

Genesis 1:1-31

by John Calvin

John Calvin's sermon on Genesis 1:1-31 explores the creation narrative, emphasizing God's sovereignty and the goodness of His creation.

Scripture: Genesis 1

Topics: "Creation Theology", "Gods Sovereignty"

Description

John Calvin preaches about the creation account in Genesis, emphasizing God's power and wisdom in creating the world out of nothing, forming it with order and purpose. He highlights the significance of God's approval of His creation, the special attention given to the creation of man in His image and likeness, and the responsibility and authority granted to humanity to rule over the earth. Calvin also addresses the importance of recognizing God's provision and care in sustaining His creation, urging gratitude and obedience to God's design and blessings.

Transcript

1. In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.
1. In principio creavit Deus coelum et terram.
2. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.
2. Terra autem erat informis et inanis; tenebraeque erant in superficie voraginis, et Spiritus Dei agitabat se in superficie aquarum.
3. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.
3. Et dixit Deus, Sit lux. Et fuit lux.
4. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.
4. Viditque Deus lucem quod bona esset; et devisit Deus lucem a tenebris.
5. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

5. Et vocavit Deus lucem, Diem: et tenebras vocavit Noctem. Fuitque vespera, et fuit mane dies primus.
6. And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.
6. Et dixit Deus, Sit extensio in medio aquarum, et devidat aquas ab aquis.
7. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so.
7. Et fecit Deus expansionem: et divisit aquas quae erant sub expansione, ab aquis quae erant super expansionem. Et fuit ita.
8. And God called the firmament Heaven. And the and the morning were the second day.
8. Vocavitque Deus expansionem Coelum. Et fuit vespera, et fuit mane dies secundus.
9. And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so.
9. Postea dixit Deus, Congrentur aquae quae sunt sub coelo, in locum unum, et appareat arida. Et fuit ita.
10. And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good.
10. Et vocavit Dues aridam, Terram: congregationem vero aquarum appellavit Maria. Et vidit Deus quod esset bonum.
11. And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.
11. Postea dixit Deus, Germinet terra germen, herbam seminificantem semen, arboram fructiferam, facientem fructum juxta speciem suam cui insit semen suum super terram. Et fuit ita.
12. And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good.
12. Et protulit terra germen, herbam seminificantem semen juxta speciem suam, et arborem facientem fructum cui semen suum inesset juxta speciem suam. Et vidit Deus quod esset bonum.
13. And the evening and the morning were the third day.
13. Et fuit vespera, et fuit mane dies tertius.
14. And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years:
14. Tunc dixit Deus, Sint luminaria in firmamentum coeli, ut dividant diem a nocte, et sint in signa, et stata tempora, et dies, et annos:
15. And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so.

15. Et sint in luminaria in expansione coeli, ut illuminent terram. Et fuit ita.

16. And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also.

16. Et fecit Deus duo luminaria magna: luminare majus in dominium diei, et luminare minus in dominium noctis, et stellas.

17. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth,

17. Posuitque ea Deus in expansione coeli, ut illuminarent terram:

18. And rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good.

18. Et ut dominarentur diei ac nocti, et dividerent lucem a tenebris: et vidit Deus quod esset bonum.

19. And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

19. Et fuit vespera, et fuit mane dies quartus.

20. And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.

20. Postea dixit Deus, Reperere faciant aquae reptile animae viventis, et volatile volet super terram in superficie expansionis coeli.

21. And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

21. Et creavit Deus cetos magnos, et omnem animam viventem, reptantem, quam reperere fecerunt aquae juxta species suas: et omne volatile alatum secundum speciem cujusque. Et vidit Deus quod esset bonum.

22. And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth.

22. Benedixitque eis, dicendo, Crescite et multiplicare vos, et replete aquas in maribus; et volatile multiplicet se in terra.

23. And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.

23. Et fuit vespera, et fuit mane dies quintus.

24. And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so.

24. Postea dixit Deus, Producat terra animam viventem secundum speciem suam, jumentum et reptile, et bestias terrae secundum speciem suam. Et fuit ita.

25. And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

25. Fecitque Deus bestiam terrae secundum speciem suam, et jumentum secundum speciem suam, et omne reptile terrae secundum speciem suam: et vidit Deus quod esset bonum.

26. And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

26. Et dixit Deus, Faciamus hominem in imagine nostra, secundum similitudinem nostram; et dominetur piscibus maris, et volatili coeli, et jumento, et omni terrae, et omni reptili reptanti super terram.

27. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

27. Creavit itaque Deus hominem ad imaginem suam, ad imaginem inquam Dei creavit illum: masculum et foeminam creavit eos.

28. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

28. Et benedixit illis Deus, dixitque ad eos Deus, Crescite, et multiplicare vos, et replete terram, et subjicite eam, et dominemini piscibus maris, et volatili coeli, et omni bestiae reptanti super terram.

29. And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.

29. Et dixit Deus, Ecce, dedi vobis omnium herbam seminificantem semen, quae est in superficie universa terrae, et omnem arborem in qua est fructus arboris seminificans semen: ut vobis sit in escam.

30. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to everything that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so.

30. Et omni bestiae terrae, et omni volatili coeli, et omni reptanti super terram in quo est anima vivans, omne olus herbae erit in escam. Et fuit ita.

