

4. Theories that oppose the doctrine of creation

a. Dualism

This view holds to the eternity of God and the eternity of matter, and thus dismisses the idea of a creation without the use of previously existing matter.

But what is the problem with the eternity of matter? One problem is that *Is* makes matter equally ultimate with God (in the ontological sense), in which case matter is self-sustaining. This appears to be contradicted by such Scriptures as Colossians 1:17, where Paul writes: "And He (Christ) *Is* before all things, and by Him all things hold together (or endure)."

Of course, dualism could attempt to avoid the charge that *is* makes matter equally ultimate with God by arguing that matter can be viewed as being eternally dependent on God. But then we must ask the question, in what sense *is* matter dependent upon God? *Is* it dependent on God for its existence? Obviously not, if matter *is* eternal. Then what does "dependent" mean?

b. Emanationism

This view holds that the universe *is* of the same substance as God, and *is* the product of the overflow of the fullness of His being. Proposed by Plotinus, this view destroys the very idea of creation itself, and thereby does away with the Creator-creature distinction.

c. Creation from eternity

This view holds that, since there is no time with God, and since God created the universe with time or into time, therefore His initial act of creation must have occurred in eternity, and must therefore be eternal. Thus creation *is* an eternal act.

But what is an eternal act? Does it mean that God's initial act of creation has no effect for aeons before the coming into being of the matter energy complex, and then no effect afterwards? Or does it mean that God's initial act of creation is an eternal act of bringing into being the matter energy complex, thus ruling out any real beginning or ending of the universe? How then shall we understand Scriptural revelation, which speaks of a beginning and a consummation?

d. Naturalistic Evolutionism

This view holds to the eternity of matter. it contends that the appearances of the structured universe, of life, and of man are all products of natural forces operating randomly in time. It denies the necessity, the existence, and the meaning of a Creator.