

PREEMINENT ROLE OF GOD THE FATHER IN THE TRINITY: WHAT ABOUT THE COUNCIL OF NICEA AND THE NICENE CREED? - PART 2

Karl Kemp; July, 2016

All quotations were taken from the New American Standard Bible, 1995 edition, unless otherwise noted. Sometimes I make comments in the middle of quotations using brackets [] or [[]] to make them more obvious. I am using straight quotation marks ("), hyphens (-) instead of dashes, and a few other things like this because some of the internet sites where I post these articles require it. Also they don't allow footnotes. Cf., e.g., means "compare, for example."

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MOST OF THE EXCERPTS AND COMMENTS THAT FOLLOW TO THE END OF THIS PAPER ARE RELEVANT TO THE MEANING OF "HOMOOUSIOS" IN THE NICENE CREED OF AD 325. I believe this is very important! Large numbers of Christians believe the Nicene Creed proves that God the Son cannot be eternally subordinate to God the Father in His role, but it seems clear that at least most of those who signed the Nicene Creed, in agreement with the pre-Nicene Christian Fathers (and, much more important, in agreement with the Bible), believed that God the Son is eternally subordinate to God the Father in His role, but not in a way that denies the full deity of the Son.

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INTRODUCTION AND CONCLUSION. I believe it is quite important for us to know that the Bible teaches the preeminent role of God the Father in the Trinity. It is an important doctrine and quite relevant to many aspects of our Christian lives, very much including prayer and worship. For one thing, we should typically pray to the Father (see my paper "Who Do We Pray To?" on my internet site [Google to Karl Kemp Teaching]), and we should worship Him first and foremost (see my paper "Who Do We Worship?"). What the New Testament has to say about the respective roles of God the Father and God the Son before the incarnation confirms the preeminent role of God the Father. And everything that the Old Testament says about the preincarnate Son of God (the Angel/Messenger of Yahweh and the man dressed in linen of Ezek. 9:2, 3, 11; 10:2, 6 and Dan. 10:5; 12:7) fits perfectly with the preeminent role of God the Father and the subordinate role of God the Son. All agree that the Son was subordinate to the Father during the brief time He lived on the earth as a man, the God-man. What the Bible has to say about the respective roles of God the Father and God the Son during this present age, and on into the eternal state that follows the millennial kingdom, also confirms the preeminent role of God the Father. The Son boasts in the preeminent role of the Father. Probably more than anything else the Son wants to see, He wants to see the Father's will fully accomplished and the Father glorified to the max. For one thing, it is probably beyond our ability to comprehend the level of love and respect that the Son has for the Father, and the Father for the Son.

I appreciate the fact that those who deny any eternal subordination of the Son to the Father are concerned that we don't deny the full deity of the Son. His deity has been repeatedly attacked by the devil and those who listen to him. However, I am totally convinced that we are not denying the full deity of the Son by speaking of the eternal preeminent role of God the Father (the eternal subordinate role of God the Son). We need the balanced truth of what the Bible teaches.

Since I became a born-again Christian in 1964, I have always believed in the FULL deity of the Son of God and (as far as I can remember) that He has a role eternally subordinate to the Father in the Trinity. I was taught the deity of the Son, and I believe it is clearly taught in the Bible. I don't know that I was taught that the Son has a role eternally subordinate to the Father. I believe I learned that mostly through my study of

the Bible. I have discussed many of the relevant passages of the Bible in earlier papers that deal with the Trinity. See Part 1 of this present paper.

Section 1 of the 29 sections that are included here in Part 2 of this paper (see the Contents of Part 2 of this paper), which is the article by Wayne Grudem, lists many of the Biblical passages that speak of the eternally subordinate role of the Son to the Father. I'll include a six-paragraph excerpt from section 1 of this paper: "On page 226 Grudem makes it clear that he is speaking of a 'relational subordination' that accompanies equality in being or essence ["ontological equality"],' and that he is speaking of a 'submission that is not oppressive but is pure and holy.' Based on what I have read, I believe that Grudem, based on his understanding of the 'ontological equality' of the three Persons, would agree with Athanasius (AD296-373) and Kevin Giles (we'll speak quite a bit about both of them in this paper) that the Son shares an identical, same-substance (oneness, but not modalism) unity with the Father that cannot be divided. It is significant, however, that Grudem makes it clear that he doesn't agree with Athanasius and Giles (and many others) that (because of this identical, same-substance [oneness, but not modalism] unity that cannot be divided) the Son cannot be, and is not, eternally subordinate to the Father in His role. And Grudem doesn't agree that there is only one center of consciousness in the Trinity, with one will and one mind.

I admit I don't know enough to fully understand or define the Trinity, but the Full deity of the Son is clear to me, along with His eternal subordination to the Father in His role, and I cannot agree that there is only one center of consciousness with one will and one mind in the Trinity. IF it were true, as Athanasius and Giles have taught/teach, that the Son's sharing the identical, same-substance (oneness, but not modalism) unity that cannot be divided rules out any eternal subordination of the Son to the Father, and requires us to believe that there is only one center of consciousness in the Trinity, with one will and one mind, then I would have to say that the Son does not share that unity (that unity as understood by Athanasius and Giles).

I believe it is possible that Giles is right to say that Grudem cannot legitimately believe in the identical, same-substance (oneness, but not modalism) unity of the Son with the Father that cannot be divided and also believe that the Son is subordinate to the Father in His role, or believe in three centers of consciousness in the Trinity with three wills and three minds. I'm not going to try to directly or fully answer this question in this paper (but I'll deal with this topic quite a bit, including in the next paragraph); it's over my head; but I am satisfied to be able to say that I believe the Bible clearly teaches the eternal preeminent role of God the Father (and eternal subordinate role of God the Son), and that the Bible does not teach that there is one center of consciousness with one will and one mind in the Trinity. Furthermore, as we discuss quite a bit in this paper, it is

significant that the pre-Nicene Christians and most of the Christians gathered to Nicea in AD 325 DID NOT AGREE WITH ATHANASIUS (OR GILES) THAT THERE IS AN IDENTICAL, SAME-SUBSTANCE (ONENESS, BUT NOT MODALISM) UNITY OF THE THREE PERSONS THAT CANNOT BE DIVIDED, OR ON THE ONE CENTER OF CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE THREE PERSONS, WITH ONE WILL AND ONE MIND, AND THEY CLEARLY BELIEVED IN THE ETERNAL SUBORDINATE ROLE OF GOD THE SON.

As we discuss in this paper, we don't want to overstate or put too much emphasis on the oneness/unity of the being, substance, essence of the Trinity (it seems that this has happened a lot), which is a topic that we learn very little about from the Bible (which leaves a lot of room for philosophic speculation); we don't really have a need to know much about those details. The Bible speaks mostly regarding the words, actions, and relationships of the three Persons as they interact with one another and with the world they created (especially with the people of God). The Bible puts all the emphasis on the three Persons, but guards against the idea of three Gods.

I need to point out that Athanasius and Giles (and it's not just them) are speaking of the three Persons SHARING the identical, one, same substance, essence, nature, being that cannot be divided. (They are not speaking of three Persons each having the same divine substance, essence, nature that goes with each of them being deity/God, but of them SHARING that ONE substance, essence, nature, being that cannot be divided.) Significantly, based on what I have read, this was a new viewpoint that wasn't promoted until after the Council of Nicea. As we will discuss, it wasn't promoted at the Council of Nicea. Athanasius could have been the first Christian to promote this new viewpoint; if not, he was one of the first. And it is significant that this new viewpoint wasn't needed to refute the heretical teaching of Arius. The Council of Nicea was convened for the most part to deal with the controversy regarding Arius and those who followed his teaching.

If you push the new viewpoint a little, as Athanasius and Giles did/do, it is rather easy to come up with new ideas like there is no way that one of the three Persons who share the identical, one, same-substance, essence, nature, being that cannot be divided can have authority over the other Persons, and that there can only be one center of consciousness with one will and one mind in the Trinity. I clearly have to reject the ideas that the Son is not subordinate to the Father in His role and that there is one center of consciousness with one will and one mind in the Trinity, ideas that are held by many Christians. Anyway, it is totally clear that one way, or another, the Son is of the substance of the Father (He was not created out of nothing as Arius said) and He is deity with the Father in a totally full sense." (This is the end of the six-paragraph excerpt.)

Section 2 of this paper, which discusses Phil. 2:5-11, is quite important. In Phil. 2:1-11 the apostle Paul was exhorting his readers with the need to be humble: If the Lord Jesus, God the Son, could GREATLY humble Himself to do the Father's will, which involved great condescension and suffering, we certainly need to humble ourselves before God and one another. Of key importance for the topic of this paper, I believe Phil. 2:6 speaks of the fact that the Son did not grasp after equality with God (an equality that He did not have) at a time before He became a man, the God-man. I quote from a Greek scholar who confirms this interpretation of Phil. 2:6 and gets into the details of the Greek to show why we should understand Phil. 2:6 this way. This scholar, Denny Burk, wrote "Christ's Functional Subordination in Philippians 2:6," which is chapter 2 in "The New Evangelical Subordinationism?" and he has written a book that deals with the specific details of Greek grammar that apply here, "Articular Infinitives in the Greek of the New Testament."

One reason this is so important is that many, including Augustine, use Phil. 2:6 as a, or the, key verse to try to show that the Son had equality with the Father before His incarnation. It is true, of course, that God the Son was always equal with God the Father in the sense that He was God/deity with God the Father, but He has also had a role subordinate to that of the Father. In Phil. 2:6 the apostle Paul was denying that the Son was grasping for a status where He would be equal with the Father and no longer be subordinate to Him. The Son did the exact opposite of that: He humbled Himself to do the Father's will. First He humbled Himself to become a man, the God-man. I don't believe we are able to begin to comprehend what a drastic change that meant for Him. Then He humbled Himself further, in submission to the Father's will, to become the Lamb of God. Again, I don't believe we are able to begin to comprehend how very difficult that assignment was.

(As we continue, I'll mention several things that were discussed in the six-paragraph excerpt that I included above, but these things are important enough to bear some repetition. We desperately need the balanced truth of what the Bible teaches.) All twenty-nine sections of Part 2 of this paper are quite relevant to the topic of this paper, but some are more important than others. I believe the evidence is overwhelming that the Son of God is eternally subordinate to God the Father. The primary evidence is what the Bible has to say on this topic, but it is quite significant that the pre-Nicene Christians (before the Council of Nicea in AD 325) agreed with this viewpoint, and it is quite significant that most of the bishops who signed the Nicene Creed also agreed with this viewpoint. I discuss this last point a lot in this paper because this information (this important information) is rather new to me, and I believe it will be new to many of my readers. Based on what I have read recently, many Christians, probably the majority,

wrongly believe that the Council of Nicea gave us a creed that rules out any eternal subordination of the Son to the Father.

I was surprised a few years ago (and in doing the research to write this paper) when I began to see how many Christians, including quite a few evangelicals, don't believe that the Son is eternally subordinate to the Father in His role. Kevin Giles is a key leader motivated to argue against the eternal subordination of the Son to the Father. He has an article in the book, "The New Evangelical Subordinationism?" I'll quote a little from that article as we continue in this "Introduction and Conclusion," but I don't have a separate section to deal with that article in this paper; however, in sections 28 and 29 I interact with two of his books that deal with this topic. Giles calls himself an evangelical (see page 265 of his article); he might even consider himself a conservative evangelical theologian (but I doubt it); however I am sure that he doesn't consider himself to be as conservative as the "conservative evangelical theologians" that he strongly criticizes in his article and in his books.

Kevin has done his homework, and he makes some important points. It seems clear, for example, that he can rightly claim that he is saying what key Christian leaders like Athanasius (AD296-373) and Augustine (AD354-430) have said on this topic, and what the Athanasian Creed says. However, I have to strongly disagree when he says that Christians who believe in the eternal subordination of the Son are holding a heretical viewpoint. He uses some strong language.

I'll quote what Giles says (on page 278 of his article in "The New Evangelical Subordinationism?") about the Bible and the idea of the eternal subordination of the Son to the Father: "To quote to me...John 14:28, 1 Cor. 11:3 and 15:28, texts my debating opponents think eternally subordinate the Son to the Father, causes me little concern. Along with Athanasius, the Cappadocians, Augustine, and Calvin I see my challenge as explaining how these seemingly exceptional scriptural comments, and possibly a few others [It is a lot more than a "possibly a few others," as this paper shows.], can be reconciled and harmonized with what is primary in Scripture, namely the full divinity and omnipotence of the Son." I believe his "debating opponents" believe in "the full divinity and omnipotence of the Son." The fact that there is some eternal subordination of the Son to the Father in His role does not lessen the fact that the Son is deity with the Father in a totally full sense. THE SON IS NOT SUPPOSED TO BE THE FATHER, OR A BROTHER OF THE FATHER, OR AN IDENTICAL DUPLICATE (A CLONE) OF THE FATHER: HE IS GOD THE SON! AND THAT PERFECTLY! On page 282 Giles says, "...the Scriptures do not teach the eternal subordination in being or authority of the Son to the Father. The Son is co-equal without any caveats."

It is significant that Giles agrees that the pre-Nicene Fathers believed in the eternal subordination of the Son to the Father (see section 28 in this paper). It is clear, however, that he is sure they were wrong. I am confident that they were right, while admitting that there are places where they overstated the eternal subordination of the Son. Where did they get what they believed for the most part? From the Bible and the apostles, who were sent by God to lay the foundation for Christianity, which included giving us the all-important New Testament.

Giles consistently makes it clear that he believes the Nicene Creed totally supports his viewpoint. Before doing this study I hadn't thought much about or studied the Nicene Creed. When I started getting into the details of the Council of Nicea, I could see that the evidence strongly supports the idea that the original intent of the Nicene Creed doesn't offer any support for Giles viewpoint. The primary intent of the creed was to refute the teaching of Arius that the Son was created out of nothing; that He did not always exist; that He was not deity with the Father. It is true though that later, through the influence of Athanasius, the Cappadocians, and Augustine, many began to interpret (actually reinterpret) the Nicene Creed to include ideas like the Son cannot be eternally subordinate to the Father because of their overstated and/or overly strong emphasis on the same-substance unity of the three Persons of the Trinity.

The evidence strongly supports the viewpoint that an identical, same-substance (oneness, but not modalism) unity of the three Persons that cannot be divided was not included in the Nicene Creed. Several scholars I quote in this paper point out that that much fuller meaning was something new to the history of Christianity. Many, including Giles, believe that "something new" represents the truth. I believe it has led to some substantial errors in understanding the Trinity. I admit, however, that we do need to emphasize the unity of the three Persons of the Trinity (we don't believe in three Gods), but in a way where we do not overstate and/or overemphasize that unity to come up with new ideas that don't line up with the Bible. Giles and many others say that the Bible argues against the eternal subordination of the Son. I don't see how! Full deity of the Son, Yes! Eternally subordinate to the Father in His role, Yes!

Many of the sections of this paper deal with the intent of the Council of Nicea and the Nicene Creed (especially see sections 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 21, 23, 24, 25, and 26). Keep in mind that the pre-Nicene fathers believed in the eternal subordination of the Son to the Father (Giles agrees). How is he so sure that most of the bishops at Nicea would be ready to accept a new teaching that included a denial of the eternal subordination of the Son to the Father. I haven't seen any evidence that anyone was promoting that new teaching until quite a few years after the Council of Nicea, even if some (including Athanasius) may have believed that controversial new teaching at the time of the

Council of Nicea. Furthermore, and significantly, that new teaching wasn't needed to refute Arius and his followers at Nicea. By the way, the fact that some scholars make the point that this was a new teaching in the history of the church doesn't mean that they all think the new teaching was/is wrong. I, in agreement with many in our day, especially large numbers of evangelicals, believe it was wrong to deny the eternal subordination of the Son to the Father, for one thing.

This is the end of the Introduction and Conclusion of this paper. I believe that if you read this entire paper you will have enough information to come to a solid, rather balanced understanding of the subordination of the Son to the Father. But again, we don't have the information or ability to fully understand the triune God, and especially not before we are glorified. It's easy to speak of all the details about the Trinity, and it's easy to be wrong too. We need to stay humble before God and one another. I'll try to heed this important advice in this paper. Anyway, I believe it is clear that the Son of God is subordinate to God the Father in His role as Son, and I believe it is quite important for us to know this. It is very relevant information (important doctrine) that will significantly affect our lives as Christians, very much including our prayer and worship.

EXTENSIVE EXCERPTS FROM "THE NEW EVANGELICAL SUBORDINATIONISM?: PERSPECTIVES ON THE EQUALITY OF GOD THE FATHER AND GOD THE SON" (Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2012, 440 pages. These excerpts and my comments cover the first six sections of the twenty-nine sections included in this paper.):

Used by permission of Wipf and Stock Publishers. I received permission from Wipf and Stock Publishers to quote extensively from this book. The majority of the articles agree that the Father has an eternal preeminent role in the Trinity, but some of them would refrain from using words like subordinate. I certainly don't insist on using that word, but it seems reasonable to me and I'll use it in this paper. It must be understood that there are no negative or demeaning ideas associated with the Son being eternally subordinate to the Father He loves and respects with an intensity that we cannot comprehend, and knowing that the Father, who is perfect and good in every way (the Son knows that the Father knows what He is doing), loves Him and respects Him with an intensity that we cannot comprehend. On this topic we need to hold, to the fullest extent possible, the balanced truth of what the Bible teaches. I put most of the priority on what the Bible teaches, but we will also discuss the views of some pre-Nicene Christians and the Council of Nicea and the Nicene Creed. They are quite important to the topic of this paper too.

