that threatening curse which shadowed human existence from the moment of rebellion against God.

"If in Genesis 1: 2 judgment upon a world alienated from Him is indicated as at least a possibility, it can actually be executed only at one point in the cosmos created by Him and in one creature. And at this point and in this creature God is Himself the One who is judged and suffers in the place and for the salvation and preservation of the rest of creation." ²

The terrifying wrath of God has been actualised. It has fallen fully upon the head of offending humanity, but on that humanity in the Person of His only begotten Son. So does that Son suffer and complete His work of winning preservation for humanity.

The Church is convinced that its freedom from slavery to sin is due to the judgment and death of sinful humanity in its Saviour. It is likewise certain that its new vitality could only have come from an inbreathing of

¹ K. Barth, Church Dogmatics, Vol. 2, No. 1, p. 346.
spiritual life through Him. The Church can only conclude that His work was not merely the ending of the threat of eternal judgment upon them, but that, within its scope it has actuated certain life-giving processes. That is to say, both from a negative and a positive side He has accomplished His work "on behalf of" mankind. So the Church comes to employ various terms to gather together and convey the implications of His work. The Church is concerned to specify as clearly as possible the way in which His suffering work is effective for the salvation of men. Does He represent man? Is He a substitute for man? Is He the vicarious bearer of man's dues? Is He a sacrifice for man's sins? Does God need to be placated? Is His attitude toward mankind alterable and does His suffering Son alter it? Is the work of Jesus Christ that of man or God or both? What influence does His work have on man? The whole truth involved in Jesus Christ's work "for man" like the union of His divinity and humanity can only be clothed in terms familiar to man's understanding however incompletely these expressions may approximate the totality of the truth. Whatever may be the descriptive terms chosen to elucidate the work of Jesus Christ the Church is convinced that what He has done is "for" it.

Jesus Christ, being very man is a fit Person to take man's place. There is no humanity which is not included in that which He took to Himself in the Incarnation. Where Jesus Christ stands there stands man, all humanity, all mankind. This the Church affirms. It is possible therefore to speak of Christ as truly taking man's place, standing in for him, as him. Barth very forcibly describes the suffering work of Jesus Christ in terms of His "taking man's place."
"With all the truth and validity and force of a sentence which has not only been pronounced but executed and therefore pronounced once and for all, it (i.e. God's verdict on man) declares that man is no longer the transgressor, the sinner, the covenant-breaker that God has found him and he must confess himself to be, that as such he has died and perished from the earth, that he cannot be dealt with as such, that as such he has no future. Jesus Christ has taken his place as a malefactor. In his place Jesus Christ has suffered the death of a malefactor. The sentence on him as a sinner has been carried out. It cannot be reversed. It does not need to be repeated. It has fallen instead on Jesus Christ."

Instead of God's judgment falling upon man and utterly crushing him God has taken that suffering upon Himself and borne it in man's place. But by doing so He has not displaced man. Man is not set aside in aseptic isolation while God bears his punishment. The mass of divinity is not so extensive that the humanity is totally displaced. Rather Jesus Christ incorporates sinful humanity, the whole of it, within in His Person and brings it to the bar of judgment. It is humanity that pronounces God's sentence in the persons of His judges and yet it is humanity in Him, His humanity that bears the punishment. It is not that humanity is set aside while divinity bears its agony but rather that humanity in Him once and for all is judged, sentenced and executed. He alone can stand in man's place because He is man. He alone could veritably die in fulfilment of that sentence and yet on the basis of His obedient divine Sonship rise again to the overflowing of new life.

Another concept used to express the way in which Jesus Christ has effected man's salvation through His suffering work is representation. If man were boldly to present Himself to God apart from the Person of Jesus Christ the result of his face-to-face encounter would be, could be, only the

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venting of the wrath of God upon him and his destruction. Man as he is in himself dare not look upon the face of God or the recognition of the true identity of God would completely cleanse man and in so doing destroy him. Man's only hope is that Someone may represent him to God. Jesus Christ is the One who does this very thing.

"In fulfilling this end (i.e. establishing a new covenant-relationship). He identified Himself with sinful men in the greatness of His love, entering into the consequences of human sin and bearing them upon his heart. As the suffering Servant, He stood in a representative relation to His own, voicing their repentance, obedience, and submission to the will of God."1

He does not supplant humanity with a special category of human being or existence nor with His divinity. What He does is to re-present humanity in Himself to God. Humankind is not annihilated but rescued and the judgment of God is not withheld but executed in the fiery torture and death due to sinful humanity.

"In His omnipotence and mercy the Son of God has made Himself the Brother of this man, and as his Brother his representative, taking his place, accepting his guilt, perishing and passing and dying, and being lost in his stead. It was in this way, as the Neighbour of this neighbour, that He came to the cross and suffered and died on the cross. We recognise the man who has God for his Judge, who has to drink the bitter cup of His wrath, to accept the sharpest human accusation and condemnation and finally to perish in shame and contempt and supreme agony and isolation as the champion of a lost cause. For it is obviously our own human essence, our flesh, we ourselves who are there extirpated as we deserve."2

Between man as he is and humanity in Jesus Christ there is a real and active interaction so that when He presents Himself to His Father He is re-present-

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2. K. Barth, Church Dogmatics, Vol. 4, No. 2, p. 293.
ing nothing less than the fullness of sinful human nature. God reacts in judgment which is the only possible expression of His love, a love so serious that it seeks only the cleansing and renewing of mankind regardless of the cost in suffering to God Himself in Jesus Christ the Son. He suffers as man's representative and so effects salvation by accepting the suffering due to man from God and by representing man's repentance and obedience which is due from man to God.

The concept of sacrifice is yet another thought form which serves to convey the significance of Christ's sufferings. When God draws men near to Himself men suffer in their sinfulness as the history of Israel attests. And yet it is near to God as His image that man truly belongs. For him to isolate Himself from God is eternal death. Man must be brought near to his Creator. Should he come himself in the depth of his sinfulness he could only expect a cleansing but annihilating experience of God's presence. The way must be opened for man to be safely drawn near to God. This Jesus Christ does by His suffering work seen as sacrifice. "The representative ministry of Christ . . . provides a means of approach for sinful men to the God of infinite holiness and majesty." "... this ministry . . . is of the nature of a sacrificial offering." If the concepts of "in man's place" and representation allow for reconciliation on the basis of the full expression of the judgment and gracious righteousness of God then there remains the necessity of an alteration in the heart of man. The obedience which man cannot offer because of his sinful nature must be offered to God and this offering must be made in such a way that man is at least granted the capability

of participation. Taylor discovers this thought in the book of Hebrews.

"... he (i.e. the author of Hebrews) thought of sacrifice as a work of Christ which annuls sin, cleanses the heart, and opens the way to God."¹

"... the writer's central theme ... the One Offering by which men are sanctified and perfected, and in virtue of which Christ appears before the face of God on their behalf."² Man is brought face to face with God in Jesus Christ. Not model man but true man; man who has repented in full in the repentance offered on his behalf by Jesus Christ; man who has been agonisingly purged of sin in Jesus Christ; man who endures at the right hand of God in the Person of His Saviour. This Jesus Christ has accomplished through His suffering as man and on behalf of men.

There is a very real and valid sense in which the term substitution may be used in reference to the suffering work of Jesus Christ. In his sermons on Isaiah Calvin uses the phrase "in our name".

"... when we see that our Lord Jesus Christ made such an exchange for us, and was willing to make complete payment of all our debts so that we might be cleansed of them; that He was willing to be condemned in our name and, as it were, in our person so that we might be absolved - all this ought to draw us to Him, indeed, to set us on fire to find our rest in Him."³

This substitutionary act of Christ redounds to man's eternal benefit taking from him the necessity of having to endure the unbearable punishment for his own sin. But it is not merely that God's judgment is executed that constitutes the fullness of His substitution. Christ's active obedience again in place of man's is an important factor. "For Calvin the substitutionary

¹. ibid, p. 181.
². ibid, p. 184.
character of Christ and His perfect obedience in our place is the means of justification."\(^1\) It is this latter concept which binds man into continuous relationship with God that keeps substitution from becoming displacement. If Christ's work were conceived to be the work only of His divinity alone, or in collaboration with some unique kind of humanity then the Person of the Son would be injured and docetism would threaten. But when substitution is maintained in terms of His concrete and continued hypostatic relationship with sinful humanity then it may be safely used as a term descriptive of the suffering work of Jesus Christ on behalf of man. Calvin maintains this link - "It is as man that Christ is our Brother and has become our Substitute."\(^2\) What is clarified by the use of the term substitute is that if anything efficacious be done by man it must be done by some One who is other than merely sinful man but who is at the same time so related to man that all of humanity is incorporated in His salutary act.

The work of atonement in which the suffering of Jesus Christ is central is an act of God. It is an act which man is not capable of accomplishing through the exercise of his own resources. What is done must be done on his behalf. All the language used to describe the work of atonement accomplished in the Person of Jesus Christ points to this truth. "... it (i.e. sacrifice of Jesus Christ) is a means to cover sin from His sight which God provides. The initiative is with Him."\(^3\) "If Jesus' death is a sacrifice then the sacrifice originates with God."\(^4\) It is this initiative of God that Gustaf Aulén seeks to preserve in his book *Christus Victor*.

\(^1\) P. van Buren, *Christ In Our Place*, Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1957, p.119.
\(^2\) ibid, p.119.
\(^3\) H.R. Mackintosh, op. cit., p.220.
\(^4\) ibid, p.221.
What he refers to as the 'classic' idea of the atonement has as its basis the truth that God Himself is the ground and active agent in the work of atonement. ... it represents the work of Atonement or reconciliation as from first to last a work of God Himself, a continuous Divine work ..."¹ At no point is the boundary between God and man obscured or transgressed in such a way that man might be set forth as the subject of the saving work. The end result of this activity of God must be reconciliation between God and man and Aulen declares that this is precisely what does happen. "... it is a work wherein God reconciles the world to Himself, and is at the same time reconciled."² He will not allow that the suffering work of Christ is merely directed toward God as the object of satisfaction nor that its sole purpose is to effect a change in mankind. God is the subject throughout and man is reconciled to God and God to man in this one act done on behalf of man.

Aulen finds support for this concept in the thought of Irenaeus.

"He does not think of the Atonement as an offering made to God by Christ from man's side, or as it were from below; for God remains throughout the effective agent in the work of redemption."

"The redemptive work is accomplished by the Logos through the Manhood as His instrument; for it could be accomplished by no other power than that of God Himself."³

In the suffering work of Jesus Christ there is both that which reveals the righteousness of God in His zeal for man's salvation whatever the cost to Himself and also on behalf of man that expression of faithful obedience that counts as man's worthy sacrifice and worship when men participate in it by faith.

2. ibid, p. 20.
3. ibid, p. 50
Aulén finds support for his 'classic' idea of atonement in the New Testament as well.

"...the New Testament idea of redemption constitutes in fact a veritable revolution, for it declares that sovereign Divine Love has taken the initiative, broken through the order of justice and merit, triumphed over the powers of evil, and created a new relation between the world and God."¹

This 'new solution' however did not become a reality without the suffering of Jesus Christ. It is not a redemption that circumvents or ignores the reality of man's sin. It is an act which is costly in the extreme and the idea of "sovereign Divine Love" dare not be dissociated from the suffering Divine Love for any "Divine Love" known to faith takes its content from out of the Person and work of Jesus Christ. The "order of justice and merit" is transcended in that God Himself in Jesus Christ satisfies the demands of justice. The new concept of justice takes its rise from this fact and is indeed revolutionary; but the conclusion dare not be drawn that man's sin had no importance in the face of an indulgent Divine feeling undeserving of the term love. This activity does stem entirely from God. "This central thought that God Himself has in Christ effected both salvation and atonement provides the key to all the passages which speak of Christ's work as vicarious "for our sake", or "in our stead"..."² This conforms to the terms of the hypostatic union. The anhypostasia makes it clear that there is no other manhood outside the Person of Christ that could function efficaciously in the act of reconciliation thus guaranteeing God as Subject. The enhypostasia makes it clear that in the Incarnate Son true manhood is

¹ ibid, p. 96.
² ibid, p. 88.
incorporated. This too is the activity of God. There can be no recourse to a position in which the atonement is reduced merely to an act of man, however painful or pious, effecting the placation of God, nor is it possible to reduce the efficacy of the atonement only to some subjective alteration in the hearts of men. In the work of Jesus Christ including His sufferings "... God (is) closely and personally engaged in the work of man's deliverance."¹ The existence of the Church proves its effectiveness.

The suffering work of Jesus Christ which brings about reconciliation between God and man and man and God reveals God as being "with us".

"Quand on médit sur les circonstances de 'la bienheureuse passion' du Christ, on ne peut pas ne point penser que Jesus a assumé tout cela pour être pleinement avec tant de pauvres gens qui, à travers tous les temps, ont été battus, pendus, crucifiés..."²

The suffering of mankind, even if that suffering be inflicted by God in retribution for man's sin, does not keep Him from coming to man's side any more than the exile kept Him from granting His presence to Israel. He is with man as a man to the very depths of his experiences, not as a helpless innocent sharer in man's predicament but as One who by his presence and activity accomplishes something for man, on his behalf. What man himself cannot do in his sinful state, Jesus Christ does from out of man's sinful condition. He takes upon Himself in full, the punishment, judgment and execution of man as the malefactor. He offers a perfect obedience to God as a man and on behalf of man and is hated and abused and executed by man for daring to put him under obligation to God whose only might is that of suffering service. In the process man is transformed despite himself and God's justice is 'satisfied' through its clear expression of grace. He has

¹ ibid, p.171.
taken from man his last source of pride; that is his right to suffer for his own sins. God has claimed this right as His own, freeing man to worship and adore Him and laying him under the infinite obligation of a holy and gracious love.
"Jesus Christ suffered." This simple statement stands unchallenged. Many interpretations have been offered as to the resultant significance of His activity for mankind. Much has been said of the way in which His suffering affects the concept of His Person. But that He did suffer is not in dispute. When it is said that "Jesus Christ" suffered the reference is to the agony of the Incarnate God, the God-man. As the Person He is, He passed through pain. In the wilderness, in Gethsemane, on Golgotha He did not for a moment cease to be this One. No rhythmic shift took place within Him, His experience at one moment being borne by His manhood, at another being sustained by His Godhood. As the one Person He suffered. Anything less than this kind of full participation of His Person in His work negates its redemptive value. In the full integrity of His Person Jesus Christ did suffer.

This statement is only acceptable where the concepts of Godhood and manhood do not preclude the possibility of this kind of dual reference of His experience, or where such preconceptions are permitted to be re-moulded to fit the contours of the Person and work of Jesus Christ. From the side of His humanity there is, at first, no major problem. He suffered as a Jew, as a citizen of an occupied and oppressed nation, as a man with fully tangible and sensitive tissues, as a compassionate and sympathetic person, as yet another unit in the long line of humanity passing from the cradle to the grave. That He suffered as a man is, initially, no surprise, and on the basis of universal experience is perfectly credible. But Jesus Christ suffered as no other because He is
not an other. He is the Other. He is the God-man. It is the introduction of this term "God" into His ontic description which seems disruptive, for to say "God" immediately brings to mind thoughts of freedom and dissociation from suffering of any kind or even existence in a form susceptible to pain. If God be the "Other" then He is not ontically or ethically man; for it is in reference to man that the term "other" is employed. Apart from Jesus Christ God is not He Who is liable for any reason to suffer nor existent in a form to which the application of the term suffering in human parlance can have any meaning. But there is no possibility of discussing suffering in relation to God "apart from Jesus Christ," for apart from Him God is not known. Whoever God is, God in His "Godheadness," He is Jesus Christ the Incarnate, and works as He does, and it is only this content which can be safely applied to the Person of God in the fullness of His Trinitarian being; unless of course the Son is some sort of emanation discontinuous with the totality of God. God and suffering must be bound together in the Person of the Son just as and just because God and man are thus related.

