

Sonship, Pinnochio-style
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It is a charming story; Geppetto, the warm, loving and loveable woodworker whose dream of having a son so consumed him that he just had to give it some sort of substance by creating a boy marionette, all the while wishing it could become a real little boy who he could love and raise as his own.

I don't know how accurate is my recollection of that beloved fairy tale---in spite of having read the book and seeing the Walt Disney movie version more than once when I was very young, but what I do remember of it came to mind recently as I contemplated how strange, to my thinking, is Christian orthodoxy's rendition of the process by which one becomes a child of God.

The two stories aren't really all that dissimilar. Geppetto created Pinnochio out of wood, and Pinnochio underwent a process all the way from being a lifeless puppet-creation to receiving some sort of life animation, and then finally, becoming a real, live little boy. According to orthodoxy's version of humans becoming children of God, God created us out of nothing, gave us a life of our own out from His life, and then went one step further to make us His children by infusing us by the Holy Spirit with His life in Christ, thereby making us His children.

Now, I'm sorry, but that just doesn't set right with me. It seems to me that becoming God's child ought to involve a birthing experience on the part of God, not God merely capping off the creation of a living soul by endowing it with divine life. That's hardly the same as Deity giving birth to children.

The evangelical account of being born of God---consistent with its man-centered, self-determining concept of relationship with God---almost completely misses the fact that God having children is first God's internal, relational experience which resulted in our being coming forth out of the Divine Being. That's how we received the experience of being born of God. To repeat: before you and I experienced our spiritual birth, God experienced giving birth to us. In a word, our experience owed to an experience within the Godhead.

God really is our Father and Mother. God really did come together within to bring us forth as reproductions of the Divine Nature; in fact, it was by us that the Divine Nature realized Its parental potential. Certainly it is true that we owe our Being to being born of God, but it is also true that God owes becoming parents to having given birth to us.

Very few understand that having children makes the Divine Nature be all that it is, namely, Family. Even fewer are those who realize that the earthiness of our being is completely consistent with the spiritual nature of our heavenly childhood. When the Word became flesh in Jesus our Lord, that was not a transition inconsistent with the nature of the eternal Word, but as the perfect expression of the same. Becoming human was always at the heart of the Divine Nature from eternity.

Your spiritual birth is in and from eternity, and it is from that reality that, in your aeonian life-passage, you are "born FROM above," as Jesus explained. There is a descent from heaven to earth that is central to the administration of God, and the administration of God has at its heart the translation of our heavenly birth down into aeonian experience. Jesus couldn't get into these "heavenly things" with Nicodemus, for the man was not yet even able to receive the "earthly things" the Lord had been expounding to him. Being born from above comes from above. It is heavenly in origin, but it is experientially aeonian and earthly.

I have often written and spoken of the truth that---as the Spirit spoke it to my heart---we are the fruit of His loins and the work of His hands. It was from the substance of our God-birthed spiritual being that our creaturehood is made from, and that creaturehood is destined to finally reveal its birthed Origin. When John saw the new heaven and new earth, that is what he saw; the heavenly and the earthly re-united as One.

It was our very Son/son-substance in creaturely form that God subjected to the futility of the sin/death experience, a subjugation that Christ Himself shared with us, and which He gathered up, headed up, and summed up in Himself for us all. The liberty of the glory of the

sons of God had to be subjected to enduring bondage so that by breaking the chains of death, the liberty of our glory might be known in all its unlimited power.

In us in Christ, God has descended to the earth, and then into the bowels beneath the earth in order to ascend above all the heavens. This profound descent was necessary for God---and we with Him---to realize the lofty heights of our Being. From the depths of all that would try to shut up the Divine Nature, God, in Christ, unleashed the power that raised Christ from the dead, defeating death by making it serve the process by which life becomes ever-increasingly abundant.