31. And God saw every thing that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

31. Et vidit Deus omne quod fecerat, et ecce bonum valde. Et fuit vespera, et fuit mane dies sextus.

1. In the beginning. To expound the term "beginning," of Christ, is altogether frivolous. For Moses simply intends to assert that the world was not perfected at its very commencement, in the manner in which it is now seen, but that it was created an empty chaos of heaven and earth. His language therefore may be thus explained. When God in the beginning created the heaven and the earth, the earth was empty and waste. 35 He moreover teaches by the word "created," that what before did not exist was now made; for he has not used the term **■**, (yatsar,) which signifies to frame or forms but **■**, (bara,) which signifies to create. 36 Therefore his meaning is, that the world was made out of nothing. Hence the folly of those is refuted who imagine that unformed matter existed from eternity; and who gather nothing else from the narration of Moses than that the world was furnished with new ornaments, and received a form of which it was before destitute. This indeed was formerly a common fable among heathens, 37 who had

received only an obscure report of the creation, and who, according to custom, adulterated the truth of God with strange figments; but for Christian men to labor (as Steuchus does 38) in maintaining this gross error is absurd and intolerable. Let this, then be maintained in the first place, 39 that the world is not eternal but was created by God. There is no doubt that Moses gives the name of heaven and earth to that confused mass which he, shortly afterwards, (Ge 1:2.) denominates waters . The reason of which is, that this matter was to be the seed of the whole world. Besides, this is the generally recognized division of the world. 40

God. Moses has it Elohim , a noun of the plural number. Whence the inference is drawn, that the three Persons of the Godhead are here noted; but since, as a proof of so great a matter, it appears to me to have little solidity, will not insist upon the word; but rather caution readers to beware of violent glosses of this, kind. 41 They think that they have testimony against the Arians, to prove the Deity of the Son and of the Spirit, but in the meantime they involve themselves in the error of Sabellius, 42 because Moses afterwards subjoins that the Elohim had spoken, and that the Spirit of the Elohim rested upon the waters. If we suppose three persons to be here denoted, there will be no distinction between them. For it will follow, both that the Son is begotten by himself, and that the Spirit is not of the Father, but of himself. For me it is sufficient that the plural number expresses those powers which God exercised in creating the world. Moreover I acknowledge that the Scripture, although it recites many powers of the Godhead, yet always recalls us to the Father, and his Word, and spirit, as we shall shortly see. But those absurdities, to which I have alluded, forbid us with subtlety to distort what Moses simply declares concerning God himself, by applying it to the separate Persons of the Godhead. This, however, I regard as beyond controversy, that from the peculiar circumstance of the passage itself, a title is here ascribed to God, expressive of that powers which was previously in some way included in his eternal essence. 43

2. And the earth was without form and void. I shall not be very solicitous about the exposition of these two epithets, ■■■■, (tohu,) and ■■■■, (bohu.) The Hebrews use them when they designate anything empty and confused, or vain, and nothing worth. Undoubtedly Moses placed them both in opposition to all those created objects which pertain to the form, the ornament and the perfection of the world. Were we now to take away, I say, from the earth all that God added after the time here alluded to, then we should have this rude and unpolished, or rather shapeless chaos. 44 Therefore I regard what he immediately subjoins that "darkness was upon the face of the abyss," 45 as a part of that confused emptiness: because the light began to give some external appearance to the world. For the same reason he calls it the abyss and waters , since in that mass of matter nothing was solid or stable, nothing distinct.

And the Spirit of God Interpreters have wrested this passage in various ways. The opinion of some that it means the wind, is too frigid to require refutation. They who understand by it the Eternal Spirit of God, do rightly; yet all do not attain the meaning of Moses in the connection of his discourse; hence arise the various interpretations of the participle ■■■■■■, (merachepeth .) I will, in the first place, state what (in my judgment) Moses intended. We have already heard that before God had perfected the world it was an undigested mass; he now teaches that the power of the Spirit was necessary in order to sustain it. For this doubt might occur to the mind, how such a disorderly heap could stand; seeing that we now behold the world preserved by government, or order. 46 He therefore asserts that this mass, however confused it might be, was rendered stable, for the time, by the secret efficacy of the Spirit. Now there are two significations of the Hebrew word which suit the present place; either that the spirit moved and agitated itself over the waters, for the sake of putting forth vigor; or that He brooded over them to cherish them. 47 Inasmuch as it makes little difference in the result, whichever of these explanations is preferred, let the

reader's judgment be left free. But if that chaos required the secret inspiration of God to prevent its speedy dissolution; how could this order, so fair and distinct, subsist by itself, unless it derived strength elsewhere? Therefore, that Scripture must be fulfilled,

'Send forth thy Spirit, and they shall be created, and thou shalt renew the face of the earth,' (Ps 104:30;)

so, on the other hand, as soon as the Lord takes away his Spirit, all things return to their dust and vanish away, (Ps 104:29.)

3. And God said Moses now, for the first time, introduces God in the act of speaking , as if he had created the mass of heaven and earth without the Word. 48 Yet John testifies that

'without him nothing was made of the things which were made,' (Joh 1:3.)

And it is certain that the world had been begun by the same efficacy of the Word by which it was completed. God, however, did not put forth his Word until he proceeded to originate light; 49 because in the act of distinguishing 50 his wisdom begins to be conspicuous. Which thing alone is sufficient to confute the blasphemy of Servetus. This impure caviler asserts, 51 that the first beginning of the Word was when God commanded the light to be; as if the cause, truly, were not prior to its effect. Since however by the Word of God things which were not came suddenly into being, we ought rather to infer the eternity of His essence. Wherefore the Apostles rightly prove the Deity of Christ from hence, that since he is the Word of God, all things have been created by him. Servetus imagines a new quality in God when he begins to speak. But far otherwise must we think concerning the Word of God, namely, that he is the Wisdom dwelling in God, 52 and without which God could never be; the effect of which, however, became apparent when the light was created. 53

Let there be light It we proper that the light, by means of which the world was to be adorned with such excellent beauty, should be first created; and this also was the commencement of the distinction, (among the creatures. 54) It did not, however, happen from inconsideration or by accident, that the light preceded the sun and the moon. To nothing are we more prone than to tie down the power of God to those instruments the agency of which he employs. The sun an moon supply us with light: And, according to our notions we so include this power to give light in them, that if they were taken away from the world, it would seem impossible for any light to remain. Therefore the Lord, by the very order of the creation, bears witness that he holds in his hand the light, which he is able to impart to us without the sun and moon. Further, it is certain from the context, that the light was so created as to be interchanged with darkness. But it may be asked, whether light and darkness succeeded each other in turn through the whole circuit of the world; or whether the darkness occupied one half of the circle, while light shone in the other. There is, however, no doubt that the order of their succession was alternate, but whether it was everywhere day at the same time, and everywhere night also, I would rather leave undecided; nor is it very necessary to be known. 55

4 And God saw the light Here God is introduced by Moses as surveying his work, that he might take pleasure in it. But he does it for our sake, to teach us that God has made nothing without a certain reason and design. And we ought not so to understand the words of Moses as if God did not know that his work was good, till it was finished. But the meaning of the passage is, that the work, such as we now see it, was approved by God. Therefore nothing remains for us, but to acquiesce in this judgment of God. And this admonition is very useful. For whereas man ought to apply all his senses to the admiring contemplation of the works of God, 56 we see what license he really allows himself in detracting from them.

