
EARLY MODERN PERSPECTIVES: REFORMATION, ENLIGHTENMENT, AND POST-ENLIGHTENMENT APPROACHES

Creation

REFORMATION PERSPECTIVES

MARTIN LUTHER

- Creation is the work of the Son
- Creation exists in a relationship of dependence upon the Father through the Son in the Spirit
- Creation is God's address to and through the creature (Gunton, 149)

JOHN CALVIN

- Creation is willed by God.
- "Believers comfort themselves with the solace that they suffer nothing except by God's ordinance and command" (*Institutes*, 16.3, quoted in Gunton, 151)
- Everything that happens is the playing out of God's providence
- Evil is subject to God's providence as well, but God cannot be said to will evil: "The rays of the sun may cause the corpse to putrefy, yet the stink is to be attributed to the corpse and not to the sun." (*Institutes* 1.17.5, paraphrased in Fergusson, 56)

LATER REFORMED SPIRITUALITY

- Every event, being willed directly by God, has particular significance.

PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVES

PANTHEISM

- Giordano Bruno
 - All things are God.
 - The destiny of the world is working itself out in the world.
 - Humans are the activity of God.
 - Evil is only an aspect of the good.

PANENTHEISM

- Baruch Spinoza
 - God and nature are in tension
 - All is in God, drawn into the divine dynamic
 - Nothing is not divine; nothing is divine in a Jewish or Christian sense
 - Good and evil are two sides of the activity of the divine

RENÉ DESCARTES

- * Matter is extension
- * The mind is a different substance than matter
- * The mind can know the true structure of the world

DEISM

- The world is authored by God, but God is not active per se.
- Providence is reduced to the laws of nature.
- We make our own providence.
- Evil is what is experienced in human involvement in shaping the world, or the effect of going against the laws of nature.

MODERN SCIENCE

- World of laws and forces
- Fixity
- Givenness
- Evil is equivalent to imperfect development

IRRATIONAL NATURE

- David Hume
 - Good and evil have only the meaning that we give it

NATURE IS OURSELVES

- Jean-Jacques Rousseau
- Henry David Thoreau
 - Good is found in respecting the rhythm of nature
 - Evil is distancing from nature.

THE WORD HAS A DIMENSION THAT CANNOT BE EXPRESSED IN SCIENCE

- Henry Taylor Coleridge
- Arthur Schopenhauer
 - Evil is the forgetfulness of ourselves.
 - Good is found in becoming one with reality.

THE SPIRITUAL AND THE MATERIAL ARE TWO ASPECTS OF A DEVELOPING UNIVERSE

- Hegel
 - The world is in a state of development
 - God and creation are developing together
 - Humans are becoming God
 - Evil is the yet-to-be transformed