

(d) He is telling us what He is not, so that we may understand that all assertions are filled with error and contradiction, and that there is no such thing as a true assertion (except, of course, this one!). The decision basically comes to this: when God attributes specific characteristics to himself in Scripture, either He is telling us what He is or what He is not. Since there is nothing in Scripture which even hints at the idea that God, when He tells us about himself, is telling us what He is not, then such a view must arise from a nonscriptural source. And most of the options for such a source are not particularly attractive: (a) autonomous individual reason or imagination; (b) non-Christian philosophy, psychology, or religion; (c) liberal, neoorthodox, existential, or process theology; (d) Satan.

The second problem with the answer that Christ emptied himself of His divine attributes, but not of His divine essence, is that concerned with practical application. If God's attributes express to us various aspects of His nature (i.e., tell us what He is), and Christ empties himself of His divine attributes, then how can Christ tell us what He is as divine? He can then only tell us what He has become as human (and this would seem to be the view of the Person of Christ held by one who gives this second answer). The very practical problem then is what to do with the many scriptures which speak of Christ in His incarnate state in terms of possessing divine attributes. These scriptures conflict quite strongly with this answer.

- [3] "Christ emptied himself of His incommunicable attributes (self-existence, infinity, eternity, immutability)"

It should be noted that this answer does not intend to say that Christ in respect of His human nature was dependent, finite, temporal, and changeable, but Christ in respect of His divine nature became characterized by these qualities. Two problems with this answer should be mentioned. The first problem is how Christ can continue to be called God in any meaningful sense if those attributes which are uniquely God's and not shared in any sense by His moral and spiritual beings are negated of Him in His incarnate state. And yet Col. 2:9 tells us "For in Him all the fulness of Deity dwells in bodily form." The second problem with this answer is that once again the scriptural evidence does not support such an assertion; in fact, it conflicts with it. The incarnate Christ is said to be omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, self-existent, and eternal. And He is "the same yesterday and today, yes and forever." (Heb. 13:8)

- [4] "Christ emptied himself of the exercise of His divine attributes"

The problem with this answer is, of course, that Christ not only kept His divine attributes (which this answer would concede); He also exercised them (which this answer denies). In fact, if He kept His divine attributes (i.e., continued to be God), He could not help exercising them! God is characterized in scripture as a living, dynamic, personal Being who feels and wills and acts; not as a lifeless, static, impersonal Being who feels nothing, whose decisions and actions are all eternal and unmoving, and who, unmoved, contemplates the universe. Thus if Christ retained His divine attributes, He, as a living, dynamic Person, must have exercised them.