5. And God called the light That is, God willed that there should be a regular vicissitude of days and nights; which also followed immediately when the first day was ended. For God removed the light from view, that night might be the commencement of another day. What Moses says however, admits a double interpretation; either that this was the evening and morning belonging to the first day, or that the first day consisted of the evening and the morning. Whichever interpretation be chosen, it makes no difference in the sense, for he simply understands the day to have been made up of two parts. Further, he begins the day, according to the custom of his nation, with the evening. It is to no purpose to dispute whether this be the best and the legitimate order or not. We know that darkness preceded time itself; when God withdrew the light, he closed the day. I do not doubt that the most ancient fathers, to whom the coming night was the end of one day and the beginning of another, followed this mode of reckoning. Although Moses did not intend here to prescribe a rule which it would be criminal to violate; yet (as we have now said) he accommodated his discourse to the received custom. Wherefore, as the Jews foolishly condemn all the reckonings of other people, as if God had sanctioned this alone; so again are they equally foolish who contend that this modest reckoning, which Moses approves, is preposterous.

The first day Here the error of those is manifestly refuted, who maintain that the world was made in a moment. For it is too violent a cavil to contend that Moses distributes the work which God perfected at once into six days, for the mere purpose of conveying instruction. Let us rather conclude that God himself took the space of six days, for the purpose of accommodating his works to the capacity of men. We slightly pass over the infinite glory of God, which here shines forth; whence arises this but from our excessive dullness in considering his greatness? In the meantime, the vanity of our minds carries us away elsewhere. For the correction of this fault, God applied the most suitable remedy when he distributed the creation of the world into successive portions, that he might fix our attention, and compel us, as if he had laid his hand upon us, to pause and to reflect. For the confirmation of the gloss above alluded to, a passage from Ecclesiasticus is unskillfully cited. 'He who liveth for ever created all things at once,' (Ecclesiasticus 18:1.) For the Greek adverb **κοινῶς** which the writer uses, means no such thing, nor does it refer to time, but to all things universally. 57

6 Let there be a firmament 58 The work of the second day is to provide an empty space around the circumference of the earth, that heaven and earth may not be mixed together. For since the proverb, 'to mingle heaven and earth,' denotes the extreme of disorder, this distinction ought to be regarded as of great importance. Moreover, the word **ρακία** (rakia) comprehends not only the whole region of the air, but whatever is open above us: as the word heaven is sometimes understood by the Latins.

Thus the arrangement, as well of the heavens as of the lower atmosphere, is called **ρακία** (rakia) without discrimination between them, but sometimes the word signifies both together sometimes one part only, as will appear more plainly in our progress. I know not why the Greeks have chosen to render the word **στρωμα**, which the Latins have imitated in the term, firmamentum; 59 for literally it means expanse . And to this David alludes when he says that 'the heavens are stretched out by God like a curtain,' (Ps 104:2.)

If any one should inquire whether this vacuity did not previously exist, I answer, however true it may be that all parts of the earth were not overflowed by the waters; yet now, for the first time, a separation was ordained, whereas a confused admixture had previously existed. Moses describes the special use of this expanse, to divide the waters from the waters from which word arises a great difficulty. For it appears opposed to common sense, and quite incredible, that there should be waters above the heaven.

Hence some resort to allegory, and philosophize concerning angels; but quite beside the purpose. For, to my mind, this is a certain principle, that nothing is here treated of but the visible form of the world. He who would learn astronomy, 60 and other recondite arts, let him go elsewhere. Here the Spirit of God would teach all men without exception; and therefore what Gregory declares falsely and in vain respecting statues and pictures is truly applicable to the history of the creation, namely, that it is the book of the unlearned. 61 The things, therefore, which he relates, serve as the garniture of that theater which he places before our eyes.

Whence I conclude, that the waters here meant are such as the rude and unlearned may perceive. The assertion of some, that they embrace by faith what they have read concerning the waters above the heavens, notwithstanding their ignorance respecting them, is not in accordance with the design of Moses. And truly a longer inquiry into a matter open and manifest is superfluous. We see that the clouds suspended in the air, which threaten to fall upon our heads, yet leave us space to breathe. 62 They who deny that this is effected by the wonderful providence of God, are vainly inflated with the folly of their own minds.

We know, indeed that the rain is naturally produced; but the deluge sufficiently shows how speedily we might be overwhelmed by the bursting of the clouds, unless the cataracts of heaven were closed by the hand of God. Nor does David rashly recount this among His miracles, that God layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters, (Ps 104:31;) and he elsewhere calls upon the celestial waters to praise God, (Ps 148:4.) Since, therefore, God has created the clouds, and assigned them a region above us, it ought not to be forgotten that they are restrained by the power of God, lest, gushing forth with sudden violence, they should swallow us up: and especially since no other barrier is opposed to them than the liquid and yielding, air, which would easily give way unless this word prevailed, 'Let there be an expanse between the waters.'

Yet Moses has not affixed to the work of this day the note that God saw that it was good: perhaps because there was no advantage from it till the terrestrial waters were gathered into their proper place, which was done on the next day, and therefore it is there twice repeated. 63

9. Let the waters... be gathered together This also is an illustrious miracle, that the waters by their departure have given a dwelling-place to men. For even philosophers allow that the natural position of the waters was to cover the whole earth, as Moses declares they did in the beginning; first, because being an element, it must be circular, and because this element is heavier than the air, and lighter than the earth, it ought cover the latter in its whole circumference. 64 But that the seas, being gathered together as on heaps, should give place for man, is seemingly preternatural; and therefore Scripture often extols the goodness of God in this particular. See Ps 33:7,

'He has gathered the waters together on a heap,
and has laid them up in his treasures.'

