

The Emotional Life of the Eternal God: A Story
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Abstract: In contemporary theology, there is a renewed interest in classical theism, but this also coincides with a renewed interest in alternative models of God.¹ Many have come to reject classical theism in favour of open theism, panentheism, and pantheism. However, other theologians and philosophers have been unwilling to stray too far from classical theism, and instead wish to make as few modifications to classical theism as possible. These theologians are referred to as neo-classical theists because they reject one or more of the classical divine attributes, but don't go as far in rethinking the doctrine of God as open theists, panentheists, or pantheists.² It can be a bit difficult to navigate these debates because there are so many moving parts within the dialect. For example, one common assertion in these debates is that the rivals to classical theism offer a conception of the divine that is more personal than classical theism. However, it is not obvious what that claim really amounts to. In an attempt to help readers understand some of the issues in these debates, I have written a short story that focuses on one kind of debate that is currently taking place over the personal nature of God's emotional life. This is the dispute over impassibility and passibility, and the systematic connections to other divine attributes such as divine eternity. The story that I have written will help illuminate some of the key issues in this particular debate over the emotional life of the eternal God.

I want to take us on a brief journey through different conceptions of God. I shall ask one to consider the case of a fictional character named Kelli, and her friends Ruby and Paul. Kelli has recently come to believe that God exists. As one follows Kelli's journey, one will discover various reasons for considering particular conceptions of God over others. I do not take these reasons to be determinative for the debate, but I take them to be representative of the kinds of reasons that one will encounter in such debates. As a bit of a spoiler, Kelli will come to consider two different personal models of God called classical theism and neo-classical theism. Kelli will come to consider a dispute between the two that relates to God's eternity and emotional life.

Here is a bit of background on Kelli. Lately, Kelli has been reading Yujin Nagasawa's recent work on perfect being theology and the ontological argument.³ After carefully considering the modal ontological argument, she becomes convinced that God must exist. She takes God to be the greatest conceivable being, but she isn't certain which attributes best fill out this conception of God. She finds herself convinced that God is a necessarily existent being with attributes like maximal power, maximal knowledge, maximal goodness, freedom, and eternity. However, she isn't certain what else to believe about God at this point.

Kelli runs across a book called *Models of God and Alternative Ultimate Realities*.⁴ This seems like a great place to start as it will help her understand some of the competing conceptions of God. She quickly discovers that there are multiple models of God. In fact, she finds herself a bit overwhelmed by the array of options. She can pick from classical theism,

¹ E.g. Andrei A. Buckareff and Yujin Nagasawa, eds. *Alternative Concepts of God: Essays on the Metaphysics of the Divine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

² Kevin Timpe, "Introduction to Neo-classical Theism," in Jeanine Diller and Asa Kasher, eds. *Models of God and Alternative Ultimate Realities* (New York: Springer, 2013), 202. For this story, I shall be following the classification of models of God found in *Models of God and Alternative Ultimate Realities*. However, I am ignoring one important model called process theism because it would overly complicate the story.

³ Yujin Nagasawa, *Maximal God: A New Defense of Perfect Being Theism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

⁴ Jeanine Diller and Asa Kasher, eds., *Models of God and Alternative Ultimate Realities*.

neo-classical theism, open theism, panentheism, or pantheism, just to name a few models. She quite likes the idea of a personal God, but she isn't certain yet what kind of divine person she is looking for. Kelli doesn't feel comfortable identifying God with the universe like pantheism does. She isn't certain how the universe could be a person, let alone a divine person. So she rules pantheism is out of the running. Panentheism claims to offer a deeply personal God, so this seems promising to Kelli.⁵ However, she is not exactly certain what the panentheist model of God is affirming. On panentheism, God is not identical to the universe, but the universe is in God, and God is in the universe. Kelli wonders what exactly that means. Upon further inspection, Kelli finds the plethora of panentheist metaphors about God and the world being "in" each other somewhat confusing, so she decides to look elsewhere until they can make some non-metaphorical statements.⁶ Next, Kelli considers open theism. Open theism seems intriguing as it is very popular today. On open theism, God knows everything there is to know, but God does not know the future because what will happen in the future is yet to be determined.⁷ According to open theists, this allows God to enter into a genuine responsive relationship with free creatures. This seems plausible, yet Kelli sees passages in the Bible that seem to affirm God's exhaustive foreknowledge of the future. As such, she rules out open theism for the time being. Kelli has narrowed her options between classical theism and neo-classical theism. But which one? Kelli decides to take a closer look at each view.