Several articles in this book deny that the Lord Jesus is subordinate to the Father. I won't be quoting much from those authors. The scope of this paper is limited. I consider what those authors say, and you can learn from them, but I am convinced that they are wrong in their denial of the eternal subordinate role of the Son and quite often in other details regarding the Trinity that they came up with through their ideas regarding, and their strong emphasis on, the identical, same-substance (oneness, but not modalism) unity of God that cannot be divided. For one thing, I believe they read too much into the Greek word "homoousios," far more than what was intended by the Council of Nicea.

1. CHAPTER 10 of "The New Evangelical Subordinationism?": "Biblical Evidence for the Eternal Submission of the Son to the Father," by Wayne Grudem (pages 223-261). I find this article to be especially helpful. For one thing, my number-one concern is "What Does the Bible Say on this Topic?" Grudem limits himself to deal with my number-one concern.

I'll quote part of a sentence that Grudem has near the beginning of this article: "...I will examine the meaning of the names Father and Son [in the Bible] as well as 31 passages of Scripture that give evidence that God the Father has eternally had a role of leadership, initiation, and primary authority among the members of the Trinity, and that the Son has eternally been subject to the Father's authority" (page 224). Later on the page Grudem mentions the originating and directing roles of the Father too and "that the Son and the Spirit always fully agreed with these directives and when the appropriate time came, willingly and joyfully carried them out."

On page 226 Grudem makes it clear that he is speaking of a " 'relational subordination' that accompanies 'equality in being or essence ['ontological equality'],' " and that he is speaking of a "submission that is not oppressive but is pure and holy." Based on what I have read, I believe Grudem, based on his understanding of the "ontological equality" of the three Persons, would agree with Athanasius (AD296-373) and Kevin Giles (we'll speak quite a bit about both of them in this paper) that the Son shares an identical, same-substance (oneness, but not modalism) unity with the Father that cannot be divided. It is significant, however, that Grudem makes it clear that he doesn't agree with Athanasius and Giles (and many others) that (because of this identical, same-substance [oneness, but not modalism] unity that cannot be divided) the Son cannot be, and is not, eternally subordinate to the Father in His role. And Grudem doesn't agree that there is only one center of consciousness in the Trinity, with one will and one mind.

I admit I don't know enough to fully understand or define the Trinity, but the Full deity of the Son is clear to me, along with His eternal subordination to the Father in His role, and I cannot agree that there is only one center of consciousness with one will and one mind

in the Trinity. IF it were true, as Athanasius and Giles have taught/teach, that the Son's sharing the identical, same-substance (oneness, but not modalism) unity that cannot be divided rules out any eternal subordination of the Son to the Father, and requires us to believe that there is only one center of consciousness in the Trinity, with one will and one mind, then I would have to say that the Son does not share that unity (that unity as understood by Athanasius and Giles).

I believe it is possible that Giles is right to say that Grudem cannot legitimately believe in the identical, same-substance (oneness, but not modalism) unity of the Son with the Father that cannot be divided and also believe that the Son is subordinate to the Father in His role, or believe in three centers of consciousness in the Trinity with three wills and three minds. I'm not going to try to directly or fully answer this question in this paper (but I'll deal with this topic quite a bit, including in the next paragraph); it's over my head; but I am satisfied to be able to say that I believe the Bible clearly teaches the eternal preeminent role of God the Father (and eternal subordinate role of God the Son), and that the Bible does not teach that there is one center of consciousness with one will and one mind in the Trinity. Furthermore, as we discuss quite a bit in this paper, it is significant that the pre-Nicene Christians and most of the Christians gathered to Nicea in AD 325 DID NOT AGREE WITH ATHANASIUS (OR GILES) ON THE IDENTICAL, SAME-SUBSTANCE (ONENESS, BUT NOT MODALISM) UNITY OF THE THREE PERSONS THAT CANNOT BE DIVIDED, OR ON THE ONE CENTER OF CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE THREE PERSONS, WITH ONE WILL AND ONE MIND, AND THEY CLEARLY BELIEVED IN THE ETERNAL SUBORDINATE ROLE OF GOD THE SON.

As we discuss in this paper, we don't want to overstate or put too much emphasis on the oneness/unity of the being, substance, essence of the Trinity (it seems that this has happened a lot), which is a topic that we learn very little about from the Bible (which leaves a lot of room for philosophic speculation); we don't really have a need to know much about those details. The Bible speaks mostly regarding the words, actions, and relationships of the three Persons as they interact with one another and with the world. The Bible puts all the emphasis on the three Persons, but guards against the idea of three Gods.

I need to point out that Athanasius and Giles (and it's not just them) are speaking of the three Persons SHARING the identical, one, same substance, essence, nature, being that cannot be divided. (They are not speaking of three Persons each having the same divine substance, essence, nature that goes with each of them being deity/God, but of them SHARING that ONE substance, essence, nature, being that cannot be divided.) Significantly, based on what I have read, this was a new viewpoint that wasn't promoted

until after the Council of Nicea. As we will discuss, it wasn't promoted at the Council of Nicea. Athanasius could have been the first Christian to promote this new viewpoint; if not, he was one of the first. And it is significant that this new viewpoint wasn't needed to refute the heretical teaching of Arius. The Council of Nicea was convened for the most part to deal with the controversy regarding Arius and those who followed his teaching.

If you push the new viewpoint a little, as Athanasius and Giles did/do, it is rather easy to come up with new ideas like there is no way that one of the three Persons who share the identical, one, same-substance, essence, nature, being that cannot be divided can have authority over the other Persons, and that there can only be one center of consciousness with one will and one mind in the Trinity. I clearly have to reject the ideas that the Son is not subordinate to the Father in His role and that there is one center of consciousness with one will and one mind in the Trinity, ideas that are held by many Christians. Anyway, it is totally clear that one way, or another, the Son is of the substance of the Father (He was not created out of nothing as Arius said) and He is deity with the Father in a totally full sense.

I don't object to words like the subordination of the Son or of His being subject to the Father's authority, but we must understand that there aren't any (none at all) negative connotations to these words when they apply to the relationship between the Father and the Son. The Son totally loves the Father and understands that He is greatly and totally loved by the Father and that everything the Father wants is totally good and will work for good. Furthermore, the Son has no (zero) problem with being under the authority of the Father in the ways that He is, and, in fact, I'm sure that He totally loves being where He is. Everything is in divine (perfect) order in their relationship; the Son has zero rebellion and zero desire for (or a grasping for [cf. Phil. 2:6]; we will discuss Phil. 2:6 in the article that follows this one by Grudem) a higher place for Himself, a place where He is not subordinate to the Father.

The first seven passages of the thirty-one passages from the Bible that Grudem mentions that demonstrate the eternal preeminent role of God the Father in the Trinity are under the heading "The Father's Authority and the Son's Submission Prior to Creation," which starts on page 232. He quotes and briefly discusses Eph. 1:3-5; Rom. 8:29; 2 Tim. 1:9; Eph. 1:9-11; Eph. 3:9-11; 1 Pet. 1:19, 20; and Rev. 13:8. These passages serve to demonstrate the unique authority of the Father in planning, choosing the elect, predestinating, sending His Son to die for us as the Lamb of God to save us at the right time, etc.

I'll quote three of these passages from the NASB: EPHESIANS 1:3-5. **"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who [God the Father] has blessed us**

with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ, (4) just as He [God the Father] chose us in Him [in Christ] before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him [before the Father]. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His [the Father's] will."

2 TIMOTHY 1:9. "[God (God the Father)] **who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity** [Grudem included a bracket at the end of this verse, "literally 'before times eternal' "]."

EPHESIANS 3:9-11. "**and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God [God the Father] who created all things; (10) so that the manifold wisdom of God [God the Father] might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly *places*. (11) This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He [God the Father] carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord.**"

The next three passages (Grudem's numbers 8-10) of the thirty-one passages are discussed under the heading "The Father's Authority and the Son's Submission in the Process of Creation" (pages 242-243). Grudem says (in part) "...in this activity [creation of everything that is created] the Father is also the one who initiates and leads, and the Son is the one who carries out the will of the Father." The three passages are John 1:1 (actually John 1:1-3); Heb. 1:1-2; and 1 Cor. 8:6. I'll quote JOHN 1:1-3 (and 1 Cor. 8:6) from the NASB here: "**In the beginning was the Word [God the Son], and the Word was with God [God the Father], and the Word was God [in the sense that He was deity with God the Father and the Holy Spirit; He was and is God the Son]. (2) He was in the beginning with God [God the Father]. (3) All things came into being through Him [through the Word, God the Son], and apart from Him [God the Son] nothing came into being that has come into being.**"

1 CORINTHIANS 8:6. "**yet for us there is *but* one God, the Father, from whom are all things and we *exist* for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by [or through] whom are all things, and we *exist* through Him.**"

The next three passages (numbers 11-13) are listed under the heading "The Father's Authority and the Son's Submission Prior to Christ's Earthly Ministry" (page 243-245). I'll quote part of what Grudem says here: "Another set of texts indicates the Father's authority and the Son's submission prior to the incarnation. These texts speak of the Father's *sending* the Son and the Son's coming to earth in obedience to the Father. For

example: JOHN 3:16-17 [I'll quote these verses from the NASB: "**For God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten [or, unique] Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. (17) For God did not send the Son into the world to judge [condemn] the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.**"]

But the Father had to be Father before he sent his Son, or he could not have sent him as Son. The Father *sending* the Son into the world implies an authority that the Father had prior to the Son's humbling himself and becoming a man. ... He was first sent as Son, and then He obeyed and humbled himself and came. By that action he showed that he was subject to the authority of the Father [that's one way to say it; He with great humility and manifesting an incomprehensible love for the Father did what the Father wanted Him to do] before He came to earth.

Other verses also speak of the Father sending the Son into the world." Grudem quoted Gal. 4:4 and 1 John 4:9-10 (his numbers 12-13); then he listed many similar verses, which he didn't count toward the thirty-one passages.

Grudem listed the next two passages (numbers 14 and 15) under the heading "The Father's Authority and the Son's Submission in Christ's Ministry as Great High Priest" (pages 246-247). Grudem says, "The submission of the Son to the Father did not end with his return to heaven. It continued then and it continues still today in his ongoing ministry as Great High Priest." He quoted Heb. 7:23-26 (his number 14) and Rom. 8:34 (his number 15).

His passage number 16 is under the heading "The Father's Authority and the Son's Submission in Christ's Pouring Out the Holy Spirit at Pentecost" (page 247). Grudem quoted Acts 2:32-33. This passage demonstrates that Christ's receiving and pouring out the gift of the Holy Spirit was part of the Father's promised plan of salvation.

His passage number 17 is under the heading "The Father's Authority and the Son's Submission in Christ's Receiving Revelation from the Father and Giving it to the Church" (page 247). Grudem says, "Jesus did not initiate the book of Revelation, but he was given this revelation by the Father to deliver to the church." He quoted Rev. 1:1. I'll quote REVELATION 1:1 from the NASB: "**The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God [God the Father] gave Him [the resurrected, glorified Son of God] to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and He [the Lord Jesus] sent and communicated *it* by His angel to His bond-servant John.**"

Grudem's numbers 18-28 are under his heading "The Father's Authority and the Son's Submission in Christ's Sitting at God's Right Hand - A Position of Authority Second to that of the Father Himself" (pages 248-251). After quoting Acts 2:32-35; Eph. 1:20; and Heb. 1:3 (numbers 18-20), Grudem asks, "But does sitting at a ruler's right hand indicate a position of secondary authority? Yes, as several passages indicate. The background to this concept is seen in Psalm 110: '**The LORD** [Yahweh in Hebrew] **says to my Lord** [the Messiah (the God-man)]: '**Sit at my right hand Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.**' " " Grudem then says, "To sit at the LORD's right hand is not a position of equal authority, for 'the LORD' (Yahweh) is still the one commanding ["commanding" is rather strong language that gives the wrong impression], still the one subduing enemies. [Actually, the Son Himself will subdue the enemies of God the Father and His enemies and the enemies of His people when He is sent by the Father. I agree with Grudem that we see the Father's authority here.] But it is a position of authority *second only* to the LORD [Yahweh in the Hebrew, referring to God the Father here].... ..

Several other New Testament verses show Jesus at God's [God the Father's] right hand, in this place of second authority over the universe," and he quotes eight verses (numbers #21-28 of this thirty-one passages that show the eternal authority of God the Father and eternal submission of the Son): Mark 14:62; Luke 22:69; Rom. 8:34; Col. 3:1; Heb. 8:1; Heb. 10:12; Heb. 12:2; and 1 Pet. 3:22. Then he says (on page 251): "This is a standard New Testament way of speaking of Jesus' heavenly situation, and it indicates ongoing authority for the Father, and then secondary authority [in that, even though He is fully deity with the Father, He is under the authority of the Father; He has an eternal role subordinate to the role of the Father], but authority over the entire universe, for the Son at his right hand."

I'll quote three of these verses from the NASB: ROMANS 8:34. "**who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised** [by God the Father (Acts 2:24, 32; Rom. 8:11; and many other verses show that the Father raised Him from the dead; the Father raised Him by the Holy Spirit [e.g., Rom. 1:4]), **who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.**" HEBREWS 8:1. "**Now the main point in what has been said is this: we have such a high priest, who has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of Majesty in the heavens.**" And HEBREWS 10:12. "**but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD.**"

Grudem's numbers 29 and 30 are under the heading "The Father's Authority and the Son's Submission in Giving the Son Authority to Rule over the Nations" (page 271). He quoted Rev. 2:26-27 and Dan. 7:13-14 (numbers 29 and 30). I'll quote REVELATION

2:26-27 (NASB): **"He who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds [or, works] until the end, TO HIM I [the Lord Jesus] WILL GIVE AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS; (27) AND HE [the overcomers(s)] SHALL RULE THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON, AS THE VESSELS OF THE POTTER ARE BROKEN TO PIECES, as I [Jesus] have received authority from My Father."** Note the words "as I have received authority from My Father." These verses, which borrow from Psalm 2, deal with God's end-time judgment of the world through the Lord Jesus, who will be accompanied by the raptured, glorified saints from the time of the (mid-week) glorification and rapture.

Grudem's number 31 is under the heading "The Father's Authority and the Son's Submission after the Final Judgment and then for All Eternity" (pages 251-254). He quotes 1 CORINTHIANS 15-24-28 (his number 31), which I'll quote from the NASB: **"then comes the end, when He [the Lord Jesus, God the Son] hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and authority and power. (25) For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. (26) The last enemy that will be abolished is death [cf. Rev. 20:14 (at the time of the great-white-throne judgment)]. (27) For HE [God the Father] HAS PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS [the Son's] FEET [See Psalm 8:6.]. But when He [or, it] says, 'All things are put in subjection,' it is evident that He [God the Father] is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him [to the Lord Jesus]. (28) When all things are subjected to Him [to the Lord Jesus], then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, so that God [God the Father] may be all in all."**

These verses clearly demonstrate the "ultimate authority" (words used by Grudem) of God the Father who "put all things in subjection to [the Lord Jesus]." And it is totally significant that Paul made it clear that God the Father did not put Himself under subjection to the Lord Jesus. I don't believe He could have done that even if He wanted to: God the Father has the preeminent role in the Trinity. That's the way it is! That's reality!

The idea isn't that God the Son will no longer continue to function in His all-important role as the Son of God. This is confirmed by Rev. 22:1, for example, where the Lord Jesus is on the throne with God the Father in the eternal state that follows the millennial kingdom, after all judgment has been completed with the great-white-throne judgment of Rev. 20:11-15. It is significant that God the Father, who is seated on the great-white throne, will be quite involved in the end-time judgments. When God the Son judges at the end of this age, He will be sent by and represent God the Father. Clearly the Son of God will play a major role in the end-time judgments (see 1 Cor. 15:23-25) that will be

initiated by His coming in the middle of Daniel's 70th week, at which time the glorification and rapture of the saints will take place.

A primary point that the apostle Paul was making in 1 Cor. 15:28 is that once the Lord Jesus has accomplished the things He has been given authority to do in His end-time judgment of the world, He will no longer need that special authority. It seems clear to me that the apostle Paul didn't know some of the end-time details that were revealed in the book of Revelation some thirty years after Paul was martyred for Christ Jesus, including the role of God the Father in the great-white-throne judgment. Even though God the Father has given the Lord Jesus very important assignments in relation to the end-time judgment of the world, God the Father will not be passive while those judgments are taking place, and especially at the great-white-throne judgment.

Grudem has the heading "Are All the Actions of any One Person of the Trinity Actually the Actions of All Three Persons?" on pages 254-258. He is discussing and rejecting something that Millard Erickson said against his teaching on the preeminent role of God the Father. I'll quote the excerpt that Grudem included from Erickson's "Who's Tampering with the Trinity?" (Kregel, 2009), pages 137, 138: "Although one person of the Trinity may occupy a more prominent part in a given divine action, the action is actually that of the entire Godhead, and the one person is acting on behalf of the three. This means that those passages that speak of the Father predestinating, sending, commanding, and so on should not be taken as applying to the Father alone but to all members of the Trinity. Thus they do not count as evidence in support of an eternal supremacy of the Father and an eternal subordination of the Son." ((What Erickson said seems to be a good example of overstating the same-substance unity of the Trinity (and/or putting too much emphasis on that unity and missing the balanced truth of what the Bible teaches about the Trinity) with Athanasius and many others, including Kevin Giles. We will further discuss the overstating of the same-substance unity (and/or putting too much emphasis on that unity and missing the balanced truth of what the Bible teaches about the Trinity) of Athanasius (and many others) as we continue.))

After discussing the details for a few pages, Grudem says (in part): "And so we must conclude that Erickson is incorrect in saying that an action of any member of the Trinity, such as predestinating, sending, or commanding, 'should not be taken as applying to the Father alone but to all members of the Trinity.' To say this is actually to come very close to obliterating the distinctions among the members of the Trinity. ... Such a position, therefore, does not nullify the significant force of over 30 passages of Scripture, which show the authority of the Father and the submission of the Son throughout the entire range of the history of redemption in Scripture, from before the creation of the world until after the judgment."

