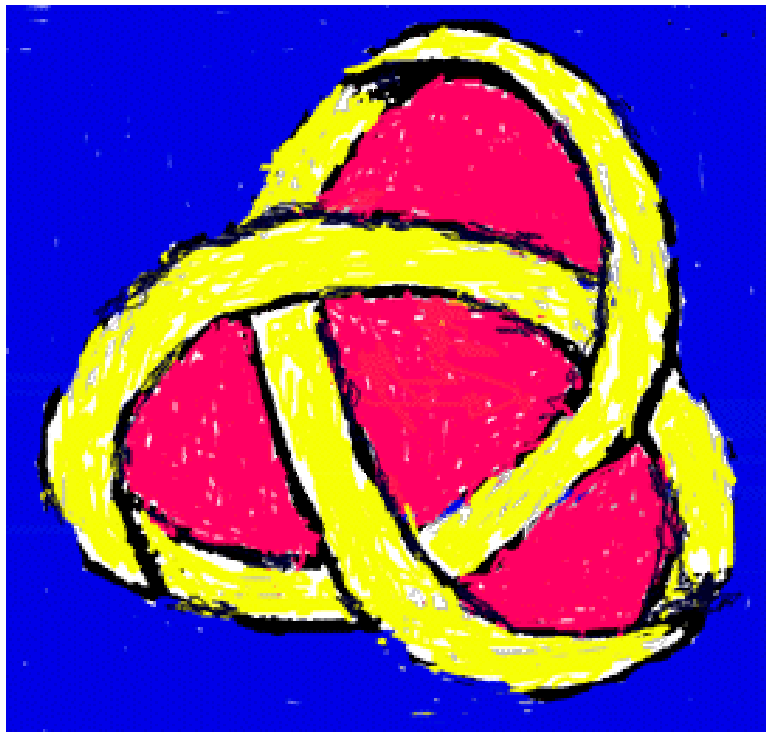


**GOD TRIUNE IN THE BEGINNING
— AND FOR THE 21ST CENTURY**



by

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"God Triune, at the beginning, created the tri-universe" (*cf.* Gen. 1:1*f*)

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In Genesis 1:1, "God" translates '*Elohiym* (PLURAL) — meaning: **three** or more Gods. It is used with the singular verb *bara'* — meaning: "**He** did create" (and **NOT** with the plural verb *baru'* meaning "**They** did create").

What that **three-in-one** God created, is said to be **TWO** "Heavens" (the DUAL *Shamayiym*) & **ONE** "Earth" (the SINGULAR '*Arets*). That totals a **THREE-IN-ONE** universe, alias a "tri-universe" created by "God Triune." This is what one would expect **such** a God to create — if and when He might unnecessarily condescend to create anything at all.

God Triune Himself has never changed. From eternity, God the Father and the Son and the Spirit has always been an un-begun and a never-ending Harmony — *Jehovah 'Elohiym*. Gen. 1:1f; 2:4f; Ex. 3:14f; 6:3; Isa. 6:3; 11:2; 63:7-10; Mal. 3:6; Mt. 28:19; Jn. 17:1-5; Heb. 9:14; Rev. 1:4-6; 4:2-8; 5:6f; 22:16-19f.

God Triune, at the beginning, created the tri-universe (two-heavens-and-one-earth). Gen. 1:1f. The first heaven is the air surrounding our earth, and an integral part thereof (Gen. 1:6). The second heaven is outer space, and the third heaven is the dwelling-place of God's good angels (II Cor. 12:2). All three, like the Three Persons within God Triune Himself, interpenetrate and overlap one another — which is quite what one would expect creatures of God Triune to do. Indeed, this is what Rev. Prof. Dr. Cornelius Van Til meant by "the one and the many." I Cor. 12:12-20.

This threeness-in-oneness or oneness-in-manyness can be seen throughout Genesis chapter one. Thus in this one creation account — within God Triune — there are clear inferences anent the Father, Word and Spirit (Gen. 1:1-3 & 1:26). There are two parallel series of three days each — on which God Triune respectively made light, and lights; the atmosphere/sea, and their inhabitants; and the dry land, and its inhabitants (Gen. 1:3-31).

On day one — He made light, evening, and morning (Gen. 1:3-5). On day two — He made the firmament, the waters below, and the waters above (Gen. 1:6-8). On day three — He made the grass, the herbs, and the trees (Gen. 1:9-13). On day four — He made the sun, the moon, and the stars; and for days, seasons, and years (Gen. 1:14-19). On day five — He made water-monsters, sea-creatures, and things with wings (Gen. 1:20-23).

On day six — He made reptiles, wild animals, and domestic animals; as well as men, as man and woman and child (Gen. 1:24-28). He then gave all of them three commands — to be fruitful, to multiply, and to fill the Earth (Gen.1:28); and then gave man herbs, fruit, and fish *etc.* (Gen. 1:29). Finally, on day seven — He ended and rested in and blessed all the work of His hands (Gen. 2:1-3).