Both views claim that God is a necessarily existent being who has essential attributes like omnipotence, omniscience, perfect goodness, and perfect freedom. Both affirm that God's omniscience includes an exhaustive knowledge of the future. Both views affirm the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo* and the entailment that there is a state of affairs where God exists without creation.⁸ Yet they disagree over four divine attributes. Classical theism says that God is timeless, immutable, simple, and impassible. Neo-classical theism says that God is temporal, mutable, unified, and passible.

Kelli has two friends named Ruby and Paul. Paul is a classical theist, and Ruby is a neo-classical theist. Kelli asks each of them to explain their views a bit more. Paul starts by explaining classical theism's four unique divine attributes. He defines them as follows.

Classical Theism. God is timeless if and only if God exists without beginning, without end, and without succession. God is immutable if and only if God cannot undergo any intrinsic or any extrinsic change. God is simple if and only if God lacks any parts, properties, potential, and distinctions. Moreover, all of the simple God's attributes are identical to each other, and identical to the essence and existence of God. God is impassible if and only if (i) God cannot be moved or influenced by anything external to the divine nature, and (ii) God cannot be moved from His pure, undisturbed bliss.

Kelli finds some of these notions a bit puzzling, so she asks Paul to clarify. She asks, "Does classical theism really say that God does not have any properties? What about

⁵ E.g. Thomas Jay Oord, *The Uncontrolling Love of God: An Open and Relational Account of Providence* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2015).

⁶ Cf. R.T. Mullins, "The Difficulty of Demarcating Panentheism," *Sophia* 55 (2016).

⁷ Alan R. Rhoda, "Open Theism and Other Models of Divine Providence," in *Models of God and Alternative Ultimate Realities*, 293-295.

⁸ For classical theists who affirm this, see Augustine, *The City of God*, Book XII. Cf. John of Damascus, *Orthodox Faith* I.7. Boethius, *On the Catholic Faith*. A.W. Pink, *The Attributes of God* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1975), 9. For a neo-classical theist affirmation, see William Lane Craig, *God, Time, and Eternity: The Coherence of Theism II: Eternity*, (London: Kluwer Academic Publisher, 2001), 56-57.

accidental properties like being the creator or redeemer?” Paul replies that a simple God does not have any accidental properties, not even accidental properties like being the creator and redeemer.⁹ Kelli surprised by this, but Paul reminds her that classical theism has a long pedigree in the Christian tradition with major thinkers like Augustine, Boethius, and Thomas Aquinas. Kelli acknowledges that those are some very clever individuals, so they must have had some reason for denying that God has these accidental properties.

Yet Kelli is still curious about impassibility. In particular, she wants to know more about the claim that God cannot be moved by anything external to God. She says, “I thought that a personal God is meant to be full of empathy, and to respond to humans with sympathy. How do you square that with divine impassibility?” Paul explains that there is no need to square impassibility with empathy because classical theism denies that God has empathy.¹⁰ As Paul explains, empathy involves being moved by another, and impassibility rules out that possibility for God.¹¹ Kelli is quite shocked to hear that the classical God lacks empathy. She asks, “Does that mean that God is completely apathetic? If God has no emotions, God sounds like a moral monster.” Paul laughs because he has heard this sort of complaint before. Paul says, “Of course God has emotions. Recall that I said that God cannot be moved from His pure bliss. Classical theists have long held that God is perfectly happy in Himself.” Kelli realizes that happiness is built into Paul’s definition of impassibility, but she wants to know which emotions the impassible God can have. Paul explains that the classical God can have whichever emotions are consistent with God’s impeccable rationality, moral perfection, and perfect happiness.¹² Kelli says, “So the classical God cannot suffer because He cannot have any emotion that would disturb His perfect happiness. Is that right?” Paul smiles, and says, “That’s right. There is no suffering in God, nor any unpleasant emotions. God’s happiness is grounded entirely in Himself, and nothing can move Him from that happiness.”

Kelli seems satisfied for the moment with her understanding of classical theism. She decides to turn her attention to Ruby. She asks Ruby to explain the neo-classical position. Ruby explains neo-classical theism as follows.