The Hebrews were acutely aware of the fact that God is "other" than man. He does transcend His creature. God and man are not to be confused; and they worked out this belief in constant struggle against the anthropomorphism that would reconstruct God in idolatrous forms. For the Hebrews the otherness of God consisted in His being morally distinct from mankind.¹ "God was absolutely other than man in His perfect holiness and in His eternal being."² But this real difference between the Covenant God and His people did not constitute an impassable

2. ibid, p.3.
gulf for the Hebrew mind. God could still be known, personal relationship was possible with Him, indeed they only knew their God "... as a 'Person' in whose image and likeness they had been made."¹ Being personal God was naturally looked upon as having feelings. "The prophet's (i.e. Isaiah's) consciousness is wholly imbued with the feelings of God."² The absolute otherness of God did not preclude the possibility of His possibility. "The possibility of God is ... an integral element in the consciousness of the prophets."³ God was not conceived to be the solitary, aloof, imperturbable potentate of a remote realm untouched by the vicissitudes of men. Rather, "Love, joy, anger, jealousy, "repentance," are all ascribed to God, differing from the corresponding feelings in men only by their conformity with God's perfect righteousness."⁴ If later Judaism failed to admit the possibility of suffering into the Person of the Messiah, it was not because Hebrew thought was unaware of such possibilities within the personal nature of God.

The term "god" bore rather different connotations for the Greek mind.

"For the Greeks on the other hand God was the last term of a difficult philosophical enquiry; Plato admitted that to discover the maker and father of the universe, as well as his work, is difficult indeed; and when discovered, it is impossible to describe him to mankind at large; to which the Hebrews would have replied that it is not we who discover God, but God who makes Himself known to us in His works, and His works are plain for all who have eyes to see."⁵

³. ibid, p.141.
⁴. Mozley, op. cit., p.3.
The difference is plainly evident. The Hebrew concept of God was based on the fact that God had acted and revealed Himself to them as a personal God quite able, and willing to associate himself with the causes of His people. Such a God is possible, or He is not personal and the whole of their history has been in vain. To the Greek, God stands at a great distance from man,

"... Philo passes very easily from the LXX translation of the Hebrew יִתְנָה (Exodus 3: 13) as ὁ ὄνω to the neuter ἐν ὄν. The living God of the Hebrew Scriptures has become the impersonal Absolute, the Real Existent, of the Greek philosophers, although this is only one strand in the tangled skein of Philo's theology."¹

The idea of the impassibility of God was imported into Christian theology from the world of Greek philosophical ideas through Alexandrian Jewish theology.² If the impassibility of God, conceived in these terms were permitted a free rein in Christian theology its destructive influence could wreck the entire framework.

"So alien is this idea, so foreign is it to Hebraic-Christian thought, that it makes nonsense of the revelation of God in the Old Testament; it makes the Incarnation no real Incarnation and it reduces the suffering and death of Christ to a purely human work."³

Throughout its formative period Christology had to tack against a theological wind which threatened to blow it off its Incarnational course on to the rocks of the doctrine of the impassibility of God.

The New Testament writings stood as a check against the move of Christology over into the impassibility error.

"Two convictions are embedded in the Pauline and Johannine writings respectively. The first is that at the centre of the Gospel stands the cross not of a man, but of the Son.

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1. ibid, p.356.
2. Cf. ibid, p.356.
3. ibid, p.356.
of God who had emptied Himself, taken upon Himself to death for man; the second is that Jesus, who is the Son of God, has come in the flesh, a coming which is also described, with direct reference to the Passion, as a coming 'in the blood'.

It was not possible for Christology to avoid such clear direction. Jesus Christ had suffered on the cross and this became a basic tenet of the emergent faith. Perceptive, Spirit-led minds were quick to discern that unless He suffered as the Son of God and the Son of man His suffering was of no avail, being merely another entry in the ages long catalogue of man's calamity. The re-vitalising experience of the Church was so potent that its theologians could not ignore the real involvement of the divinity of the Person of Jesus Christ in His redemptive work.

The impassible god concept of the Greeks continued to exert its influence in some of the earliest post-apostolic writings.

"... impassibility ... is assumed rather than argued for. At the same time it is asserted that God suffered in Christ. ... we see side by side, the Greek philosophical idea placed in paradoxical juxtaposition with the Apostolic faith that God was in Christ in His sufferings and death reconciling the world to Himself."  

If God be in Jesus Christ and He is One to suffer in the accomplishment of His work then how is His Person to be viewed? Is it not true to say that here is the hub, acknowledged or otherwise, around which a great deal of the Christological controversy revolves? The attempts to formulate acceptable Christological statements true to the nature of the events and the experience of the Church tended to founder on the impassibility either by accentuating the divinity of Christ at the expense of His humanity, or, by denying the divinity altogether and making Him

I am not a mere man. The teaching on the impassibility of God threatened the Christological structure right at its very centre.

Ignatius is willing to speak of the "passion of God" (ad. Rom. 6) but (ad. Polyc. 3) his thought is restricted so

"... that we must not attribute to him views of a suffering God outside of the sphere of the Incarnation."
"The thought clearly is that Christ in the incarnate state becomes voluntarily subject to certain conditions which were wholly absent till then."
"We must see in this phraseology the presupposition that God, who is essentially spirit is in Himself beyond those experiences which we know of only in connexion with the life of the world and with human nature."

The distinction between Father and Son is sufficiently commodious to allow that God as Father is impassible, but, Godhead, while existing as Son, is subject to suffering. Speaking of Ignatius and Irenaeus Pollard observes,

"For both these writers, the divine is essentially impassible, but becoming incarnate in Jesus Christ, becomes capable of suffering and of human emotions and passions. No attempt is made to explain the paradox thus created by the introduction of the idea of impassibility, which nowhere appears in the New Testament, into the doctrine of the Incarnation. But the fact that the first Christological heresy which the Church had to face was one which tended to deny the reality of the humanity of the Incarnate Christ forced these early writers to assert the reality of the sufferings and death, and of the human passions of the Saviour even though the impassibility of the divine was an unargued assumption in all their thinking." 2

The restriction of the divine impassibility to the Person of the Father while declaring that the Incarnate Son is possible, suggests that divinity is in fact possible but only when in the form of the Incarnate One. Divinity in the form of the First Person of the Trinity is not only not possible in the same fashion as the Second Person, not being

in fleshly but spiritual form, but is impassible whatever that may mean in terms of the nature of being that constitutes the Fatherhood of God. If its implications are so rigidly applied that the Father becomes impersonal, is robbed of those attributes which the prophets conceived of as being necessary to His existence as the Covenant-making God, then something alien has triumphed. If however this impassibility — possibility point is made within the confines of the Father-Son distinction then how can it be disallowed? — for surely whatever "feeling" the Father may have in expression of His being are not those of an enfleshed personage. But nor can the Father express in terms of His spiritual being anything that is contradictory to His own self-expression in the flesh of His Son. The problem is for creatures of flesh and blood to approximate adequately within the limits of their language tools, what it means for Spirit to suffer. In any case the distinction existing between the Father and the Son which makes it possible to apply these titles to them does suggest the possibility of different modes of personal expression of their identical purpose. If suffering in the flesh is appropriate to One then suffering in the Spirit may be predicated of the Other whatever this entails. On the other hand their sharing of the one personal essence is assurance that the One, the Son, does not suffer without the appropriate compassionate involvement of the Other, the Father.

The concept of the impassibility of God infused difficulties into the Christological discussions of the early theologians. To some, the Modalists it was obvious that "... if God had been so wholly present in Jesus Christ that, during the Incarnation God was Jesus and not to
be found anywhere else, the belief in a divine, impassible nature could no longer be retained.”¹ Certain groups in this school were led to the conclusion that God the Father actually suffered in the Person of Jesus Christ the Son thus blurring the distinction between the Persons and undoing the careful work of the Trinitarian thinkers. For them Father and Son were distinct only as invisible and manifested, and not in terms of real Personhood. For them the impassible God elected to become possible by an act of His own will.

"In estimating the character of the Modalist conception of the possibility of God, it is necessary to lay stress on the possibility being the result of the action of the divine Will, whereby God condescends to limit Himself in such ways as to enable Him to enter upon the level of finite existence through the Incarnation. It is not that in itself the divine nature is capable of suffering."²

God exists first as impassible Father, then as Incarnate, possible Son becoming this second mode through an act of His personal will which He is apparently free to exercise. The limited Godhead is then enclosed in the Person of the Son, and the Church's experiences of Father, Son and Holy Spirit count for nought. Modalism bridged the gap between the Father and the Son but in an unacceptable fashion, eliminating virtually all significant distinction between them.

In reaction against the modalists the impassibility of the Father was reasserted. Tertullian says,

"'The Father did not suffer with the Son . . . If the Father is impassible, then He cannot suffer with another; if He can suffer with another then He is possible . . . But the Father is unable to suffer with another as the Son is unable to suffer in virtue of His divinity'. (Against Praxeas Ch XXIX)."³

¹ Mozley, op. cit., p.29.
² ibid, pp.34, 35.
³ Pollard, op. cit., p.358.
The impassibility of God now becomes a factor within the Person of Jesus Christ being attached to His divinity. The difficulty of arriving at a satisfactory Christological formulation is compounded. When the impassible divine and the possible human are thrust into existence in the form of one Person then it is most difficult to see how that One can function in anything but a schizophrenic way. Nevertheless Tertullian asserted "... the impassibility of the divine in Christ; despite his opposition to philosophy his unrecognised Stoic presupposition of ἄναγκη rules his argument against the idea that God even in Christ suffered."\(^1\) Beside this Tertullian maintained the reality of the sufferings of Jesus Christ, depending on the distinction between the Persons of the Father and the Son for His authority.

"By the distinction of the Persons of the Father and the Son as he interpreted it, he both, to his own satisfaction, preserved the full truth of the transcendence of God, and also showed how, without diminishing anything of that transcendence, such a contact between God and the world was possible as allowed him the use of such language as "the Son of God was crucified ... the Son of God died," (De Carne Christi), which seemed paradoxical just because it assigned to a Person truly divine the experience of finitude and possibility."\(^2\)

It was one thing for the Patripassians to declare that the Father suffered and quite another for Tertullian to maintain the divine and human in the Son and to restrict the suffering to Him. But when he bisects the Person of the Son with this rigid line of demarcation holding His divinity apart and making His humanity the sole active subject in the suffering then he has done irreparable damage to Personhood of the Godhead. At least two Sons would have to be postulated in order that the whole work might be fulfilled. The distinction becomes intolerable division.

1. ibid, p.358.
The relating of the suffering to the humanity of Christ alone proved to be an attractive solution to the problem imposed by the presupposition that Divinity must be impassible. "Athanasius...retaining the idea of divine impassibility,...asserts that it is the human in Christ that suffers."¹ But he finds it possible to relate the sufferings to the divinity using the Incarnation principle.

"'In nature the Word Himself is impassible, and yet because of the flesh which He put on these things (i.e. all the wants and sufferings that belong to the flesh) are ascribed to Him, since they are proper to the flesh, and the body is proper to the Saviour'. (Against the Arians III, 26, 34,) ..."²

There is a sense in which it is correct to associate the sufferings with the divinity, on the same principle of propriety by which the body of Jesus Christ is appropriate to His Incarnate Personhood. But what is the effect of this upon the reality of Christ's manhood and so upon all humanity incorporated in Him? "...the Impassible Word 'obliterates and destroys these affections so that men, their passions as if changed in the Impassible, henceforth become themselves also impassible...'."³

Humanity is threatened with a divinisation that would falsify the experience of the Church and render any work of Christ beyond the moment of His incarnation superfluous. Still "Athanasius had occasion from time to time in his works to show that the sufferings of Christ were in no way incompatible with the fullness of deity being His."⁴ Athanasius apparently held firmly to the reality of the sufferings of Christ in spite of his belief that in Christ humanity was rendered impassible.

The suffering of the God-man and the concept of the impassibility of God

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¹. Pollard, op. cit., p.358.
². ibid, pp.358, 359.
³. ibid, p.359.
⁴. Mozley, op. cit., p.83.
are the two factors struggling for full and coherent expression in this part of Athanasius' teaching.

Only under the terms of the two-nature Christology could there be any reconciliation between the assumed impassibility of God and the actual sufferings of the Son.

"The Two Natures doctrine gave the conditions for a precise ascription of passibility to the Lord's manhood while through what was to become the technical expression of the *communicatio idiomatum* the Divine Person could be spoken of as truly the subject of the human experiences."\(^1\)

The mutual exchange of attributes thus postulated made it possible to speak of the sufferings of Jesus Christ and to refer these to His humanity without apparently jeopardising the real existence of a divinity assumed to be impassible. If it is incorrect to speak of divinity as suffering and yet the Saviour must be divine as well as human in order for His work to be efficacious, and if His work is accomplished through suffering, then His existence and His work become possible through the application of the principle assumed to be implicit in the incarnation, i.e. the *communicatio idiomatum*. The two natures do exist in the one Person, and the one Person truly suffers, therefore adequate space must be left within the formulations for the existence and function of this two-natured Person. His being must not be jeopardised nor His functions weakened. If anything can be said it must be that the two natures exist in the one Person "without confusion, without change, without division, with separation." The assumed impassibility of God and the actual sufferings of the God-man compelled Christology to this position. Had God been conceived as a being replete with feelings as in the ancient Hebrew traditions, the suffering of the God-man would not have loomed as

\(^1\) ibid, p. 87.
so large an obstacle in the settlement of the Christological problem.

An attempt was made to ease the problem posed by the assumed impossibility of divinity and the suffering of the God-man, by stating the divinity of the Son in terms that would not separate Him from the divinity of the Godhead and yet would allow a place within His personhood for the existence of His suffering humanity. Divinity was allowed to be fully present in the Son but in a humiliated form. Jesus Christ is the second Person of the Trinity because of the condescension or self-emptying of the Divine in order to accommodate Himself to existence as the God-man. The relationship between the divine and human in the Incarnate Person is possible because Divinity, while not ceasing to be divine, is nevertheless altered in such a way that existence in real human form becomes possible.

"Basic to Christian faith is the belief in the divine self-emptying or condescension in Christ for the redemption of men. According to the Christian faith God in His creation and redemption of the world accepted the limitations of finitude upon His own Person."¹

The impassibility of Divinity is safeguarded by such a description while the sufferings of the God-man are given their full place. Neither the Divinity nor the humanity is denied but the Divinity is asserted in a form suitable to its association with the humanity.

"We must certainly hold true to both statements without reduction. True God, true Man."²

It is . . . obvious that the Kenosis which belongs to the Incarnation, constitutes a self-limitation of God whose limits cannot possibly be defined by us. We cannot say how God became Man. But we can and must say, that God, as He confronts us in the Man Jesus, and especially as He is manifested to us as the crucified, has divested Himself of His attributes of majesty."²

Brunner wishes to safeguard the mystery of the Incarnational process but does insist upon a Divinity in Jesus Christ limited to the extent that He can enter into the experiences of the Person of Jesus Christ. Dawe holds so strongly to the humiliation — *kenosis* concept that he is able to say, "The divine *kenosis* is the key to the whole drama of human salvation."¹ Humiliation or *kenosis* seems to become the incarnational principle, the method by which the divine and human are bound together in the one Person, Jesus Christ. The mysterious gap existing within the Person of the Son is not closed so that the natures become confused, but the humiliation of the Divine makes possible the existence of the Two-in-One. The danger involved is that the real Divinity may be jeopardised by too strong a reaction away from it, initiated by the fear of infringing upon the divine impassibility.

