

## **The fool hath said in his heart, *There is no God.***

This paper is written to demonstrate that an acceptance of God, known as Trinity, in accordance with the definition maintained by the Eastern Orthodox Church, is the only logical understanding of reality and existence that is possible. To reject this understanding is really the act of a fool.

The above is a bold claim, although David in one of his psalms, which has been quoted as the title of this paper, previously makes it, so the claim is not new. In fact this paper is a justification of the psalmist, who could otherwise be claimed to have spoken foolishly himself.

How can one claim that to say “there is no God” is the saying of a fool? It would imply that reason and logic would lead anyone to the conclusion that there is a God and only to act unreasonably or illogically, i.e. foolishly, would lead on the conclusion that there is no God. So, what is this reason or logic that leads one to accept that there is a God, which is strong enough to preclude any reasonable belief that there is no God. In other words what is this proof of the existence of God?

Many have tried to prove the existence of God and these proofs have met with various successes, although none of them has been conclusive and it could be said that it is certainly foolish not to accept it. The best argument for, rather than proof of, the existence of God is from the orderliness and apparent design of the universe. This has been a strong argument over many centuries but today modern scientists, who are working hard to explain the orderliness without reference to God, have weakened it, although a complete reasonable and logical explanation without a reference to God has not yet been arrived at.

Arguments for the existence of God may be very convincing but they cannot be said to be proofs; there may be another reasonable explanation. Is it possible to prove the existence of God? The answer depends on what type of proof one is looking for. The best type of proof is by deduction but this is impossible in reference to God. Why? Because it would imply a principle that exists outside and above God from which one can prove God, However, such a principle itself would be in need of proof and, more importantly, it would contradict the notion of God, who transcends all other principals and concepts. The next type of proof is by induction working from a result to the cause. This is essentially the logic of the argument by design, mentioned above. It is difficult though to demonstrate that the logic induced from the result is the only possible explanation. If this could be done then the proof would stand.

Rather than demonstrate that something is induced from certain observations, it may be better to demonstrate that nothing else is able to be induced from these observations: the idea of disproving the negative hypothesis. This is the approach that will found the argument in this paper. Rather than try to prove God by deduction or induction, the paper will begin by disproving one concept and then develop the logical consequences of this to show that it is foolish not to accept the reality of God as accepted in Orthodox Christian doctrine.

Also, another issue is whether a theoretical proof has connection to existential reality. This can only be confirmed with experience that transcends conceptual thought. From scientific experience, there has been shown to be a connection of theory and experience. Theories have been deduced from experience and experience has confirmed theory. This is also true in

theology. The theory of God is not the experience of God, which must confirm and extend theory. This will be touched on later in the paper.

### ***The Argument.***

Following is the logic that leads one to justify the statement of the psalmist and further to realise that the Orthodox Christian doctrine of reality is in fact the only reasonable understanding of reality.

Rather than considering what we see here and now, let us consider some basic ideas for existence and reality. Let us ask a very basic question: does something exist or does nothing exist? Rather than look at whether something exists, which is obvious by the existence of this paper and the one reading it, let us consider the idea that nothing exists, is this logically possible?

If we say that nothing exists then we are saying that ‘nothing’ has a positive existence and therefore we have the existence of something, which is nothing. But this is a contradiction: nothing cannot be something. Hence, there cannot be the existence of nothing, so something must exist. In other words nothing is only a referential term to the absence of something it is not an absolute in itself. Also, non-existence is only relative to existence: non-existence cannot exist.

The above may be stating the obvious and our observations lend support in that we observe the existence of things, so something exists. However, we applied to the fundamentals of existence we have some important corollaries arising. The most important idea is the in considering the existence of something we cannot also imply the existence of nothing. What does this mean?

If I consider what the something is which exists then I must acknowledge that this something cannot be defined to exist in such a way as to require the existence of nothing. In other words the something, which exists cannot be bound to the extent that it can be said that nothing exists beyond that boundary. So, the something must have no bounds to the extent of its existence, i.e. it is omnipresent. (It is also one and undivided because two things would imply a division to separate one from another; this division would require a limit and hence the existence of nothing.) This therefore precludes matter as being the only something that exists because matter has spatial properties that imply limits to its presence. So, we must have an omnipresent something and this something transcends material existence. In other words in can be said that it is foolish to limit existence to the material universe; there must be something beyond the material universe otherwise one must accept the illogical and contradictory notion of the existence of nothing.

Now is there more that we can “prove” from this point because at present we have not limited the notion of existence to the Trinitarian concept of Orthodox Christianity? Well, let us consider the existence of the omnipresent something. Can we distinguish this from nothing, which can also be said to have the property of omnipresence? At present the answer is no. The something if limited to this is equivalent to nothing and again we fall into a contraction. The something cannot be material, as above, but it must have some “substance” (essence/hypostasis). Substance must be the substance of something and so far the something

we have in not distinguishable from nothing. The something must have features other than merely substance to distinguish it from nothing.

The something that exists must be something more than a merely substance, however we label that substance. If we consider the something to be some 'thing', or object, we cannot distinguish it from mere substance without conceiving of form, which conflicts with omnipresence. A solution is to consider the something in terms of more abstract notions of being such as force, energy and person. Force and energy are relative notions; that is something else generates/uses force or energy. Force and energy do not exist as substance but from substance. However, a person can be considered a substance without needing form and without necessarily deriving its existence from something else. Hence, the substance (or hypostasis) can be considered a person to distinguish it from nothing. (It can also probably be demonstrated that the notion of person is the only notion that can satisfy the requirements needed as all other concepts describe something else, a process requiring something else or something that requires form to be defined.)