Neo-Classical Theism. God is temporal if and only if God exists without beginning and without end, but can exist with succession. God is mutable in that God can undergo non-essential changes as He exercises His essential attributes. God is unified in that His essential properties are necessarily co-extensive, and not derived from some external source. God is passible in that God can experience a wide range of emotions that disturb His bliss.

Kelli has a few questions for Ruby at this point. She asks, “How can God be eternal and temporal? Aren’t those contradictory claims?” Ruby explains that an eternal being is simply a being that never began to exist and who never ceases to exist. According to Ruby, “God’s eternality does not mean timelessness. Timelessness is a stronger claim than merely being eternal.” Kelli seems satisfied with this response, so she moves on to her next question.

⁹ Augustine, *The Trinity* V.17. Boethius, *The Trinity Is One God Not Three Gods* IV. Peter Lombard, *Sentences* Book I Dist. XXX.1. Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles* II.12. James Arminius, Disputation IV.XIV in James Nichols trans. *The Works of James Arminius: The London Edition, Volume 2* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1986).

¹⁰ Girolamo Zanchius, *Life Everlasting: Or, The True Knowledge of One Jehovah, Three Elohim, and Jesus Immanuel* (Cambridge: John Legat, 1601), 357-358.

¹¹ Anselm, *Proslogion* VIII.

¹² Cf. R.T. Mullins, “Why Can’t the Impassible God Suffer? Analytic Reflections on Divine Blessedness,” *TheoLogica* 2 (2018), 14-18.

“You seem to be suggesting that God can change in certain ways, but not in others. How is that possible?” Kelli asks. Ruby says, “God has essential attributes like omnipotence or perfect love. Essential properties are just not the sort of things that one can possibly lose. That is why they are called *essential* properties. One can only gain and lose non-essential, or accidental properties. For example, God gains the accidental property *creator* when God freely creates the universe. Being the creator is not essential to God. Being the creator is something that God becomes when He exercises His essential power.” Kelli says she needs to think about this some more, but she wants to ask one more question before moving on.

Kelli asks Ruby to say a bit more about God’s emotional life. “Can God have any kind of emotion?” Kelli asks. Ruby says that a passible God cannot have any emotion whatsoever. According to Ruby, God can have any emotion that is compatible with God’s impeccable rationality and moral perfection. However, unlike classical theism, God can have unhappy emotions. Ruby says, “There might be times where it is rational and morally appropriate for God to be sad, and other times where it would be irrational and morally inappropriate for God to be sad. Whatever the case may be, God will have the right emotions at the right time.”

Where do we go from here? The Virtues of Neo-Classical Theism

Kelli feels like she now has a better understanding of each view. However, Kelli tells Paul and Ruby that she is uncertain which view to affirm. Paul reminds Kelli that classical theism has a long history with wide affirmation in the western world. Paul considers this an advantage because it shows that classical theism has been tested and affirmed by generations of thinkers. According to Paul, the burden rests on neo-classical theism to demonstrate what advantages it has since it is the newcomer to the debate. This seems plausible to Kelli, so she asks Ruby if neo-classical theism has any advantages in its favour.

Ruby is more than delighted to tell Kelli all about the theoretical advantages of neo-classical theism. She starts by explaining that neo-classical theism is a simpler hypothesis than classical theism because it makes more minimal claims about God that are easier to establish, and thus are more likely to be true. For example, the average cosmological argument for the existence of God tries to establish the existence of a necessary being. A necessary being is a being who exists without beginning and without end, yet nothing about a necessary being requires that it must exist without succession. Ruby points out that one will need an extra argument for that conclusion. She tells Kelli that divine temporality does not need any extra arguments to establish her position because it logically follows from God’s necessary existence.

Ruby says she has more advantages to offer Kelli. As she explains, divine mutability fits nicely with the notion that God is freely interacting with the universe. It is a bit difficult to figure out how an immutable God can causally interact with the universe without undergoing change. Ruby says that an intuitive causal principle is that an entity cannot causally bring about a change in the world without itself also undergoing a change.¹³ Ruby explains that it is natural to think that exercising one’s freedom and power involves changing from a state of not freely willing something, to a state of freely willing something. Neo-classical theism can affirm this intuition since it says that God is mutable. Thus, neo-classical theism fits nicely with our intuitions about causation, freedom, and change.

