

CREATION

The Beginning

Substance

- Energy
- Matter
- Formation of the heavens
- The nature of space-time

Time

- Beginnings of the universe
- Age of the universe
- End of the universe

Spiritual Beings

- The nature of spirit
- The nature of body
- The possibility of spiritual beings

Biological Beings

- Formation of life
- Complexity of life forms
- Emotion
- Moral action
- The emergence of mind

Thinking Beings

- Animals and humans
- What sets humans apart?
- What is the mind?
- What is thought?
- What are emotions/motivations/ethics?

The soul

- What is the soul?
- What is human choice?
- Immortality
- Death

How is the Trinity Manifest in the World?

- What God is not
- Our connection to God

Other issues

- What is the world?
- How did it come to be?
- What should the world be like?
- What is the world like now?
- How does God relate to the world?
- What is a human being?
- What is evil?
- How does science relate to our understanding of the world?
- What can we expect in the future?

The task ahead

Notes from Colin E. Gunton, *The Triune Creator: A Historical and Systematic Study* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998).

ix: "It is also the case that in the modern age scientists became to a large extent the theologians of creation, until recent times effectively excluding the theological altogether."

Gunton distinguishes between creation as action (1) and creation as product (2).

In the *Timaeus*, he points out, there are three eternal realities: form, the receptacle of form (matter), and the demiurge (3).

Creation is essentially an assertion that exceeds reason, as Gunton argues (8). The experience of faith leads one to say something beyond what can be said with rational certitude. Thus, the Christian affirmation is that the world arises from God as an act of free creation, from God alone and from God's free initiative alone (9). It affirms that God has no need for creation for something to define him or as an object of his love, since both of these are already eternally and infinitely happening within the being of God. Creation is thus a contingent result of God's love.

This means, Gunton shows, that creation has a value in and of itself (10). The structure of creation is its reliance on and manifestation of the Son; the goodness of creation is a goodness by participation and, Gunton says, is due to the Spirit. God is always involved in the world, bringing it to completion.

This means that evil is extraneous to creation (11). In the restoration of creation, even is an aberration that is being overcome; in the completion of creation, evil becomes something that is used to foster creation's restoration (11). In the general thrust of the dynamics of creation, evil is ultimately a temporary setback or complication (12).

Gunton sees the reference to "days" as an important affirmation of temporality in the act of creation, against Augustine. Like Basil, he asserts that "days" reflect the diversity of God's action and relation to the world. (16).