It is possible to interpret the divine *kenosis*, humiliation, or condescension as part of the very essence of divine Being and activity. What God suffers as the Son and in the Son is that which may seem to hide His Divinity but which as a matter of fact reveals Him as He truly is. "The very thing which seems to conceal His Godhead, His flesh, the weakness of earthly creatureliness, is an element in the divine glory of revelation."¹ God is no less God because He has united Himself with humanity in Jesus Christ. In fact only because He has done this is it at all possible to know God. The freedom of God to be who He truly is becomes part of the knowledge imparted.

"... it is of His essence to possess the freedom to be capable of this self-offering and self-concealment, and beyond this to make use of this freedom, and therefore really to effect this self-offering and to give Himself

up to this self-concealment. The meaning and the goal of His self-emptying is His self-humiliation. In this above all He is concealed as God. Yet it is here above all that He is really and truly God."¹

The "accommodation" of Divinity to existence in the suffering Son does not involve such a limitation or humiliation or self-emptying that the self of God is bereft of His identity. But in fact the divine-human Self, Jesus Christ is that very One who most clearly portrays the "Godness" of the Godhead. This must be asserted against any doctrine of the humiliation which would impugn the nature of God. In His very suffering human existence Jesus Christ is no less God than in His pre-existence or His exaltation. Divine impassibility must be re-interpreted in the light of these truths.

In becoming one with Man in Jesus Christ God does not abdicate from His rulership by altering His nature in such a fashion that He is no longer capable of functioning. The presence of suffering in the Godhead in the Person of the Son does not render Him susceptible to the suasion of the creatures whose suffering He now fully shares. In fact, His entry into the world of agony is precisely that event through which His unparalleled sovereignty is declared. "The kenosis, passion, humiliation which He takes upon Himself by becoming man, signifies no loss in divine majesty but, considered in the light of its goal, actually its triumph."² In the suffering Son, God does not undertake a new course of action discontinuous with His gracious activity evidenced on behalf of man from the beginning of time. There is no new factor introduced into His Being that could supply the ontic root for such new growth.

2. K. Barth, Church Dogmatics, Volume 1, Number 2, p.37.
"He who the third day rose from the dead was no less true God in the manger than on the cross. By becoming flesh the Word is no less true and entire God than He was previously in eternity in Himself."

The possible existence of God in His Son makes clear by what omnipotence He actually does reign.

"They (i.e. the regeneration and conversion of men) took place in Jesus Christ as the crucified because it is finally and supremely in His Cross that He acted as Lord and King of all men, that He maintained and exercised His sovereignty, that He proved His likeness to the God who is so unassuming in the world but so revolutionary in it, that He inaugurated His kingdom as a historical actuality."

"The cross...of the Son of Man, as it is portrayed in the New Testament, does not...cast a shadow over Him. It is His coronation."

In His very possibility, being subject to suffering, the Lordship of Jesus Christ is fully and definitively declared. There is no need to struggle with concepts of the impassibility of God which conflict with or threaten to sabotage the Person and work of the Son. For God cannot be found anywhere else, behind, beside, above or below the Person of Jesus Christ.

Barth finds it possible to go further and declare that far from taking away the uniqueness of the true God, His activity in the possible Person of Jesus Christ is the very thing which firmly establishes His singularity.

"He is God, in the fact that He can give Himself up and does give Himself up, not merely to the creaturely limitation but to the suffering of the human creature, becoming one of these men, Himself bearing the judgment under which they stand, willing to die and, in fact, dying the death which they deserved."

"It is in the light of the fact of His humiliation that on this first aspect all the predicates of His Godhead which is the true Godhead must be filled out and interpreted. Their positive meaning is lit up only by this

1. ibid, p.38.
2. K. Barth, Church Dogmatics, Volume 4, Number 2, p.291.
determination and limitation, only by the fact that in this act He is God and therefore the true God distinguished from all false gods by the fact that they are not capable of this act, and they have not in fact accomplished it, that their supposed glory and honour and eternity and omnipotence not only do not include but exclude their self-humiliation.

The passibility of the Divine in Jesus Christ far from being an embarrassing factor requiring great elaboration before it is included in theological and Christological statement, is that very content which makes the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ such amazingly good and transforming news. God is graciously "with us" not "away off there".

Might it not be true to say that in the passibility of the Divine evidenced in Jesus Christ the prophetic insight into the personal nature of God has in fact been vindicated once and for all? For whatever else may be said in elaboration of the term "personal" surely it does include within the scope of its use reference to attributes of feeling, sympathy, compassion and indeed the expression of these traits in appropriate action. The mere feelings are scarcely sufficient to guarantee authentic personhood. But actions undertaken in fidelity to the feelings certify it. It is precisely this that is enclosed in the Judaeo-Christian tradition. God has acted in true expression of His being. His actions revealed His Person and His feelings to the prophet and His revealed personhood gave meaning to His deeds. If His activities include moments of anguish in the Person of the Son this is not surprising. For the very existence of the Incarnate One is posited upon the personal covenant relationship between God and man. The passible God is not an actor but the Saviour.

1. K. Barth, Church Dogmatics, Vol. 4, No. 1, p.130.
In thus supporting the possibility of the Divine in Jesus Christ it might be asked whether there is not a danger of falling directly into the Patripassian pitfall of confusing the Persons and thus the activities of the Father and the Son. In answer to this query the distinction between Father and Son must be maintained. While the personal presence of Divinity in the Son leads to the possibility conclusion nevertheless the relation is not reversible. That is to say that the sufferings of the Son are not to be posited as sufferings of the Father. "We cannot say of God the Father that He was conceived and born, that He suffered and died and rose again."

"For on the one hand all these statements stand in affinity with the relation of the Son . . . to the Father, but not vice versa; their content, therefore, pertains peculiariter to the Son . . . and not to the Father." "They (i.e. these statements) would . . . applied to God the Father, collide with His affinity to the essence and action of God as the Creator. Of course, in the Incarnation of the Word the Creator became a creature . . . and a presence of the Father also in the Son who was born, suffered and died . . . no one could or should for that reason deny. But we ought just as little to say, God the Father died as we ought to say Jesus of Nazareth . . . created heaven and earth."²

If the work of the Son is attributed to the Person of the Father as well as to the Son then of course their Persons must be identical and some sort of modalism is re-affirmed, the experience of the Church on which the doctrine of the Trinity was founded is ignored, the distinction between the Father and the Son is obliterated, and some form of unitarian theology affirmed. Basic to the Church's transforming message was the belief that very God had revealed Himself as very man but not that in doing so He had ceased to perform the functions of sovereignty attributed to His existence as Father. Firm insistence on the possibility of

2. ibid, pp.455, 456.
the Divinity in Jesus Christ dare not be allowed to obscure the distinction between the Father and the Son.

Soteriological interests however do demand that Jesus Christ be very God. "If the acts and the sufferings of Jesus are really revelation and reconciliation, then it can only be the acts and the sufferings of God Himself." The acts of mere men whether pleasurable or excruciatingly painful are never salutary deeds, even though the active subject be among the most righteous. Whatever deeds are construed to be effective for salvation they must include God as the active agent.

Is it possible then to say "God Himself" suffers, experiences pain?

"All the experiences of the Incarnate One, however endured, were experiences of the One Divine Person and it was just because the cross was not the cross of a man but of the Lord Jesus Christ that the cross saved." In spite of the enduring distinction between the Father and the Son, Woollcombe argues in favour of the suffering of God, in terms which have implications for the whole Godhead.

"If God's outgoing love is the expression of His innermost nature, then, confronted as He is with such a world as ours, He must suffer. If God is really the ground of the world's being, the world being what it is, He must be a suffering God. What the cross revealed in time — the Father giving the Son to redeem the world by suffering for it — was eternally true of God's nature, and was always true in fact ever since over against God, even though His work, a world existed."

Suffering is used in direct connection with God's nature, His "innermost nature". The implication is that whatever else the Godhead may be and whatever functions He is ontically equipped to perform in His three Persons, suffering is appropriately referred to His essence.

This is to say more than merely that God suffered in the Person of the Son. It seems to imply that in the Godhead, appropriate to His modes of existence, there is distributed that which is identical with the suffering revealed in the Son. Though it cannot be stated that the Father was born, suffered and died, nevertheless there is that personal trait within Him that does not merely reject the possibility of suffering but that actively espouses it in His Son. If this factor, whatever it may mean for His existence as Father, were not present then the binding relationship suggested by the terms Father and Son would be negated and there would be Two unrelated Persons for whom new relational terms would have to be found.

Barth carries this train of thought connecting suffering and God a step further when he relates suffering to the Person of the Father at the point of the sending of the Son and His abasement. It is not the Father's suffering apart from His Son nor is it an agony belonging strictly to the Father or the Son, that is involved.

"It is not at all the case that God has no part in the suffering of Jesus Christ even in His mode of being as the Father. . . . there is a particular veri in the teaching of the early Patripassians. This is that primarily it is God the Father who suffers in the offering and sending of His Son, in His abasement. The suffering is not His own, but the alien suffering of the creature, of man, which He takes to Himself in Him. But He suffers it in the humiliation of His Son with a depth with which it never was or will be suffered by any man — apart from the One who is His Son. And He does so in order that, having been borne by Him in the suffering and sending of His Son it should not have to be suffered in this way by man. This fatherly fellow-suffering of God is the mystery, the basis, of the humiliation of His Son; the truth of that which takes place historically in His crucifixion." [1]

Barth wisely refrains from attempting to specify precisely what this

1. K. Barth, Church Dogmatics, Vol. 4, No. 2, p.357.
must mean to the Father in terms of unincarnate existence. He is rightly concerned more with the implications for mankind. In light of the heavy emphasis placed on the efficacy of the Son's sufferings as the God-man in many other passages in the Dogmatics it can hardly be alleged that Barth is here jeopardising the infinite value of the Son's suffering. For however much is made of the suffering of the Father it is only the agony of the God-man, the One who acts simultaneously as God and man, that can be effective for man's salvation. A docetic Christology would issue from an undue emphasis on the suffering of the Father. Barth seems to guard his teaching at this point by employing the term "fellow-suffering" so that however much he may wish to impress his readers with the need to see Fatherly suffering in the Godhead, still it is suffering which has an immovable point of contact in the Son and through Him in humanity. For only on this premise could he hold that the bearing of suffering by the Father would be effective in lifting the burden from man.

"In Jesus Christ God Himself, the God who is the one true God, the Father with the Son in the unity of the Spirit, has suffered what befell this man to suffer to the bitter end."

"It is of this fellow-suffering of God Himself borne on earth and also in heaven to the greater glory of God and the supreme salvation of man; it is of the God who has not evaded this suffering with and for the world, that the crucified man Jesus Christ speaks."1

The question whether God Himself suffers is here answered in the affirmative in terms which enclose the distinction between the Father and the Son, which establish the Incarnate One firmly in the pattern and which preserve the importance of the salutary issue deriving from these.

particular Ones in action.

One of the challenges that is bound to arise when the involvement of God in suffering is declared to be so complete is whether the distinction between the Father and the Son, and between the divine and human natures in the Son is not thereby impaired. If the Father makes the agony of the Son His own is not the work of the Son confused with that of the Father and the Church's experience of the three Persons declared false in respect at least to the first two Persons of the Trinity? Berkouwer argues against this involvement of God, this theopaschitism. He has rightly understood Barth when he summarises

"The triumph of grace manifests itself in the revelation of this suffering and of this obedience of God. It is a revelation of God not in the heights but in the depths, not of riches but of poverty, and in this manifestation the nature, the being of God stands revealed before our marvelling eyes."¹

"The "God Himself" in the passion of Christ does not stand in need of modification or weakening in the direction of the suffering of the Logos "according to the flesh", but is posited unreservedly as essentially divine humiliation."²

What Berkouwer fears in such statements is that speculation has triumphed over revelation. He insists that the Scriptures set certain boundaries beyond which thought dare not go and still be respectful of the mystery of the incarnation and the cross.³ "In our opinion it is here that consistent theopaschitism has speculatively transgressed the boundaries."⁴ The boundary which Scripture establishes according to Berkouwer has to do with the subjection of the Son to the Father.

2. ibid, p.301.
3. Cf. ibid, p.302.
4. ibid, p.302.
This for him is the mystery which ought not to be endangered as mystery.

His fear is that theopaschitism is a trespasser on this sacred ground.

"It cannot be denied that theopaschitism in its consistent form has always in one way or another come into conflict with the witness of Scripture concerning Jesus Christ. Particularly does this happen when by way of the "God Himself" (or, in the older form the divine nature) the subjection of the Son of God to the Father is relativised or obscured."¹

If, as it has been shown (above P.192) that for Barth, God is truly revealed as God in His humiliation, and for Berkouwer this humiliation must be acknowledged but referred not to the glory of God but the subjection of the Son, then conflict is inevitable, and the grounds on which the battle is to be fought become clear — Is it more accurate theologically to speak of the mystery of the Incarnational humiliation as a revelation of the true nature of God as personal and passible or to refer the humiliation only to the Person of the Son and make subjection the controlling principle?

Berkouwer is convinced that, "When Barth speaks of the suffering of God and even of an "obedience of God" . . . he exceeds the boundaries of the revelation which we have in Christ."² There is a "no man's land" of which theology must beware or violence is done to the Person of the Godhead.

"The opposition to theopaschitism does not arise from the desire to separate the two natures of Christ but from the realisation of the uniqueness and unfathomableness of the union of the person to which there is no analogy. To conclude from this to a tension and an obedience to God Himself, to an "above" and a "below" in Him can only be characterised as speculation. However logical and obvious the theopaschitic conclusion may appear to be (is not Christ vere homo et vere Deus) it is an unacceptable conclusion. It wishes to introduce another dimension of

¹. ibid, p.303.
². ibid, p.304.
thought into the reflection of the Church than that with which we are confronted in the biblical revelation concerning the subjection of Jesus Christ to the Father as the Mediator between God and man.¹

Berkouwer finds within the Scriptures that principle of subjection which he maintains is appropriately related to the mystery of the union of Christ's person. It is more legitimately applied to the "unfathomable" mystery than theopaschitism on the basis of its appearance in certain biblical texts, to which his hermeneutical principles have been applied. Nevertheless for him the mystery remains incomprehensible. The application of the subjection principle seemingly does no damage to the sacred mystery which remains intact. But is the work of this subjected Person still that of the Son? Is He still the vere Deus capable of saving activity? If the Son suffers and the Father does not are they truly Father and Son?

The term mediatorship is then applied in order to provide a concept of Christ's Person appropriate to this development of theological thought. It is the Person of the Mediator that is harmed by theopaschitism.