Ruby tells Kelli that she has another theoretical advantage over classical theism. Classical theism has a difficult time making divine simplicity coherent. It seems quite

¹³ Graham Oppy, “Divine Causation,” *Topoi* 36 (2017), 641.

obvious that the attribute of love is not identical to the attribute of power. Ruby also finds it puzzling that classical theism explicitly denies that God has accidental properties like *creator* and *redeemer*. As Ruby explains, religious people want God to be a redeemer, so neo-classical theism seems to have an advantage here because it gets rid of divine simplicity, and affirms that God can have accidental properties.

Kelli asks, “What about passibility? Are there any theoretical advantages there?” Ruby assures her that this comes with all sorts of theoretical advantages over classical theism. First, a passible God knows more than the classical God. This is because a passible God knows the truth-values of all propositions, but also has a great deal of phenomenal knowledge about the world. According to Ruby, “phenomenal knowledge is a kind of experiential knowledge. Philosophers sometimes refer to this as knowledge of ‘what it is like.’ A passible God is one who can gain experiential knowledge of the world as history unfolds. An impassible God cannot have experiential knowledge of the world because an impassible God cannot be moved or caused to know anything by an external source. Hence, the passible God has an additional kind of knowledge that the impassible God lacks.”

This all sounds well and good to Kelli, but she says she is ready to consider some objections to neo-classical theism. Yet Ruby shouts, “But wait! There’s more.” Ruby explains that neo-classical theism also has some unique religious advantages over classical theism. She starts by explaining that it is easier to understand how a passible God can be a person. Ruby says, “It is difficult to understand how God can be a person if God lacks the wide range of emotions that a passible God has.”

Paul replies by pointing out that the classical God is a person. “Nothing about God lacking a wide range of emotions entails that God is not a person,” Paul says, “Otherwise, you will exclude a whole host of humans from being persons.” Ruby nods her head in agreement, but points out that, “most theists aren’t looking for a God who is merely personal. Instead, they are searching for the kind of divine person who can satisfy humanity’s longing for sympathy.” Ruby says that even the classical theist Katherin Rogers will agree to this. According to Rogers, “It seems vital for religious commitment that God really understand our pain and sorrow.”¹⁴ Paul is a fan of Rogers work, so he agrees to hear Ruby out on this point.

Ruby explains that we all desire to be understood by others. We naturally bond with people who understand us. There is a kind of loneliness that one experiences when no one else understands what you feel.¹⁵ According to Ruby, the passibilist Francis McConnell made this point when he said that humans “want to feel that their suffering means something at the center of the universe. It means that they crave at least to be understood through the understanding which comes out of sympathetic sharing of distress.”¹⁶ Ruby claims that her neo-classical view can better satisfy this longing than the God of classical theism who lacks empathy. This is because a passible God is a maximally empathetic God who understands what it is like to be you.

Ruby says that she has one last religious virtue to tell Kelli about. She says that the impassible God is not worship worthy. Paul and Kelli are both surprised by this claim, and are curious to hear how Ruby will explain this one.

Ruby tells them about an old Scottish preacher named Bertrand Brassnett. According to Brassnett, we can be envious of an impassible God who exists with undisturbed happiness, but it is not a being that we can worship. This God’s life is too cold to fan the flames of an

¹⁴ Katherin A. Rogers, *Perfect Being Theology* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), 88.

¹⁵ Adam Morton, “Empathy and Imagination,” in ed. Heidi L. Maibom, *The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Empathy* (London: Routledge, 2017), 184.

¹⁶ Francis McConnell, *Is God Limited?* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1925), 290.

eager loyalty in the hearts of humankind.¹⁷ Humans are willing to pay homage to those who undergo self-sacrifice and pain in the service of others. For Brassnett, a God who cannot suffer is a God who cannot undergo self-sacrifice, and is thus not a God that humans can pay homage.¹⁸

Kelli points out that a Scotsman would focus on suffering as connected to being worthy of worship. “After all,” she says, “the Scots highly value a wee gurn.” Ruby agrees, and rests her case for neo-classical theism.

Why Can't I Just Fiddle with Classical Theism a Bit?