Lastly, I'll quote the last paragraph of Grudem's "Conclusion" (pages 260-261):
"Therefore, the consistent testimony of Scripture is that the Father, by virtue of being Father, eternally has authority to plan, initiate, command, and send, authority that the Son and the Holy Spirit do not have. The Son, by virtue of being Son, eternally submits, joyfully, and with great delight, to the authority of his Father. It is only in a sinful world deeply marred by hostility toward authority, and overly focused on status and power, that we would fail to see that submission to the authority of the Father is one aspect of the great glory of the Son. Both *authority* and *submission to authority* are wonderful parts of the great glory of the Father and the Son, and this will be their glory for all eternity."

2. PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11, Especially Phil. 2:6, and Another Article, CHAPTER 5 of "The New Evangelical Subordinationism?": "Christ's Functional Subordination in Philippians 2:6" by Denny Burk, who is "Associate Professor of New Testament at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary" (pages 82-107). For a start, I'll quote what I said on these verses in my last paper, "Harlot of Babylon According to Irvin Baxter; Trinity and Oneness." (I won't quote the extensive excerpts that I have there that deal with refuting the oneness [modalism] viewpoint.) Under Phil. 2:6 I'll comment on what Denny Burk says in this article. What he says about the details of the Greek of Phil. 2:6 strongly supports my interpretation (and it's not just me) of this very important verse.

PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11. **"Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus** [[The apostle Paul was speaking of the attitude of humility, as the preceding and following verses show. If God the Son could humble Himself to become a man (the God-man) and die for us as the Lamb of God, certainly we Christians can, and we must, humble ourselves before God and before one another. Humility is the opposite of pride, which, with unbelief, is the root of sin.]], **(6) who although He existed in the form of God** [[In verse 6, as the context shows, we are seeing God the Son, a Person who always existed with God the Father (and God the Holy Spirit) at a time before He humbled Himself to become the God-man. The Greek noun translated "form" could also be translated "nature." The NIV, for example, translates, "Who being in very nature God." He was deity, God the Son. He existed in the form of God, being God the Son, who was there with God the Father before anything was ever created, and through whom all things were created (see John 1:1-3, Col. 1:16, 17; and Heb. 1:1-3, 8-13).]], **did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped** [[Even though the Son of God always was fully deity with God the Father, He always recognized (and loved) the fact that He had an eternally subordinate role to God the Father in the Trinity. I didn't say He was inferior to the Father. God the Father created through Him; God the Father

sent Him into the world; He was the unique Son of the Father; and many verses throughout the Bible show that God the Father has the eternal preeminent role. (See my papers "Who Do We Pray To?"; "The Name Yahweh and God the Father and God the Son"; and "More on the Trinity" for many examples, and many examples are included in this paper, very much including in the last article we discussed by Wayne Grudem, and in Part 1 of this paper.

Rather than grasp for more (which would include trying to get rid of His subordinate role in the Trinity), He (as the next verses show) humbled Himself to temporarily leave the glory behind and become a man (the God-man), which was a gigantic condescension, and then to die a shameful death on the cross, all in loving submission to the Father's will. He also understood that He would be saving all believers and overthrowing all rebels (starting with the devil) through His incarnation, sinless life, and all-important atoning death.

Excerpts from, and Comments Regarding, "Christ's Functional Subordination in Philippians 2:6: A Grammatical Note with Trinitarian Implications" by Denny Burk. (This article is chapter 5 in "The New Evangelical Subordinationism?") I'll quote his first footnote: "This chapter is a revised version of an article I wrote several years ago: 'On the Articular Infinitive in Philippians 2:6.' My full treatment of the articular infinitive appears in my book: 'Articular Infinitives in the Greek of the New Testament.' " An articular infinitive is an infinitive ("to be," for example, is an infinitive; "to be" is used in Phil. 2:6) preceded by a definite article, which is similar to our "the" in English. It is obvious that Burk is an expert on this topic. I am not going to get into the extensive details of the Greek that are packed into this article (For at least most of my readers it would be very difficult [or impossible] to follow), but I'll give what he considers to be the correct viewpoint. I believe he is right.

I'll give one brief detail regarding the Greek: "[The definite article] marks the infinitive as object. [In Phil. 2:6 the infinitive clause is "to be equal with God."] In a similar way, that is what is happening in Phil. 2:6. But in [Phil. 2:6] the article marks the direct object and thereby distinguishes it from its accusative complement [which (the accusative complement) Burk translates "a thing to be grasped for" or "as something he should go after also"]" (page 102).

Burk gives a translation of Phil. 2:6 on page 83: "Although he existed in the form of God, he did not regard equality with God ["the to be equal with God" (the "articular infinitive" that is the direct object of the verbal clause "he did not regard") a thing to be grasped for [which is the "accusative complement" that Burk mentioned]." Under the heading "Theological Implications" on page 103 he offers the similar translation, "Although Jesus

existed in the form of God, he did not consider equality with God as something he should go after also." And he continues: "In other words, although Jesus actually possessed an identical characteristic of His Father with respect to his deity (i.e., 'he existed in the form of God'), he did not want to grasp after another role that was not his - namely equality with God. So what is this 'equality with God' if it is not something that he already possessed?"

I'll quote part of Burk's answer to his question: "Paul argues here that in his pre-incarnate state, Christ existed as [God (God the Son)]. Yet in this pre-incarnate existence, Christ Jesus did not seek to be like [God (God the Father)] in every respect. Paul pictures Christ Jesus as identified with God in one respect, but distinguished from Him in another respect. Christ, before all time, preexisted in the form of God, but he did not forsake his unique role in order to be like God the Father in every way. The pre-incarnate Christ shared the Father's deity, but he did not try to usurp the Father's role. The Father would send the Son, and the Son would submit to being sent. In eternity past, the Son submitted to this plan" (page 104). The Son of God, who is fully deity with God the Father, submitted to the plan of God the Father, who has always had, and always will have, the preeminent role in the Trinity.], **(7) but emptied Himself** [I'll quote part of what the BAGD Greek Lexicon gives for the meaning here: "he emptied himself, divested himself of his prestige or privileges."], **taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.** [[He didn't cease being deity, God the Son, but He temporarily exchanged an infinitely high place for a place of little reputation (that included becoming a man, the GOD-man). His incarnation, perfect life, atoning death, and resurrection were important on an infinite scale and would bring forth results of infinite proportion.]] **(8) Being found in appearance as a man** [after His incarnation], **He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.** [[Having become the God-man, He humbled Himself much further by voluntarily submitting to the all-important crucifixion and all that it involved (cf. John 10:17, 18), doing the Father's will (cf. Matt. 26:38-44; Mark 14:34-39). The physical suffering was a small part of what He submitted to. The Scriptures make it quite clear that this was an extremely difficult assignment: "And being in agony He was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground" (Luke 22:44). "Then He said to them, 'My soul is deeply grieved to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with Me.' And He went a little beyond them, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, 'My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not My will, but as You will' " (Matt. 26:38, 39). "About the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'ELI, ELI, LAMA SABACHTHANI?' [written in Aramaic, which was the primary language used in Israel at that time] that is, 'MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?' " (Matt. 27:46). He was totally committed to always do the Father's will, and He knew that He was earning the right to save us and to judge and remove the devil and all

those who follow him. Talk about two super-important accomplishments!]] **(9) For this purpose also** [or, "Therefore" with the NIV.], **God** [God the Father, who has the preeminent role in the Trinity] **highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name** [[Before God the Son humbled Himself (as pictured in verses 7, 8), He had a name above every name, excluding the name of God the Father. But now He had earned the right to save us with a very full salvation; we are even united with Him (with God the Son, and through Him with God the Father) through His incarnation, atoning death, resurrection and ascension to the right hand of God the Father, and we are destined to be glorified with Him and to reign with Him forever. (I am emphasizing God the Father and God the Son, but none of this would work without the all-important Holy Spirit, who dwells in every born-again Christian, for one thing). And now He has totally defeated the devil (see, for example, John 12:31; 16:11; and Heb. 2:14 [see Heb. 2:15-18 on His saving us]). This defeat will be fully manifested at the end of this age (cf., e.g., Rev. 12:7-9; 20:1-3, 10).]], **(10) so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, (11) and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**" God's people bow willingly; His enemies (including Satan and his followers) will be subdued and forced to bow and acknowledge that God has defeated them through His beloved Son and that Jesus Christ is Lord, ALL TO THE GLORY OF GOD THE FATHER, who always had, and always will have, the preeminent role in the Trinity. God the Father did not give His Son a name above His name, nor could He have.

3. CHAPTER 7 of "The New Evangelical Subordinationism?" (pages 133-181): "The Eternal Relational Subordination of the Son to the Father in Patristic [Referring to the Fathers of the Early Christian Church] Thought" by H. Wayne House, who is one of the two editors of the book. He is "Distinguished Research Professor of Theology and Culture at Faith Evangelical College & Seminary, Tacoma, Washington."

House makes it clear that he is against any subordination of the nature of the Son of God, "which is shared undivided with the Father and the Holy Spirit" (page 134). (It seems clear that House would agree with the identical, same-substance (oneness, but not modalism) unity that cannot be divided of the three Persons of the Trinity, but he also believes in the eternal subordinate role of the Son to the Father.) "What is at issue is whether the Son and the Father are equal in regards to authority within the Godhead *ad intra* [within the Trinity] and not whether the Son, as God has authority toward the creation *ad extra*. That the Son possesses equal power (omnipotence) with the Father and the Spirit is not in question, since this relates to the nature that all three distinct persons share in common. However, is authority an attribute of Triune God *ad intra*, in

which an unequal relationship exists between the persons? Is authority, if it is not an essential attribute of the essence of God, a relational matter in which the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit associate with each other from all eternity that distinguishes their persons from each other, even as they share in common the essence of Deity? Thus the Father is always Father, and over the Son and the Spirit, and the Son is always the Son, begotten from the Father and in subjection to Him" (page 136).

House has a major heading, "The Current Debate Regarding the Eternal Subordination of the Son to the Father" (pages 136-153). In a first subsection he laments the fact that some Christian scholars (he mentions Gilbert Bilezikian and Kevin Giles) are calling "those who believe in the eternal relational subordination of the Son [like Wayne Grudem and many of those I quote in this paper]...heretics."

[[(This double bracket goes on for three paragraphs.) Kevin Giles, who is mentioned and quoted quite often in this paper, is a major critic of the idea that Christians can believe that the three Persons of the Trinity share an identical, one, same substance, essence, nature, being that cannot be divided and also believe in the eternal subordination of the Son to the Father, and that there are three centers of consciousness with three wills and three minds in the Trinity. We discuss this issue in some detail in this paper, but as I mentioned, I am not going to try to directly or fully answer this question. For one thing, although the Bible has a lot to say about the three Persons and their words, actions, relations, etc., it has very little to say about the same-substance unity of the three Persons. It's easy to talk about the triune God, to speculate, to philosophize, but there is a lot we don't know about the Trinity, perhaps including some things that we think we know. ((Later in this paper I'll briefly discuss the fact that a little over a hundred years ago scientists thought they understood the physical universe pretty well (not that they thought that they understood every detail), but the theories of Einstein, which have proven to be true, upended quite a few things that they thought they knew. How much more might this be true when it comes to the three Persons of the Trinity and their non-physical dimension.)) I do feel comfortable (I am confident), however, saying the following:

I believe it is totally necessary for us to believe that the Son of God is God (deity) in the FULL sense of that word. I also believe the Bible makes it clear that God the Son always has been and always will be subordinate to God the Father in His role. The subordination is not limited to the time that the God-man lived on the earth, like so many, including Kevin Giles, say. The fact that the pre-Nicene Christian fathers agreed with the eternal subordination of the Son to the Father (this is obvious; Kevin Giles agrees) serves as a strong confirmation of the eternal subordination of the Son to the Father. (The pre-Nicene Christians learned of the eternal subordination of the Son from

the apostles and their writings contained in the New Testament.) Furthermore, as we discuss in some detail in this paper, at least most of the bishops gathered for the Council of Nicea in AD 325, who came up with the Nicene Creed, agreed with the eternal subordination of the Son to the Father. This rather obvious and quite important fact is very often overlooked (not mentioned) by large numbers of Christians, including Kevin Giles.

So, I believe the evidence is overwhelming that the Son is eternally subordinate to the Father in His role, whether this violates the understanding of many Christians regarding the three Persons sharing the identical, one, same-substance, essence, nature, being that cannot be divided, or not. As I have mentioned, I have to reject any view of the same-substance unity of the three Persons, or ontological equality, that doesn't leave room for the eternal subordinate role of God the Son, or requires us to accept that there is one center of consciousness with one will and one mind in the Trinity. It could be very significant, as I have mentioned and as we will discuss in this paper, that the pre-Nicene Christians and most of those gathered to Nicea did not believe in the identical, same-substance (oneness, but not modalism) unity that cannot be divided of the three Persons of the Trinity. We always need to be open to modify our viewpoints, always aiming to be aligned with the Bible. It is a privilege to learn where we are wrong, so we can make the necessary corrections. Better now than when we stand before God at the end.]]

House's second subsection here is titled "Orthodox Theologians of Former Days and the Present." I'll quote his first two sentences: "Those who consider evangelicals as heretics if they embrace relational subordinationism equally indict a number of church fathers in the early centuries as well as several theologians of the past and many since the reformation. Let us examine a few." That subsection continues from page 138 to 150.

House's next major heading is "The Use of the Term 'Subordination' by the Fathers" (pages 154-168). The first subheading here is "Definition of the Term 'Subordination' " (pages 154-160). The primary point that House makes here is that though it would be wrong to speak of the subordination of the essence, being, nature of the Son or of the Spirit, it is proper and "was embraced by the fathers of the patristic period" (page 155) to speak of a relational subordination of the Son and the Spirit to the Father. Much more important (and I know that House would agree) is that the Bible, which must be our foundational source for God's revealed truth, quite often speaks of this relational subordination.

House's second subheading here is "Is the Subordination of Roles within the Trinity Condemned at Nicea?" (pages 160-164). I'll quote the first two sentences that House has here: "The debate at Nicea was not about role relationship between the Father and the Son but whether the Son was subordinate in His divine essence, a lesser divine being to that of the Father. [[The primary purpose of the Council of Nicea, which they accomplished, was to reject the teaching of Arius (and those who agreed with him) that the Son was a created being, who was created out of nothing, who was not of the substance of the Father, which effectively denied His deity. His viewpoint was more like the Jehovah Witnesses' viewpoint of our day.]] There is consistency in the pre-Nicene church regarding this truth, even though the use of language by some fathers of the church sometimes obscured this reality" [House went on to mention that Origen, for example, unfortunately spoke of the Son being a second God along with all the good things that Origen said on this topic. I'll skip House's footnotes here.] ... Consequently, the Father, Son and Spirit...are one essence distinguishable in modes of existence from each other. The Father begets the Son as a person distinct from Himself, but sharing eternally the same essence. He, thus, does not beget an inferior person qualitatively, but does beget a Son who relates to Him as Father, and who, by personal subsistence ([Greek] 'hypostasis') in which they are different, and not the divine essence ([Greek] 'ousia') in which they are the same, submits to the Father's will" (pages 160-161).

I'll quote a sentence from page 163 and then part of a sentence from House's excerpt from Charles Hodge ("Systematic Theology," 3 vols. 1871-73; 1:460). "How they relate as Father and Son says nothing regarding an inequality of their one divine nature." And (quoting from Hodge) "The subordination intended is only that which concerns the mode of subsistence and operation, implied in the Scriptural facts that the Son is of the Father...and that the Father operates through the Son..." (pages 163-164).

House's next subheading is "Subordination in Relationship to the Father, but not Subordinate in Nature to the Father" (pages 164-168). I'll quote the first sentence that House has here: "One of the reasons for confusion in the discussion of subordination of the Son in the history of the Church relates to how the term 'subordination' is defined." "...the main point of this paper [the paper of House] is that the eternal Logos [the Word of John 1:1], who was 'homoousios' with the Father (sharing the same divine nature) and equal in every divine attribute to the Father, was nonetheless subordinate to Him in regards to authority and order within the Trinity" (page 166).

The next major heading in House's article (the fourth) is "Early Patristic Exegesis [which refers to their understanding of what the Bible teaches] Regarding the Subordination of the Son to the Father" (pages 168-178). I'll quote most of House's first paragraph here: "It is my contention that the fathers of the patristic era (2-8th century AD)...believed in

the eternal Sonship that flows from the Father, begotten from unbegotten, and in the subordination of the Son to the Father within the divine Trinity. Building on the earlier teaching of apologists and theologians such as Justin, Origen, and Irenaeus, though taking advantage of the theological development of the third and fourth centuries, with their more precise terminology, they believed that the person of the Son came eternally from God the Father, sharing equally with Him the entirety of the divine nature indivisibly from all eternity, yet that He was distinguished in the manner in which He related to the Spirit and the Father. Though He shares the common Godhead of attributes, in His personal relationship with the Father He is second in order and under the Father, a property unique to Him. (He has a footnote here: "If each of the Persons of the Trinity is God, then each necessarily possesses the attributes of deity, such as eternity, immutability, and infinity. In what sense, then, can the Persons be said to be distinct from one another, if the attributes they possess are identical? To explain this, theologians coined the term 'property,' derived from the Latin 'proprius ('proper,' i.e. 'pertaining to the person or individual'). In theology, a property pertains to one Person alone' (Harold O. Brown, 'Heresies,' 1984, page 131)."