"In concluding from the "vere Deus" to the "God Himself" it is not possible to escape falling into difficulties with respect to the biblical conception of the mediatorship of Christ. The subjectivity of God in the whole of Christ's suffering cannot but obscure that mediatorship."¹¹ . . . in this view of Christ's suffering it becomes difficult to understand that Christ was under the curse of the law that He endured the wrath of God, and that He was forsaken by God. These are realities which cannot be squared with the suffering of God in which He Himself is the subject of the suffering."²

That is to say the true personhood of the Son has been subsumed by the Father on the basis of the declaration that they both do the same work

1. ibid, p. 304.
2. ibid, p. 305.
of atonement, that is bearing the "curse" enduring the "wrath" and being "forsaken". The identity of the Mediator is swallowed up in the Person of the Father. The Trinity becomes, Father, Father and Holy Spirit and the need for the Mediator is lost. But if there is sufficient likeness between the Father and the Son to apply this relational term to them, then is it not possible for each to carry out a work complementary to the Other without losing His own personal identity? Certainly if the Father were in Himself impassible and so impersonal it would be impossible to declare Him to be the Father of a suffering and agonising Person. And if in that case a Father-Son relationship were affirmed, One or the Other would have to disown it, being in Himself completely antithetical to the Other. When suffering is attributed to the Father and to the Son it is the distinction between the two Persons which is of first importance. God existent and suffering as Father implies certain values to that suffering peculiar to His being as Father; God existent as incarnate Son determines the significance of that suffering. The distinction between the Persons is not automatically obscured when it is asserted that there is a fellowship of suffering between them.

To the mind of Berkouwer the subordination concept is the basis of the harmony within the Person of the Mediator.

"... harmony which exists between the deity of Christ and the Constitutio Mediatoris. ..."

"The essential element in this harmony is one of subordinatio of subjection. In the unfathomableness of this mystery it is revealed that He who is true and eternal God confronts us in the incarnation of the Word as the Servant of the Lord. The very incomprehensibleness of the mystery, however, forbids us to make it the point of departure for a series of conclusions in which the "God Himself" begins to function in determining the being of God, and that with special reference to His obedience and suffering. This goes beyond the confession of the deity of Christ and constitutes
an attempt to comprehend the incarnation."¹

God the Father and the Incarnate Word can exist as two Persons at the same instant because the Father is deity unsubordinated and the Word Incarnate is deity subordinated to the Father. This seems to be what Berkouwer is saying. If it is not stated in this way then according to him the mystery of the Incarnation is violated. We have therefore to do with two kinds of deity. The one while subordinate is yet a true revelation of the other. It is possible on the basis of the existence and suffering work of the Son to postulate that in Him deity is subordinate, subordinate in reference to that deity which is God Himself. The mystery surrounding the Incarnation is sufficiently limited to allow this perceptive observation to be made. But it is, according to Berkouwer, unacceptable to state anything about that deity which is not subordinate. It then becomes exceedingly difficult to say precisely what subordination means since the point of reference has been declared out of bounds. Even deity when it is subordinated to an unknowable becomes rather elusive.

Berkouwer attacks Barth’s concept of omnipotence which he feels is improperly influenced by the teaching that God Himself suffers

"... the idea of omnipotence, according to Barth cannot add something "new" to God, for this would mean a return to the concept of omnipotence as we find it in natural theology. It can do no more than circumscribe this powerlessness of God revealed in the cross."²

And he is quite right in his analysis.

"His majesty derives from the depth of the omnipotent mercy of God in which God Himself in His Son really gives Himself to man as His creature accepting and effecting solidarity with Him even to the bitter end."³

1. ibid, p.307.
2. ibid, p.308.
Berkouwer refutes this attempt to link the omnipotence of God with His suffering again on the basis that this "... conclusion drawn from the incarnation to "God" as subject of suffering and death obscures the scriptural witness to Jesus Christ."¹ He will not allow that the humiliation of Jesus Christ has any bearing whatsoever upon the omnipotence of God.

"Greatly though the depths of the humiliation of Christ revealed God's justice and His love, it is not possible to conclude from the "powerlessness" and the "death" in this humiliation to a "new" insight into God's omnipotence."²

Berkouwer turns away from a purely Christological interpretation of the omnipotence of God to the Bible where he discovers that,

"The Bible relates the power of God also to the divine act of raising Christ from the dead. And it speaks of the sovereignty and the power of God in connection with the will and command of God for the Son, of the sending of the Son and of the work that has been given Him to do, and of the Servant of the Lord, the Man of sorrows in whose life the good pleasure of God to bruise Him and put Him to grief was executed."³

According to this view God the Father is the active subject in the whole atoning event and Jesus Christ becomes the object of God's action. The distinction between the Father and the Son is very sharply drawn indeed, in fact so sharply that it might be asked if this Son could not have fulfilled his function as the object of God's wrath simply by being composite humanity. Just what function the divinity of the Son performs is open to question. The omnipotence of God becomes God's power to act against man, not to accomplish as man and on man's behalf his salvation.

2. ibid, p.309.
3. ibid, p.312.
Berkouwer feels that the relating of the humiliation to the omnipotence and exaltation of God is in error. He finds that Barth, "... does not deny the humiliation. On the contrary, it is the real, the essentially divine element, the honour, the greatness, the glory, the depth of God's being." Berkouwer steadfastly refuses to accept this. For him exaltation is not to be confused with humiliation. The exaltation was a separate event in a sequence preceded by humiliation. 

"... this glory of the incarnate Word nowhere in the New Testament leads to an obscuring of the decisive transition from humiliation to exaltation which took place at the resurrection." There is no glory in the cross; but in the resurrection the glory, and omnipotence of God are revealed. The danger here is that the body may be left in the tomb. So radical a break may be made between the humiliation and the exaltation that it may be forgotten that the power is in the hand of the Lamb who bears the marks of slaughter upon him (Revelations 5:6). Berkouwer demands a sign proving that God is not He Who He shows Himself to be on the cross and he finds that sign in the resurrection. But the God who is Himself the Saviour of men is that Saviour as the God-man, the exalted sufferer, and the effective Saviour just because as Incarnate He proved once and for all Who it is that God really is.

What is at stake in this discussion is the nature of the distinction between the Father and the Son. Jesus Christ is Godhead. He is Godhead as the Incarnate One, as the God-man. The Father is Godhead as spirit. They are of the same essence but equipped by their existence, each in

1. ibid, p.316.
2. ibid, p.315.
His own form to carry out specific functions. The Son reveals the Godhead by being born, suffering, dying and rising again. In order to accomplish this particular work which includes reconciliation, He became incarnate. It may be said, from out of the givenness of this situation that this was the only way in which God could accomplish His saving purposes. Nothing need be added to this work of His. It is fully complete and efficacious as it stands. No more weight need be given to His Person than to say that God is in Him. His existence need not be equated, indeed, dare not be equated with that of the Father in order to account for His peculiar accomplishment as Son. What He does as Son has its special value just because it is done as the Incarnate. His work is effective because it is the work of God in Him, but also because it is "in Him" who is also man. When He suffers He does so as the Incarnate Son, as the God-man. His suffering reveals God because God is in Him and it bears vitally upon the life of man because He is also man. What His suffering reveals about the essence of God is that Godhead is not impersonal or aloof but is passible, capable of entering into suffering. This must be said or Christ's Person and work denied. This means that in His own way the Father who is also a Person within the Trinity is possible. This is not to say that the Father suffered as the Saviour. There is no need to make that statement once it has been asserted that the Son has suffered to that end. Indeed to make such a statement would obscure the distinction between the Father and the Son by confusing their work. To say that the Father is possible is to say that He sent His Son, that the Son is the true expression of the Godhead which dwells in Him bodily and which is also the essence of the Father. If the Son in His suffering is a false image of Godhead
then it might be said that the Father is impassible. But if the Son shares the same essence as the Father, then the Father must be also possible. His suffering does manifestly not include the stress of birth from the womb, because He is not incarnate, nor for the same reason does it include the agony of torn tissues on a cross. His suffering is a different work because He is a different Person of the Trinity. His agony may well be the sending of His Son and His infinitely personal involvement with Him in His work, a sympathy which only pertains between members of the Godhead existing in so personal a communion. To centre suffering only in the Son is to isolate Him from the Godhead. It is to make Him the object of the actions of Godhead and eliminate His divinity existing along with His humanity as the active subject of His work. The Father and Son are distinct. The Father works according to His nature in sending His Son. The Son works according to His nature, being Incarnate, in the redemption of mankind. Both function as true expressions of the essence of the Godhead which they are. The Son suffers in the flesh as the Saviour. The Father "suffers" in the spirit in the sending of His Son.

Might it not be well to underline the fact that whatever pain might be related to the Godhead through the suffering of the Incarnate Son it is agony which stems from His existence as man? Is this pain not man's pain and only His until God makes it His own in Jesus Christ? Is it not true to say that the existence of God Himself in His trinitarian being is free from the kind of agony that man knows because of his rebellion against God and that the term pain is used in reference to God, in part at least because He, in His Son, has freely made man's pain His own, suffering it from our side, something which properly did not belong
to Him at all? Is it not therefore correct to speak of God as being impassible in the sense that when this suffering is made His own, by His very own act, He is not overwhelmed by it — i.e. whatever pain He suffers as Son does not triumph over His being as Son and whatever pain in compassion He experiences as Father in sending His Son does not disturb that peace of God which is true ἅθανασία, that impassibility which is God’s alone? And yet must it not be emphasized likewise that there is, reflected in the troubling or distress of Jesus (John 14: 27, Luke 19: 41), that vexation, grief and sorrow that abides in the heart of God because of man’s rebellion? Is it not because of God’s constancy, His consistency and His invariability in being love, and expressing it, His immutability in these terms, that He may be spoken of as suffering even in His being as Father — an agony which culminates in the sending of His Son? Must there not be this dual reference made when the pain of God is discussed in order that both His immutability and His impassibility be properly conceived?

The Lord of the Christian Church is the God-man Jesus Christ. How God could be associated with man under any circumstances was a problem with which early Christologists had to deal in terms of the relationship between the Father and the Son and then in terms of the relationship between the two natures in the Son. It has already been shown, within the limitations imposed by the mystery of the Person of Jesus Christ, how God Himself might be seen as present in the Son, and how suffering might be related to His Person with overtones for the Person of the Father and for the whole Godhead. But humanity is also present in the Person of Jesus Christ and it becomes necessary to specify as precisely as possible the terms of that humanity
incorporated into the Person of Jesus Christ. If it is a peculiar category of humanity specially suited for inclusion within His Person then there are unavoidable implications which throw shadows upon His work. For, if His work is accomplished in isolation from that human nature which is common to man, that leprous humanity which man has willed into existence and perpetuated, then there is no possibility of the human situation being altered by His efforts. If the humanity bound up in the Person of the Son is sinful humanity then what are the implications for His own Person? Does He too share in the sinful will of man? Though at first His humanity may not be recognised as a hazard to the full expression of His Person, it soon becomes evident that the task of identifying that humanity more accurately must be undertaken.

The New Testament is not, and perhaps does not intend to be uniform with regard to its emphasis on the Virgin Birth. Certain authors are more positive in the assertion of this doctrine than others. But the one point at which there is no room for uncertainty is that Jesus Christ was born. No New Testament author proposes some sort of spontaneous generation from inert matter or a genesis from a union of gods or god-like beings. Jesus Christ was nurtured prenaturally in the womb, thrust into existence by the labour of Mary and nourished to manhood in a family setting. Jesus of Nazareth is completely one with that parental stock from whose act of generation He sprang. "The fact that one human parent was involved certainly seems to imply that Jesus assumed the human nature that was linked, through heredity, with fallen mankind."¹ The question might quite legitimately be asked as to what

other human nature there is. If Jesus be declared to be human it must be in terms of solidarity with this common humanity for otherwise the term humanity loses its significance in its resultant contradiction.

The New Testament is likewise firm in its assertion that Jesus Christ does not shed this human nature which is His by birth. It must be observed again here that at His baptism He is not fleeing to a higher level of existence than that plane on which man lives but is declaring His firm solidarity with man. "The baptism of Jesus was not a personal cleansing from personal sin, but an affirmation of His real self-identification with humanity in its need, and His obedience to the call of God through the voice of the Baptist." Had Jesus possessed something other than that nature common to all men it is difficult to see how His temptation experience could have been real in any sense conveyed by the term temptation.

"... the acceptance of the hypothesis that Jesus possessed 'fallen human nature' gives fuller weight to the Temptation narrative. Jesus felt the full power of temptation because He shared our weakened nature that was affected by the rebellions of previous generations." Only because He had claimed sinful human nature as His own could He be said to have experienced temptation, for the existence and influence of the Tempter is limited to that realm enclosed within human nature where, by the rebellion of man, he has been given the possibility of actualising His being as Tempter. The narratives of the Baptism and the Temptation are only meaningful to faith in the light of Jesus Christ's solidarity with the only humanity this world knows, sinful humanity.

The Cross takes on its supreme significance because it is the place

1. ibid, p.49.
2. ibid, p.51
of execution of this One who is God and yet in the fullest solidarity with sinful mankind. Faith cannot avoid this disturbing but also salutary fact. Particularly in the cry of dereliction which burst from Jesus' lips is there support for the teaching that Jesus assumed fallen human nature. The cause of His forsakenness could scarcely be attributed to the fact of His generation by the Spirit, nor to His life of obedient Sonship to God. "... this cry of Jesus seems to demand that Jesus at that moment endured in His heart the alienation from God which was the direct outcome of sin and rebellion."¹ This cry was no mere ruse to delude the spectators but issued from the depths of His Person because at that very moment He was the one sinful man reaping a just reward on behalf of all sinful men. But the Cross of Jesus Christ is the Cross of Him who faith knows to be also the resurrected and exalted One. In Him sinful humanity was firmly established because He too was man. But in Him that humanity did not triumph. It was killed as it deserved to be. "In that struggle the 'fallen nature' which he had assumed was nailed to the Cross, purged and cleansed through death; thus in Jesus Christ, risen and victorious, there is a root of sinless humanity.² What was executed in the Son, on the Cross, was the sinful humanity which formed part of the Person of Jesus Christ. Sinful human nature is judged, sentenced and the supreme penalty carried out. Good Friday is indeed "good". Had He been "merely" divine that Friday would have been the blackest day of all for then God would have been forced to submit Himself to death with no ensuing benefit, in fact only portraying His own impotency where sin was concerned. Jesus Christ is God and

² ibid, p.62.
yet incorporates sinful human nature within His Person. It is this latter which deserves to die and does die and the new glorified Son of Man lives on having offered the sacrifice for all of the sins of fallen human nature, as well as becoming the wellspring of nurture on which humanity can now feed.

Cranfield discovers that the Epistles bear out, in interpretation, the significance of the events recorded in the Gospels.

"The New Testament bears witness to a condescension of ineffable graciousness, the descent of the Son of God from the glory which he had with His Father before the world was, to the very lowest depths of human suffering and shame. This downward movement, indicated in II Corinthians 8: 9 by the pregnant expression "became poor" and traced in more detail in Philippians 2: 6-8 in language strongly reminiscent of Isaiah 52: 13 — 53: 12, was a real and thorough-going self-identification with sinful men. The words "became flesh" mean that without ceasing to be God, He took upon Himself not a human nature uncorrupted by man's fall, but the self-same human nature that is ours, that is, a fallen human nature. It was with that altogether uncompromising material what Paul calls ἡμῶν τοῦ ἐμανθήσεως (Romans 8: 3) that He wrought out His perfect obedience to the Father being 'in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.'" (Hebrews 4: 15)

To compromise on the real humanity of Jesus Christ is to name him other than man in such a radical way that His life, death and resurrection are isolated events with no point of bearing in history and without effective significance for mankind. If Jesus Christ did not assume fallen human nature then the Incarnation is denied and the Incarnate One's work is without dynamic.

