

# THE LOGICAL INCOHERENCE OF TRADITIONAL CHRISTIANITY

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## I. The Fundamental Assumption: *Creatio ex nihilo*

A. Metaphysical Monotheism: There exists a simple, immaterial substance SS that: (i) is necessarily the sole instance of the kind “divine” and utterly unique in the sense that there are no other members in the class of being occupied by SS; (ii) alone has ontologically necessary actuality; and (iii) everything else that is actual in any way depends upon SS for its actuality.

1. There is a single being not in a class with any others.
2. This single being is the uncreated source of everything else.
3. The universe cleaves into creator/creatures with God on one side and everything else on the other.

## B. Divine Simplicity

1. God must be a single undivided substance because if God were complex or composite in any sense, then this complexity would have to be explained, and since God is the explanation of everything else that exists, there can be no such explanation for God.

2. God is reduced to a conscious mind that knows all there is to know and has efficacious power at all places.

## II. The Trinity

A. There cannot be any real distinction among persons, or metaphysical monotheism is violated.

B. The “persons” are merely relational subsistences.

C. The Logical Problem of the Trinity:

- (1) The one true God is exactly one divine individual, Yahweh.
- (2) The Father is God.
- (3) The Son is God.
- (4) The Son is not identical to the Father.

D. Types of Monotheism:

*Monotheism:* There is only one “God.”

*Henotheism:* There are many gods who are independently worshipped but only one is preeminent.

*Monolatry:* There is only one God that is properly worshipped as a matter of political duty or contractual agreement; but there are gods of other nations.

*Trinitarianism:* There are three divine individuals who together constitute but one God.

- (a) Latin: There is a single being that is manifested in three relations.
- (b) Social: There is a community of indwelling but distinct divine persons.

*Monarchical Monotheism:* There are many gods, but all of the gods are subordinate to a Most High God to whom the gods give ultimate honor and glory and without whose authority and approval they do not act in relation to the world.

#### 1. The Problem of Metaphysical Monotheism:

- (1\*) There is exactly one Most High God.
- (2\*) The Father is identical to the Most High God.
- (3\*) The Father, Son and Spirit are each equally and fully divine.
- (4\*) The Son is not identical to the Father and neither is identical to the Spirit.

These propositions are not inconsistent. Any three of them are consistent with the fourth. Of course, a problem arises if we add a fifth premise:

- (5) If X fully possesses the divine nature, then necessarily X is the single instance of the kind divine.

2. The Scriptural Problem: The Son is clearly distinct from the Father in the sense that the Son has properties that the Father does not have: The Son is begotten, the Father is not; the Son is sent by the Father, the Father is not; the Son prays to the Father, the Father does not.

### III. The Problem of Christology:

A. If God is the essentially uncreated and the only one of its kind, then Christ cannot be fully divine.

(CT) It is possible for a single person to be at once both fully human and fully divine.

(C1) Human nature is such that it is essentially created at some time.

(C2) Divine nature is such that it is essentially uncreated and timeless.

(C3) A nature defines what is essential to the kind that an individual is.

(C4) It is impossible for a single person to be both human (created) and also divine (uncreated) natures. (From 1, 2, and 3).

(65) Premise (C4) entails the denial of (C5) and therefore one of them is false.

B. If God possesses essentially attributes that humans cannot possess essentially, then Christ cannot be both human and divine.

(1\*) God is essentially omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent (essentially good, immutable, impassible, timeless, a se, etc.)

(2\*) Jesus Christ was and is fully God/divine.

(3\*) Jesus Christ was and is fully human.

(4\*) Necessarily, no human is omnipotent, omniscient, or omnipresent (essentially good, immutable, impassible, timeless, a se, etc.)

Whatever God's nature is, human nature essentially cannot be / Whatever God's nature is, human nature must be essentially different.

### IV. The Problem of Deification

A. If metaphysical monotheism is true, then we cannot participate in any of God's attributes and *theosis* as it was conceived by the Patristic Fathers is impossible.

(1) God's essence is utterly incomprehensible and simple.

(2) A simple essence has no component parts in the sense that all of God's attributes are identical.

(3) God is essentially loving (and the divine love is expressed to us through his energies) and thus the energies are included within God's simple essence.

(4) Humans cannot share in God's essence or incommunicable properties such as being uncreated, immutable, impassible, timeless, omnipotent and omniscient.

(5) God's love and energies are identical to God's incommunicable properties. (From 2, 3, and 4).

(6) Thus, God's love and energies are incommunicable to humans. (From 4 and 5).

(7) Humans participate in the divine nature by having the love and energies of God communicated to them.

(8) Therefore, the divine nature cannot be communicated to humans (From 6 and 7).

B. We cannot be "gods" or "divine" in the same sense that God is divine.

#### V. The Problem of Free Agency (grace and salvation)

A. If we are created *ex nihilo*, then it is not our nature to exist and we continue to exist only if God sustains our existence by recreating everything about us in each moment, including God's directly creating our acts of "willing" or "choosing."

B. If God creates our acts of "willing," then the choice to accept God must be up to God alone and there is no free will (regardless of whether freedom is construed as compatibilist or incompatibilist).