House overstates the case when he says that "the fathers of the patristic era (2-8th century AD) believed...in the subordination of the Son to the Father within the divine Trinity." I believe it is true that most of the Christians before Nicea and at Nicea (AD 325) and many Christians after Nicea would agree with what House says here; however, many of the Christians in the years following Nicea, very much including Athanasius (AD296-373) and Augustine (AD354-430), who were very influential, didn't leave any room for the eternal subordination of the Son. (I document this point as we continue with this paper.) For one thing, the more you put the emphasis on the one divine being, nature, essence, substance, including ideas like there is only one center of consciousness, one will, and one mind, which Athanasius and Augustine, who were very influential did, the more you don't leave room for distinctions between the three Persons, including the Father having authority over the Son. We will discuss these things (including the viewpoints of Athanasius and Augustine) as we continue with this paper. We will also discuss what the majority of the Christian leaders at Nicea meant by the Greek word "homoousios" ("of the same substance").

4. CHAPTER 2 of "The New Evangelical Subordinationism?": "Equal in Essence, Distinct in Roles: Eternal Functional Authority and Submission among the Essentially Equal Divine Persons of the Godhead" by Bruce A. Ware (pages 13-37). Ware is "Professor of Christian Theology at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky." I also include some excerpts here from "Father, Son, & Holy Spirit: Relationship, Roles and Relevance," a book by Ware.

"I will defend the thesis...that the Father and Son are fully equal in their deity as each possesses fully the identically same divine nature, yet the eternal and inner-trinitarian Father-Son relationship is marked, among other things, by an authority and submission structure in which the Father is eternally in authority over the Son and the Son eternally in submission to the Father" (page 14).

On page 15 Ware has a major heading, "The Case for an Eternal Functional Authority-Submission Structure in the Trinity." The first subheading is "Names of the 'Father' and the 'Son' " (pages 15-17). "If the Father sends his Son into the world (John 3:17) and if the Father creates and reveals and redeems through his Son (Heb. 1:1-3), then these names refer not to some *ad hoc* [for this specific purpose] arrangement for the incarnation but to an eternal relationship in which the Father is the eternal Father of the Son, and the Son is the eternal Son of the Father" (page 15). "Without question, a central part of the notion of 'Father' is that of fatherly authority" (page 16).

The second subheading here is "The Rightful Authority Specifically of the Father over All Things" (pages 17-19). I'll quote the first two sentences of what Ware says here: "The Father is the grand architect, the wise designer of all that has occurred in the created order, and he, not the Son or the Spirit, is specifically said to have supreme authority over all. In his position and authority, the Father is supreme among the Persons of the Godhead as he is supreme over the whole created order."

His third subheading here is "The Submission of the Son to the Father in the Incarnate Mission of the Son" (pages 19-21). Essentially everybody agrees on this point. His fourth subheading here is "The Pre-Incarnate Submission of the Son to the Father in Eternity Past." This is important! Ware spends some five pages (pages 21-26) discussing this point. I'll mention a few of the points he makes here: He refers to 1 Cor. 11:3 and devotes a paragraph to discuss this verse (page 22). I'll quote 1 CORINTHIANS 11:3 from the NASB: **"But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ."** Ware says this verse speaks of "the relationship between the Father and Son that reflects an eternal verity." In a footnote he says: "For helpful discussion of the interpretation of 'kephale' [which is the Greek noun translated "head"] and its bearing on this text, see Grudem, 'Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth,' pages 568-94."

Ware discusses the fact that the New Testament speaks of the Father sending His Son into the world "prior to the incarnation itself" (page 22). For example, "In John 6:38, Jesus says, 'For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me.' These words could not express more clearly that the obedience to

the will of the Father took place in eternity past as the pre-incarnate Son came from heaven at the will of the Father" (page 23). Ware also quoted John 8:42 and 10:36 to demonstrate the same point.

The New Testament speaks of the Son's role in creating all things that have been created, but "he creates under the authority of the Father" and "the Father creates by or through the agency of the Son" (page 25). Ware quotes 1 Cor. 8:6 and refers to John 1:3 and other verses here too.

And I'll quote part of Ware's last paragraph in this subsection: "Consider also Paul's teaching that the Father, before the foundation of the world, has chosen us in Christ (Eph. 1:4) and predestined us to adoption through Christ (Eph. 1:5). ... Surely this shows both the Father's supreme position of authority over all, but it also shows that the Son's work fulfills what the Father has willed. ... It is his will that the Son accomplishes, and his will to which the Son submits. ... Indeed, the Father is praised for redeeming us through his Son (cf. Isa 53:10; John 1:29; Acts 2:23; Rom. 8:32), and for this reason, the Father is deserving of all praise for the lavish display of his glorious grace (Eph. 1:6-8, 12, 14). Both creation and redemption, works accomplished by the Son, are ultimately and rightly seen, then, as works of the Father that are done through the agency of his eternal Son according to the design and will of the Father" (pages 25, 26). Of course we must not minimize the work that the Son has accomplished and will yet accomplish. I know Ware will agree. I am totally sure that the Son very much wants to see God the Father glorified to the max! Ware goes on to mention that he has not given "the full evidence of the authority of the Father over the Son in eternity past but [that what he has mentioned here] is sufficient to demonstrate this clear teaching from Scripture" (page 27).

Ware's fifth subsection is "The Submission of the Son to the Father in Eternity Future," which covers pages 26-28. I'll mention some of the things Ware says here. The Lord Jesus at the right hand of the Father intercedes for the saints (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25). "...the Son acts on behalf of his own and brings their requests to the Father, the highest authority over all" (page 26). I'll quote part of what he says when commenting on 1 Cor. 15:24-28: "... The Son...shows himself as the supreme victor and conqueror of all, including the conqueror of death itself, only because the Father has given him this highest of all callings and roles. In full acknowledgment of the Father's supremacy, the Son displays his submission to the Father by delivering up the now-conquered kingdom to the Father, and then, remarkably, by subjecting himself also to the Father. Though all of creation is subject to the Son, the Son himself is subject to his Father. There is no question, then, that this passage indicates the eternal future submission of the Son to the Father, in keeping with his submission to the Father both in the incarnation and in

eternity past" (page 27). He also points out (referring to Phil. 2:10-11) that when every knee will bow before the Lord Jesus and confess that He is Lord, it will redound "to the glory of God the Father," in that these things will have all come to pass in accordance with the ultimate authority and plan of God the Father. "Authority and submission reside eternally in this Father-Son relationship, as taught clearly in Scripture" (page 28).

Ware's sixth and last subheading here is "Historical Tradition Acknowledging Authority and Submission in the Trinity" (pages 29-36). I'll quote a small part of what he says on pages 35-36: "One recent theologian who has observed the beauty of the Son's submission to the Father is the eminently quotable P. T. Forsyth. ("God the Holy Father," 1897, page 42). He asserts that the Son's obedience to the Father demonstrates that 'subordination is *not* inferiority, and it is Godlike. The principle is embedded in the very cohesion of the eternal trinity and it is inseparable from the unity, fraternity and true equality of men. It is not a mark of inferiority to be subordinate, to have an authority, to obey. It is divine.' And in another place, Forsyth makes clear that the Son's obedience to the Father was indeed an eternal obedience, rendered by an eternal equal, constituting an eternal subordination of the Son to do the will of the Father. ... Forsyth writes, 'Father and Son co-exist, co-equal in the Spirit of holiness, i.e., of perfection. But Father and Son is a relation inconceivable except the Son be obedient to the Father. The perfection of the Son and the perfecting of his holy work lay, not in his suffering but in his obedience. And as he was eternal Son, it meant an eternal obedience.... But obedience is not conceivable without some form of subordination. Yet in his very obedience the Son was co-equal with the Father; the Son's yielding will was no less divine than the Father's exigent will. Therefore, in the very nature of God, subordination implies no inferiority' (Forsyth, "Marriage, Its Ethic and Religion," pages 70-71)."

Lastly, I'll quote part of what Ware says in his "Conclusion." "There is, then, an eternal and immutable equality of essence between the Father and the Son, while there is also an eternal and immutable authority-submission structure that marks the relationship of the Father and the Son. Ultimately the credibility of this thesis depends on the teaching of God's word. Because in his inspired word, God has made known his own triune life, we must with renewed commitment seek to study, believe, and embrace the truth of God as made known here. Where we have been misled by the history of this doctrine or contemporary voices, may Scripture lead to correction. [Amen!] But where contemporary revision departs from Scripture's clear teaching, may we have courage to stand with the truth and for the truth. [Amen!] For the sake of the glory of the only true and living God, who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, may we pledge to him alone our fidelity, obedience, love, and devotion." Amen!

This Would Be a Good Place to Include Several Excerpts from Bruce Ware's book, "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: Relationships, Roles, and Relevance" (Crossway Books, © 2005, 173 pages). His Bible quotations were taken from the "English Standard Version," ESV.

"As noted above in Ephesians 1, we are to give praise first and foremost to the Father, since he 'chose us in him [in Christ] before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him' (Eph. 1:4)" (page 19).

"Here [in the Trinity] is a unity of differentiation, where love abounds and where neither jealousy or pride is known. Each divine Person accepts his role, each in proper relation to the others, and each works together with the others for one unified, common purpose. It is nothing short of astonishing to contemplate the fundamental and pervasive unity within the Trinity, given the eternal differentiation that exists in the three Persons" (page 20).

"The Father possesses the place of supreme authority.... ...even though it is also eternally true that each Person is fully equal to each other in their commonly possessed essence" (page 21).

"...Paul spoke of this day, when Christ will stand before every creature in heaven and earth as the exalted Lord, and every knee will bow and every tongue confess 'that *Jesus Christ is Lord*, to the *glory of God the Father*' (Phil. 2:11). ...all proclaim that 'Jesus Christ is Lord' - nonetheless, all worship of the Son, in and of itself, is penultimate. That is, worship of the Son, while right and true and glorious, must also recognize the one whom the Son himself acknowledges as supreme over all, even over himself. The ultimate object of our honor, glory, praise, and worship is the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, who himself alone is over all. Just as the Son himself will one day 'be subjected to him [to the Father] who put all things in subjection under him [with the exception of the Father Himself (I Cor. 15:27)], that God [the Father] may be all in all' (1 Cor. 15:28), so we must recognize even now that all worship to the Son...is always meant also to reverberate yet further to the glory and majesty of the Father" (pages 154-155).

Lastly, I'll quote part of a paragraph from the "Conclusion." "Whether submitting, serving, and obeying, or whether leading, sending, and commanding ["commanding" is a rather strong word to use], each divine Person accepts his respective roles and responsibilities with complete and unabashed delight. The eternal authority and submission structure of the Trinity does not permit deviation, so that authority and submission are themselves eternal realities. While the Father embraces and revels in his position of being supreme in the Trinity, so too do the Son and Spirit embrace and

revel in their positions as second and third, respectively. No competition, no jealousy, no bitterness, and no dispute exist among these Persons. Here in the Trinity, rather, we see hierarchy without hubris, authority with no oppression, submission that is not servile, AND LOVE THAT PERVADES EVERY ASPECT OF DIVINE LIFE [[my emphasis; the super-powerful love of God suffices to remove anything that could be considered negative and turn it into something very positive; everything is in perfect divine order in the Trinity, and everything that is part of His heavenly kingdom will come into divine order before He is finished]]. Unity and diversity, identity and distinction, sameness and difference, melody and harmony - these are qualities that mark the rich texture of the life of the one God who is three" (page 157).

It is obvious that pride is wrong, and certainly there is no pride in any Person of the Trinity, but I'm sure that each Person of the Trinity thinks in line with reality. It isn't pride for Christians to think of themselves in line with what God has called and anointed them to be and to do, but we must stay away from all pride and make sure that God receives all the glory forever.

5. CHAPTER 3 of "The New Evangelical Subordination?" (pages 39-58): "Subordination within the Trinity: John 5:18 and 1 Cor. 15:28" by Craig S. Keener (he is "Professor of New Testament at Asbury Theological Seminary"). I'll quote part of what he says when discussing 1 Cor. 15:28. I'll quote 1 CORINTHIANS 15:28 from the NASB: **"When all things are subjected to Him [to the Son], then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him** [[The Father subjected all things to Him by giving Him the commission and the authority to overthrow all opposition, but we must understand that the Father Himself is quite active in the overthrow and judgment of His enemies. Consider, for example, the great-white-throne judgment of Rev. 20:11-15, where God the Father is the One sitting on the throne.]], **so that God** [God the Father] **may be all in all.**" "This does sound like the Son will continue to submit to the Father in the future. As Ambrosiaster [written by an unknown author between AD366-384, according to Wikipedia] comments in his 'Commentary on Paul's Epistles,' the Father and Son share the same deity but the Father comes first in authority" (page 50). "...in the end Christ himself will be plainly subordinated to the Father (1 Cor. 15:28) in a more complete way than he is before that day (15:27), though he sits already at the Father's right hand (cf. Acts 2:34-35). At that point, God [God the Father] will be 'all in all' (1 Cor. 15:28). This refers to his unchallenged authority over all else, in this context presumably including the Son.this passage appears to affirm the Son's willing subordination to the Father in the future era. For Paul, then, Jesus' deity (e.g., 1 Cor. 8:6) is presumably not incompatible with his recognition of the Father's higher position, even in the eternal future. Paul's wording does not indicate the

sense in which the Son submits to the Father...[but Keener goes on to show that the Son will be on the throne with God the Father in the eternal state, referring to Rev. 22:3]. But it does suggest that the Father and Son embrace some characteristic activities that remain distinct in some respects even in eternity" (pages 51-52). I believe we can safely say that the Father will have the preeminent role in the Trinity in the eternal state, as He always has, even during the reign of the Lord Jesus when He [the Lord Jesus] is subduing all opposition (1 Cor. 15:25-26).

"If the Son's submission [earlier in this paragraph Keener mentioned "voluntary submission"] to the Father teaches us nothing else, we should learn from it to value the Father's honor and submit to His will. Again, if the Son's unity with the Father teaches us nothing else, we [referring to all true Christians] should learn from it how our unity with one another is essential to honoring him (John 17:21-23)" (page 54).

"I believe this passage [1 Cor. 15:28] fairly clearly favors Jesus' continuing submission to the Father, although I would certainly not make the interpretation of this verse a matter of heresy. Kevin [referring to Kevin Giles, who has an article in this book and who is a leading spokesman for the view that the only time the Son was subordinate to the Father was during the few years that He lived on the earth], by contrast, argues for Jesus' current non-subordination especially from the creeds, a difference that reflects our different disciplines as well as our different beliefs and in some sense our different ecclesiastical traditions. I acknowledge Kevin's noteworthy competence in the creeds, but I believe that Scripture is ultimately more authoritative than creeds [I totally agree with this super-important point.] and need not be conformed to the creeds (which like Scripture, may be subject to interpretation). ..." (page 55).

Lastly, I'll quote Keener's last two sentences in this article from page 56: "Where the present debate matters most on a practical level is that Jesus' submission to the Father offers a model for us to lay aside our self-centeredness and independence. If the Son himself would submit to the Father, how much more ought we (Phil. 2:5-8; John 15:10; 1 John 3:16)?" AMEN!

6. CHAPTER 15 of "The New Evangelical Subordinationism?" (pages 339-374): "Complementarian Trinitarianism: Divine Revelation Is Finally True to the Eternal Personal Relations" by J. Scott Horrell ("Professor of Theological Studies at Dallas Theological Seminary"). (This completes the six excerpts from "The New Evangelical Subordinationism?")

I'll quote part of what Horrell says under the subheading "Father-Son Language as a Path into the Eternal Trinity." "Although not by any means the only terms for deity in the New Testament, the designations *Father*, *Son*, and *Spirit* carry us into the very heart of God's eternal relations. Jesus repeatedly spoke about God as his Father and his relationship with the Father that preceded his coming into the world.the words 'Father' and 'Son' have been understood in nearly all church history as those which best describe the deepest personal ontology [dealing with the being, nature, essence, substance] of God" (page 345).

I'll quote part of what Horrell says under the subheading "Historic Tensions between Divine Hierarchy and Functional Equality" (pages 348-351). First he makes it clear that he cannot agree with Kevin Giles (previously mentioned in this paper) and Millard Erickson (he wrote "Who's Tampering with the Trinity?") that "to ascribe the idea of a Trinitarian functional hierarchy to an evangelical invention is unjustified." (And he says in a footnote: "For a response to Giles, see Bird and Shillaker, 'Subordination in the Trinity'...." That article is chapter 12 in "The New Evangelical Subordinationism?") But Horrell went on to say, "Nevertheless, Giles and Erickson are correct in arguing that historical post-Constantinopolitan theology [[The Council of Nicea took place in AD 325. The First Council of Constantinople took place in AD 381. They came up with the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed there, which roughly was the equivalent to the Nicene Creed of AD 325 with some additions.]] does not generally embrace a hierarchy of authority. [[In other words, "historical post-Constantinopolitan theology" did not generally agree that the Son was eternally subordinate to the Father in His role. However, as we will discuss further in this paper, the pre-Nicene Christian writings did include the eternal subordination of the Son to the Father in their roles and the majority of those gathered to Nicea held that viewpoint too, along with believing in the full deity of the Son of God. We discuss this important point in some detail in this paper.]] On the other hand, biblical theology as emphasized by Grudem and Ware [We have discussed the articles by Wayne Grudem and Bruce Ware, who believe that the Son is eternally subordinate to the Father in His role along with believing in the full equality of the three Persons of the Trinity, earlier in this paper.] - as well as early patristic historical theology - does seem to favor eternal functional hierarchy, if not eternal subordination of the Son. Various contemporary biblical scholars align, at least somewhat, with Ware and Grudem's Trinitarian arguments.

The tension between ontological equality [[(This double bracket goes on for two paragraphs.) As I have mentioned, IF the same-substance unity (or ontological equality) is understood in a way that doesn't leave room for the eternal subordination of the Son to the Father, which is the understanding of many, then I cannot agree with that view. The Bible teaches the eternal subordination of the Son and this was the viewpoint of the

Christians before Nicea and the dominant viewpoint of the Christians at Nicea (AD 325), but, as Horrell says, "historical post-Constantinopolitan theology does not generally embrace a hierarchy of authority." Anyway, the Son is fully deity with God the Father: He wasn't created, and He certainly wasn't created out of nothing, as Arius said; one way, or another, the Son is of the substance, essence of God the Father. For one thing, the Nicene Creed included the Greek word "homoousios," which means "of the same substance, essence."