The question is bound to arise as to Jesus Christ's active, willing participation in the sin of mankind. When His solidarity with Man is so strongly emphasised the allegation may be made that He too was a sinner. It is true in one sense of the expression that He is a sinner

— even "the" sinner. "... divine benefit consists with merciless clarity in the hard thing that Jesus must and will allow Himself to be the one great sinner among all other men."¹ In making this declaration Barth appears to link His Name so directly with sin that the conclusion to His active participation would have to be drawn. This is not the purpose or intention. The statement is made in so striking a way in order that no mistake might be made concerning the salutary work of Jesus Christ which depends on this radical association of His Person with fallen human nature.

"God's Son not only assumed our nature but He entered the concrete form of our nature, under which we stand before God as men damned and lost. He did not produce and establish this form differently from all of us; though innocent He became guilty; though without sin He was made to be sin."²

The One who is so uncompromisingly linked with sinful human nature is also He who is without sin. He made no contribution whatsoever to the great flow of human sinfulness, by thought or act. In the midst of sin He was sinless. This astounding statement stands at the very centre of the Christian faith. The sin which was quite properly His He made to be His own, assuming to Himself the infirmities of man and dying burdened with this composite guilt.

The Church's teaching on the hypostatic union makes it possible to speak of the sinlessness of Jesus Christ and also of His sin bearing without being faced with hopeless contradiction. "The doctrine of anhypostasia safeguards the fact that the Priesthood and Sacrifice of Jesus are the work of God Himself. God is the Subject of the atoning

sacrifice and not man."¹ There is no possibility that His sacrifice could have been declared to be an act of God if it had been the deed of a guilty one. In His sinlessness He is a fit Person to be the subject of God’s activity. It is not possible to confuse His sinless humanity with any other. "Apart from the hypostatic union we can think of no humanity of Jesus."² Still this humanity which He has made His own must not be severed from all that the term humanity implies or another term must be found to assume its weight of meaning.

"... the doctrine of the enhypostasia safeguards the fact that in the assumptio carnis the priesthood and the sacrifice of Jesus are truly human, that within the hypostatic union the sacrifice of Christ is not only God’s own act of sacrifice, but is sacrifice offered to God on behalf of men by Jesus as man."³

He does not indeed He cannot do what He does as other than man for that is who and what he is.

"What the Son assumed into unity with Himself and His divine being was and is ... not merely "a man" but the humanum, the being and essence, the nature and kind, which is that of all men, which characterises them all as men and distinguishes them from other creatures."⁴

In the hypostatic union there is that which is in the most intimate solidarity with sinful human nature, the only known humanity. Nevertheless God is acting in that union, not fearing to risk His very Self in painful confrontation with man’s contradiction; in human form standing squarely in man’s place accepting the judgment due to him, suffering execution in his place and being resurrected to continued perfect obedience.

². ibid, p.157.
³. ibid, p.168.
That Jesus Christ suffers is not surprising because He too is a man. He is one of those Persons to whom suffering is due as the inevitable result of involvement in rebellious humanity. Suffering is not deferred in His case nor as God-man is He exempt from it. When He made humanity His own in the incarnation He took upon Himself the full implications of existence as man and though He Himself made no contribution to the sum of man's rebellion still, being one of them He was made to suffer. Being the Son of man, the entire legacy of human suffering is laid upon Him. The intolerable burden of God-forsakenness bears upon Him. His only escape would be to deny the reality of His Personhood, to disrupt His identity as the God-man by depending on supernatural powers for His own self-preservation. This He steadfastly refuses to do. He suffers; He dies in solidarity with sinful mankind. In Him all men suffer; all men die. Apart from His assumption of sinful humanity no such statement could be made. Nor of course could it be said that in Him all men have the promise of resurrection and new life. His work is effective because He brings the omnipotence of divinity to the task. But the soteriological task is only completed when divinity and sinful humanity are bound up in the Person of the Saviour; when no room is left for sinful humanity to manoeuvre in self-justification; when God Himself in His Son makes man's burden His own, suffering and dying in the place of man so that man may be set in the right on the basis of God's justification alone.
Suffering Humanity and Its Suffering God

Man suffered and he continues to suffer. Israel suffered and it continues to suffer. Christians suffer. God has come in the Person of the Son, has identified Himself fully and completely with mankind, and has entered into the arena of suffering. And still man's lot is full of agony. Men of all persuasions observe that pain and find it necessary to deal with it in their interpretation of life and its meaning. For some, humanity's pain is a fundamental deterrent to any acceptance of divine existence. Others look upon man's pain as the outworking of the personality of a vengeful punishing god, and seek, in cultic rites to appease their particular idol. But for those bound up in the Judaeo-Christian traditions the continuation of man's agony has other meaning. It is this significance that must be examined.

Jew and Christian would for the most part agree that man's agony is a direct result of his rebellion against God. God is holy and He is just and He is righteous. Any God who was not at least this much would be inferior even to those ideals which man, in his better moments, discerns and vainly attempts to approximate in his own behaviour. God must utter a No to man; not because that No was implicit in His creative act but because man has elected to offer a No of his own to God in answer to God's purpose that man should be "for God". Man has uttered his No to God and has elected to be only "for himself". This man, God opposes. This evil, God loathes. This answer of man's God must eliminate first by uttering His own No in the form of punishment which brings pain to man. God exercises His right of judgment. "Obviously the righteous God is like this and acts like this even in His mercy. He adjudges
guilt to the guilty and causes His deeds to recoil on his head."¹ His activity is expressive of His true and vital being. "In this clash God is and does what is worthy of Himself. This necessarily means condemnation and punishment where He finds disobedience, and pardon and reward where He finds the obedience of faith."² In and through the activity of God man receives precisely what is due to his own person as the one he has chosen to be. "What we have deserved and what we are worthy to receive in our intrinsic being and conduct is always and will always be the condemning and punishing operation of divine justice."³ Man offers his arrogant No to God and so he suffers as God's just contradiction of that No is kneaded into the existence of man.

Confronted by this No of God man was inclined to interpret the whole of God's being out of that negative. To some it seemed that His one and only word to man was No, "Thou shalt not". But others, graciously accorded more perceptive insight, were given to see and recognise the true identity of God. This revelation sprang out of the history of the chosen people of Israel as they suffered while held in covenant fellowship with their God. In the midst of personal and national agony the discovery of God's nature as love was made. "In the covenant relation of truth and love Israel had to suffer, for it shattered itself on the unswerving persistence of the divine purpose of love. Israel suffered inevitably from God, for God would not let His people go."⁴ However overwhelmingly painful Israel's encounter with God was, the whole of the covenant relationship could not be subsumed under this one category.

¹. K. Barth, Church Dogmatics, Vol. 2, No. 1, p.391.
². ibid, p.392.
³. ibid, p.393.
God was seen to be other than the One whose whole Person was exhausted in the afflicting of pain. He had a purpose for Israel beyond anything that could be interpreted as merely a rigid divine loyalty to some form of retributive justice. The conclusion was drawn that,

"He used the suffering and judgment of Israel to reveal the terrible nature of sin as contradiction to God's love and grace, to uncover the enmity of man, in his persistent self-will toward God in His self-giving. But transcending all, God used this nation in the ordeal of history and suffering to reveal His own infinite love and the undeflecting persistence of His will to bring forgiveness and reconciliation, until His love achieved its purpose of final union and communion of man with God in Jesus Christ."¹

Even men specifically chosen by God suffered; and in fact, it was through this seeming contradiction that the true personal nature of the covenant-making Yahweh was revealed. He utters a painful No; but it is a negative whose significance while concrete and real and painful to man is nevertheless transcended by His over-arching purpose of declaring Himself to be the God of grace who He truly is.

The distinctive mark burned into the history of Israel is the scar of suffering. Chosen but judged and painfully punished; this is the Israelite, this is the nation. But however dire the sufferings of Israel and however comparatively righteous the individual or nation, the agony of Israel is not that event by which God brings His saving purpose to an effective conclusion. For to have allowed the unquenchable fire of eternal judgment to rest even momentarily upon that people would have meant its extinction. They bore what they could bear while in His grace God withheld the full measure of His wrath. Not until the fullness of that wrath was actuated could fellowship be re-established between God and man. "The suffering of the Servant of the Lord, however, is only

¹ ibid, p.308.
a symbol of redemptive suffering, not redemptive suffering itself.\textsuperscript{1} In the agony of Israel the righteousness of God is revealed both in that He does judge sin and also in that judging He withholds that retribution which would fully exhaust His wrath. Only in the One who is both Israelite and God, man and God is there any possibility of the realisation of God's full expression of His radical antipathy to sin. Israel is not that God-man. ". . . suffering Israel, the suffering prophet, the suffering righteous man is not Christ."\textsuperscript{2} The suffering history of Israel is revelation. It is salvation history in the midst of suffering history. But it is not that event in which man endures the infliction of that penalty which is his due, nor in which filial obedience is wholly offered to God by man. Israel's suffering history is that preparation necessary to God's deed in Jesus Christ, the culmination of His saving activity. As such "... the pain of the "Servant of the Lord", is a symbol for the pain of God."\textsuperscript{3}

The sufferings of Israel do perform the function of revelation. God is only known as He who He is because of His activity in Israel. It is this that constitutes the benefits of that nation's agony. God is revealed as this One and no other and the sign points directly to the coming complete revelation in the Son.

"... God's fatherly disposition to this people is the prime and ultimate meaning of its history ... even the intention of the divine warning and punishment that dominate so powerfully the portrait presented by this history is fatherly ... even the purpose of the obscure dispensation of suffering falling blow after blow upon Job is fatherly."

"As the crucifixion of Jesus is a divine benefit in its association with His resurrection, so also is Israel's

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1} Kazoh Kitamori, op. cit., p.67.
\item \textsuperscript{2} K. Barth, Church Dogmatics, Vol. I, No. 2, p.89.
\item \textsuperscript{3} K. Kitamori, op. cit., p.67.
\end{itemize}
history of suffering in its association with the pre-
history of the God enacted within it.  

Had Israel in its peculiar existence not been manifested to the world
its God would have remained not only obscure but completely unknowable.
Only because Israel was the suffering yet covenant people is it possible
to understand the significance of God's act in Jesus Christ, the
Israelite without guile.

It is in Jesus Christ and in Him solely that God's definitive act
of salvation is at once begun and completed. The significance of the
Suffering Son has already been described. But its junction with the
agony of man may again be noted in more direct relation to what has
just been proposed with regard to Israel.

"What Jesus Christ suffered innocently was undoubtedly
the punishment of man handed over to himself by the wrath
of God, the judgment which man brings upon himself, and,
like Judas, must execute upon himself in his freedom to
continue in evil."  

In this act the wrath of God is fully and finally given expression.
Indeed there is no other possibility of it having been vented in the
past nor in the ensuing period without the destruction of humankind.
His sufferings are related to all mankind regardless of its divisions.

"Although He Himself was not evil, Jesus had to suffer
just what had to be suffered in the freedom to continue
in evil: the suffering of Israel given up to idolatry;
the suffering of the Gentiles given up to the lusts of
their own hearts: the suffering of Christians given up
to Satan."  

In Him is the crossroads of the peoples. No one passes into, through,
and out of time without being touched by Him. His suffering work bears
directly upon all of mankind. Whatever men do and experience must

2. ibid, p. 495.
3. ibid, p. 495.
finally be related to what Jesus Christ did and experienced in the course of His suffering work. Jews, unbelievers, Christians all now stand in the direct beam of light thrown upon them by His action in suffering. Do Jews suffer today? Their agony must be related to His. Is there suffering among the nations? His pain is the only reality that gives significance to their plight. Is there suffering in the Christian Church? The agony of its Lord is the sole applicable interpretative principle. As He enclosed all of humanity within His Person so now all of human experience including pain is to be observed only in vital connection with His pain.

"The meaning of illness and want, of mental and physical suffering of each individual, of war, hunger, tyranny and revolution in the life of peoples, of the winding sheet of death spread unceasingly over everything and everyone, is revealed in its true frightfulness only on Good Friday."¹

In Jesus Christ the ages-old question relating to the stinging experience of human suffering has been answered finally and fully. The answer presented in Him is not serviceable as a fully logical principle which can be systematically and uniformly applied in each and every individual case of human pain. Yet there is no human agony which occurs outside the purview of the meaning given by the suffering of Jesus Christ. Wherever and whenever there is pain it exists after the pain of Jesus Christ; after He has suffered decisively. No agony is possible that is not now related to His suffering. The answer given in Jesus Christ and which now determines what is stated about all suffering, is that by His suffering He has suffered for all. "The New Testament answer to the problem of suffering — and it alone is the answer to the sharply put query of the Old Testament — is to the effect that One has died for

¹ K. Barth, Church Dogmatics, Vol. 2, No. 1, p.395.
All that is implied in the negation of suffering is focussed in death. Jesus Christ has suffered and died. It is now true to say that all men have suffered and died. Whether they know it or not, in the midst of their agonies, confronted with death, all men have already suffered and have already died — in Him. The sharp pricks of their agonies may not be blunted but the knowledge and confession of this act of Christ's brings with it that power which transforms suffering. No explanation per se is given or indeed any longer needed. "The hope of personal sense and fulfilment lies neither in ignoring evil nor in explaining evil, but in the fact that Jesus Christ endured evil and emerged from evil." The mere explanation that would satisfy the intellect would be utterly useless in transforming the experience of suffering. To know the why does not ease the pain. But to know the immediate presence of an Other who has triumphed on one's behalf is to know not the reason but the victory. Whether they are aware of it or not, mankind, all of humankind, when they are stricken, agonise after the decisive event of Jesus Christ and so their sufferings are already caught up in His triumph.

Christians are aware of God's act in Jesus Christ and therefore believe that their own sufferings are not without meaning. Their pain is weighted with significance not because of the person of the sufferer but because of the Person of the One who has made their suffering His own possession. This distinction must be carefully maintained. For the sufferings of the Church, of comparatively good people, of "innocent" individuals, of pious persons is still not the redemptive

agony of Jesus Christ. The only Person equipped to accomplish this all-important task is Christ Himself.

"... you should also accustom yourself to distinguish carefully between the suffering of Christ and all other suffering and know that His is a heavenly suffering and ours is worldly, that His suffering accomplishes everything while ours does nothing except that we be conformed to Christ, and that therefore the suffering of Christ is the suffering of a lord, whereas ours is the suffering of a servant."¹

Whatever terms may be used to describe the relationship between the sufferings of Christians and those of Christ, — and there certainly is a real connecting element, — still it must be made unmistakably clear that only His sufferings are redemptive. The agony of the Church is not a repetition of His work. "There can be no question of identification with Him, of a repetition of His suffering and death."² Christian pain ",... must not be confused with the primary theologia crucis which is wholly and exclusively that of the cross of Jesus, but it cannot and must not be separated from it."³ The suffering of Christians is not another humiliation from which the same benefit is derived as from the divine condescension in Jesus Christ.

"... there can be no question of a new surrender of the Son of God and man into its (i.e. the world's) hands...
"... what Christians come to suffer at its (i.e. the world's) hands as affliction cannot be the great affliction which the world imposed on Him."⁴

No man or nation is equipped with that quality of personhood to be able to bear the punishment due to man without annihilation nor to offer that obedience due to God on behalf of man which effects reconciliation.