Thus God Triune made also a triune mankind (husband/wife/child) as His own triune image. Gen. 1:26-28. Epiphanius and Witsius recognized that Adam knew God is Triune. Indeed, there is an intimate connection between the One-and-the-Many — in the Triune

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God on the one hand, and human respect for the life of all mankind as His image on the other. Gen. 9:1-7; I Cor. 12:3-20; Eph. 4:24-30f; Col. 3:10f; Jas. 3:8-18.

The earliest version of the *Apostles' Creed* simply states: "I believe in God the Almighty Father and Maker of Heaven and Earth...; and in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord...; [and] in the Holy Ghost." Progressing, the A.D. 381 *Nicaeno-Constantinopolitan Creed* adds that the Father made "all things visible and invisible." It declares of the Son that He was "begotten by the Father before all worlds"; that He is "God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God" — and that it is by the Son that "all things were made." It also states that "the Holy Ghost [is] the Lord and Giver of life, Who proceeds from the Father" and "Who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified."

Yet later, attempting to remove the very last traces of any possible subordinationism in her understanding of the Son's relationship to His Father, the Western Church declared in the eleventh century that the Spirit proceeds not only from the Father. Consequently, she added to the above creed also the word *Filioque* ("and from the Son"). Unfortunately, the Eastern Church did not follow suit, and so has lacked the subsequent dynamism of the Western Church (whether Roman Catholic or Protestant Reformed).

Calvin exalted the Son yet further, by declaring that **not just the Father but also the Son was Auto-Theos** ("Himself God") — not deriving His divinity from that of the Father. As a corrective to any Hyper-Pentecostal over-reaction toward Solopneumatism ("by the Spirit alone") — **the future Church of the twenty-first century should officially recognize that also the Holy Spirit is Auto-Theos**. For He has always essentially proceeded or gone forth — and keeps on proceeding — just as much as the Father essentially has always fathered or "paternalized" (and keeps on paternalizing), and just as much as the Son essentially has always been a son or "filiated" (and keeps on filiating).

Yet to guard against tritheizing (making three gods), the Church of the future should also stress: that the Father has never had auto-paternity; that the Son has never had auto-filiation; and that the Spirit has never had auto-procession. For the Father could never have paternalized from all eternity without there always having been a co-eternal Son in the power of the Spirit. Nor could the Son have filiated from all eternity without a co-eternal Father, in the power of the Spirit. Nor could the Spirit ever have proceeded from all eternity, without always having gone forth and always having continued to go forth from a co-eternal Father toward a co-eternal Son (and also *vice-versa* back again to the co-external Father).

Thus, the Father has never needed the Son or the Spirit — in order for the Father to be God. The Son has never needed the Son or the Spirit — in order for the Son to be God. And the Spirit has never needed the Father or the Son — in order for the Spirit to be God. Yet the Father has always needed the Son and the Spirit — in order for the Father always to have been the Father. The Son has always needed the Father and the Spirit — in order for the Son always to have been the Son. And the Spirit has always needed the Father and the Son — in order for the Spirit always to have been the Spirit. No Divine Person has ever needed the other Two, in order to be God. Each of the Three has always needed the

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other Two, in order to be a distinct Person. Thus it always was before the beginning, and also at the beginning. Thus it is now; and ever shall be — world without annihilatability. Amen.

Post-Christian Judaists, Moslems and 'Jehovah witnesses' all deny this. They believe in a unitarian god. But such would have been an eternally personality-less god without a face or *prosopon*, at least before creation. To have a face or *prosopon* or personality, one must be able to look into **other** faces or *prosopa* or personalities (Prov. 8:12,22-36; John 1:1-5,17; Heb. 1:8-10 & 9:14).

Especially for God to be a Person, He must always have had and always continue to have a Face or *Prosopon* or a Divine Personality — always interfacing with other Faces or *Prosopa* or Divine Personalities. Also tritheistic Mormons deny this. For **their** "Father" and "Son" and "Spirit" are not one but three different gods — not co-eternal, but emerging consecutively and accumulatively in an endless polytheistic series.

The Church-of-the-future will need to set out, also in the various inter-relationships of human society — the full implications of the Father's paternity, the Son's filiation, and the Spirit's procession. For the Church needs to distinguish the various personal attributes of the Deity ontically (within Himself) — from their application economically (within man's world).

The Church has distinguished between the Ontological Trinity and His economic coming into man's world. The Church now needs to distinguish between the Father's ontic and His economic paternity; between the Son's ontic and His economic filiation; and also between the Spirit's ontic and His economic procession. Yet, if the Church does not emphasize also those ongoing economic movements — she will undermine her own credibility and indeed also humanity's perception even of the ontic realities which undergird the economic movements. See: Tertullian, Novatian, Hilary, Augustine, Van Ruler, Rahner, and Van Til.