Also Ps 78:13,

'He has collected the waters as into a bottle.' 65

Jer 5:22,

'Will ye not fear me? will ye not tremble at my presence,

who have placed the sand as the boundary of the sea?'

Job 38:8,

'Who has shut up the sea with doors? Have not I surrounded it with gates and bars?

I have said,

Hitherto shalt thou proceed; here shall thy swelling waves be broken.'

Let us, therefore, know that we are dwelling on dry ground, because God, by his command, has removed the waters that they should not overflow the whole earth.

11. Let the earth bring forth grass Hitherto the earth was naked and barren, now the Lord fructifies it by his word. For though it was already destined to bring forth fruit, yet till new virtue proceeded from the mouth of God, it must remain dry and empty. For neither was it naturally fit to produce anything, nor had it a germinating principle from any other source, till the mouth of the Lord was opened. For what David declares concerning the heavens, ought also to be extended to the earth; that it was

'made by the word of the Lord, and was adorned and furnished by the breath of his mouth,' (Ps 33:6.)

Moreover, it did not happen fortuitously, that herbs and trees were created before the sun and moon. We now see, indeed, that the earth is quickened by the sun to cause it to bring forth its fruits; nor was God ignorant of this law of nature, which he has since ordained: but in order that we might learn to refer all things to him he did not then make use of the sun or moon. 66 He permits us to perceive the efficacy which he infuses into them, so far as he uses their instrumentality; but because we are wont to regard as part of their nature properties which they derive elsewhere, it was necessary that the vigor which they now seem to impart to the earth should be manifest before they were created. We acknowledge, it is true, in words, that the First Cause is self-sufficient, and that intermediate and secondary causes have only what they borrow from this First Cause; but, in reality, we picture God to ourselves as poor or imperfect, unless he is assisted by second causes. How few, indeed, are there who ascend higher than the sun when they treat of the fecundity of the earth? What therefore we declare God to have done designedly, was indispensably necessary; that we may learn from the order of the creation itself, that God acts through the creatures, not as if he needed external help, but because it was his pleasure. When he says, 'Let the earth bring forth the herb which may produce seed, the tree whose seed is in itself,' he signifies not only that herbs and trees were then created, but that, at the same time, both were endued with the power of propagation, in order that their several species might be perpetuated. Since, therefore, we daily see the earth pouring forth to us such riches from its lap, since we see the herbs producing seed, and this seed received and cherished in the bosom of the earth till it springs forth, and since we see trees shooting from other trees; all this flows from the same Word. If therefore we inquire, how it happens that the earth is fruitful, that the germ is produced from the seed, that fruits come to maturity, and their various kinds are annually reproduced; no other cause will be found, but that God has once spoken, that is, has issued his eternal decree; and that the earth, and all things proceeding from it, yield obedience to the command of God, which they always hear.

14. Let there be lights 67 Moses passes onwards to the fourth day, on which the stars were made. God had before created the light, but he now institutes a new order in nature, that the sun should be the dispenser of diurnal light, and the moon and stars should shine by night. And He assigns them this office,

to teach us that all creatures are subject to his will, and execute what he enjoins upon them. For Moses relates nothing else than that God ordained certain instruments to diffuse through the earth, by reciprocal changes, that light which had been previously created. The only difference is this, that the light was before dispersed, but now proceeds from lucid bodies; which in serving this purpose, obey the command of God.

To divide the day from the night He means the artificial day, which begins at the rising of the sun and ends at its setting. For the natural day (which he mentions above) includes in itself the night. Hence infer, that the interchange of days and nights shall be continual: because the word of God, who determined that the days should be distinct from the nights, directs the course of the sun to this end.

Let them be for signs It must be remembered, that Moses does not speak with philosophical acuteness on occult mysteries, but relates those things which are everywhere observed, even by the uncultivated, and which are in common use. A twofold advantage is chiefly perceived from the course of the sun and moon; the one is natural, the other applies to civil institutions. 68 Under the term nature, I also comprise agriculture. For although sowing and reaping require human art and industry; this, nevertheless, is natural, that the sun, by its nearer approach, warms our earth, that he introduces the vernal season, that he is the cause of summer and autumn. But that, for the sake of assisting their memory, men number among themselves years and months; that of these, they form lustra and olympiads; that they keep stated days; this I say, is peculiar to civil polity. Of each of these mention is here made. I must, however, in a few words, state the reason why Moses calls them signs; because certain inquisitive persons abuse this passages to give color to their frivolous predictions: I call those men Chaldeans and fanatics, who divine everything from the aspects of the stars. 69 Because Moses declares that the sun and moon were appointed for signs, they think themselves entitled to elicit from them anything they please. But confutation is easy: for they are called signs of certain things, not signs to denote whatever is according to our fancy. What indeed does Moses assert to be signified by them, except things belonging to the order of nature? For the same God who here ordains signs testifies by Isaiah that he 'will dissipate the signs of the diviners,' (Isa 44:25;) and forbids us to be 'dismayed at the signs of heaven,' (Jer 10:2.) But since it is manifest that Moses does not depart from the ordinary custom of men, I desist from a longer discussion. The word מוֹדִימוֹת (moadim,) which they translate 'certain times', is variously understood among the Hebrews: for it signifies both time and place, and also assemblies of persons. The Rabbis commonly explain the passage as referring to their festivals. But I extend it further to mean, in the first place, the opportunities of time, which in French are called saisons, (seasons;) and then all fairs and forensic assemblies. 70 Finally, Moses commemorates the unbounded goodness of God in causing the sun and moon not only to enlighten us, but to afford us various other advantages for the daily use of life. It remains that we, purely enjoying the multiplied bounties of God, should learn not to profane such excellent gifts by our preposterous abuse of them. In the meantime, let us admire this wonderful Artificer, who has so beautifully arranged all things above and beneath, that they may respond to each other in most harmonious concert.