When Christians do suffer as bearers of the new life granted to them by

3. ibid, p.264.
their Lord they function in relationship with Him but not as He does. What then may safely be said in accurate description of Christian suffering? Every experience of the Church is meaningful in the light of its existence as the body of the faithful whose Head is Jesus Christ. Therefore when the Church is faithful to its calling it serves not itself but some One else. It ministers. In what sense is the suffering of the faithful a ministry in distinction from that one ministry completed in Jesus Christ?

"Thus though the ministry of the Church does not in any sense extend the ministry of Christ, and though the priesthood in the Church does not prolong His Priesthood, nevertheless the priesthood in the Church derives its form from the form of the Suffering Servant, and so the ministry of the Church goes back to the historical Jesus, not to extend His vicarious functions but to follow Him as disciples of the Son of Man."¹ The ministry of the Church in suffering is determined by the fact that it comes after that of Jesus Christ. It is part of the "following". The Church does not precede, progress simultaneously with, nor remain stationary in relation to its Lord. It follows after Him and its affliction is a significant ministry only in this context.

The distinction between the suffering ministry of Christians and that of Christ Himself may be further delineated by noting that Christian suffering is not undergone by believers as the objects of God's rejection. Though the antipathy of God toward man's sin is real and therefore demands expression, what is experienced by Christians is not the termination of communication and eternal setting apart that is implied in the term rejection. "We are not called to bear the suffering of rejection because God has taken this suffering upon Himself."² It is now utterly

¹ T.F. Torrance, Royal Priesthood, Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1955, p.84.
impossible for man to suffer rejection. God has made that right His own in Jesus Christ.

"He suffers this rejection not merely as a rejection by men but, fulfilled by men, as a rejection by God — the rejection which all others deserved and ought to have suffered, but which He bore in order that it should no more fall on them. Their cross does not mean that they still have to suffer God's rejection. This has been suffered already by Him (as their rejection). It can no longer be borne by them."  

The suffering of the person in whom the Spirit of God dwells may be excruciating and appear to be in excess of what might be his relative due, but it is never that rejection which Christ suffered.

At Golgotha Jesus Christ suffered that agony due to man's sin in the final and complete fulfilment of God's justice which is a vital part of His love and mercy. Therefore it does not remain to man to suffer pain in the same service of God. Christian suffering is not a re-enactment of Christ's agony. "... if their (Christians') elevation consists ultimately in the fact that they have to take up and carry their cross this is not a re-enactment of His crucifixion."  

It is not within the scope of man's being to function in this capacity, for he is always the one whose suffering is graciously reduced from that intensity which is really his due. Nor is Christian pain a repetition or re-presentation of the cross of Christ. Whatever the similarity between the sufferings of the body of Christ and Himself who is the Head the distinction remains. "Their cross corresponds to the death of Christ. It does this with supreme realism. But it does no more. It is not a repetition, or re-presentation, of the Cross of Christ."  

2. ibid, p. 600.
3. ibid, p. 601.
relationship between the suffering of Christians and that of Christ. Nevertheless His deed is just as unrepeatable as His Person and just as incapable of re-presentation by man whose unmediated presence before the face of God would result in his own eternal destruction. Other terms must be found to positively state the interaction between the sufferings of Jesus Christ and those of His followers.

In spite of the reservations needed to maintain the distinction between the sufferings of Christ and His followers there is a valid relationship. Christian suffering is borne as a witness to the suffering of Christ. "... he (i.e. the Christian) does suffer and has to do so, as a witness to the suffering of this One."¹ Christian pain becomes a sign of the agony of Jesus Christ. "This suffering of his (i.e. the Christian's) is suffering in reflection of and analogy to the suffering of the one man of Gethsemane and Golgotha."² The Church in agony is not the Saviour in pain, therefore its agony does not bear the same connotation as that of the one Person who did suffer effectively for the salvation of men. But in the Church's pain there is that significance which springs from the fact of Christ's unity with it and which establishes its agony in analogical relationship. Its pain is not His but His is not that of the whole of Him until it has been diffused throughout His Body. The pain in the body is thus related to His pain so that it cannot be experienced or observed without bringing His Person and work into immediate view.

Christian suffering is experienced "... under the shadow of His cross."³ Without that shadow there is the searing and all-consuming

2. ibid, p.637.
3. ibid, p.637.
ray of God's unmitigated judgment. Christians are able to abide in the shadow of His Cross because it is there that He filtered out the sting of death and suffering; that eternal agony which now no longer can fall on man, while in that shadow. "No man but Jesus has ever known the true breadth and depth, the true essence and darkness of human misery. What we see and note and know and more or less painfully experience is only the shadow of His cross touching us."¹ In this altered situation suffering no longer bears the same connotations as before. It cannot occur without pointing to the Person of Jesus Christ and His redemptive work. Suffering no longer points to God's No, His negation, but now to His Yes. Suffering in the shadow of Jesus Christ throws His eclipsing presence into sharp relief. This agony now occurs only as it is because of Him. Therefore its occurrence does not take place without revealing Him. To reveal Christ is to make known not only the suffering Servant but the risen Lord and so Christian pain now has overtones of life.

When Christians suffer, their agony points no longer to that eternal death decreed by God for rebellious man but rather to that new life, not possible but actual, which has been objectively conferred by Jesus Christ in His act as suffering Servant.

"By His own suffering He has characterised our suffering as a token of life and not of death, as a token of His friendship and not of His enmity, as a token which is meant to awaken and maintain and not to destroy our faith. It is the shadow of death under which our life now stands, the shadow of the eternal death which Jesus Christ has suffered for us all."

"It is the shadow of eternal death. We shall not have to drink this cup. And it is the shadow of the eternal death suffered by Jesus Christ... although it is a real and a serious shadow... it is the token of life, eternal life."²

Prominent in the message of the Church must be this profoundly disturbing

¹ K. Barth, Church Dogmatics, Vol. 4, No. 2, p.487.
² K. Barth, Church Dogmatics, Vol. 2, No. 1, p.420.
and inspiring Good News.

Barth employs the term "echo" in order to convey the distinction-in-relation between the sufferings of Jesus Christ and Christians.

"What they (i.e. Christians) suffer is not what Jesus suffered — the judgment of God on the man of unrighteousness..."

"This was suffered by Jesus for the whole world and therefore for them. They exist only... in the echo of His sentence, the shadow of His judgment, the after-pains of His rejection. In their cross they have only a small subsequent taste of what the world and they themselves deserved at the hand of God, and Jesus endured in all its frightfulness as their Head and in their place."\(^1\)

There is to be no confusion between the suffering of the Head and the Body and yet relationship cannot be denied. Without the initial saving note struck in the act of Jesus Christ there could be nothing but discordant noise in the clamour of man's agony and death. Since Jesus Christ, the jangling disturbance of human suffering has produced a resonant harmony when it occurs within the Christian community — His Body. The significance of this response is that it reproduces in the world that which directs men's attention to the decisive act accomplished on their behalf by Jesus Christ.

"What is still lacking to the afflictions of Christ as such can only be their echo in creation, their repetition and reproduction in the ministry of His disciples, to the extent that this could not manifest the life of Christ if they themselves were not men who were delivered up, who in the execution of their human commission had to suffer for them to whom it was addressed."\(^2\)

The suffering of Christians is a ministering, a serving. It is this because it points beyond its own transient and temporal and narrowly prescribed occurrence to the suffering of Jesus Christ. The Christian

community suffers in service to its proclamation of the Divine act.

"... the apostles can repeat and portray by their proclamation the act of the divine grace addressed to man: and... they can repeat and portray by their sufferings the act of the self-humiliation of God for the fulfillment of this grace — the second being a confirmation and attestation of the first."¹

Christian suffering does not minister to the purpose of God by being that "act of divine grace addressed to man" by which man is reconciled to God.

"It is not in any sense in realization of the mystery of reconciliation, which has been already and definitively realized, but in the service of the revelation of this mystery among the Gentiles that the apostle in and with his affliction fulfills the great affliction of Jesus Christ Himself."²

Christian suffering plays its part in attesting to the proclamation in which the Church announces the good news of what has already been accomplished through the Person and work of the suffering Son. Christian suffering is that which lends weight to the Church's proclamation of the saving event and is not to be confused with the event itself. The suffering of the Body becomes revelation when seen in proper relation to that of the Head.

The Church's suffering may also be described in terms of participation. On the basis of this principle of relationship the suffering of Christians is related to that of Christ. There is that kind of bond established between the Head and the Body which makes it possible to speak of the common possession of experience. "Through faith we are

¹ ibid, p.500, see also Merrill Proudfoot, Imitation or Realistic Participation, in Interpretation, Richmond: Union Theological Seminary, 1963, Vol. XVII, p.155.
so placed in relation to Jesus Christ that everything that is His becomes ours.\textsuperscript{1} Thus "The New Testament speaks as if in all that happened to Jesus Christ His people in every age have already been involved."\textsuperscript{2} There is a very valid sense therefore in which it is not only possible but essential to see and speak of Christian suffering as a participation in the agony of Jesus Christ. The sacramental manifestation of this fact is included in the rite of baptism. "He (i.e. the Christian) is brought into fellowship with Christ's sufferings at baptism."\textsuperscript{3} The life of suffering is directly related to the cross of Jesus Christ. It is participation in His agony. "The special fellowship of the Christian with Christ involves participation in the passion of His cross."\textsuperscript{4} Those who benefit from the sufferings of Jesus Christ in their place and are aware of their fellowship with Him, now experience their pain only as cruciform. In their cross they participate in the sufferings of Christ.

This participation is not meant to suggest that anything can or needs to be added to the work of Christ. His work has been fully completed "... so that it does not need to be augmented by their suffering or by any lesser Calvaries." "Nor is their suffering even the tiniest of contributions to the reconciliation of the world with God."\textsuperscript{5} The distinction is to be maintained even under the term participation.

"Between Christ and the Christian, His cross and ours, it is a matter

\textsuperscript{3} Merrill Proudfoot, op. cit., p. 151.
\textsuperscript{4} K. Barth, Church Dogmatics, Vol. 4, No. 2, p. 604.
\textsuperscript{5} ibid., p. 604.
of similarity in great dissimilarity."¹ In the similarity Christian suffering is participation and does in fact serve.

"His (i.e. the Christian's) cross points to the fulness and truth of that which he expects, and to which he hastens, as one who is sanctified in Jesus Christ. It points to God Himself, to His will for the world, to the future revelation of His majesty, to the glory in which His Lord already lives and reigns."²

Just as the Christian is not himself God, just so is his pain not God's, nor does it carry with its occurrence the significance of the Son's pain. But the Christian's agony is that which in this world since Jesus Christ now points beyond itself to God and so functions in His service. No one can see the Church in pain without being driven to ponder the agony of Jesus Christ and so to confront the Person of God as Jesus Christ reconciling the world to Himself.

Suffering also serves the Christian as a reminder of the futility of depending on his own resources. "Even if it consists only in an ordinary toothache, it will remind him of the limited nature of even his Christian existence, of his frailty and pettiness."³ Honestly confronting the reality of his own powerlessness the Christian is driven repeatedly to seek help outside of himself. "It will summon him to seek and find his salvation and God's glory and the power of his own service only in the place extra se from which they come to him and in which they alone have an unshakable foundation."⁴ Suffering also reminds the Christian that God is the source of corrective ministrations which serve to his ultimate benefit.

"... for the Christian it is also helpful to sanctification that he should accept the punishment which in some real if hidden sense comes in and with his cross. Jesus Himself has

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¹ ibid, p. 605.  
² ibid, p. 606.  
³ ibid, p. 607.  
⁴ ibid, p. 607.
borne the great punishment for him and for the whole world. But it is inevitable that in the following of Jesus all sorts of lesser punishments should have to be borne by the one who belongs to Him, and that he will have good reason to see and accept that these are just. It will certainly not be the sword which smites him — the sword of the wrath of God. But it will be the rod of His Fatherly love."

Though the entire word of God to man cannot be subsumed under the No of retributive punishment nevertheless there is a real and valid word addressed to him in his suffering which does warn and serve to alert the Christian to the fact that he is the proper object of divine displeasure, a wrath which has been fully actualised in Jesus Christ but a holy anger which nevertheless filters through to man as a Fatherly chastening.

The Christian by the very nature of his being as the one indwelt by the Spirit of Jesus Christ suffers as no other. He is subject to that "... pressure or affliction which he has to suffer as a Christian man, and which does not affect others, no matter how severely they may be afflicted in other respects." Nevertheless it is not this affliction which makes him a Christian, and he must be reminded of this fact lest he seek by his own suffering, or by an appeal to the agony of the saints, to draw down upon himself the grace of God which has already been poured out fully in the suffering of Christ. "It is not the affliction that makes him a Christian." Still, if the Christian is and remains faithful it is axiomatic that he will be subjected to suffering. "If he (i.e. the Christian) discharges his ministry of witness however, he cannot avoid disturbing those around, exerting upon them by his

1. ibid, p.608.
3. ibid, p.615.
witness a pressure to which they can and will react with counterpressure."

"If the ministry of witness is the primary determination of Christian existence and if the ministry of witness unavoidably brings the Christian into affliction then we have to say none can be a Christian without falling into affliction."\(^1\)

If the Christian finds that his environment is not oppressive then he has good cause for self-interrogation to determine whether in fact he has kept the faith. What makes the Christian the butt of so much antipathy is the fact that he stands in his ministry for the free grace of God which is intensely disliked by men. "The freedom of grace which is always at issue necessarily makes those who proclaim it unsympathetic, unsettling, uncomfortable and therefore basically odious to men."\(^2\)

What man insists upon is the right to arrogate to himself his own means of salvation. A declaration of the free grace of God strikes at the very heart of his assumed self-sufficiency. His first response is to strike back and the Christian becomes the object of his recriminations.

All of this is quite unavoidable for the faithful Christian. He "... cannot evade it by ceasing to be a witness ... since this would be a denial or renunciation of his vocation ... forfeiture of the personal knowledge, experience, and assurance of salvation which distinguish him from other men."\(^3\) Should he elect to exchange his surroundings for a new environment there too he would be subjected to affliction. He "... cannot escape by changing his situation in accordance with circumstances ... it would only break out afresh in the new situation and surroundings."\(^5\) In spite of all this there is the most powerful consolation possible available for the Christian. For in the presence

1. ibid, p.617.
2. ibid, p.618.
3. ibid, p.628.
4. ibid, p.626.
5. ibid, p.626.
of affliction he recognises the hallmark of the presence of Christ. "The first and last and true basis of the affliction of the Christian is Jesus Christ Himself, His fellowship with the Christian and the fellowship of the Christian with Him." Only this faith can bring the Christian comfort even in the midst of his agony. The profound truth illustrated in the Christian experience of suffering is nothing less than the concrete outworking of the implications of the Incarnation in which God and man are once-and-for-all established in an unbreakable bond of relationship.

One of the most startling events of contemporary times has been the suffering of Jews. No treatment of the suffering of humanity could ever be complete without attempting an interpretation of the pain of the Jewish people. It might seem at first that the event of the Incarnation and the subsequent work of the Incarnate One has no relation to the Jews since it was Jewish rejection of Jesus Christ that brought about His death on the cross. It might appear that the Jewish nation by its own will and activity has established an insurmountable barrier between itself and God. But this is not the case. Nowhere does Jesus reject His manhood nor renounce His relationship with His people. His is not the voice that is raised in protest against the title identifying Him as the King of the Jews which was placed on His cross. The Jews themselves were the source of the complaint. They were the ones who wanted to be disengaged from Him. God refused to break His covenant with His people or to allow them to shatter it. Israel cannot avoid being Israel and thus cannot possibly dissociate themselves from this One Israelite. It is therefore in the light of His suffering that their subsequent

1. ibid, p.634.
pain must be viewed. Their agony since Golgotha can only be regarded out of the whole complex of meaning attached to all of man’s pain by the cross of Christ and specifically out of the pre-history of Israel in covenant fellowship with their God.