For a long time now large numbers of Christians have understood "homoousios" and the same-substance unity of the Father and the Son of the Nicene Creed in a way that excludes any eternal subordination of the Son to the Father. As I have mentioned, and we will discuss this further in this paper, the influential ministries of Athanasius, the three Cappadocians, and Augustine strongly contributed to this change in viewpoint. Based on what I have read, those who deny the eternal subordination of the Son in his role deny it based on their overstatement of the same-substance unity of the three Persons and/or on their overemphasis on that unity. ((His being of the same substance ("homoousios") of the Father can be understood in a way that doesn't leave any room for the eternal subordination of the Son to the Father, but most of the signers of the Nicene Creed did not understand it that way, which is very important information. Furthermore, it is super-significant that the Bible speaks of the eternal subordination of the Son to the Father in His role, and the pre-Nicene Fathers believed in the eternal subordination of the Son.)) Keith E. Johnson discussed Augustine's viewpoint in chapter 6 of "The New Evangelical Subordination. "] and functional subordination is part of the mystery of the Trinity that the church has sought to hold together. [I believe that essentially all Christians understand that there is some "mystery" regarding our understanding of the Trinity. We will understand more in the future, but even then we probably won't fully understand the Trinity.] On the one side, biblical theology depicts an order within the Godhead of creation *ex nihilo* [out of nothing] which initiates with the Father's will, the Son as the means, and the Spirit as the enlivening power. As to salvation, the *ordo salutis* [Latin for "order of salvation"] begins with the Father's decree, the Son's incarnation and death on the Cross, and the Spirit's conviction and regeneration. [Horrell leaves room here for the functional subordination of the Son as He carries out His role(s) ordained by the Father.] On the other side [of the tension between ontological equality and functional subordination], no act of God reflects a single divine person to the exclusion of the others. The three persons act as one God. Each member of the Trinity is present in every act of God. [[This viewpoint comes because they overstate the same-substance unity of the three Persons and/or put too much emphasis on that unity and don't leave room for what the Bible teaches about the three Persons of the Trinity and their roles. They conclude that there is only one center of consciousness and one will and one mind in the one God, and that there cannot be

any eternal subordination of the Son to the Father. Like I said, I don't believe these ideas fit what the Bible says. We will speak more of these things as we continue.]] Yet, as the fourth and fifth-century fathers increasingly stressed the equality of the Father, Son, and Spirit [based on their conception of, and their emphasis on, the identical, same-substance (oneness, but not modalism) unity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit that cannot be divided], they struggled to [and, based on what I have read, failed to] form a synthesis that simultaneously captured the rich personal Trinitarian relations."

As Horrell continues he speaks of many Christians in our day who want to balance out the overemphasis on the oneness of God (the same-substance unity) which doesn't leave much room for the three Persons and their roles. The New Testament puts all the emphasis on the three Persons with their different roles, not on the oneness of God, and certainly not on an overstated oneness of God. It is totally necessary to see that the Bible doesn't teach three Gods, but we don't want to overstate the oneness of God. The Bible doesn't do that. It is important to see that verses like Deut. 6:4 that mention that there is only one God were intended for one purpose: They boldly proclaimed that, although the nations around Israel had many gods, there is only one God, the God of the Bible, the God of creation, the God of Noah and Abraham and Israel. Those verses were designed to refute the polytheism that permeated the ancient world. They were not given (not at all) to deny the full revelation yet to come of the three Persons of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are united in love relationships that we don't fully understand. We cannot know any more about the Trinity than what has been revealed, but it is clear that we don't have three Gods. It is equally clear that we are related to, and totally dependent on, the three distinct Persons of the Trinity. We relate to and worship the three Persons of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, but God the Father has the preeminent role in the Trinity and we should worship Him first and foremost.

I'll quote a sentence from what Horrell says here (page 350): "More recently from a different angle, social Trinitarian Colin Gunton decried the overbearing dominance in Western theology of the Augustinian emphasis on the single nature ('homoousios') of God" (referring to Gunton's book, "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit" (T&T Clark, 2003, 240 pages). I obtained a copy of this book. I'll include a few excerpts from Gunton before I continue with Horrell:

I'll quote part of what Gunton says on pages 43, 44, under the heading "Being and Person." "It is often said, oversimplification that it is, that in the East discussion of the Trinity moves from the three to the one [which clearly seems to be much more in line with the Bible], whereas in the West the reverse is the case. The real difference, however, tends not to be in the starting point but in the way in which the oneness and

threeness of God are weighted in relation to one another, AND WHETHER, AS OFTEN HAPPENS IN THE WEST, THE ONENESS OUTWEIGHS THE THREENESS AND MAKES THE PERSONS FUNCTIONALLY INDISTINGUISHABLE TO ALL INTENTS AND PURPOSES [my emphasis]." The more you put the emphasis on the oneness, the more you don't leave room for the three Persons and differences between them.

And I'll quote part of what Gunton says on page 47: "Without a distinction between persons - as the ones who are each particularly what they are by virtue of their relations...to one another - and the relations between them, the danger is that their particularity will be lost, as has been the case notoriously in the West with its excessive stress on the principle that the acts of God *ad extra* [Latin for "to the outside," referring to the acts of God external to the Trinity] are undivided." There is a strong emphasis on the acts of God external to the Trinity being undivided because of the overstatement of the same-substance unity of the three Persons and/or an overemphasis on that unity.

On page 354 Horrell includes the idea that there are "three distinct centers of consciousness" in "the one divine Being." Many want to speak of one center of consciousness with one mind and one will, and which doesn't leave room for any eternal subordination of the Son to the Father. On page 367 he makes the important point that "Philosophic arguments that a true equality of the divine nature necessitates equality of roles are neither rationally required nor harmonious with God's self-revelation [in the Bible]." On page 354, for example, Horrell speaks of "three distinct centers of consciousness, wholly equal in nature...."

7. Eternal Subordination of the Son to the Father in the Book of Revelation. The book of Revelation is a very special book. For one thing, the content came almost entirely by direct revelation from God. The book of Revelation strongly emphasizes the full deity of the Lord Jesus, but I won't deal with that super-important point in this section. (I deal with that topic in my verse-by-verse teaching on the book of Revelation on my internet site: See under Rev. 21:6 and 22:6, 9 in my paper on Revelation Chapters 20-22.)

REVELATION 1:1. **"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God [God the Father] gave Him to show to His bond-servants [It seems that "His" refers to the Lord Jesus in this context; we are His bond-servants (cf., e.g., Phil. 1:1; Rev. 1:1 at the end of this verse; and Rev. 2:20). It is also true, however, that we are bond-servants of God the Father (cf., e.g., Acts 4:29; Rev. 19:2, 5; and 22:3).], the things which must soon take place; and He [the Lord Jesus] sent and communicated it by His angel [see Rev. 22:6, 16] to His bond-servant John [the apostle John]."** The fact that God the Father gave this revelation to His resurrected, glorified Son demonstrates the preeminent role

of God the Father at that time, *after* the Son had been glorified and is seated at the right hand of the Father. The Father is the One who planned the salvation and judgments that are spoken of throughout the book of Revelation.

REVELATION 1:4-8. "**John to the seven churches that are in Asia** [[See Rev. 1:11. Seven churches in seven cities of the Roman province of Asia are addressed in chapters 2 and 3 of the book of Revelation. The most prominent theme that permeated most of those messages was the powerful call to repent, where repentance was required, or else forfeit their salvation. It seems clear that the messages to those seven churches are directly applicable to all churches/Christians of all generations that are in the same situations. For one thing, the number seven, which is used repeatedly throughout the book of Revelation, is a symbolic number for completeness/perfection. Also, it's very clear that the prophetic content of the book of Revelation wasn't designed just for those seven ancient churches. Since so much of the prophecy deals with the end of this age, the book of Revelation undoubtedly has the greatest application for the churches/Christians of the last days. They're (we're) the ones who most need this detailed information.]]: **Grace to you and peace, from Him who is and who was and who is to come** [[(This double bracket continues for two paragraphs.) In this context, with the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ being mentioned next, it seems clear that God the Father is being spoken of here. This same title/name is also used of Him in Rev. 1:8 and 4:8. Also, in Rev. 11:17; 16:5 the same title/name is used of Him, but the last words, "and who is to come" are dropped, because He comes (especially in that He sends His Son at that time) at the sounding of the seventh and last trumpet in the middle of Daniel's 70th week. The sounding of this trumpet is mentioned in Rev. 11:15, just before 11:17. God the Father will be directly involved in those events, and He will be seated on the throne at the great-white throne judgment at the end of the millennial kingdom (Rev. 20:11-15). He will come to His people in the full and final sense at the time of the new heaven and new earth, after the great-white-throne judgment [Rev. 21:1-22:5].

This title/name, "Him who is and who was and who is to come," could also be used for the Lord Jesus Christ, even as the name "Yahweh" and the word "God" are also appropriate for Him, since He is deity with the Father and the Spirit. However, here it refers to God the Father. (It would be very confusing if these words, "Yahweh" and "God," were used of the Son very often.) There is widespread agreement that the words "from Him who is and who was" build on the Hebrew name Yahweh, which is used some 6,800 times in the Hebrew Old Testament. It was typically used of God the Father in the Old Testament, but it was used several times of the Angel/Messenger of Yahweh, who was the preincarnate Son of God in the Old Testament, which serves as a very strong confirmation of His full deity. On the name Yahweh, see my paper "The Name

Yahweh and God the Father and God the Son" on my internet site (Google to Karl Kemp Teaching).]], **and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne** [This is a symbolic way to refer to the Holy Spirit, with the number seven symbolizing perfection/completeness. See Rev. 3:1; 4:5; 5:6; and Zech. 4:10.], **(5) and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness** [On the "faithful witness," see Rev. 1:2. The Lord Jesus Christ was a faithful witness when He lived on the earth (cf. John 3:11; 8:14; 18:37; and 1 Tim. 6:13, 14). Of course He still is a faithful witness.], **the firstborn of [or, from] the dead** [He was the first "man" to leave death behind and be born into the resurrection glory of eternal life. Also see Col. 1:18; Rom. 8:29; and 1 Cor. 15:20-23.], **and the ruler of the kings of the earth** [cf., e.g., Matt. 28:18; Rev. 17:14; 19:16; and 21:24]. [See Psalm 89:27, 37. Note the words "faithful witness" in the NIV, KJV, and NKJV translations of Psalm 89:37.] **To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood** [[He released us from our sins with the guilt AND WITH THE PENALTIES, INCLUDING THE MAJOR PENALTIES OF SPIRITUAL DEATH AND BONDAGE TO SIN. This release is discussed in detail in my book "Holiness and Victory Over Sin." See, for example, Acts 26:18; Rom. 6:1-23; 8:1-14; 2 Cor. 5:21; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:9-14; Titus 2:14; Heb. 9:14; 10:10-18, 29; 1 Pet. 1:18, 19; 2:24; and 1 John 1:7. These verses are all discussed in "Holiness and Victory Over Sin," except for 2 Cor. 5:21, which is discussed on pages 38, 39 of my paper "The Christian, the Law, and Legalism." Quite a few more equally powerful verses could be listed here. This super-important topic is also discussed in my much more recent book, "Righteousness, Holiness, and Victory Over Sin." Both books are available at amazon.com.]] - **(6) and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God** [[The words "His God," referring to the God of the resurrected, glorified Christ, which are a little surprising, confirm the preeminent role of God the Father, but they certainly don't deny the full deity of the Lord Jesus that is emphasized in the Bible, very much including the book of Revelation. Also see Rev. 3:2, 12 ("My God").]] **and Father** [[In a preliminary sense we Christians are in the kingdom now (cf., e.g., Ex. 19:6; Luke 11:20; 17:20, 21; Rom. 14:17; Col. 1:13; and Rev. 1:9), and we are priests now (Ex. 19:6; 1 Pet. 2:5, 9). Many verses, however, show that the kingdom in its full sense, and our reigning in it, is yet future, starting when the King returns (cf., e.g., Dan. 7:13, 14, 18, 22, 27; Matt. 6:10; 16:27, 28; Luke 19:11-27; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; 15:50; Gal. 5:21; James 2:5; Rev. 2:26, 27; 3:21; 5:10; and 20:4, 6). Revelation 5:10 speaks of our yet-future reign; Rev. 20:6 speaks of our yet-future priesthood and reign in the millennial kingdom. Revelation 22:5 speaks of our reigning forever in the eternal state that follows the millennial kingdom.]] - **to Him [to Christ Jesus] be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen. (7) BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS** [cf. Dan. 7:13; Matt. 24:30; 26:64; Mark 13:26; 14:62; Luke 21:27; Acts 1:9-11; and 1 Thess. 4:16, 17], **and every eye will see Him** [There's no secret, invisible coming of Christ mentioned in the Bible; it seems that all will see Him when He returns, at the time of the (mid-week) rapture.], **even those who pierced Him; and all**

the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. [[(This double bracket goes on for two paragraphs.) There undoubtedly is an allusion intended to Zech. 12:10, which speaks of the end-time remnant of the nation Israel looking upon Him whom they had pierced (referring to Israel's rejection and crucifixion of the Messiah at His first coming) and of their mourning with repentance. But here in Rev. 1:7 the picture is apparently broadened to cover all the tribes of the earth. All mankind, because of sin, is responsible in a very real way for the crucifixion of the Lamb of God, who bore the sin of all mankind. We can probably include the idea here that the remnant of the nations will ultimately "mourn" with a genuine repentance, as will the remnant of the nation Israel (Zech. 12:10). Revelation 15:3, 4; 20:3 confirm that the remnant of the nations will repent and enter the millennial kingdom. Until the revelation of the book of Revelation about AD 95, which is rather late (the apostle Paul was martyred for Christ in mid 60s, for example), the New Testament has very little to say regarding God's salvation plans for the remnant of the nations after Christ returns with the clouds.

It's also true, whether the idea is included here in Rev. 1:7, or not, that there will be much negative mourning (mourning that goes with judgment, mourning without repentance) that will attend the return of Christ to judge the world. The mourning of the tribes of the earth at the return of Christ pictured in Matt. 24:30 doesn't seem to include any idea of mourning with repentance. It probably is relevant that Matt. 24:30 doesn't mention mourning for/over Him, as do Zech. 12:10 and Rev. 1:7.] **So it is to be. Amen. (8) 'I am the Alpha and the Omega [cf. Isa. 41:4; Rev. 21:6],' says the Lord God, 'who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.' "** [On this verse, see under Rev. 1:4. God the Father is referred to here, but the fact that the words "the Alpha and the Omega" are used of the Lord Jesus in Rev. 22:13 strongly confirm His full deity.]

REVELATION 2:26, 27. **"He who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds ["My works." Jesus is speaking of the works required to be faithful to Him.] until the end, TO HIM I WILL GIVE AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS [cf., e.g., Luke 19:17, 19; 2 Tim. 2:12; Rev. 3:21; 20:4-6; and 22:5]; (27) AND HE [the overcomer(s)] SHALL RULE THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON, AS THE VESSELS OF THE POTTER ARE BROKEN TO PIECES** [These words are quoted from, or at least build on, Psalm 2:8, 9. Psalm 2 is a very important end-time prophetic passage. It's discussed verse-by-verse in chapter 18 of my book, "The Mid-Week Rapture."], **as I also have received authority from My Father [cf., e.g., Rev. 3:21]."** [[The fact that the resurrected, glorified Son of God received this authority from God the Father demonstrates the eternal preeminent role of God the Father (and the eternal subordinate role of the Son). It's important to see that this promised blessing to the overcomers, as with the promised blessings mentioned in the letters to the other six churches, apply to all overcomers of all churches of all generations; they apply to all the members of God's true Israel (all true believers). The

words of Rev. 2:26, 27 are extremely important. For one thing, these verses (which build on Psalm 2:8, 9) help us understand Rev. 12:5, which I understand to be the most important verse in the Bible on the timing of the rapture, enabling us to see that the rapture of the Christian church will take place right in the middle of Daniel's 70th week. Revelation 2:26, 27 help us see that the "male *child* who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron" of Rev. 12:5 speaks of those members of God's true Israel who will be resurrected (if they have died before that time), glorified and raptured when Christ returns with the clouds in the middle of Daniel's 70th week.

It's also significant that Psalm 2:7 is one of the most important cross-references to help us understand the birth of the male child of Rev. 12:5. The birth spoken of in both of these verses (and in Isa. 66:7; Mic. 5:3; cf., e.g., Col. 1:18; Rev. 1:5) is the birth into the fullness of eternal life of true Israel. For those members of true Israel who will have died before the rapture, it will mean resurrection to eternal glory; for those members still alive when the Lord Jesus returns, it will mean transformation to eternal glory. Revelation 12:5 is discussed on pages 314-316 of "The Mid-Week Rapture." It is also discussed in my newer book, "Introduction to the Mid-Week Rapture," on pages 92-116. The "Mid-Week Rapture" contains a lot more information, but I recommend reading the newer book first. For one thing it was taken from radio broadcasts and is easier to read.