15. Let them be for lights It is well again to repeat what I have said before, that it is not here philosophically discussed, how great the sun is in the heaven, and how great, or how little, is the moon; but how much light comes to us from them. 71 For Moses here addresses himself to our senses, that the knowledge of the gifts of God which we enjoy may not glide away. Therefore, in order to apprehend the meaning of Moses, it is to no purpose to soar above the heavens; let us only open our eyes to behold this light which God enkindles for us in the earth. By this method (as I have before observed) the dishonesty of those men is sufficiently rebuked, who censure Moses for not speaking with greater exactness. For as it became a

theologian, he had respect to us rather than to the stars. Nor, in truth, was he ignorant of the fact, that the moon had not sufficient brightness to enlighten the earth, unless it borrowed from the sun; but he deemed it enough to declare what we all may plainly perceive, that the moon is a dispenser of light to us. That it is, as the astronomers assert, an opaque body, I allow to be true, while I deny it to be a dark body. For, first, since it is placed above the element of fire, it must of necessity be a fiery body. Hence it follows, that it is also luminous; but seeing that it has not light sufficient to penetrate to us, it borrows what is wanting from the sun. He calls it a lesser light by comparison; because the portion of light which it emits to us is small compared with the infinite splendor of the sun. 72

16. The greater light I have said, that Moses does not here subtilely descant, as a philosopher, on the secrets of nature, as may be seen in these words. First, he assigns a place in the expanse of heaven to the planets and stars; but astronomers make a distinction of spheres, and, at the same time, teach that the fixed stars have their proper place in the firmament. Moses makes two great luminaries; but astronomers prove, by conclusive reasons that the star of Saturn, which on account of its great distance, appears the least of all, is greater than the moon. Here lies the difference; Moses wrote in a popular style things which without instruction, all ordinary persons, endued with common sense, are able to understand; but astronomers investigate with great labor whatever the sagacity of the human mind can comprehend. Nevertheless, this study is not to be reprobated, nor this science to be condemned, because some frantic persons are wont boldly to reject whatever is unknown to them. For astronomy is not only pleasant, but also very useful to be known: it cannot be denied that this art unfolds the admirable wisdom of God. Wherefore, as ingenious men are to be honored who have expended useful labor on this subject, so they who have leisure and capacity ought not to neglect this kind of exercise. Nor did Moses truly wish to withdraw us from this pursuit in omitting such things as are peculiar to the art; but because he was ordained a teacher as well of the unlearned and rude as of the learned, he could not otherwise fulfill his office than by descending to this grosser method of instruction. Had he spoken of things generally unknown, the uneducated might have pleaded in excuse that such subjects were beyond their capacity. Lastly since the Spirit of God here opens a common school for all, it is not surprising that he should chiefly choose those subjects which would be intelligible to all. If the astronomer inquires respecting the actual dimensions of the stars, he will find the moon to be less than Saturn; but this is something abstruse, for to the sight it appears differently. Moses, therefore, rather adapts his discourse to common usage. For since the Lord stretches forth, as it were, his hand to us in causing us to enjoy the brightness of the sun and moon, how great would be our ingratitude were we to close our eyes against our own experience? There is therefore no reason why janglers should deride the unskilfulness of Moses in making the moon the second luminary; for he does not call us up into heaven, he only proposes things which lie open before our eyes. Let the astronomers possess their more exalted knowledge; but, in the meantime, they who perceive by the moon the splendor of night, are convicted by its use of perverse ingratitude unless they acknowledge the beneficence of God.

To rule 73 He does not ascribe such dominion to the sun and moon as shall, in the least degree, diminish the power of God; but because the sun, in half the circuit of heaven, governs the day, and the moon the night, by turns; he therefore assigns to them a kind of government. Yet let us remember, that it is such a government as implies that the sun is still a servant, and the moon a handmaid. In the meantime, we dismiss the reverie of Plato who ascribes reason and intelligence to the stars. Let us be content with this simple exposition, that God governs the days and nights by the ministry of the sun and moon, because he has them as his charioteers to convey light suited to the season.

20. Let the waters bring forth... the moving creature 74 On the fifth day the birds and fishes are created. The blessing of God is added, that they may of themselves produce offspring. Here is a different kind of propagation from that in herbs and trees: for there the power of fructifying is in the plants, and that of germinating is in the seed; but here generation takes place. It seems, however, but little consonant with reason, that he declares birds to have proceeded from the waters; and, therefore this is seized upon by captious men as an occasion of calumny. But although there should appear no other reason but that it so pleased God, would it not be becoming in us to acquiesce in his judgment? Why should it not be lawful for him, who created the world out of nothing, to bring forth the birds out of water? And what greater absurdity, I pray, has the origin of birds from the water, than that of the light from darkness? Therefore, let those who so arrogantly assail their Creator, look for the Judge who shall reduce them to nothing. Nevertheless if we must use physical reasoning in the contest, we know that the water has greater affinity with the air than the earth has. But Moses ought rather to be listened to as our teacher, who would transport us with admiration of God through the consideration of his works. 75 And, truly, the Lord, although he is the Author of nature, yet by no means has followed nature as his guide in the creation of the world, but has rather chosen to put forth such demonstrations of his power as should constrain us to wonder.

21. And God created A question here arises out of the word created . For we have before contended, that because the world was created, it was made out of nothing; but now Moses says that things formed from other matter were created. They who truly and properly assert that the fishes were created because the waters were in no way sufficient or suitable for their production, only resort to a subterfuge: for, in the meantime, the fact would remain that the material of which they were made existed before; which, in strict propriety, the word created does not admit. I therefore do not restrict the creation here spoken of to the work of the fifth day, but rather suppose it to refer to that shapeless and confused mass, which was as the fountain of the whole world. 76 God then, it is said, created whales (balaenas) and other fishes, not that the beginning of their creation is to be reckoned from the moment in which they receive their form; but because they are comprehended in the universal matter which was made out of nothing. So that, with respect to species, form only was then added to them; but creation is nevertheless a term truly used respecting both the whole and the parts. The word commonly rendered whales (cetos vel cete) might in my judgment be not improperly translated thynnus or tunny fish , as corresponding with the Hebrew word thananim. 77

When he says that "the waters brought forth," 78 he proceeds to commend the efficacy of the word, which the waters hear so promptly, that, though lifeless in themselves, they suddenly teem with a living offspring, yet the language of Moses expresses more; namely, that fishes innumerable are daily produced from the waters, because that word of God, by which he once commanded it, is continually in force.