Throughout the history of Israel prior to the Incarnation God sought to reveal Himself to Israel. By every means available short of battering the mind of Israel into senseless submission God attempted to make His gracious self known. But Israel refused to allow Him to be that gracious self and repeatedly turned to idols fabricated to suit the people’s desire of retaining their own ultimate means of salvation for themselves. Israel refused to acknowledge the true personhood of Yahweh and to identify Him according to the clear revelation of His Person made through His activity in their history. In the absence of an obedient covenant faith Israel became subject to God’s activity, sometimes painful, designed to enlighten their dimmed perception.

"Not only in the era of the Old Testament but also in the era of the New Testament, Israel had to undergo an ordeal of unparalleled suffering and rejection — and no doubt it is through that ordeal that Israel is to recover its sight."

In Jesus Christ God has fully and finally revealed Himself in such intimate relation with man that His identity cannot be denied. He is Who Jesus Christ is. And Jesus Christ is the God-man in whom He is also at one and the same time the God-Israel. Therefore Israel cannot evade confrontation with the true personhood of God. They may still refuse to acknowledge Him in stiff-necked resistance but this cannot alter the fact that He is now revealed. He is manifested as the One who, in solidarity with man, bears absolutely the punishment due to man

while at the same time offering to God full and free obedience on behalf of all men including Israel. In spite of the part Israel played in the rejection and crucifixion of Jesus Christ they do not suffer today that punishment which is due them. It is no longer, indeed it never was, possible for them to endure it. "He and not Israel is also the One who really suffers in all that the Jews of today have to endure."¹ The revelation of God is made absolute in the act by which He identifies Himself as the One who takes Israel's suffering upon Himself. That agony inflicted upon Israel because of its will to blindness is still not that pain which would suffice for the effective removal of its sin. However intense Israel's suffering, it is still not that crushing, annihilating, destruction due to a stiff-necked people. This has been borne already by God in His Son in the service of enlightening His people and leading them to confess the true identity of God revealed in His Son.

Jewry may persist in its rejection of Jesus Christ, and does to this very day. However that is not to say that they do not bear a powerful witness to Him.

"... what Israel undergoes up to the present time is undergone as an echo and aftermath of what the heathen long ago did to the Messiah of Israel and had to do as instruments of God, as an echo and aftermath of the one real outbreak, smiting and slaying, of the divine wrath of Golgotha."²

When Jews suffer they invariably declare and proclaim Jesus Christ. It is surely unwillingly and perhaps unconsciously that they speak their word; but nevertheless they do communicate. Since the Cross of Christ Israel's agony is inextricably bound up with His pain. Not in the sense

¹. K. Barth, Church Dogmatics, Vol. 2, No. 1, p.395.
². ibid, p.396.
that Israel actively cooperates in effecting man's redemption but in
that their suffering points back directly to that agony which was truly
redemptive — to Jesus Christ. Prior to the Incarnation no Jew suffered
but that the coming of Jesus Christ was implicit in his pain. Since
Jesus Christ, no Jew suffers but that the Messiah is again called
vividly to mind. When the nations take up their cudgels and aim blows
at the Jews they preach "Jesus Christ and Him crucified."

Is it possible to make statements of this kind in the light of
the previously unheard-of suffering inflicted on the Jews by the Fascist
dictatorships in this age? Are Dachau and Spandau and Auschwitz really
housetops from which God's word is shouted? Are these horrors of anti-
Semitic oppression part of a random expression of the hopeless tangle
of man's good and evil or is there meaning wrapped up in them? On the
basis of the Person and work of Jesus Christ Ulrich Simon declares that
even Auschwitz is rescued from being a meaningless occurrence.

"He (i.e. Jesus Christ) neither was nor is partner of the
human condition only, but rather he has taken and takes the
human condition into his divinity. Our humanity depends on
the divinity of the Incarnate Lord as the assurance of the
meaningfulness of the meaningless. Without the God-man
Auschwitz would stand as a nightmare, the culmination of
unreason and malice. Owing to His divine status alone
there is no suffering which remains outside the orbit of
meaning mediated by him . . ."1

The victims were not Christians but Jews. Still their suffering is
rescued from a meaningless void by the fact that it is an echo and an
aftermath of the sufferings of Jesus Christ. There is profound
significance in the suffering of Jews in the twentieth century because
their pain cannot be divorced finally from the suffering of Jesus Christ.

Though neither inflicter nor inflicted may purpose that witness be given to Him, nevertheless the echo is in perfect relation to the initial Word and magnifies it so that it resounds for all to hear. Israel suffered. Israel suffers. God's purpose of reconciliation is served. His work accomplished in Jesus Christ is given lively proclamation. The Suffering Servant suffers and serves.

In spite of their long history of suffering and the revelation of God accomplished through it, many Jews can find no place for this agony in their self understanding and their concept of God.

"The Jews have suffered indeed, suffered as no nation has ever done for so long a period or so intensively. And yet many American Jews today possess no clue whatsoever to this monstrous suffering . . . and cannot build a theodicy for themselves into which suffering can be fitted."1

To mis-identify the Messiah is to utterly fail to comprehend even in the limited way open to the human mind, the aim and accomplishment of God in Jesus Christ. If Jesus Christ is not really the Messiah then of course suffering reverts to mere punishment and God Himself is seen only in His negative expression. The rejection of Jesus Christ as Messiah falsifies revelation and God in His true identity remains quite unknown and unknowable. Nevertheless Israel continues to exist. God has not chosen to name the nation anything but His own. Even in this way, or perhaps manifestly in this way God uses Israel to indicate His word.

"The last two thousand years of dispersion present a nightmare of suffering and humiliation never equaled in history. By all the laws of reason this people ought either to have disintegrated and disappeared or else sunk to the levels of pariahs. Instead they have emerged unbroken in spirit, conscious of their dignity, and with a sense of mission and purpose."2

2. ibid, p.89.
Israel lives on in vigorous self assertion. This intensity of existence is not yet the result of their acknowledgement of God as the suffering Son. But it is concrete evidence that God, in His grace, still preserves His people who reject His grace, waiting with infinite patience for them to turn and accept His gracious justification. In the meantime their agonies both present and menacing bear mute witness to the cross of Jesus Christ.

Man's experience of suffering is not exhausted by a consideration of the pain undergone by Christians and Jews. Though the agonies of unbelievers may not possess the same significance, or be as directly expressive of God's word as are those of Christians and Jews, nevertheless, since Jesus Christ no suffering occurs which does not have a reflective reference in Him. "The afflictions of Israel, the Church, the world and ourselves are all announcements and echoes of the reality of divine judgment." Even recalcitrant, incorrigible unbelievers who insist on reserving to themselves the right of determining their own destiny suffer "after" Jesus Christ. In His sinful humanity nailed to death on the cross these unbelievers, along with all other sinners, Christians and Jews, have already died that eternal death which was due to them. This may not have been announced to them, or it may have been arrogantly rejected; but nevertheless it has objectively and finally happened. The unbeliever has also been determined for salvation. He can no longer bear that judgment universally due to man because God has made that pain His own possession. "The divine judgment itself in its reality is only what happened at Golgotha. But it did really happen there." However much the unbeliever may be repulsed by the idea that

2. ibid, p. 406.
his strength is truly in the weakness of Christ, and may wish to bear his own burden and effect his own salvation and thus escape the obligation to obedient faith that comes along with the acknowledgement of Christ's gracious work on his behalf, still he is bound to fail in the end because there is in fact no longer anything remaining to be done. Not even the most frenzied piety can accomplish a task the doing of which has already been completed.

"Their (i.e. godless men) concern is still the suffering of the existence which they have prepared for themselves by their godlessness (in the shadow of which the One has suffered for them) — and it is bitter enough to have to suffer this existence. Their concern is still to be aware of the threat of their rejection. But it cannot now be their concern to suffer the execution of this threat, to suffer the eternal damnation which their godlessness deserves." 1

"...because it has already been taken away by the eternally decreed offering of the Son of God to suffer in place of the godless, and cannot any longer be their goal." 1

Not even the satisfaction of suffering effectively is left to the unbeliever. The severity of his pain dims to non-reality in the shadow of the sufferings of Jesus Christ and becomes merely the token of that real rejection which now belongs only to Christ, a token which cannot fail finally to point away from the unbelieving sufferer and directly toward Jesus Christ. The pain experienced by unbelievers becomes in itself a negative witness to Jesus Christ. They experience their agony as participation in rejection, but in that rejection which has already been fully actualised. "In their sinning, and in their suffering as sinners, they can only be arrogant and yet reluctant participants in the rejection which He has averted from them by taking it upon Himself in the consummation of His election." 2 The unbeliever

2. ibid, p.352.
may have no wish at all to be associated with Jesus Christ; and he may go to great lengths to demonstrate that fact. Nevertheless his pain is still that of rejection, a rejection which is not his own but the property of someone else. Quite unavoidably and inextricably even the suffering of unbelievers is concrete witness, though unwilling ministry to the Person and work of Jesus Christ.

What unbelievers are either ignorant of, or unwilling to acknowledge, is the Person and work of Jesus Christ. They have not assimilated the truth that "He is the Son of God who transmuted the cross not only by what He did and suffered but also because He was what He is: God."¹ Since they fail to understand God in these terms as given in the Person of Jesus Christ "... unbelievers do not recognize their pain as a symbol of the pain of God; the fiercer their pain, the greater their estrangement, to the point of their complete separation."² But their agony provides that very point of contact needful between their experience and that of believers. For "Believers, though they have already been freed from the wrath of God, must share the pain of unbelievers, and thus help them to accept their pain as a symbol for God's pain in order to be united with God."³ It is possible for the unbeliever to see a link between his own suffering and that of his fellow human, the believer, for they are both partakers of the human condition. Through the agony of the believer the unbeliever may be pointed directly to the truly redemptive suffering of Jesus Christ and so find that knowledge and experience in which he too can triumph in the midst of pain.

3. ibid, p.62.
This solidarity in suffering operates in the service of the believer as well, for in his agony even the unbeliever ministers.

"... his benefaction to us as a suffering fellow-creature in need of help consists in the fact that even in his misery he shows us the true humanity of Jesus Christ, that humanity which was not triumphant but submissive, not healthy and strong, but characterised by the bearing of our sins, which was therefore flesh of our flesh — the flesh abandoned to punishment, suffering and death. Our fellow-man in his oppression, shame and torment confronts us with the poverty, the homelessness, the scars, the corpse at the grave of Jesus Christ."¹

For Jesus Christ, in order to redeem man from his misery, Himself became just exactly what the unbeliever truly is in the depths of his agony.

"For the sake of this misery, in His faithful actualisation, He became poor and homeless, tormented, dead and buried. What Isaiah 53 says of the suffering Servant of God is true at any level of any man so far as it simply speaks of his suffering."²

There is that real solidarity between Jesus Christ and the most miserable of humanity because God in Jesus Christ has elected to descend to the very depths of human nature. There, in the depths, man's suffering becomes a pointer to Jesus Christ by the very intensity of the shared misery. "... in recognising my neighbour in my fellow-man, I am actually placed before Christ."³ In the midst of human misery there is no direction which may be investigated but that Jesus Christ is found since he too was there. Moreover, the suffering unbeliever serves as a mirror to reveal the true identity of the believer. "The wretched fellow-man beside me simply reveals to me in his existence my own misery." "The neighbour shows me that I myself am a sinner."⁴

² ibid, p.429.
³ ibid, p.429.
⁴ ibid, p.43/.
insight leads to the recognition that there is a bond of fellowship between the believer and the unbeliever.

"He shows me that there is a fellowship of sin and misery: a place where it is concretely true between us men that we cannot accuse each other; that we cannot claim any advantages, any superiority or superior position; that we all have to claim our common bankruptcy."¹

But man is not left contemplating only the miry bottom of the pit in which he finds himself and his companions.

"... when I see myself placed with a fellow-man in this fellowship the fellowship of sin and misery, I can hardly help understanding it as at least a pointer to the fellowship of grace and forgiveness and so taking it quite seriously for that reason."²

There is hope for the "fellowship of sin and misery" when by his witness the believer does point the way upward. "...I shall not speak to him of myself but of Jesus Christ: of Jesus Christ as Helper who is the end of this process, of Jesus Christ as life in death and beyond death."³

This word spoken by the believer will carry its own authority when it is spoken by one who speaks "... not only as a fellow-sufferer ... but as one who knows where help is to be found: knows because I have already been actually helped in Jesus Christ in respect of my own suffering."⁴ Jesus Christ has made man's misery His own, all of his suffering, that of the believer and the unbeliever. In Jesus Christ, in misery, they are one. But the misery is that which has been tempered by the presence of Jesus Christ in its very depths. It is now misery in which He is encountered and the unbeliever and the believer are enabled to mutual service in that fellowship.

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1. ibid, p.436.
2. ibid, p.436.
3. ibid, p.444.
4. ibid, p.445.
The advent of Jesus Christ and His concrete participation in human existence has determined the significance of human suffering whether it be the pain of the Jew, the Christian or the unbeliever. His descent to plumb the depths of human misery has created a fellowship between Him and all men at the point which is the lowest common denominator of all humanity, i.e. suffering and death. No man passes by without entering and moving through this space already occupied by Jesus Christ. Therefore at this point, if only and finally here, all do contact Him. Thus it is possible for all to see in their solidarity in suffering the One who Himself has transmuted the experience into one of triumph, not by ignoring this valid negation of human existence, but by eliminating the cause of the misery — that is man's alienation from God. This, done by Jesus Christ, and acknowledged by man, serves to the victory of suffering right in its throes as countless saints in the history of the Church are able to witness. Men still suffer, but no longer in solitary confinement, and their Companion in suffering enables them to bear the pangs without being destroyed, indeed enables them to suffer while at the same time living a positively new and triumphant life.
From Presupposition to Discovery

This work was begun with certain presuppositions. First it was assumed that there is in existence a certain group of persons who might be classified by the term "men in whom the Spirit of God dwells". Frankly the concept was put forward unexamined. There simply appears to be a category of individuals related to the Judaeo-Christian tradition who have been granted certain insights into the existence and nature of God and who express these ideas by making use of certain terminology. The existence of this group of individuals and their tools of expression were taken as a part of the given to be examined. Secondly it was assumed that these persons individually and collectively were and are convinced of the goodness of God. Here again the term goodness was not narrowly defined. Its meaning remains open-ended, to be given content as the work proceeds. But the presupposition was frankly made that this belief in the goodness of God, at the very least implied His desire for the well-being of man and not his painful annihilation. In other words the assumption was made that within the thought of the persons so related to God, He is of One mind and that to the ultimate benefit of man. Again this became a part of the given on which the study was to proceed. Thirdly it was presumed that the existence of this group of persons in a world fraught with suffering and pain produces within them a kind of distress which is peculiar to them. This agony arises from their unshakable faith in the goodness of God, the unity of His being; and this, faced with suffering sometimes apparently arbitrarily distributed. To be this person and to suffer produces a unique kind of agony in which a real part of
the pain lies in the fact that the very existence in relation to God is
thrown into question by the doubt introduced as to the nature and identi-
ty of God and so His purposes. And fourthly it was argued that this
unique kind of suffering could not be dealt with purely by a rational
process leading to understanding or logical expression since no logical
system which conforms to the presupposition of God's goodness appears to
be adequate in every respect. Fifthly it was assumed that in spite of
the painful predicament of the persons in whom the spirit of God dwells,
something has been accomplished for them or on their behalf. An event
has taken place in association with the person of Jesus Christ which
enables believers to not only endure in the midst of their heightened
affliction but also to minister to others. The mentality exemplified
in these presuppositions is not at all uncommon to the Christian mind
and seems to be supported by a phenomenal observation of Christian lives
and expressions.