What though distinguishes this concept of person from a mere substance? The person cannot be defined in terms of form, body, spirit or other such features to be distinct from an object. To do this requires that person to be defined as with a mind. The mind is not an object as such but it can be used for the person to "act", (i.e. it makes sense to apply a verb, such as to know, to mental activity) and this ability to "act" provides us with a feature that distinguishes the something from nothing, which cannot "act". However, a mind in itself is empty and indistinguishable from nothing unless it "contains" something i.e. the person knows something. In this case the only thing such the person can know is itself.

This knowledge must be distinct from the mind and, hence person and have its own existence, or hypostasis; otherwise it would only be the mind and not knowledge in the mind. The knowledge is of itself so this knowledge must be the exact image of the person (Person) and be substantial in being a unique hypostasis, i.e. the thought becomes substantial in word. The image must itself be person and mind and it is also omnipresent because there can be no limit on its form.

This something which exists can only be considered a something if it is a person with a mind who knows itself and hence there becomes the real existence of the knowledge as another hypostasis. But how can this knowledge be distinct without form or limit of the existence of either hypostasis. They are both omnipresent and they are exactly the same as each other. Which is the Person and which is the image and what unites or divides them? The solution to this cannot be found in the two hypostases themselves; something else needs to exist for this. The only option is to consider a third hypostasis. This third cannot be considered to be of the same cause as the image/knowledge otherwise we would only multiply the difficulties above. It must be distinct from the mind and knowledge, although also have real existence as a hypostasis like the Person and the image/word for the reasons above that the others are hypostases. Arguably, the only conceivable way for this to be represented is by the concept of spirit/soul (or 'inner man'). The spirit of the Person is the same as the Person yet like the image is distinct from the Person. The "spirit" is of and in the Person and it is shared by the image, which is in the mind and hence in the Person, which is confirmed by being in the "spirit". Hence, the unity of the Person and image is in that they have one "spirit". Distinction is kept because the "spirit" is of the Person and is shared by the image because it is in the Person (in the mind). In other words, the Person is the cause and the image receives/shares. These are different properties of the Person and image that are unique to them and can

identify them from each other. The “spirit” is distinct because it is of the Person and shared by the image and this is feature is unique to the “spirit”.

To sum these ideas in other words: the “spirit” (Spirit) ‘proceeds’ from the Person (Father) to the image (Son) that is ‘begotten’ of the Father and an exact representation of its being. The Father is named as such being the cause of the Son, who is His image and the Spirit, who proceeds from Him and rests in the Son. The Person can also be considered as God. There is one God, who is three hypostases with distinct and complete existences. The hypostases are indistinguishable except for their unique properties, so they are consubstantial and all equally God. Hence, we have the Trinity as defined in Orthodox Christian doctrine.

Other aspects of the Person (God) can be seen as follows. The sense of knowing is also referred to as enlightenment from the principle human means of knowing, which comes through sight requiring light. In an abstract sense this means that for the mind to know itself it must be in light, which must be of itself, because there are no other sources for light. That is the Person is light as is also the image and “spirit”. If we were to consider the person to be darkness we would be denying that He could know Himself and hence He would be indistinguishable from nothing.

Also, existence of persons is linked in our minds to life and death. That is we know someone who is alive and relating to us and we can’t know them if they are not relating to us, ultimately in death. So, for the person to know itself, it is living and relating; it “acts”. This implies action and energy rather than passivity and lack of energy. Hence, the something must be considered living and with energy rather than a static substance. This energy must be distinct from the substance of the hypostases otherwise the only means of the hypostases relating would be a merge of substances and hence remove their distinct realities and leave us unable to distinguish God from nothing.

### ***Conclusion***

Many more corollaries can be deduced from the fundamental premise that nothing cannot exist, in an absolute sense. They result of this is to accept that only the Trinitarian God as taught in Christian doctrine is a reasonable and coherent understanding of reality. To say there is no God, to consider God as non-Trinitarian, such as the Muslims, to accept some form of duality, such as the Zoroastrians, or to accept only a force or pantheism leads to one accepting an idea that requires, or is indistinguishable from, the existence of nothing. This is a contradiction that is unreasonable and illogical and therefore foolish. The psalmist is justified in saying: “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.”

This proof does not attempt to say how God exists; it merely demonstrates that the existence of any other reality other than of the Trinitarian God, as believed by the Orthodox Church is not logically reasonable. God transcends any form of existence or concepts that we are capable of understanding because such concepts would themselves need to precede God and “cause” God. This paper has used concepts from human thinking to explain the only logical way of understanding the existence of God but this is only a mapping of inconceivable ideas into language and concepts accessible to humans and it isn’t the true idea of reality itself. The logic is still true and this is the only way of expressing reality in human words and concepts. Mathematics legitimately uses these techniques to solve problems and so can theologians in discussing God. It works because even though God transcends humanity, he can also relate to humanity and this relationship is mutual. To know God is to experience Him existentially

with is achieved by following the path of the Church and especially in quietness and prayer, which is practiced by Orthodox monks, who experience Theosis and the real presence of God that transcends concept and words and is known in silence. This experience proves the Theory and the theory confirms the experience.