22. And God blessed them What is the force of this benediction he soon declares. For God does not, after the manner of men, pray that we may be blessed; but, by the bare intimation of his purpose, effects what men seek by earnest entreaty. He therefore blesses his creatures when he commands them to increase and grow; that is, he infuses into them fecundity by his word. But it seems futile for God to address fishes and reptiles. I answer, this mode of speaking was no other than that which might be easily understood. For the experiment itself teaches, that the force of the word which was addressed to the fishes was not transient, but rather, being infused into their nature, has taken root, and constantly bears fruit.

24. Let the earth bring forth He descends to the sixth day, on which the animals were created, and then man. 'Let the earth,' he says, 'bring forth living creatures.' But whence has a dead element life? Therefore,

there is in this respect a miracle as great as if God had begun to create out of nothing those things which he commanded to proceed from the earth. And he does not take his material from the earth, because he needed it, but that he might the better combine the separate parts of the world with the universe itself. Yet it may be inquired, why He does not here also add his benediction? I answer, that what Moses before expressed on a similar occasion is here also to be understood, although he does not repeat it word for word. I say, moreover, it is sufficient for the purpose of signifying the same thing, 79 that Moses declares animals were created 'according to their species:' for this distribution carried with it something stable. It may even hence be inferred, that the offspring of animals was included. For to what purpose do distinct species exist, unless that individuals, by their several kinds, may be multiplied? 80

Cattle 81 Some of the Hebrews thus distinguish between "cattle" and "beasts of the earth," that the cattle feed on herbage, but that the beasts of the earth are they which eat flesh. But the Lord, a little while after, assigns herbs to both as their common food; and it may be observed, that in several parts of Scripture these two words are used indiscriminately. Indeed, I do not doubt that Moses, after he had named Behemoth, (cattle,) added the other, for the sake of fuller explanation. By 'reptiles,' 82 in this place, understand those which are of an earthly nature.

26. Let us make man 83 Although the tense here used is the future, all must acknowledge that this is the language of one apparently deliberating. Hitherto God has been introduced simply as commanding; now, when he approaches the most excellent of all his works, he enters into consultation. God certainly might here command by his bare word what he wished to be done: but he chose to give this tribute to the excellency of man, that he would, in a manner, enter into consultation concerning his creation. This is the highest honor with which he has dignified us; to a due regard for which, Moses, by this mode of speaking would excite our minds. For God is not now first beginning to consider what form he will give to man, and with what endowments it would be fitting to adorn him, nor is he pausing as over a work of difficulty: but, just as we have before observed, that the creation of the world was distributed over six days, for our sake, to the end that our minds might the more easily be retained in the meditation of God's works: so now, for the purpose of commending to our attention the dignity of our nature, he, in taking counsel concerning the creation of man, testifies that he is about to undertake something great and wonderful. Truly there are many things in this corrupted nature which may induce contempt; but if you rightly weigh all circumstances, man is, among other creatures a certain preeminent specimen of Divine wisdom, justice, and goodness, so that he is deservedly called by the ancients μικροκοσμος, "a world in miniature." But since the Lord needs no other counsellor, there can be no doubt that he consulted with himself. The Jews make themselves altogether ridiculous, in pretending that God held communication with the earth or with angels. 84 The earth, forsooth, was a most excellent adviser! And to ascribe the least portion of a work so exquisite to angels, is a sacrilege to be held in abhorrence. Where, indeed, will they find that we were created after the image of the earth, or of angels? Does not Moses directly exclude all creatures in express terms, when he declares that Adam was created after the image of God? Others who deem themselves more acute, but are doubly infatuated, say that God spoke of himself in the plural number, according to the custom of princes. As if, in truth, that barbarous style of speaking, which has grown into use within a few past centuries, had, even then, prevailed in the world. But it is well that their canine wickedness has been joined with a stupidity so great, that they betray their folly to children. Christians, therefore, properly contend, from this testimony, that there exists a plurality of Persons in the Godhead. God summons no foreign counsellor; hence we infer that he finds within himself something distinct; as, in truth, his eternal wisdom and power reside within him. 85

In our image, etc Interpreters do not agree concerning the meaning of these words. The greater part, and nearly all, conceive that the word image is to be distinguished from likeness. And the common distinction is, that image exists in the substance, likeness in the accidents of anything. They who would define the subject briefly, say that in the image are contained those endowments which God has conferred on human nature at large, while they expound likeness to mean gratuitous gifts. 86 But Augustine, beyond all others, speculates with excessive refinement, for the purpose of fabricating a Trinity in man.

For in laying hold of the three faculties of the soul enumerated by Aristotle, the intellect, the memory, and the will, he afterwards out of one Trinity derives many. If any reader, having leisure, wishes to enjoy such speculations, let him read the tenth and fourteenth books on the Trinity, also the eleventh book of the "City of God." I acknowledge, indeed, that there is something in man which refers to the Fathers and the Son, and the Spirit: and I have no difficulty in admitting the above distinction of the faculties of the soul: although the simpler division into two parts, which is more used in Scripture, is better adapted to the sound doctrine of piety; but a definition of the image of God ought to rest on a firmer basis than such subtleties.

As for myself, before I define the image of God, I would deny that it differs from his likeness. For when Moses afterwards repeats the same things he passes over the likeness, and contents himself with mentioning the image. Should any one take the exception, that he was merely studying brevity; I answer, 87 that where he twice uses the word image, he makes no mention of the likeness. We also know that it was customary with the Hebrews to repeat the same thing in different words. besides, the phrase itself shows that the second term was added for the sake of explanation, 'Let us make,' he says, 'man in our image, according to our likeness,' that is, that he may be like God, or may represent the image of God.

Lastly, in the fifth chapter, without making any mention of image, he puts likeness in its place, (Ge 5:1.) Although we have set aside all difference between the two words we have not yet ascertained what this image or likeness is. The Anthropomorphites were too gross in seeking this resemblance in the human body; let that reverie therefore remain entombed. Others proceed with a little more subtlety, who, though they do not imagine God to be corporeal, yet maintain that the image of God is in the body of man, because his admirable workmanship there shines brightly; but this opinion, as we shall see, is by no means consonant with Scripture.

