

ASSESSING COSMOLOGIES AND *CREATIO EX NIHILO*

Creation

PRE-CHRISTIAN

PLATO

- Eternal existants
- Forms
- Matter
- Demiurge
- True reality and partial reality
- The problem and the solution
 - Cave—True living
- The status of the present world

ARISTOTLE

- Eternal world
- Unmoved mover
- Final causality
- The problem and the solution
 - Confused living—right reason
- The status of the present world

STOICS

- The soul and the world
- Eternal return
- The problem and the solution
 - Distraction of the logos—the purification of the logos
- The status of the present world

PANTHEIST I

- Spirits and gods
- Honouring the balance of nature
- The problem and the solution
 - Disharmony—harmony
- The status of the present world

LATER PERSPECTIVES IN DIALOGUE WITH CHRISTIANITY

NEOPLATONISTS

- The One, the Mind, the Soul
- Matter
- The informing of matter
- The problem and the solution
 - Descent of the soul—the freeing of the soul
- The status of the present world

MONIST

- The omnipresence of soul/spirit
- The present world as illusion
- The problem and the solution
 - Living on the surface—living at the depths
- The status of the present world

MODERN

PANTHEIST II

- Spirits in the world
- The human spirit as mediator
- The problem and the solution
 - Forgetfulness/materialism—mindfulness
- The status of the present world

DEIST

- Naturalistic universe
- Creator but no providence
- The problem and the solution
 - Superstition—Realistic materialism
- The status of the present world

EVOLUTIONARY

- Matter and spirit
- Cause and transcendence
- The problem and the solution
 - Progress
- The status of the present world

QUANTUM

- Various theories
- Thought and matter
- The problem and the solution
 - Progress beyond natural laws
- The status of the present world

CAUSALITY AND CREATIO EX NIHILO

GOD

- God as God
 - “That than which nothing greater can be conceived” - Anselm
- Transcendence of God
- Eternal
 - Necessary existence
 - Only existence

- Unchanging
 - No lack
 - No dependencies
 - Nothing to be improved
- Loving
 - Intentionally creating
 - All-powerfully creating

CAUSALITY

Causes within the world

These are all secondary causes, presuming that something rather than nothing exists

CREATION

CONTINGENCY

Only God is eternal

There can be nothing else eternal

Nor can God need something else

TRINITY

- God's being is fulfilled in his outpouring and sharing of self (Bonaventure)
- The Trinity is complete being
- The procession of the persons is the ground for the possibility of creation (Aquinas)

WHERE DOES GOD CREATE?

- Outside himself
- Where is "outside" to God
 - God making room for creation (Moltmann)
 - God does not create in a void as if the void were eternal with him

FROM WHAT DOES GOD CREATE?

- Nothing
 - This is not a sort of substance
 - This is not a property of a subject
 - It is merely the fact of not existing (see Anselm's *Monologion*)
 - Nothing observed in creation is secondary to the nothing from which creation came forth
 - The nothing of theology is not the same as the absence of things in physics
 - Even were a nothing possible, it would not be the non-being that is at the heart of the doctrine (see Hayes, 57-58)
- His will
 - "The teaching that the creation is the outcome of God's willing is one of the most momentous developments in all the history of thought, affecting as it does the way in which the relation of God and the world is understood and, in the longer term, the development of science." (Gunton, 65)
- How is the world like god?
 - Ontologically it is not
 - It reflects God's creative action

WHEN DID GOD CREATE?

- "What was God doing before he created the world?" (see Augustine's *Confessions*)

- Time and creation

WHEN DID GOD FINISH CREATING?

- Creation in the past and creation throughout history
- Continuous creation: sustaining
- Continuous creation: redeeming
- Continuous creation: providence
 - Aquinas: "The ordering of creatures to an end that pre-exists in the mind of God." (ST I q. 22, a. 1, quoted in Hayes, 51)
 - Vatican I: "All things that have been created God protects and governs by means of divine providence that 'reaches from end to end mightily, and governs all things well' (Wis 8:1). For all things are bare and open to God's eyes (Heb 4:13) even those things which are yet to be by the free action of creatures." (quoted in Hayes, 51)
- Continuous creation: perfecting

WHAT KIND OF CREATION RESULTS?

- Order in creation
 - Chain of being?
 - Hierarchy
- Are some parts of creation more like God than others?
- How is God related to creation?
 - Paradigmata / logoi
 - Plan of God
 - Son and Spirit
- The dignity of creation
 - The independence of creation from God
 - Creation conceived as God's dwelling (Moltmann, xiv)
 - Eschatology of nature
 - Current nature as a symbol of the new creation (Moltmann, xi)
 - Possibility of an orthodox panentheism

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