The fact that God the Father is the One seated on the throne in Rev. 4:2, 3 confirms the preeminent role of God the Father. Revelation 5:7 confirms that God the Father is the One on the throne in chapter 4. So too does REVELATION 4:11, which refers to God the Father, the One on the throne in Revelation chapter 4 (cf. Rev. 4:2, 3, 10): **"Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power [God the Father receives glory and honor and power in the sense that these things, which belong to Him by virtue of who He is and what He has done, are ascribed to Him by His worshipers.]; for You created all things [God the Father created all things through the Son (see John 1:3; 1 Cor. 8:6 ["Jesus Christ through whom are all things" with the NKJV, NIV, and ESV]; Col. 2:16 ["all things have been created through Him and for Him."]; and Heb. 1:2], and because of Your will they existed, and were created."**

MOST OF THE EXCERPTS AND COMMENTS THAT FOLLOW TO THE END OF THIS PAPER ARE RELEVANT TO THE MEANING OF "HOMOOUSIOS" IN THE NICENE CREED OF AD 325. I believe this is very important! Large numbers of Christians believe the Nicene Creed proves that God the Son cannot be eternally subordinate to God the Father in His role, but it seems clear that at least most of those who signed the Nicene Creed, in agreement with the pre-Nicene Christian Fathers and, much more important, in agreement with the Bible, believed that God the Son is eternally

subordinate to God the Father in His role, but not in a way that denies the full deity of the Son.

8. Several Excerpts from Early Christian Fathers on the Trinity Taken from "A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs" by David W. Bercot, Editor (Hendrickson Publishers, 1998). Some of these excerpts speak of the eternal preeminent role of God the Father/the eternal subordinate role of the Son of God, which is very relevant to what the bishops gathered to Nicea believed. Bercot took these excerpts from the "The Ante-Nicene Fathers" (Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson; 1885-1867; 10 volume set; Hendrickson Publishers, 1994; I have the 1986 printing of this set). Bercot has five pages of these excerpts here. The excerpts demonstrate the eternal preeminent role of the Father, these writers also acknowledged the deity of the Son of God, who was of the substance of the Father. I take the liberty to modify these excerpts a little, going back to the writings in the "Ante-Nicene Fathers." These excerpts are found on pages 651-657 of Bercot's book.

"One God the Father is declared, who is above all, through all, and in all. The Father is indeed above all, and He is the Head of Christ. But the Word [the Son, who became the Christ] is through all things and is Himself the Head of the Church. While the Spirit is in us all, and He is the living water." Irenaeus (written about AD 180; found in Vol. 1 of "The Ante-Nicene Fathers," page 546).

"... We believe that this one only God [God the Father] has also a Son, His Word, who proceeded from Himself, by whom all things were made, and without whom nothing was made. Him we believe to have been sent by the Father into the virgin, and to have been born of her - being both man and God, the Son of man and the Son of God...who also sent from heaven from the Father, according to His own promise, the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, the sanctifier of the faith of those who believe in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit." Tertullian (written about AD 213; found in Vol. 3, page 598).

"As for me, I derive the Son from no other source than from the substance of the Father. And I believe He does nothing without the Father's will and that He received all power from the Father. ..." Tertullian (written about AD 213; found in Vol. 3, page 599).

"I testify that the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are inseparable from each other.... ...my assertion is that the Father is one, the Son is one, and the Spirit is one, and that they are distinct from each other. ... The Father is not the same as the Son, for they differ from one another in the mode of their being. For the Father is the entire substance, but the Son is a derivation and portion of the whole, as He Himself acknowledges, 'My

Father is greater than I.' " Tertullian (written about AD 213; found in Vol. 3, pages 603-604). It is clear that Tertullian believed that the Father has a preeminent role in the Trinity.

"A man, therefore...is compelled to acknowledge God the Father Almighty, and Christ Jesus the Son of God, who being God, became man, to whom also the Father made all things subject, Himself excepted, and the Holy Spirit; and that these three, therefore, are three [Persons]. However if he desires to know how it is shown that there is still one God, let him know that His power is one. As far as regards the power, therefore, God is one. But as far as regards the economy, there is a threefold manifestation." Hippolytus (written about AD 205; found in Vol. 5, page 526.)

"We are not ignorant that there is one God [the Father], and one Christ, the Lord (whom we have confessed); and one Holy Spirit." Cyprian (written about AD 250; found in Vol. 5, page 323).

"The Father is the God over all. Christ is the Only-Begotten God - the Beloved Son, the Lord of glory. The Holy Spirit is the Comforter, who is sent by Christ...." Apostolic Constitutions (compiled about AD 390; found in Vol. 7, page 431).

9. Text of the Nicene Creed of AD 325. (The Council of Nicea is called the "First Ecumenical Council"; I'm taking the creed from "Early Christian Doctrines" by J. N. D. Kelly [Harper and Row, Publishers, revised edition, 1978], page 232):

"We believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of all things visible and invisible;

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten from the Father, only-begotten, that is from the substance [Greek "ousia"] of the Father, God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten not made, of one substance [Greek "homoousios" ("of the same substance")] with the Father, through Whom all things came into being, things in heaven and things on earth, Who because of us men and because of our salvation came down and became incarnate, becoming man, suffered and rose again on the third day, ascended to the heavens, and will come to judge the living and the dead;

And in the Holy Spirit.

But as for those who say, There was when He was not, and, Before being born He was not, and that He came into existence out of nothing, or who assert that the Son of God is from a different hypostasis or substance [Greek "ousios"], or is created, or is subject

to alteration or change - These the Catholic Church [the universal church] anathematizes."

10. Some Excerpts from "Early Christian Doctrines" by J. N. D. Kelly that Deal with the Meaning of "Homoousios" at Nicea (Harper and Row, Publishers, revised edition, 1978, 511 pages).

Kelly's heading "The Theology of Nicea" is on pages 231-237. He argues that "there are the strongest possible reasons for doubting" the idea that "homoousios" was understood by the Nicene fathers to mean that the Father and the Son shared the identical substance (essence, nature). ((The identical, same-substance unity of the three Persons of the Trinity that cannot be divided understanding of "homoousios" can, and very often has been interpreted to include the idea that the Son cannot be eternally subordinate to the Father, but we don't find that understanding of homoousios being promoted until years after the Council of Nicea.)) Kelly agrees that that became the widely-accepted understanding after Nicea, but he argues that the Nicene fathers (speaking for most of them) understood "of the same nature" in a "generic" sense: "that the Son was fully God, in the sense of sharing the same divine nature as His Father" (but not including the ideas that they shared the identical same substance, nature, essence that cannot be divided, or that the Son wasn't eternally subordinate to the Father) (page 235). For one thing, Kelly discusses the use of "homoousios" before Nicea. Furthermore, they were there at Nicea to confirm the eternal existence of the Son with the Father and His full deity with the Father (being of the substance of the Father, not created out of nothing, as Arius said), not to discuss the details of the unity of the Godhead. And "we may be sure that, if Eusebius [of Caesarea, who had a lot of influence at Nicea] and his allies had the slightest suspicion that numerical identity of substance [that the three Persons shared an identical, same-substance unity that cannot be divided] was being foisted on them in 'homoousios,' they would have loudly objected to it as Sabellian [Sabellius, who was a modalist (oneness), had used 'homoousios' that way]. Also, it is clear that Eusebius (AD263-339), in agreement with the pre-Nicene fathers (Eusebius lived most of his life before the Council of Nicea), believed in the eternal subordination of the Son to the Father. And lastly, Kelly mentioned "that afterwards, when the identity of substance of the three Persons was fully acknowledged, the most orthodox theologians continued to use 'homoousios,' in the appropriate contexts, with the sense of generic unity" (page 236).

11. Some Excerpts from "Retrieving Nicaea: the Development and Meaning of Trinitarian Doctrine" by Khaled Anatolios (Baker Academic; 2011, 322 pages; the author

received his PhD from Boston University and is on the faculty at the University of Notre Dame).

These first excerpts are taken from chapter 1: "Fourth Century Trinitarian Theology: History and Interpretation." "This council [of Nicea] rejected Arius's slogan, 'there was once when the Son was not,' [the council] asserting that the Son's generation from the Father was of a different order than that of creation: 'God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten not made.' It used the term 'homoousios' ('of the same substance') to designate the relation between the Son and the Father, less as a positive attempt to describe divine being than as an apophatic pronouncement ruling out any suggestion that the Son was created from nothing [and therefore wasn't deity with the Father]" (page 18).

The last sentence is very important. Anatolios is agreeing with Kelly's viewpoint that the Council of Nicea was insisting (against the views of Arius and those who followed him) "that the Son was fully God, in the sense of sharing the same divine nature as His Father" (He wasn't created out of nothing; He was of the substance, essence, nature of the Father; and there never was a time when He didn't exist). They (at least most of them) did not believe that the Father and Son shared the identical, same-substance/essence that cannot be divided, and they believed in the eternally subordinate role of the Son.

This understanding is what you would expect since the viewpoint of the pre-Nicene Christians was that the Son is eternally subordinate to the Father in His role. "Eusebius of Caesarea had reluctantly agreed to the Nicene's 'homoousios,' but his own doctrine, often articulated in terms of the Son's being the 'image of the Father's substance,' is centrally concerned with maintaining the clear priority of the Father over the Son" (page 19). Anatolios also mentioned on page 19 that Eusebius "disowned Arius's doctrine of the Son's origination from nothing."

I won't get into the details (I don't know all the details; there was much strife and many different councils in the years following Nicea), but it is clear that things changed after Nicea, and some sixty years after Nicea many Christians understood "homoousios" of the Nicene Creed (AD 325) and the creed of the Council of Constantinople (AD 381) to rule out any eternal subordination of the Son to the Father. It is super-important to believe in the Full deity of the Lord Jesus, but I believe it was a mistake to deny any eternal subordination of the Son to the Father in his role. For one primary thing, as we discuss in some detail in this paper, the Bible seems to clearly teach some eternal subordination of the Son to the Father, while also clearly teaching the Full deity of the Son. And it is quite significant that the pre-Nicene Christians, who built on the

foundation of the apostles and the Bible, believed in the eternally subordinate role of God the Son. It is totally necessary though to make sure that the FULL deity of the Lord Jesus is not compromised by unbiblical ideas of subordination, like those of Arius.

What caused the change in the understood meaning of "homoousios." As Anatolios continues, he shows that Athanasius (AD296-373) strongly promoted understanding an identical, same-substance unity of the Trinity in a way that excluded any eternal subordination of the Son to the Father, for one thing. "And although Athanasius probably was not a significant figure at Nicea and maintained a discreet silence about that council for over a decade [even though he became the bishop Alexandria in 328, which was a bishopric of key importance], he did emerge in the 350s as one of its [the Council of Nicea and the Nicene Creed's] leading defenders [which included understanding "homoousios" of the Nicene Creed in a way that ruled out any eternal subordination of the Son, for one thing]" (page 28). Athanasius died before the Council of Constantinople (381).

Athanasius as a young deacon accompanied his bishop, Alexander, to Nicea (AD 325). In AD 328 Athanasius succeeded Alexander as bishop of Alexandria, Egypt. That continued for forty-six years, but he was exiled five times because of his conflicts with the Arians during those turbulent years.

It comes up again and again in this paper (my paper) that the idea of many that the Son's unity with the Father in one identical shared substance that cannot be divided that, for one thing, doesn't leave room for any eternal subordination of the Son to the Father, WAS A NEW IDEA IN THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY. (There is a whole lot that I haven't read, but I haven't read anything that refutes this viewpoint.) This is important information! And it is significant that this new idea wasn't needed to refute Arius. All that was needed to refute Arius were the facts that the Son always existed, that He was of the substance of the Father (He was not created out of nothing), and that He is fully deity with the Father; HE IS GOD the Son!) I believe this new idea was wrong, as new ideas often are.

12. I'll quote a confirming excerpt from Robert Letham ("The Holy Trinity" [P&R Publishing, 2004]): "It ["homoousios"] hardly means 'shared being,' let alone 'identity of being,' Hanson suggests that it was used at Nicea because Arius [and the Arians] disliked it, but people like Eusebius of Caesarea [who believed in the eternal subordination of the Son to the Father] signed [the Nicene Creed], so we can be reasonably sure it was not intended to teach the numerical identity [identical, same-substance unity that cannot be divided] of the Father and the Son. In fact, it may have

been used merely to unite everyone who was opposed to Arius, by denying that the Son came from a source other than God" (page 121). Arius said the Son was created out of nothing. Therefore the Son didn't always exist and He wasn't God (deity) with the Father. I didn't include the four footnotes that Letham included here.

The Roman Emperor Constantine, who was strongly motivated to unite Christians to the fullest possible extent, insisted that the word "homousios" be included in the Nicene Creed. I believe it is clear that he was not insisting on a new, controversial idea.

13. An Excerpt from Robert Letham in "the Holy Trinity" that Shows that There Were Quite a Few Versions of Arianism in the Decades Following Nicea. I am not going to get into these details in this paper (see Letham's pages 122-126 for some details), but it must be understood that Athanasius and the Cappadocians had to refute some viewpoints that differed from Arius. Under the heading "The Contending Parties in the Decades after Nicea," Letham has the following paragraph: "The details, historical and theological, of the period following the Council of Nicaea are bewildering. We have neither space nor inclination to enter the labyrinthine complexities of this period. Hanson's volume describes these machinations in often sordid detail. We will identify contending parties only for our convenience. In practice, the situation was fluid, and the various parties were not nearly as clear-cut as our classification implies."

I have read that some Arians would say almost anything trying to get their viewpoint(s) accepted. (That's easy to believe.) The reason I mention this is that that situation could have provided motivation for Athanasius (and others) to strongly argue for a viewpoint (a viewpoint that didn't exist before Arius came on the scene; at least I haven't seen any evidence that it did) that, for one thing, did not allow any eternal subordination of the Son to the Father. Athanasius' view of the Trinity totally guarded the full deity of the Son, which is good in itself, but I believe he went too far and missed the balanced truth of what the Bible teaches, which so often happens when there is controversy. (The devil does some of his most effective work when he gets Christians to overreact and get into a ditch on the other side of the road, and sometimes [but not here] the ditch on the other side of the road represents a bigger error.) Athanasius, for one thing, did not leave any room for the Biblical eternal subordination of the Son to the Father in His role. As I mentioned, that new viewpoint wasn't needed to refute Arius. All they needed to refute Arius was to say that the Son always did exist and He was fully deity, being of the substance of God the Father - He was not created out of nothing like Arius said. Arius was going against viewpoints that were accepted by the pre-Nicene Christians. That's why almost all of the bishops voted against him.

14. Some Excerpts from "Lectures on the History of the Eastern Church" that deal with the Council of Nicea by Arthur Penrhyn Stanley (Charles Scribner's Sons, 1884, 422 pages). I'm especially interested in information that will help us understand the word "homoousios" that was included in the Nicene Creed. One thing that has been frustrating about this study is the widely differing opinions regarding some details. (Even more important was the widely different definitions for the meaning of key words, and the definitions would change.) For one obvious example, I have read that Athanasius was not at Nicea (I don't believe that can be true); I have read that he played a very minor role at Nicea; and this book we are discussing now says that he played a very major role at Nicea. We don't really have to know the answer to this question. His bishop, Alexander of Alexandria, had a lot of authority and he respected Athanasius, and it seems quite possible that Athanasius, who was competent and persuasive and put a lot of emphasis on the Bible, could have played a major role if Alexander agreed. I believe it is worthwhile for me to include these excerpts in this paper, but I cannot guarantee that every detail is accurate. From what little I have read about the author of this book, he is considered to be a competent scholar, but somewhat liberal.

One view is that they ended up using the ancient confession of faith that went back before the days of Eusebius at Caesarea for a starting point for the Nicene Creed at the suggestion of Eusebius. Constantine had already read and approved using that confession. (See page 126-127.) When you read the ancient confession of faith from Caesarea, which is included in Stanley's book, it is clear that there are quite a few differences between that confession and the Nicene Creed. Also, Eusebius of Caesarea was suspect in the opinion of some because he had offered some support for Arius in the past. The article on "Nicea, Council of, Nicene Creed," by H. J. Vogt, in the "Encyclopedia of Early Christianity" (edited by Everett Ferguson; Garland Publishing, 1970) says, "In constructing the creed...the council evidently neither inserted 'homoousios' into the creed from Caesarea nor formulated a completely new confession. Instead, it adopted a text related to the confession of Jerusalem - as later attested in Cyril of Jerusalem's 'Catechetical Orations'..." (page 650). I'm confident that they didn't start with a new confession. The first part of the confession of faith from Caesarea is quite close to the Nicene Creed.

"The Arian minority were willing to adopt it [to adopt the creed before 'homoousios' was added]. But this very fact [that they were willing to adopt the creed] was in the eyes of the opposite party a fatal difficulty. They were determined to find some form of words which no Arian could receive. ... At last the weapon which they had been seeking to cut off the head of their enemy, was suddenly drawn from his own scabbard. [I'm skipping the footnotes.] A letter was produced from Eusebius of Nicomedia [who was a very

important bishop and the spokesman for the Arians], in which he declared that to assert the Son uncreated would be to say, that He was 'of one substance' ('Homoousion') with the Father - and therefore that to say, 'He was of one substance,' was a proposition evidently absurd.

The letter produced violent excitement. There was the very test of which they were in search. The letter was torn in pieces to mark their indignation, and the phrase which he [Eusebius of Nicomedia] had pledged himself to reject became the phrase which they pledged themselves to adopt. ... As soon as it was put forth a torrent of invective was poured out against it by the Arians. ..." (pages 128-129). [Keep in mind that the Arians believed that there was a time that the Son did not exist and that He was created out of nothing; He clearly, according to their viewpoint, wasn't of the same substance with God the Father.] According to Stanley, after this word was added and the Emperor agreed, "Hosios of Cordova [Spain] rose and announced the completion of the 'Faith' or 'Creed' of the Council of Nicea. The actual Creed was written out and read..." (page 132).

On page 135 Stanley spoke of the fact that Eusebius of Caesarea and others didn't like the addition of the word "homoousios" because it was subject to wrong interpretations, including oneness (modalism). In fact the word had been used in a oneness (one Person) way by Sabellius in the past. However, they accepted the Nicene Creed. For one thing, Eusebius spoke with Constantine and was assured "that the word ["homoousios"] as he understood it, involved no such material unity of the Persons in the Godhead as Eusebius feared might be deduced from it. It is totally clear that Eusebius was not in any way agreeing to any interpretation that ruled out the eternal subordination of the Son to the Father.