The exposition of Chrysostom is not more correct, who refers to the dominion which was given to man in order that he might, in a certain sense, act as God's viceroy in the government of the world. This truly is some portion, though very small, of the image of God. Since the image of God had been destroyed in us by the fall, we may judge from its restoration what it originally had been. Paul says that we are transformed into the image of God by the gospel. And, according to him, spiritual regeneration is nothing else than the restoration of the same image. (Col 3:10, and Eph 4:23.)

That he made this image to consist in righteousness and true holiness, is by the figure synecdochee; 88 for though this is the chief part, it is not the whole of God's image. Therefore by this word the perfection of our whole nature is designated, as it appeared when Adam was endued with a right judgment, had affections in harmony with reason, had all his senses sound and well-regulated, and truly excelled in everything good. Thus the chief seat of the Divine image was in his mind and heart, where it was eminent: yet was there no part of him in which some scintillations of it did not shine forth.

For there was an attempering in the several parts of the soul, which corresponded with their various offices. 89 In the mind perfect intelligence flourished and reigned, uprightness attended as its companion,

and all the senses were prepared and moulded for due obedience to reason; and in the body there was a suitable correspondence with this internal order. But now, although some obscure lineaments of that image are found remaining in us; yet are they so vitiated and maimed, that they may truly be said to be destroyed. For besides the deformity which everywhere appears unsightly, this evil also is added, that no part is free from the infection of sin.

In our image, after our likeness I do not scrupulously insist upon the particles **■**, (beth,) and **■**, (caph 90) I know not whether there is anything solid in the opinion of some who hold that this is said, because the image of God was only shadowed forth in man till he should arrive at his perfection. The thing indeed is true; but I do not think that anything of the kind entered the mind of Moses. 91 It is also truly said that Christ is the only image of the Fathers but yet the words of Moses do not bear the interpretation that "in the image" means "in Christ." It may also be added, that even man, though in a different respects is called the image of God. In which thing some of the Fathers are deceived who thought that they could defeat the Asians with this weapon that Christ alone is God's, image. This further difficulty is also to be encountered, namely, why Paul should deny the woman to be the image of God, when Moses honors both, indiscriminately, with this title. The solution is short; Paul there alludes only to the domestic relation. He therefore restricts the image of God to government , in which the man has superiority over the wife and certainly he meant nothing more than that man is superior in the degree of honor. But here the question is respecting that glory of God which peculiarly shines forth in human nature, where the mind, the will, and all the senses, represent the Divine order.

And let them have dominion 92 Here he commemorates that part of dignity with which he decreed to honor man, namely, that he should have authority over all living creatures. He appointed man, it is true, lord of the world; but he expressly subjects the animals to him, because they having an inclination or instinct of their own, 93 seem to be less under authority from without. The use of the plural number intimates that this authority was not given to Adam only, but to all his posterity as well as to him. And hence we infer what was the end for which all things were created; namely, that none of the conveniences and necessities of life might be wanting to men. In the very order of the creation the paternal solicitude of God for man is conspicuous, because he furnished the world with all things needful, and even with an immense profusion of wealth, before he formed man. Thus man was rich before he was born. But if God had such care for us before we existed, he will by no means leave us destitute of food and of other necessities of life, now that we are placed in the world. Yet, that he often keeps his hand as if closed is to be imputed to our sins.

27. So God created man The reiterated mention of the image of God is not a vain repetition. For it is a remarkable instance of the Divine goodness which can never be sufficiently proclaimed. And, at the same time, he admonishes us from what excellence we have fallen, that he may excite in us the desire of its recovery. When he soon afterwards adds, that God created them male and female, he commends to us that conjugal bond by which the society of mankind is cherished. For this form of speaking, God created man, male and female created he them, is of the same force as if he had said, that the man himself was incomplete. 94 Under these circumstances, the woman was added to him as a companion that they both might be one, as he more clearly expresses it in the second chapter. Malachi also means the same thing when he relates, (Ge 2:15,) that one man was created by God, whilst, nevertheless, he possessed the fullness of the Spirit. 95 For he there treats of conjugal fidelity, which the Jews were violating by their polygamy. For the purpose of correcting this fault, he calls that pair, consisting of man and woman, which God in the beginning had joined together, one man , in order that every one might learn to be content with

his own wife.

28. And God blessed them This blessing of God may be regarded as the source from which the human race has flowed. And we must so consider it not only with reference to the whole, but also, as they say, in every particular instance. For we are fruitful or barren in respect of offspring, as God imparts his power to some and withholds it from others. But here Moses would simply declare that Adam with his wife was formed for the production of offspring, in order that men might replenish the earth. God could himself indeed have covered the earth with a multitude of men; but it was his will that we should proceed from one fountain, in order that our desire of mutual concord might be the greater, and that each might the more freely embrace the other as his own flesh. Besides, as men were created to occupy the earth, so we ought certainly to conclude that God has mapped, as with a boundary, that space of earth which would suffice for the reception of men, and would prove a suitable abode for them. Any inequality which is contrary to this arrangement is nothing else than a corruption of nature which proceeds from sin. In the meantime, however, the benediction of God so prevails that the earth everywhere lies open that it may have its inhabitants, and that an immense multitude of men may find, in some part of the globe, their home. Now, what I have said concerning marriage must be kept in mind; that God intends the human race to be multiplied by generation indeed, but not, as in brute animals, by promiscuous intercourse. For he has joined the man to his wife, that they might produce a divine, that is, a legitimate seed. Let us then mark whom God here addresses when he commands them to increase, and to whom he limits his benediction. Certainly he does not give the reins to human passions, 96 but, beginning at holy and chaste marriage, he proceeds to speak of the production of offspring. For this is also worthy of notice, that Moses here briefly alludes to a subject which he afterwards means more fully to explain, and that the regular series of the history is inverted, yet in such a way as to make the true succession of events apparent. The question, however, is proposed, whether fornicators and adulterers become fruitful by the power of God; which, if it be true, then whether the blessing of God is in like manner extended to them? I answer, this is a corruption of the Divine institute; and whereas God produces offspring from this muddy pool, as well as from the pure fountain of marriage, this will tend to their greater destruction. Still that pure and lawful method of increase, which God ordained from the beginning, remains firm; this is that law of nature which common sense declares to be inviolable.