The outcome was not anticipated from the beginning by any means.
In fact the change in title from "Suffering in Israel and the Church"
to "Jesus Christ in Human Suffering" directly reflects the shift of
emphasis which gradually took place. I, apparently no more than a varie-
ty of other confessors of the Christian faith, was aware of the richness
of content that should be included in the terms "person in whom the Spirit
of God dwells", "goodness of God", and the accomplishment by God on be-
half of suffering humanity. Whatever clarifications have emerged from
the body of the work have become for me a vital part of the good news.

The concept of the goodness of God was enriched by reflection on
the scriptures dealing with creation. The unalloyed goodness of the
creation, as asserted by men who were bound to see one God as the source
of all events, pointed directly to the nature of the creator God. Being monotheists these men had to struggle with the existence of suffering in this world conceived and created by this God. In this world they suffered. Could there be other gods who were the source of this suffering? No. Is the one God also the creator of evil? No. His creation is good. In fact there is no way open to man by which he can approach creation apart from accepting it in its givenness. God has created this particular world and no other and because it is His work and His possession it is good. His goodness also includes the creation of man in His own image, free for fellowship with his Creator and free for dominion over the creation. God's goodness is again upheld, for in creating man in this way He has endowed him with the most powerful motive to obedience possible, that of graciously given fellowship with his Creator. Even the prohibitions put upon man are evidence of God's gracious guarding of man's fellowship with him, a communion without which man cannot abide at peace with his God, himself, or his created environment. In this way the given goodness of God is guarded at the very outset against speculative questions which might ask "Why did God create this kind of world, this kind of man, if, being omniscient, He knew man would later fall out of this holy fellowship?" or "From where does evil stem?" It is an unacceptable process of reasoning to move back from the present compromised situation to alter the givenness of God.

The concept of man was also greatly enriched by these early reflections both positively and negatively. For man there could be no higher blessing or state than being in the image of God, created free to fellowship with Him. Nothing more needed to be added by way of experience or knowledge for him to be the complete being God intended and so to
function as He planned. This man could have the fullest possible confidence in himself and his God simply because his God fully affirmed him as His own free creature, free to exist in loving obedience to his God. But man for no accountable reason mistakes his confidence in his God for a self-confidence and quite irrationally and illogically makes room in his thought for doubt about the identity of God. Having sowed this seed of uncertainty he loses sight of the true nature of the One to whom he was meant to be obedient and thus begins to act in obedience to his own idols which reflect the now diseased being which he has allowed himself to become. The responsibility for this situation lies entirely upon man and once he has named himself as disobedient he is incapable of altering his own identity. Living now in doubt of the true identity of God and therefore in fear of who He might prove to be and what action He might take, for man, the very processes of life become agony. His existence must now be negated by God instead of being fully affirmed. Man comes into painful collision with the rest of obedient creation because he has chosen the track of disobedience. And yet man remains the object of God’s grace for were that withdrawn man’s very existence would terminate and the annihilation due to him executed. The goodness of God is reflected in this continued grace and the "men in whom the Spirit of God dwells" must at least be one with all other men whose evil nature is evident.

It is not surprising that man, now uncertain of the identity of God and so the reality of His goodness, should leap to the conclusion that His gracious restrictions, with their promise of retribution, now reveal the identity of God in full. To such men God is only He who inflicts punishment on those who disobey and rewards those who are obedient. Where this inflexible rule is apparently contravened by observable dis-
continuities, suffering may be interpreted as mysterious divine instruction or example. Nothing about the goodness of God or radical evil of man precludes the possibility of suffering falling into these very categories. But where the Spirit of God does indeed dwell, there, there is no easy evasion of God's relentless grace. His Person and activity may not be wholly subsumed under the categories of punishment of evil and reward to goodness. He is more than this or no man would survive. God chooses to encounter man face-to-face, so Job discovered, person-to-person, right in the midst of that peculiar pain in which the chosen man of God must exist while he fights off the compulsion to identify the goodness of God only in the wooden terms of retributive justice. The result of such face-to-face encounter is the revelation of the true nature of God as grace, infinitely capacious, and capable of including the person who is one with all other evil men; the person whose only merit is that he refuses to name any other ground for fellowship with God than confrontation with Him and then is amazed by His grace.

In this way, for me, content began to accumulate in the categories, goodness of God and nature of man, even those individuals made recipients of His Spirit.

Further research brought to light the fact that an impasse had been reached at which even men chosen to be recipients of God's spirit could not seem to penetrate beyond a wooden application of the observed rule of God's retributive justice. Prophetic voices were repeatedly raised in harsh warning against disobedience. The people heard. They continued in rebellion against God. The promised painful retribution fell with searing agony. A new restorative act of God preserved the chosen ones. But again, in spite of clear warning they fell into disobedience. A
whole history of such rhythmic events recounted in minute detail did not seem to deter the people from further rebellion. Even the most sensitive spirits were driven to the conclusion that a healing of the breach which man had opened between himself and God could only be accomplished by an act of God Himself in which He would re-affirm His relationship with man in a way which man could not avoid. God would have to take action to effect that which no repentance of man had been capable of bringing about. It was the confidence of these persons that God would so act. He had in the past, in His goodness, accorded them His very presence by coming to them and meeting with their representatives. His presence had meant His guidance and His blessing of rulership in their midst, in their camp, and later in their capital city in a house built for Him. But in exile, while the people suffered, they discovered that He came in their midst there as well. He did not shrink from encounter with a downcast and downtrodden nation. His goodness extended to this degree, that in His glory He came to a needy, if rebellious and chastened people. What would He do finally in order to fully express His gracious goodness and effect a reconciliation with His people?

One person in whom the Spirit of God dwelt with unique strength was led to the observation that God would send a servant to His people. The cause of God expressed in this servant would certainly triumph. But the mode of this victory would be surprising in that he would win out not by an expression of might in terms of political influence or military power or even persuasive oratory but rather by taking upon himself the suffering of man. He would interpose himself at the very crux of man's relationship with God; that point at which men not only suffer the blows due to them because of their being at cross purposes with God and His
creation, but also at that place where exists that peculiar suffering of Spirit-filled men who refuse to deny the right of God to be gracious and yet experience inordinate agony. This servant would reach man at his very lowest, the grave and take even that final pain of man upon himself to his healing. The suffering of the righteous, long recognised to have great value in the traditions of this people points toward this coming servant who would finally be completely effective in re-establishing that peace in which man would know the true identity of his God as he is himself known by God. So rich is the content which may be invested in the goodness of God and so deep is the need of even the man in whom the Spirit of God dwells.

The insights of these early inspired thinkers proved to be true if in a most unexpected way. In due time a man appeared. One not unlike others — born, nourished, tutored, occupied at a productive task. A man He was born and would never cease to be. But He was born of that parentage and stock which had as its background these earlier traditional insights with regard to the nature of man and the goodness of God; this people which saw itself as a chosen son to God, under the obligation of loving obedience to Him but ever and again unfaithful to that privileged duty. As one of them He might effect on their behalf what they had consistently failed to do; that is to offer filial obedience. Indeed, apart from being one of them His activity would have no consequences for them. He willingly declared His solidarity with His people in appropriate public religious ceremony and named Himself one of the sinful throng who sought relationship with God in the coming of His Kingdom. Having thus declared Himself He was immediately forced to declare in word and life His own personal understanding of the nature of God.
There had been fragmentary evidence from the moment of His conception pointing toward a unique quality of being that was to be His in relationship to God. Through the questioning of this identity the nature of God is thrown open to doubt. This Man however persisted in faithful confession by teaching and deed. He was constant in His refusal to deny either His solidarity with very ordinary man by claiming certain privileges, or His unique personhood which came to be increasingly evident in His miraculous deeds, by serving any other ends than those of God; ends whose accomplishment led through strange, undesirable and untrodden ways. Some few men caught glimpses of divinity in Him and confessed it. The way was prepared for Him to finally and definitively reveal fully the content appropriate to the name of God. For mankind, His appearance marks a point of division in time from which all preceding and succeeding events derive their significance.

The path of this Man lay through suffering. Since He was a man this is not in the least surprising. He would have to cling to that belief in the grace of God that bore down with such intense pain when, through a succession of events, it would appear that God had utterly forsaken Him and God's own cause vested in Him. He would have to live to that point of human incapacity where only God His Father could be of any help, that point which is death itself. And even at this point He would not dare to renounce His agony by an act of sheer deliverance perfectly possible for Him, or He would be abdicating that very experience of pain and death to which every man is finally reduced; the point at which He must have the fullest possible communion with mankind. The pain and death He must make His own because it properly belongs to all those with whom He has made Himself one in baptism. As a Man He must offer that perfect
trust in God His Father that evidences an unshakable faith in God's limitless grace, that is more than retributive judgment. And yet, as more than man, as Son of God He must Himself bear to fulfilment that punishment which is due to man for his collective sin. No other man could bear this burden without annihilation. But this man in whom divinity dwelt, proved capable of bearing that crushing load, and the proof is in His resurrection and the Spirit shed abroad into the community of His followers. In Him the man deserving death is executed. In Him the man undeserving of life is granted vitality. The reason for this wholly unexpected and salutary outcome is the presence of God in this man. God, in Him, has claimed the whole of man's experience for His own, including suffering and death. They no longer are the possession of man. In Him One has suffered for all, died for all, and granted life to all. This objective act has taken place. It cannot be reversed or undone. Once and for all the true identity of God in its most mysterious depths has been made known — He is whom man encounters in Jesus Christ. No greater discovery than this is necessary or can be made by the person who seeks illumination on the human experience of pain. This is how God chooses to deal with man. This is how God elects to heal that irrational illogical gap opened up by the act of man, between himself and God. This discovery with all of its implications for suffering marks the high point of my experience.

It remained for the Church to abide faithful and proclaim the true personal identity of Jesus Christ along with His recorded deeds so that nothing of this profoundly moving and transforming message would be lost. Terms had to be preserved or discovered which would maintain his relationship to God and so guarantee the effectiveness of His work. At
At this stage His suffering proved to be a determining factor. For if His sufferings were admitted to be real His pain must have had its effect on His whole Person. But how could suffering be predicated of One in whom divinity abode? This question drove some to identify Him as a purely spiritual being and His suffering therefore unreal. Others declared in favour only of His manhood suggesting that by some process, at some stage, He became incorporated into unity with God. Neither of these alternatives were satisfactory for in one case His work is disconnected from humanity in the other it is the work of another mere man. Before the mystery of His
Person the Church had to stand in awe and confess its faith in His twonatured being. Suffering as man He could express on behalf of man that perfect obedience and trust in a gracious God. Suffering as the Son of God He could effectively bear man's burden of punishment without annihilation. Only the orthodox faith of the Christian Church permits this validity to be attached to His agony, retaining the surprising and aweinspiring dynamic of His Person and work. And this work is the activity of God undertaken in Jesus Christ on behalf of mankind. The "something" centred in Jesus Christ and presupposed at the outset now takes on these definite lines.

This concept of the involvement of God in the Person and work of Jesus Christ poses a problem for some who feel that a vital part of God's goodness is His impassibility. For them, to attribute change to the Person of God in which He will come in contact with the compromised human situation and its pain, is not permissible. They tend to regard God as quite other and aloof from humanity and that He must be protected against any doctrine which would see Him as being placed in proximity to or affected by human events. Thus Jesus Christ is seen as having somehow divested Himself of His divine attributes in order to become incarnate. Possibly there is no danger to the doctrine of God if Jesus Christ is not thereby named another God. For it is in the very might of His humiliation that He reveals the true power of God which differs so radically from the concepts of power common to man. It is in the very intense personal encounter which He has with man that His true nature is revealed as the early Hebrew prophets understood. The very astounding and dynamic thing about Him is not that He has become other than Himself in Jesus Christ but that in Jesus Christ we are truly
meeting God. To know the love of God in His free acceptance of man's suffering is to know God truly and to love Him with the whole heart. To see Him active in Jesus Christ is to know His own pain, His sorrow and vexation at the predicament of man. To know God in this way is to begin at least to plumb the depths of His gracious goodness. For He did not shrink from identifying Himself with sinful humanity or insulate Himself from painful human existence. Rather He took man and all that he is into Himself in Jesus Christ and in so doing healed the division which had so long held God and man apart. What God has done is given its determinative content from this complex of thought.

The fact that men still suffer is one which cries out for interpretation. What is certain from this perspective is that no man or nation is now suffering that pain due on account of the execution of God's unreserved judgment upon sin. This is what Jesus Christ suffered. He alone was capable of bearing that anguish. The right to suffer for his own sin has been taken away from man. Because his suffering and death now takes place after that of Jesus Christ it absolutely cannot occur without pointing directly to Him. As God's chosen people had suffered before Jesus Christ they had anticipated His coming. Now after His coming, His suffering and death, the suffering of Jewry becomes, if unwillingly and unwittingly, a pointer back to Jesus Christ for He too was one of them. The suffering of Jews today cannot be separated from their suffering history and He is inextricably bound up in that. Their suffering serves His cause. The suffering of Christians is undergone as ministration. It is evidence of their unity in fellowship with Jesus Christ. Their suffering and death is already His and does not occur outside of the circle of meaning given to these events by Him. The Church in
agony drives men to reconsider God's act in Jesus Christ. The Christian could only escape this suffering by renouncing his identity as a follower of Christ and so removing his disturbing presence from among his fellows. The agony of the unbeliever is undergone in solidarity with all mankind. The unbeliever can find a fellow in the suffering believer and in his Lord and so discover through pain a pathway to belief in God. Even in man's continuing anguish the goodness of God is revealed by the gracious way in which He deals with men who still rebel and avoid His odious grace, preferring to provide their own means of salvation rather than depending on the divine accomplishment in Jesus Christ.

From creation to atonement, this particular God, whom we know in Jesus Christ, has accomplished these things. He and they are given. It would be folly to try and question that given by the proposing of various alternatives that occur to the analytical mind. The only activity which seems to be productive of positive results is that which takes as its foundation the existence and activity of the God of grace as He and His work are encountered definitively in the Person and work of Jesus Christ. To repeat the questions "Did God say . . ." and "If you are the Son of God . . ." by attempting to alter the givenness of His being and action by means of a posteriori reasoning is to my mind wholly unacceptable. He is I Am Who I Am and has demonstrated fully in the Judaeo-Christian history the dynamic of His being. Beyond this one cannot walk with any certainty. In relation to the suffering of "men in whom the Spirit of God dwells" He gives first of all clear instruction as to who He is so that men need no longer doubt Him and so experience more acute suffering than their unbelieving fellows. But more than this He offers positive redemptive relationship to all
men at the very minimum level of human existence. This relationship, when exercised in faith, can transform all agony in its very throes into confession of faith. Certainly, from this moment on, it will be impossible for me to read any material on the topic of suffering without bringing to it this complex of theological thought. I, at least, must adhere to a theology of suffering only as interpreted through the Incarnation.
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