I haven't seen any evidence that Athanasius, or anybody else, was arguing for the idea that the Son is not eternally subordinate to the Father at Nicea (even though he and/or others may have already rejected the eternal subordination of the Son to the Father), which Athanasius clearly did later. For one thing, even if he (or anybody else) wanted to promote that idea at Nicea, it was clear that that idea would be rejected by the large majority. It is clear that the primary thing they wanted to accomplish at Nicea was to totally reject the heretical teaching of Arius, that there was a time when the Son didn't exist and that He was created out of nothing, ideas that didn't line up with the deity of the Son of God. Clearly "homoousios," "of the same substance," with the Father (even when it was understood in a way that left plenty of room for the eternal subordination of the Son to the Father) excluded any idea of the Son's being created out of nothing and confirmed His deity.

15. A Few Excerpts from the article on "Homoousios" by Fredrick W. Norris from the "Encyclopedia of Early Christianity" (edited by Everett Ferguson [Garland Publishing, 1990], pages 434-435). "The majority of the council, however, were conservatives who found 'homoousios' to be unbiblical [the word wasn't used in the Bible] and supported a significant priority of the Father. [[The next sentence confirms that Norris means that "the majority of the council" "supported a significant priority [preeminence] of the Father [and eternal subordination of the Son to the Father]."]] Thus, at Nicaea the term had only a generic meaning, one affirming the full deity of the Son, not a numerical identity of essence. ..." (page 434). The generic meaning of 'homoousios' leaves plenty of room for the eternal subordination of the Son to the Father. As we have discussed, many Christians who believe in "a numerical identity of essence [substance]" also believe in the eternal subordinate role of the Son to the Father. Others, including Giles, say that we cannot believe both of these things. As I have mentioned, I am not going to try to answer that question, but I have to reject any view of the same-substance unity of the three Persons that rules out the eternal subordination of the Son, or that requires believing that there is only one center of consciousness in the Trinity, with one will and one mind.

"In the 360s, the 'homoousios' was applied to the Spirit (Athanasius, 'Ep. Serap. 1.2, 20-21; 3.7). Gregory of Nazianzus ('Or.' 31.50) noted in [AD] 380 that various views existed [on the meaning of 'homoousios']. ... During the fifth and sixth centuries, a numerical unity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit was understood as the meaning of 'homoousios' " (page 435). Apparently the words "numerical unity" are intended here to exclude any eternal subordination of the Son to the Father. By then ("the fifth and sixth centuries") the influence of Athanasius (AD296-373); the three Cappadocians (Basil the Great, AD330-379; Gregory of Nazianzus, AD329-389; and Gregory of Nyssa, about AD332-396); and Augustine (AD354-430), which we have discussed and will discuss further, played a significant role in bringing about this change.

16. Some Excerpts from J. N. D. Kelly under the heading "The Contribution of Augustine" (pages 271-279) in the chapter "The Doctrine of the Trinity" in the book "Early Christian Doctrines" (Harper & Row, 1960, 1965, 1968, 1978).

"It was Augustine...who gave the Western tradition its mature and final expression" (page 271). "...in contrast to the tradition which made the Father its starting point, he begins with the divine nature itself. It is this simple, immutable nature or essence...which is Trinity.... The unity of the Trinity is thus set squarely in the foreground, SUBORDINATIONISM OF EVERY KIND BEING RIGOROUSLY EXCLUDED [my emphasis]. Whatever is affirmed of God is affirmed equally of each of the three

Persons. Since it is one and the same substance which constitutes each of Them, 'not only is the Father not greater than the Son in respect of divinity, but Father and Son together are not greater than the Holy Spirit, and no single Person of the Three is less than the Trinity itself. ...' (page 272). I am not including Kelly's footnotes here or in the rest of these excerpts from him.

"...the Trinity possesses a single, indivisible action and a single will; its operation is 'inseparable.' ... In his [Augustine's] own words, 'where there is no difference of natures, there is none of will either.' ... Lastly, Augustine faces the obvious difficulty which his theory suggests, viz. that it seems to obliterate the several roles of the three Persons. ... since each of the Persons possesses the divine nature in a particular manner, it is proper to attribute to each of Them, in the eternal operation of the Godhead, the role which is appropriate to Him in virtue of His origin. It is a case of what later Western theologians were to describe as appropriation.

This leads to the distinction of the Persons, which Augustine sees is grounded in Their mutual relations within the Godhead. While They are identical considered as the divine substance, the Father is distinguished as Father because He begat the Son, and the Son is distinguished as Son because He is begotten. ... The question then arises what in fact the Three are. [Kelly goes on to mention that Augustine doesn't like the traditional word "Persons," but he consented to use the word in order to be able to say something. For one thing, he needed to affirm "the distinction of the Three against Modalism...."] His own positive theory was the original and, for the history of Western Trinitarianism, highly important one that the Three are real or subsistent relations. ... The Three, he goes on to claim, are relations, as real and eternal as the factors of begetting, being begotten and proceeding (or being bestowed) within the Godhead which gave rise to them. Father, Son, and Spirit are thus relations in the sense that whatever each of Them is, He is in relation to one or both of the others. ... [Kelly goes on to mention that it is difficult to understand this "unless schooled in technical philosophy." I have not been schooled in technical philosophy. As this paper shows, I have to disagree with much that Augustine says here.]" (pages 273-275). It seems clear to me that Augustine's view subordinates the three distinct, very real Persons that the New Testament emphasizes. The Bible doesn't teach three Gods, but it puts the emphasis on the three Persons who interact with one another and do the things that each of the Persons do perfectly, including love one another. The Bible has very little to say about the same-substance unity of the three Persons, but the Son is of the substance of the Father (He wasn't created out of nothing, as Arius said).

17. Further Discussion Regarding Augustine and His Viewpoint. Robert Letham has a chapter on Augustine in his book, "The Holy Trinity" (pages 184-200). I'll quote a relevant sentence from page 197 of that chapter: "Augustine has his 'attention riveted on the essential unity' [Prestige, G. L., "God in Patristic Thought," 1952, page 236], and so the persons are not 'objective realities in their own right, but expressions of real relations inherent in the divine being' [Bray, G., "The Filioque Clause in History and Theology," *Tynbul* 34:91-144]." And I'll include a few more excerpts from Letham here: "Augustine has exerted an overpowering influence in the Western church up to the present day. We saw how he makes the divine essence, not the person of the Father, the foundation for his doctrine of the Trinity. Western theology has followed by starting from the one essence. ..." (pages 204-205). "Western theology has often said that the East exhibits a tendency toward tritheism [three Gods] by starting with the Father rather than the one divine essence. [I believe we should start with the three Persons, with the Father having the preeminent role, as presented in the Bible, not with the divine essence, which involves quite a bit of speculation.] There is little evidence for this. ..." (page 211). "In the West, the danger of modalism [oneness] is very real, evident in all Western theology down to Barth and Rahner. Later chapters will provide evidence for this. If we start with divine unity, the persons become problematic as real, personal, permanent, irreducible, and eternal ontological distinctions. Colin Gunton [who was quoted earlier in this paper] has argued forcibly that the Augustinian model has bred atheism and agnosticism. ("Colin Gunton, 'Augustine, the Trinity, and the Theological Crisis of the West,' *SJT* 43 (1990): 33-58.") [That is a very serious charge. Solid, Bible-centered evangelical Christians have been spared most of these problems, but many (or most) are weak when it comes to understanding the Trinity.] Indeed, most Western Christians are practical modalists [Christians who deny the Trinity and believe there is only one Person in God]. Certainly, the Trinity is little more than an arithmetical conundrum to Western Christianity" (page 212).

WILL WE SEE GOD THE FATHER IN HEAVEN (ALONG WITH SEEING GOD THE SON)? Yes! See Rev. 22:4; Matt. 5:8; 18:10; 1 Cor. 13:12; and 1 John 3:1-2. One reason I mention this here is that this insight serves to strongly confirm that God the Father really is a distinct Person that we will see and worship and interact with, along with the Son (and the Holy Spirit). I don't know that we will see the Person of the Holy Spirit, but I'm sure that we will worship Him and be able to interact with Him too. (I don't know how Augustine would answer this question, but I doubt that I could be satisfied with his answer.)

18. Augustine Wasn't Always Right, Far from It in My Opinion. I believe Augustine (AD354-430) seriously missed the balanced truth regarding the Trinity (as we have

been discussing). Augustine was very influential, including influencing some Protestant reformers (including Martin Luther and John Calvin), and I know that he made many positive contributions to the Body of Christ, but I have found over the years quite a few places where he (from my point of view) hurt the Body of Christ in some serious ways with some of his teaching. Every error was magnified because of his great influence. I'll give some key examples: Augustine came up with the revolutionary, out-of-Biblical-balance idea (but an idea that large numbers of Christians have accepted), that mankind is so fallen that we have no capacity to cooperate with God's grace or to have faith. Therefore, God must choose some people (the elect) and give them faith. See pages 3-8 of my "Paper on Faith" on my internet site (Google to Karl Kemp Teaching).

As part of that package, Augustine came up with the revolutionary idea that, since the salvation of the elect is totally dependent on God (God gives us faith and ensures that we will persevere to the end), it isn't possible for the elect to fail to inherit eternal glory. That's where once saved, always saved came from. You don't find that doctrine being taught by the early Christian writers before Augustine. See my paper "Once Saved, Always Saved?" on my internet site; see pages 20-24 and the Appendix that starts at the bottom of page 25. (I am aware that my "Once Saved, Always Saved?" on my internet site has some unusual spacing between some letters/words. The pdf document that I uploaded was perfect. I don't know what happened.)

I included two other examples on pages 3-8 of my "Paper on Faith" where Augustine changed his viewpoint from what I believe was right to a viewpoint that was wrong. He began to favor the viewpoint that the apostle Paul was speaking of a born-again Christian in Rom. 7:14-25. He qualified that viewpoint by saying that if the apostle was speaking of a Christian in those verses he was speaking only of the Christian having wrong thoughts and desires, which the Christian resisted, not of the Christian actually sinning, but that qualification was quickly abandoned by many. From that time on many Christians began to interpret Rom. 7:14-25 of born-again Christians, including the apostle Paul, actually sinning, which was a view unknown before then in the early Christian writings. (I haven't seen any examples of Christians teaching that view of Rom. 7:14-25, which includes Christians actually sinning, before Augustine helped open that door which needs to be shut. And if you found a few examples, they would be the great exception to the dominant viewpoint.) See my paper "The Interpretation of Romans Chapter 7 and Righteousness and Holiness" on my internet site, especially pages 7-9.

In my "Paper on Faith" I also briefly dealt with the fact that Augustine was very influential in changing from the correct pre-millennial viewpoint, which he previously

held, to what John Walvoord calls the amillennial viewpoint. I quote a few paragraphs from John Walvoord there.

I'll mention two other topics where, from my point of view, Augustine was quite influential in a negative direction. In my paper "Verse-by-Verse Studies of Ephesians Chapters 1-4; and Romans 8:16-39" on my internet site, I have a heading, "Augustine and the Donatists" (pages 76-77). I show there that Augustine began to argue that it was permissible to use force to compel schismatics and heretics to return to the true church, outside of which there is no salvation. Many evil (very evil) things have taken place among "Christians" because of ideas like that. And in my paper "Free Will? Liberal Christianity. Are Christians Punished for Sins We Commit After We Become Christians? Tertullian and the Montanists" I show that Augustine was quite influential in getting the doctrine of purgatory accepted. See pages 27-28.

19. I'll Quote Part of what John M. Frame Says under the Heading "Subordination" in "The Doctrine of God," which is Vol. 2 of the "The Theology of Lordship" series (P&R Publishing, 2002, 864 pages). "... As we have seen, the Father sends the Son into the world, and the Son joyfully obeys the Father's will. ... In the end, he delivers up the kingdom to his Father (1 Cor. 15:24) and himself becomes one of the subjects in his Father's kingdom (v. 28). [We must understand that the Son will continue to reign with the Father in the eternal kingdom that follows the millennial kingdom (cf., e.g. Rev. 22:1).] ...

So we may summarize by saying that biblical Trinitarianism denies ontological subordination ["ontological subordination" would deny that the Son was God in His being, nature, essence, substance], but affirms economic subordination of various kinds. [I'll quote two sentences from Frame's page 706: "The economic Trinity is the Trinity in its relation to creation, including the specific roles played by the Trinitarian persons throughout the history of creation, providence, and redemption. These are roles that the persons of the Trinity have freely entered into; they are not necessary to their being."] But there is a third kind of subordination that has been debated for many centuries and has been much discussed in recent literature. That might be called eternal subordination of *role*.

Both Eastern and Western thinkers have regularly affirmed that God the Father has some sort of primacy over the other two persons. Theologians have used phrases like...'fountain of deity' and...'fountain of the Trinity' to describe the Father's distinct role in the Trinity. [Frame has a footnote: "This is a central point in the theology of the Cappadocian fathers. See, for example, Fortman, 'The Triune God,' page 76. Among

Reformation thinkers, see Ursinus, 'Commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism,' page 135."] That the Father has some sort of primacy is implicit in the name Father, and of course the doctrines of eternal generation [of the Son] and procession [of the Spirit] suggest that the Father has some sort of unique 'originative' role. ... The Son and the Spirit are voluntarily subordinate to the commands of the Father ["commands" is a strong word to use, too strong], because that kind of subordination is appropriate to their eternal nature as persons. ...

This kind of subordination is not the ontological subordination of Arius [where Arius denied the deity of the Son]. Nor is it merely economic, for it has to do with the eternal nature of the persons, the personal properties that distinguish each one from the others. ... We may put it this way: There is no subordination within the divine nature that is shared among the persons: the three are equally God. However, there is a subordination of role among the persons, which constitutes part of the distinctiveness of each. Because of that subordination of role, the persons subordinate themselves to one another in their economic relationships with creation.

But how can one person be subordinate to another in his eternal role while being equal to the other in the divine nature? Or, to put it differently, how can subordination of role be compatible with divinity? Does not the very idea of divinity exclude this sort of subordination?

The biblical answer, I think, is no. ... Subordination, in the sense of serving others in love, is clearly a divine attribute, one that serves as an explicit model for our behavior. Such service does not compromise the full deity of the Son and the Spirit; rather, it manifests their deity.

... ..other writers have made a case for the 'eternal submission' of the Son and the Spirit, as I have done above. [Frame has a footnote: "See Stephen D. Kovach and Peter R. Schemm, Jr., 'A Defense of the Eternal Subordination of the Son,' JETS 42 (1999), 461-76 [we'll discuss that article next], and Dahms, 'The Subordination of the Son.' For other titles and a brief summary of the debate, see Wayne Grudem, 'Systematic Theology' (Zondervan, 1994), page 251."] They argue that there is a hierarchy of role within the Trinity, and that that hierarchy does not compromise the equality of nature, glory, and honor among the persons. ...

The notion that subordination to authority demeans a person is absurd on the face of it. ... We should not be at all surprised to find that such submission reflects the very life of the Trinity" (pages 719-722).

I'll include one last sentence, a very important sentence, from what Frame says on page 725, under the heading "Trinitarian Models." "The New Testament...presents the Trinity, not as three aspects of a single mind, but as three real persons, conversing, loving, sending, and so on." This last sentence sure sounds Biblical to me! However, many argue for one center of consciousness, one will and one mind, and the idea that the Son cannot be eternally subordinate to the Father, based on their understanding of the same-substance unity ("homoousios") of the three Persons. Of course I am not suggesting that their viewpoint disqualifies them from being sincere, true Christians, but I believe that viewpoint is wrong and significantly confuses the issue.

20. Some Excerpts from the Paper "A Defense of the Doctrine of the Eternal Subordination of the Son" by Stephen D. Kovach and Peter R. Schemm that was just mentioned by Frame (JETS 42/3, September 1999, pages 461-476).

I'll quote a little from what the authors say under the heading "Scriptural Witness to the Eternal Subordination of the Son" (pages 470-472). "... 'The biblical data put beyond doubt the subordination of the Son' (Henry, "God, Revelation and Authority." Vol. 5. "The God who Stays" [Word, 1982], page 207)" (page 470). Carl F. H. Henry (1913-2003) was a well-respected evangelical scholar. I regret that I didn't have opportunity to read what he said on this topic. I assume it would be beneficial.

And I'll quote part of what the authors say under the sub-heading "The Divine Agency of the Son." "According to Scripture, there are three major agencies or eternal roles of the Son. First he is the agent of creation. [They refer to John 1:3 and Col. 1:16; then they say:] "1 Corinthians 8:6 [They also mention John 1:3; Col. 1:16; and Heb. 1:3] explains that while God the Father is the originator of all things, the Lord Jesus Christ is the great agent 'through' whom all things came into being. The Corinthian passage [1 Cor. 8:6] is especially relevant to the Trinitarian discussion because, as can be clearly seen in comparison, it supplied vocabulary for the Nicene Creed in several places. This leads Paul Rainbow to conclude: 'From this earliest form of the creed [Nicene Creed] we can see that the Father and the Son are united in being, but ranked in function.' [I'll skip the footnote.]

The second eternal agency of the Son is that of redemption. ... The Son obeyed the Father and accomplished redemption for us.... The third eternal function of the Son is as agent of the restoration of creation to the Father at the end of time. In 1 Cor. 15:28, the Apostle Paul teaches that after Christ returns [comes] a second time to judge the world and put everything under the Father's feet, he will once again voluntarily subordinate himself to God the Father. This element of subordination should be viewed in relation to

1 Cor. 15:24. Having brought all powers under his domain, the Son will voluntarily surrender his authority, power, and prerogatives to God the Father. [That is, after He has completed the mission assigned to Him by the Father. I'll skip their footnote.] The purpose is that God the Father may be all in all. ...the unchallenged reign remains with God the Father alone. [As I have pointed out, the Lord Jesus will continue to reign with the Father in the eternal state (cf., e.g., Rev. 22:1). We will be reigning too (Rev. 22:5).]