Kelli tells Ruby that she wants to think about classical theism for a bit. Kelli admits that she is impressed by the long pedigree of classical theism, but that she has some worries that the classical conception of God is not personal enough because impassibility explicitly denies that God has empathy towards His creatures.¹⁹ Kelli asks Paul, “Why can't I just adopt passibility and keep the rest of the classical model of God?” Paul is not pleased with this suggestion, but Ruby points out that Kelli may be in luck. Ruby says, “Linda Zagzebski thinks that this is possible.²⁰ Zagzebski offers a nuanced account of passibility that she calls omnisubjectivity, and she thinks that this is compatible with the rest of classical theism.” Upon hearing this, Kelli and Paul are intrigued.

Ruby explains that omnisubjectivity is the claim that God has the power or capacity to perfectly grasp all creaturely conscious states. Ruby asks everyone to recall that the neo-classical God does not merely know the truth-value of all propositions about the world. God also has experiential knowledge of the world. An omnisubjective God has perfect empathetic knowledge of what it is like for His creatures to experience the emotions, sensations, beliefs, etc. that they do. Thus, God knows what it is like to suffer because God empathizes with creaturely suffering when it is morally and rationally appropriate to do so.²¹

This sounds great to Kelli, but a particular question plagues her. She asks, “Is Zagzebski right to believe that the omnisubjective understanding of divine passibility is compatible with the rest of classical theism?” Paul quickly chimes in stating that “Zagzebski has got to be mistaken.” He believes that the omnisubjective understanding of passibility is not compatible with classical theism. Paul refers to an argument made by the classical theist Bernhard Blankenhorn. According to Blankenhorn, divine passibility:

leads to endless problems. For if God suffers, then he suffers eternally. If God suffers, then suffering is a divine perfection. But this would mean that our destiny in heaven would involve a share in God's suffering, for heaven is the place of human perfection, of us becoming like God in the most intense way possible without losing our creaturely status. Divine suffering thus leads directly to a heaven filled with human suffering. But that is precisely not the heaven revealed to us in the Bible's apocalyptic literature or other eschatological texts of Scripture.²²

¹⁷ Bertrand Brassnett, *The Suffering of the Impassible God* (London: The MacMillan Co., 1928), 140.

¹⁸ Brassnett, *The Suffering of the Impassible God*, 36.

¹⁹ Marshall Randles, *The Blessed God: Impassibility* (London: Charles H. Kelly, 1900), 9-12.

²⁰ Linda Zagzebski, *Omnisubjectivity: A Defense of a Divine Attribute* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2013), 39-44.

²¹ Cf. Linda Zagzebski, “Omnisubjectivity: Why It Is a Divine Attribute,” *Nova et Vetera* 14 (2016).

²² Bernhard Blankenhorn, “Response to Linda Zagzebski's ‘Omnisubjectivity: Why It Is a Divine Attribute’,” *Nova et Vetera* 14 (2016), 458.

Kelli finds Blankenhorn's argument to be underdeveloped, and suggests they all work together to tighten it up. Kelli starts by focusing on the only stated premises:

- A) If God suffers, then God suffers eternally.
- B) If God suffers, then suffering is a divine perfection.

With these premises, Paul realizes that he can construct two different arguments that Blankenhorn seems to be gesturing towards. Paul says that we can call these the (A) argument and the (B) argument. The (A) argument goes as follows.

- A1) If God suffers, then God suffers eternally.
- A2) God suffers.
- A3) Therefore, God suffers eternally.

Paul tells Kelli that if she wants to affirm omnisubjectivity, or some other version of divine passibility, she will have to accept (A2). Kelli thinks this might look bad, but Ruby notices an ambiguity in Paul's use of "eternal." Kelli and Paul do not immediately see the big deal. However, Ruby tells them something that the old Scottish preacher once said: "Yet perhaps no discussion of the divine passibility can make any real claim to exhaustiveness if it does not come to terms with the problem of time. Until we know what we mean by eternity we cannot get very far towards deciding whether God is passible or impassible."²³

"Again with this Scottish preacher!" decries Kelli, "Haven't we heard enough sermons for today?" Paul finds this rather humorous, but suggests that they listen to Ruby's point. Ruby explains that Paul is assuming that God's eternity is timeless. Therefore, his argument should be clarified as follows.

- A4) If God suffers, then God suffers timelessly.
- A5) God suffers.
- A6) Therefore, God suffers timelessly.

Paul says that this is right. As he explains, "A timeless God experiences whatever He experiences in a timeless present that lacks a before and after. This is because a timeless God exists without beginning, without end, and without succession. If God experiences suffering, God will experience suffering without beginning, without end, and without succession. God will be locked into an eternal torment that shall never cease."