Subdue it He confirms what he had before said respecting dominion. Man had already been created with this condition, that he should subject the earth to himself; but now, at length, he is put in possession of his right, when he hears what has been given to him by the Lord: and this Moses expresses still more fully in the next verse, when he introduces God as granting to him the herbs and the fruits. For it is of great importance that we touch nothing of God's bounty but what we know he has permitted us to do; since we cannot enjoy anything with a good conscience, except we receive it as from the hand of God. And therefore Paul teaches us that, in eating and drinking we always sin, unless faith be present, (Ro 14:23.) Thus we are instructed to seek from God alone whatever is necessary for us, and in the very use of his gifts, we are to exercise ourselves in meditating on his goodness and paternal care. For the words of God are to this effect: 'Behold, I have prepared food for thee before thou wast formed; acknowledge me, therefore, as thy Father, who have so diligently provided for thee when thou wast not yet created. Moreover, my solicitude for thee has proceeded still further; it was thy business to nurture the things provided for thee, but I have taken even this charge also upon myself. Wherefore, although thou art, in a sense, constituted the father of the earthly family, 97 it is not for thee to be overanxious about the sustenance of animals.' 98

Some infer, from this passages that men were content with herbs and fruits until the deluge, and that it was even unlawful for them to eat flesh. And this seems the more probable, because God confines, in some way, the food of mankind within certain limits. Then after the deluge, he expressly grants them the use of flesh. These reasons, however are not sufficiently strong: for it may be adduced on the opposite side, that the first men offered sacrifices from their flocks. 99 This, moreover, is the law of sacrificing rightly, not to offer unto God anything except what he has granted to our use. Lastly men were clothed in skins; therefore it was lawful for them to kill animals. For these reasons, I think it will be better for us to assert nothing concerning this matter. Let it suffice for us, that herbs and the fruits of trees were given them as their common food; yet it is not to be doubted that this was abundantly sufficient for their highest gratification. For they judge prudently whomaintain that the earth was so marred by the deluge, that we retain scarcely a moderate portion of the original benediction. Even immediately after the fall of man, it had already begun to bring forth degenerate and noxious fruits, but at the deluge, the change became still greater. Yet, however this may be, God certainly did not intend that man should be slenderly and sparingly sustained; but rather, by these words, he promises a liberal abundance, which should leave nothing wanting to a sweet and pleasant life. For Moses relates how beneficent the Lord had been to them, in bestowing on them all things which they could desire, that their ingratitude might have the less excuse.

31. And God saw everything Once more, at the conclusion of the creation, Moses declares that God approved of everything which he had made. In speaking of God as seeing , he does it after the manner of men; for the Lord designed this his judgment to be as a rule and example to us; that no one should dare to think or speak otherwise of his works. For it is not lawful for us to dispute whether that ought to be approved or not which God has already approved; but it rather becomes us to acquiesce without controversy. The repetition also denotes how wanton is the temerity of man: otherwise it would have been enough to have said, once for all, that God approved of his works. But God six times inculcates the same thing, that he may restrain, as with so many bridles, our restless audacity. But Moses expresses more than before; for he adds ■■■■, (meod ,) that is, very . On each of the days, simple approbation was given. But now, after the workmanship of the world was complete in all its parts, and had received, if I may so speak, the last finishing touch, he pronounces it perfectly good; that we may know that there is in the symmetry of God's works the highest perfection, to which nothing can be added.

Footnotes

35

"La terre estoit vuide, et sans forme, et ne servoit a rien." -- "The earth was aempty, and without form, and was of no use." -- French Tr.

36

■■■■ It has a twofold meaning -- 1. To create out of nothing, as is proved from these words, In the beginning, because nothing was made before them. 2. To produce something excellent out of pre-existent matter; as it is said afterwards, He created whales, and man. -- See Fagius, Drusius, and Estius, in Poole's Synopsis.

37

Inter profanos homines.

38

Steuchus Augustinus was the Author of a work, "De Perennie Philosophia," Lugd. 1540, and is most likely the writer referred to by Calvin. The work, however, is very rare, and probably of little value.

39

"Sit igitur haec prima sententia. Que ceci dont soit premierement resolu." -- French Tr.

40

Namely, into heaven and earth.

41

The reasoning of Calvin on this point is a great proof of the candor of his mind, and of his determination to adhere strictly to what he conceives to be the meaning of Holy Scripture, whatever bearing it might have on the doctrines he maintains. It may however be right to direct the reader, who wishes fully to examine the disputed meaning of the plural word ■■■■■ which we translate God, to some sources of information, whence he may be able to form his own judgment respecting the term. Cocceius argues that the mystery of the Trinity in Unity is contained in the word; and many other writers of reputation take the same ground. Others contend, that though no clear intimation of the Trinity in Unity is given, yet the notion of plurality of Persons is plainly implied in the term. For a full account of all the arguments in favor of this hypothesis, the work of Dr. John Pye Smith, on the Scripture testimony of the Messiah -- a work full of profound learning, and distinguished by patient industry and calmly courteous criticism -- may be consulted. It must however be observed, that this diligent and impartial writer has not met the special objection adduced by Calvin in this place, namely, the danger of gliding into Sabellianism while attempting to confute Arianism. -- Ed

42

The error of Sabellius (according to Theodoret) consisted in his maintaining, "that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are one hypostasis, and one Person under three names," or, in the language of that eminent ecclesiastical scholar, the late Dr. Burton, "Sabellius divided the One Divinity into three, but he supposed the Son and the Holy Ghost to have no distinct personal existence, except when they were put forth for a time by the Father." -- See Burton's Lectures on Ecclesiastical History, vol. 2, p. 365; and his Bampton Lectures, Note 103. This will perhaps assist the reader to understand the nature of Calvin's argument which immediately follows. Supposing the word Elohim to denote the Three Persons of the Godhead in the first verse, it also denotes the same Three Persons in the second verse. But

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