By the Father's economic paternity, we mean implementing the recognition by Christians — in His Church and in God's world — of the full theologico-socio-cultural implications of Mal. 2:10f & Eph. 3:14f. By the Son's economic filiation, we mean implementing the recognition by Christians — in His Church and in God's world — of the full theologico-socio-cultural implications of Prov. 30:4-11f & I Cor. 12:12-20f. By the Spirit's economic procession, we mean implementing Christians' recognition — in His Church and in God's World — of the full theologico-socio-cultural implications of Gen. 1:1-28 & Isa. 63:10-19 & II Cor. 3:8-18.

Also the Holy Tri-n-ity as such, should be seen as being reflected in the various tri-uni-ties within God's tri-uni-verse. Such would include: past-present-future (within time); the two-heavens-and-the-one-earth (within Genesis 1:1's primordial tri-uni-verse); length-breadth-height (within dimensions); the triadic chord (within music); blue-yellow-red (within the primary colours); father-mother-child (within families); Preachers-Elders-Deacons (within churches); Legislatures-Administrations-Judiciaries (within civic governments); Cities-States-Federations (within lands); and body-soul-spirit (within each

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human). Note that the latter presupposes neither tri- nor di-chotom-y, but tri-unity. Indeed, "*ashrey*" or triunely "blessed is the man" of God in Psalm 1:1f.

In Calvin's May 1537 *Letter to Grynee*, he wrote: "When we first heard that the Arian [or unitarian] heresy was imputed to us, and then a little afterwards the Sabellian [or modalistic] — none of these things very much disturbed us, seeing that our ears had long since been well seasoned against such calumnies.... Indeed, some short time previously [in 1536], we had drawn up and set forth a *Catechism*...where we testify that we embraced the Father, the Son and the Spirit under one essence of the Godhead — making nevertheless such a distinction between Each from the Other, that no room might be left for any crooked suspicion or ambiguity. We taught, certainly, that Christ is the true and natural Son of God Who had possessed the like essential Deity with the Father from all eternity....

"Our *Confession* was produced at length.... Christ was there affirmed to be that Jehovah Whom of Himself alone was always self-existent.... Certainly if the distinction between the **Father and the Word** be considered attentively, we shall say that the One is from the Other. However, if the essential quality of the Word be considered — insofar as He is one God with the Father, **whatever can be said concerning God [the Father] may also be applied to Him the Second Person in the glorious Trinity**.

"Now what is the meaning of the name Jehovah? What did that answer imply, which was spoken to Moses? **I AM THAT I AM!** Paul makes Christ the Author of this saying.... Nothing, indeed, could have been set forth more plainly — than the statement in our *Confession*, that Christ is that Eternal Word begotten by the Father **before all time**. Therefore, truly, unless we please to imagine a twofold deity — it behooves that we speak concerning His Essence not otherwise than as concerning the essence of the one God.... I consider this to be a matter of **great moment**.... *Adieu*; may the Lord Jesus fill you with His Spirit — so that with one mind and heart you may be enabled to extend the glory of His Name!"

The Trinitarian Solomon exclaimed in Prov. 22:20, "Have I not written to you excellent things in counsels and knowledge?" These English words "excellent things" translate the original Hebrew *shalishom* (meaning "thrice" or "in a threefold way"; cf. the B.C. 270 Septuagint translation's *trissoos*). Also Eccl. 4:12 adds that "the three-fold cord" (Hebrew *ha-m^e-shalash* and the LXX's *to en-tri-ton*) "is hard to break." So: "Fear the Triune God (*Ha-'Elohiym*), and keep His Commandments; for this is the whole duty of man! For the Triune God (*Ha-'Elohiym*) shall bring every work into judgment!" Eccl. 12:13f.

Both pan-culturally and also eschatologically (Rev. 22:1-17), the pure river of water of life "keeps on proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb.... Blessed are they that keep on doing His Commandments, so that they may have right to the tree of life.... I Jesus...am the Root.... And the Spirit and the bride keep on saying: 'Let him who is thirsty, come!'"

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God the Father created all things — and gave man His Law, in order that he should keep it. God the Son redeemed all things — and donated the human reward He received for His Own perfect keeping of God's Law as the Son of man, to those for whom He died and rose again and now rules from Heaven. And **God the Holy Spirit writes that Decalogical Law once again in their hearts.**

The Spirit Himself wrote His Law in the heart of man before the fall. He Himself is the very own indwelling Engine and Engineer, Who now gives His adopted children the desire and ability to walk in that Law — as their very own way of expressing their gratitude to the Triune God for so great a salvation freely given them by the Father through the Lord Jesus. Precisely the desire to keep God's Law is the mark of a Spirit-filled and Spirit-driven child of God!

So all praise to God, the uni-plural 'Elohiym! Everything is **from** Him, **through** Him, and **unto** Him. He created all; and for His pleasure they are; and were created. Gen. 1:1f; Matt. 28:19; Rom. 11:36; II Cor. 13:14; Rev. 1:4-6 & 4:11 *etc.*

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