

GOD NEVER CHANGES? THE DOCTRINE OF DIVINE IMMUTABILITY

God has to be unable to change and need no change when he is perfect. Any change would make him a better God or make him less perfect so he cannot change. If God is outside time that is another reason why he can't change for it is changelessness.

This doctrine destroys the emotional appeal of God. Who wants to love and have a relationship with a God who may do good for you as impersonal as clockwork and who cannot have feelings for you? God may be a person but still be impersonal in his behaviour. He is more impersonal than the coldest and most insular human being. We cannot avoid having some kind of feeling so we cannot be like God but just close. A person will have a minimum of feeling for us and we hate that so it is worse with God who has none. God is supposed to be perfectly happy but to say he cares is inaccurate. To care is to desire and to desire is to have pain exactly as Buddha taught. A desire hurts at least a bit until it is fulfilled. So God cannot care about us for he has no feelings.

When God is perfect and is as cold and impersonal as a conscious robot it implies that it is a sin to have feelings for we should be more like him. If we can't avoid feelings they have to be kept to a minimum.

This God may be a person but is so different from what we understand by a person that he is really a "person" and his personality is of no satisfaction for us.

Nelson Pike suggested that God cannot change in his nature or character but can change with regard to having relationships with us. So God's character doesn't change but he can change his mind about you.

This God would still be perfect but he would have to be under the power of time in order to change though his nature cannot be affected by time.

This version of God is not liked for it implies that creatures cause change in God by changing themselves. God who is outside time and knows all things cannot be changed for he has decided what he will do if you do x before you do it.

Another problem with it is that God can only really change if he does not know what we will do before we do it. Norris Clarke argued that God does not know these things by looking but by enabling us to act the way we wish. It is like a man moving a box with a stick. He does not see the box but he knows he is moving it and what it is doing and this changes his thinking about the box for it has been moved. But this does not solve anything for God will still know what we do before we do it. A God who does not even look at us is not a very pleasing God either.

Most believers have a God who though they say he repents and changes his mind they don't mean this literally. He can accept somebody as his son and then reject that son and disown him when he turns sinful. In reality it is us who change not God. God can be close to me when I am good but if I go bad he departs from me not because he has changed but because I have changed. It is because he cannot change that he leaves me for he would be changing from good to bad if he stayed with me.

God cannot change for he is outside time and no time passes for him and if he is perfect he cannot change. If we have a relationship with God then we are guilty of relating to God as if he were more like us. Relating to an immutable God is impossible for he is too unlike a person as we know it.

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