

1.0 There are Christian theologians and philosophers who allow that God can be really related to creatures, even while denying that God must be so related (cf., e.g., Austin Farrer, Reflective Faith: 178-191; Thomas V. Morris, Anselmian Explorations: 124-150). But this seems to be an untenable position--first of all, for the properly philosophical reason that it is incoherent. Consider the following argument:

1.1 If God can be really related to creatures, creatures can make a value difference to God (analysis of "being really related").

1.2 If creatures can make a value difference to God, God cannot be unsurpassable in value without being really related to creatures (analysis of "making a value difference" and of "being surpassable/unsurpassable in value").

1.3 But if God need not be really related to creatures, either God can be unsurpassable in value without being really related to creatures or God can be surpassable in value (analysis of "not needing to be really related" and of "being surpassable/unsurpassable in value").

1.4 God cannot be surpassable in value (analysis of "God").

1.5 Therefore, if God need not be really related to creatures, God can be unsurpassable in value without being really related to creatures (conclusion from 1.3 and 1.4).

1.6 But if God can be unsurpassable in value without being really related to creatures, creatures cannot make a value difference to God (contrapositive of 1.2).

1.7 If creatures cannot make a value difference to God, however, God cannot be really related to creatures (contrapositive of 1.1).

1.8 Therefore, if God need not be really related to creatures, God cannot be really related to creatures (conclusion from 1.5, 1.6, and 1.7).

1.9 Either, then, God can be really related to creatures, in which case God also must be so related, or God need not be really related to creatures, in which case God also cannot be so related (conclusion from 1.8 and the contrapositive of 1.8).

2.0 The second reason the position is untenable, however, is properly theological: it contradicts a necessary implication of the Christian witness of faith. Consider the following argument:

2.1 Each and every creature, being redeemed as well as created by God, makes a value difference to God--its redemption by God consisting precisely in its being given to make such a difference (necessary implication of the Christian witness).

2.2 But if each and every creature makes a value difference to God, God cannot be unsurpassable in value without being really related to creatures (1.2).

2.3 If God cannot be unsurpassable in value without being really related to creatures, God must be so related (1.4).

2.4 Therefore, either a necessary implication of the Christian witness is false or God not only can be really related to creatures, but also must be so related (conclusion from 2.2 and 2.3).

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