Everyone agrees that this sounds pretty terrible. Kelli says, "That would definitely give a Scotsman a reason to whinge." They all acknowledge that this is a good reason to give up the belief that omnisubjectivity is compatible with the classical understanding of God.

Kelli then asks what would happen if she were to adopt the neo-classical theist's divine temporality. She asks, "How would the (A) argument look on divine temporality?" Paul says it might look like this:

- A7) If God suffers, then God suffers everlastingly.
- A8) God suffers.
- A9) Therefore, God suffers everlastingly.

²³ Bertrand R. Brasnett, *The Suffering of the Impassible God*, 138.

Ruby disagrees. She says, “There is no reason for the neo-classical theist to accept (A7). The neo-classical theist affirms that there is a state of affairs where God exists without creation. Prior to creation, God existed alone. No passibilist should affirm that God experienced suffering during this state of affairs.” Paul and Kelli’s ears perk up, and they ask her to say more. As Ruby explains, “God existed in a state of divine bliss prior to creation. This state of bliss is something that God freely gave up in the gracious act of creation for a limited time.²⁴ So it is false that God has experienced suffering from everlasting. Further, it is false to say that God will suffer forever and ever in the everlasting future. This is because God is only experiencing suffering for a limited time as He engages in the redemptive work of creation. Once God’s redemptive work is complete, everlasting bliss can be fully enjoyed by God and creatures.”

Kelli seems satisfied with Ruby’s reply, but Paul reminds them of the (B) argument. The (B) argument can be articulated as follows.

- B1) If God suffers, then suffering is a divine perfection.
- B2) God suffers.
- B3) Therefore, God’s suffering is a divine perfection.

Kelli isn’t certain why she should think that (B1) is worth considering. Paul reminds her that if she wants to accept classical theism, then she must accept divine simplicity. Paul says, “On divine simplicity, all of God’s attributes are essential to God, and are thus considered perfections. If God suffers, then that attribute must be an essential perfection of God’s.” Kelli thinks this sounds quite bad, and concedes that passibility is not compatible with divine simplicity.

At this point, Ruby chimes in by explaining that neo-classical theism has no such problem. Ruby affirms that God suffers on occasion because God possesses the perfection of omnibusjectivity. “Remember what I said before,” Ruby says, “God will experience the right emotions at the right time.” Kelli and Paul asks how this helps Ruby escape the (B) argument.

According to Ruby, “The neo-classical theist should say that omnibusjectivity is a power or capacity that can be exercised in various ways depending on the overall state of the world. Prior to the act of creation, God is not suffering. Subsequent to the act of creation, God does undergo a temporary and accidental phase of suffering. This suffering is accidental to God because it is based upon God’s empathizing with contingently existing creatures who are contingently and temporarily suffering. Once these contingently existent creatures are experiencing blessed union with God, God will no longer be suffering. The exercise of His omnibusjectivity in this state of affairs will bring Him joy.”

Kelli asks Ruby to clarify. Ruby says, “Recall that neo-classical theism rejects divine simplicity, and so can affirm that God has accidental properties. Accidental properties are not essential perfections of the divine nature. So, again, there is no reason for the neo-classical theist to accept (B1).” As Ruby explains, the neo-classical theist will affirm something like:

- B4) If God suffers, then it will be because (i) God is freely exercising His essential perfection of omnibusjectivity, and (ii) there currently exist creatures who are suffering.
- B5) God suffers.
- B6) Therefore, (i) God is freely exercising His essential perfection of omnibusjectivity, and (ii) there currently exist creatures who are suffering.

²⁴ Keith Ward, “Cosmos and Kenosis,” in ed. John Polkinghorne, *The Works of Love: Creation as Kenosis* (Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001), 157.

Paul raises an eyebrow at this, but Ruby insists that there is nothing obviously worrisome about God empathetically suffering with His creatures for a stretch of time in order to bring about His redemptive purposes for creation.

Upon reflecting on this debate, Kelli decides that omnisubjectivity is not compatible with the rest of classical theism. If she wants to affirm a more personal God with empathy, then she will not be able to make slight modifications to the classical model of God. She will need to go further, and adopt a neo-classical model of God. However, Kelli decides that she needs more time to think about the emotional life of the eternal God.