Finally, all of this scriptural evidence provides a backdrop for 1 Cor. 11:3 which states that God [the Father] is the head of Christ. While there have been many disagreements about the meaning of the word 'head,' its meaning of authority is not only based on the natural meaning of the [Greek] word 'kephale' but also the scriptural claim that God is the eternal origin of all things and Christ is the eternal agent (1 Cor. 8:6). [They have a footnote: For an extended discussion of this issue see Grudem, "Systematic Theology" 459-460.] In summary, then, the Son is eternally subordinate to God the Father both in relation and role" (pages 471-472).

Lastly, I'll quote a small part of what the authors say in the lengthy Conclusion. "Since the historical position of Christian orthodoxy is to accept the doctrine of the eternal subordination of the Son [As I demonstrate in this paper, many, very much including the influential Athanasius and Augustine, have not accepted this doctrine. I believe we should accept the eternal subordination of the Son, but the FULL deity of the Lord Jesus must be maintained, even emphasized.], it is not surprising that most evangelical systematic theologians in the twentieth century have also adopted this position as reflecting both Scripture and church history [In a footnote they list nine such systematic theologians. They go on to list two who do not accept the doctrine of the eternal subordination of the Son. As we discuss in this paper, large numbers of Christians after Nicea have rejected the eternal subordination of the Son to the Father. I believe they are wrong.] ..." (page 473).

21. Some Excerpts from, and Interaction with, the Book "Decoding Nicea" by Paul F. Pavao ("The Greatest Story Ever Told," 2011, 2014, 462 pages). It is obvious that Pavao has spent a lot of time working on this project. I don't agree with him on every detail, but I have learned from his ministry.

Part III of this book, which just contains chapters 15 and 16, is called "The Trinity before Nicea," and in the Table of Contents it is called "Homoousios before Nicea." We will discuss chapter 15 first, "The Trinity: 'Homoousios.'" This is a long chapter (pages 251-286), and Pavao gets into a lot of details. I cannot say that I believe he gets every detail

right, and I believe it is oversimplified, but I believe we need to very seriously consider what he says.

I'll quote a paragraph near the beginning of chapter 15 that shows where Pavao is going in this chapter and in chapter 16: "The in depth and perhaps overwhelming look at the early Christian view of the Trinity in this chapter and the next are, I believe, necessary to establish that the Nicene view of the Trinity was both orthodox and apostolic. It does not need to be improved, but to be received as the early Christians received it" (page 253).

What does "homoousios" mean in the Nicene Creed, according to Pavao? On page 262 he says: "Eusebius of Caesarea, after discussing 'homoousios' with the council, wrote back to his church in Caesarea to explain what it meant: 'That [the Son of God] is 'homoousios' with the Father then simply implies that the Son of God has no resemblance to created things but is in every respect like the Father only who begat him; that he is of no other substance or essence but of the Father.'" (Pavao's quotation came from " 'The Ecclesiastical History of Socrates Scholasticus' 1:8.")

Pavao went on to say that "This is what the council itself said that it meant by the term. [[(This double bracket goes on for two paragraphs.) I believe this is overstated. If the council had made it clear that this is all they meant by 'homoousios,' it is difficult to explain how so many after Nicea are convinced that 'homoousios' in the Nicene Creed includes the need to reject any eternal subordination of the Son to the Father in His role. (However, as I make it clear in this paper, I agree that most of the bishops at Nicea agreed that the Son is eternally subordinate to the Father in His role.) For one thing, the emperor Constantine, who played a major role at Nicea, was interested in uniting all Christians, and it served his purposes to allow ambiguity in the meaning of the creed. (This is true for many treaties and covenants. Very often both sides want to be able to sell the treaty/covenant back home.) He wasn't motivated to carefully define the meaning of every word in ways that would cause some (or many) to reject it.

Based on what I have read, when Athanasius (who was there at Nicea, but who wasn't yet a bishop at that time), the Cappadocians, and Augustine later interpreted the Nicene Creed to deny the eternal subordination of the Son to the Father, they were not speaking in terms of changing the Nicene Creed, but supposedly affirming it. That would have been very difficult to do if "the council had made it clear what they meant by 'homoousios,' " if they had made it clear that the Nicene Creed left room for some eternal subordination of the Son to the Father. Anyway, it is clear that Athanasius and most of those gathered to Nicea agreed that Arius was wrong to deny the deity of the Lord Jesus, saying things like there was a time that He didn't exist and that He was created out of nothing (being created out of nothing is quite different than being of the

substance of God the Father). The council agreed that that is heretical.]] It corresponds exactly with what earlier Christians said about the relationship between the Father and the Son.

[I'm still quoting from Pavao.] I apologize in advance for inundating you with all the quotes which follow [We need this information.], but I want you to see that the idea that the Son is 'begotten, not made, "homoousios" with the Father,' was not a novel concept dreamed up by the bishops of Nicea. [Pavao is writing from the point of view that "homoousios" is fully compatible with the eternal subordination of the Son.] It is brought up in the pre-Nicene writings over and over again" (page 262). Pavao goes on to quote from many pre-Nicene writers for eight pages. None of these quotations use "homoousios," but some of them use "ousios" (being, essence, substance, nature), and some of them speak of the Son's being begotten by the Father; He was of the substance of the Father; He was not created out of nothing; and He always existed. Some of the quotations demonstrate the viewpoint that the Word, the Logos, was in God the Father before He was generated, which would make Him of the substance of the Father. Some of the quotations are more helpful than others.

I am not satisfied with Pavao's discussion of John 1:1 on pages 275-276. (He mentions that he only had one year of Greek.) I'll quote part of what he says: Referring to the second use of the word "God" in John 1:1, he says, "the word 'God' is the adjective." It is a noun, not an adjective, and we should translate it as a noun. John was referring to God the Son. The word "God" is typically reserved for God the Father in the New Testament, but there are several very important verses that use the word "God" for the Son, including this one. These verses strongly confirm the deity of the Son of God (God the Son), but they do not confuse Him with the Person of God the Father. Earlier in John 1:1 we were informed that the Word (the Logos; referring to the Son of God) was WITH God the Father in the beginning, before any creating had taken place. The Son eternally existed.

I don't believe the following is adequate: "my first year Greek teacher explained that John 1:1 could best be translated, 'The Word has the character and nature of God,' or, 'The Word is exactly like God.' ... My thought is, why bother with all those words when we have a word that exactly suits the purpose? God, used as an adjective, is 'divine.'" I believe it is important to translate literally here: "God." The translation "divine" seems quite inadequate here. I believe that many readers will lose quite a bit if we translate divine.

Pavao's Chapter 16: "The Trinity at Nicea" (pages 287-321). Speaking for large numbers of Christians in our day Pavao says, "we have to admit that we have adopted a

view of the Trinity that is different from Nicea. We would never write a creed that says, 'We believe in one God, the Father, and in one Lord, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Spirit.' ..." (page 291). These words of the Nicene Creed tend to communicate the Biblical idea of the preeminent role of God the Father, while at the same time emphasizing the full deity of the Lord Jesus (God the Son). The New Testament doesn't hesitate to speak of God the Father as the "one God" (cf. 1 Cor. 8:4, 6; Eph. 4:6; 1 Tim. 2:5; and Jude 1:25). The Nicene Creed doesn't get into the details of the Holy Spirit, it only mentions His existence. Pavao goes on to point out with many examples that in our day we typically hear of the one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. I suppose that Pavao's primary concern is that large numbers of Christians in our day have lost the Biblical idea (and the dominant viewpoint of the Christians before Nicea and at Nicea) of the eternal preeminent role of God the Father (eternal subordinate role of God the Son). How many in our day would ever speak of the Father as "the one God."

I'll quote three sentences from what Pavao says under the heading "The Pre-Nicene Explanation of the Trinity." "The Son does the will of the Father. There is only one divine rule, and the rule comes from the Father. God sends the Son; the Son does not send the Father" (page 299).

I'll quote part of what Pavao says under the heading "Subordinationism." "...some sort of subordinationism is unavoidable. The Father sent the Son, not vice versa. The Father loved the world and gave his Son for it, not vice versa. The Son always does the will of the Father, not vice versa. ...

Modern Christians [many modern Christians], holding to a co-equal Trinity, generally believe that the Father was only greater than the Son while the Son was on earth. [However, we must understand (as this paper demonstrates) that many Christians, including large numbers of evangelicals, who believe in "a coequal Trinity" (in the ontological equality of the three Persons; in the identical, same-substance unity of the three Persons) also believe in the eternal subordinate role of God the Son.] On the other hand, every pre-Nicene or Nicene writer who addresses John 14:28 believes that the Father is *eternally* greater than the Son.... Such a belief is called *subordinationism*." Pavao goes on to quote from six pre-Nicene writers to demonstrate this point. Quotations like this are important.

I'll quote part of what Pavao says under his next heading, "Comments on Subordinationism," which is quite relevant to the topic of this paper (pages 302-305). I'll quote his first two paragraphs:

"Today subordinationism is seen as borderline heresy. What amazes me is that *the early Christians themselves are seen as borderline heretics* for embracing subordinationism. [[It is necessary to define what we mean by subordinationism. There is a gigantic difference between saying that the Father has a preeminent role in the Trinity and making statements that could be understood to conflict with the full deity of the Lord Jesus. There is widespread agreement that several statements in the pre-Nicene writings overstate the subordinate role of God the Son (it isn't all that surprising to find true Christians making statements that aren't fully acceptable), but they, unlike Arius, were not saying that the Son was created out of nothing and denying His deity. Those who agreed with the pre-Nicene Fathers had to reject the teaching of Arius, and they did.]]

Somewhere we have forgotten that the faith was handed down *in full* by the apostles and meant to be preserved by the church. Paul asked the Thessalonians to hold fast to his traditions, not to improve on them? (2 Thess. 2:15)" (page 302).

I agree with Pavao's point that many are criticizing the eternal subordination viewpoint of the pre-Nicene writers when they need to see that the Bible teaches the eternal subordination of the Son to the Father in His role. I have mentioned that I believe that you can find some subordination statements in the pre-Nicene writings that go too far with subordination. Pavao doesn't make that point. I have a lot of respect for the writings of the pre-Nicene writers in general, but it is clear to me that they said some things that were wrong on several topics. For one thing, they didn't always pass on exactly what the apostles taught, and sometimes they were addressing topics that the apostles had not commented on.

I believe that what Pavao says on pages 308-312 under the heading "No One Has Seen God at Any Time" is quite important. After mentioning that the early Christian writers believed that the Son of God (in the days before His incarnation) often appeared in the Old Testament, Pavao quoted from "The Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers," Series II, Vol. 1, Note 31. I'll quote part of that Note: "Augustine [AD354-430] seems to have been the first of the Fathers to take a different view, maintaining that such Christophanies were not consistent with the identity of essence between Father and Son.... [I believe Augustine was wrong. The excerpt goes on to say that Augustine said it was an angel that appeared] (cf. De Trin. III. 11)." As we discuss in this paper, Augustine, for one thing, wrongly put too much emphasis on the same-substance unity of God and came up with some wrong ideas about the Trinity based on that emphasis. (He may well have overstated the identical oneness of that unity too, going rather far beyond what the pre-Nicene Christians and at least most of the Christians at Nicea believed.) For one thing, the New Testament puts most of the emphasis on the three Persons of the Trinity, all

three Persons being deity (God) in a full sense, while guarding against the unbiblical idea of three Gods.

This is all that I will quote from "Decoding Nicea" by Paul Pavao. It must be understood, of course, that I haven't begun to cover all of the relevant information that he includes in these chapters we have briefly discussed.

I'll include a brief excerpt from www.christian-history.org under the article "The Doctrine of the Trinity: Did It Develop over Time?" Paul Pavao is arguing against the widespread belief "that the doctrine of the Trinity was developed over time and then finalized at Nicea." He believes that it "did not develop but is taught throughout the earliest Christian writings after the apostles." I believe there is an important truth included here, but that it is also overstated. It seems that the doctrine of the Trinity did develop to some extent. Tertullian (AD160-230), for example, undoubtedly had some insight regarding the Trinity that went beyond earlier understanding of the Trinity.

I'll quote what Pavao quoted from Irenaeus (AD130-200), a very well respected early Christian Father. (He also quoted from several other pre-Nicene Christian writers in this article, and this article is part of a series of articles on his internet site on the Trinity and Nicene Creed.) Pavao is quoting from Irenaeus' "Against Heresies" in the "Ante-Nicene Fathers" series, Vol. 1. (I have this ten-volume series.)

"If anyone...says to us, 'How then was the Son produced by the Father?' we reply to him that no one understands that production or generation...which is in fact altogether undecipherable. (II.28:6)." Even more clearly he says: "One God the Father is declared, who is above all.... The Father is indeed above all, and he is the head of Christ, but the Word...is himself the head of the Church (V:18:3)." "There is one God, the Father over all, and one Word of God, who is through all, by whom all things have been made. (V:18:2)." There is nothing here that goes beyond the apostolic teaching on the Trinity.

I'll also quote part of what Pavao says on the same internet site in "The Council of Nicea: Part III [that deals with] 'Homousios.'" He points out that the pre-Nicene Christians and the orthodox Christians at Nicea insisted that the Son of God was of the same substance with the Father. The idea of Arius that He was created out of nothing was totally rejected. The following excerpts from this article will help us understand what was at stake here:

"... Athenagoras, a Christian apologist writing in A. D. 168 tells us: 'We employ language that makes a distinction between God and matter and the natures of both.' ("A Plea for the Christians" 24) The question being asked at the Council of Nicea was: Is Christ of

the substance of God, or is he made of matter like us and the angels? ... The unity of substance between the Father and the Son [the Son was of the substance of the Father] and the distinction between the Son and matter, from which all else is made, is often discussed by Pre-Nicene Christian writers." The Council of Nicea dealt first and foremost with the heretical teaching of Arius. He didn't believe in the deity of the Son; he didn't believe He always existed, and he believed that He had been created out of nothing – HE WAS NOT OF THE SUBSTANCE OF GOD THE FATHER.

22. Some Excerpts from Norman L. Geisler's "Systematic Theology [In One Volume]" (Bethany House, 2003, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2011) 1664 pages. These excerpts were all taken from chapter 40, "God's Unity and Trinity" (pages 537-564).

I'll quote a short section under the heading "Three Different Persons Are God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." "In addition to declaring God to be one in nature or essence, the Scriptures affirm that there are three distinct persons who are God. All are called God, and all have the same essential characteristics of a person.

Personhood is traditionally understood as one who has intellect, feelings, and will. All three of these characteristics are attributed to all three members of the Trinity in Scripture (see below [not included in these excerpts]). Essentially, personhood refers to an 'I,' a 'who,' or a subject. Each 'I' in the Trinity possesses (by virtue of its one common nature) the *power* to think, feel, and choose. Personhood itself is the *I-ness* or *who-ness*" (page 541).

I'll quote part of what Geisler says under the heading "There Is a Functional Order in the Trinity." "All members of the Trinity are equal in essence, but they do not have the same roles. It is a heresy (called subordinationism) to affirm that there is an *ontological subordination* of one member of the Trinity to another, since they are identical in essence (examine the 'ontological argument for God's existence' in chapter 2 [of Geisler's book]); nonetheless, it is clear that there is a *functional subordination*; that is, not only does each member have a different function or role, but some functions are subordinate to others. ...

The Function of the Father: By His very title 'Father' and His label of 'the first person of the Trinity,' it is manifest that His function is superior to that of the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Father, for example, is presented as the Source, Sender, and Planner of salvation.

The Function of the Son. The Son, on the other hand, is the Means, Sent One, and Achiever of salvation. The Father sent, and the Son came to save us; the Father planned it, but the Son accomplished it on the cross. That is why it is a heresy (called patripassianism) to claim that the Father suffered on the cross - only the Son suffered and died. Further, the Son is eternally 'begotten' or 'generated' [Geisler has a footnote here that I won't include.] from the Father.... ..

In brief, the Father is the Planner, the Son is the Accomplisher, and the Holy Spirit is the Applier of salvation to believers. The Father is the Source, the Son is the Means, and the Holy Spirit is the Effector of salvation - it is He who convicts, convinces, and converts [Geisler has a footnote, "See appendix six" (not included in these excerpts)]

One final word about the nature and duration of this functional subordination in the Godhead: It is not just temporal and economical [when dealing with the world external to the Trinity]; it is essential and eternal. For example, the Son is an eternal Son.... .. His submission to the Father was not just for time but will be for all eternity. Paul wrote: 'Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom of God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority, and power.... When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything [not including the Father Himself] under him, so that God [God the Father] may be all in all (1 Cor. 15:24, 28)" (pages 549-550).

23. Some Excerpts from "God in Patristic Thought" by G. L. Prestige (S. P. C. K., 1952), 318 pages. These excerpts are quite important regarding the meaning that the Council of Nicea intended for homoousios. I'll quote from chapter 10, "The Homoousion." Prestige is referring to the Nicene Council. "The term ["homoousios"] was officially laid down, with no suggestion of its being a definition of the unity of God, but solely as a definition of the full and absolute deity of Christ.as far as the Council of Nicea is concerned, the problem of the divine unity did not arise. ...

The official interpretation laid down by the Council of Nicea left the problem of the divine unity unsolved. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that, from the first, the party which can later be designated Athanasian regarded the term homoousios as containing within itself the true and proper solution of the problem also. ... Athanasius, like Eusebius [of Caesarea], states that the object of his friends was to exclude any description of Christ as a creature [created out of nothing] or any other distinctively Arian formula. But in doing so he makes it perfectly clear that Christ's full and absolute deity involved identity, and not mere likeness of substance with the Father. [(This double bracket continues for two paragraphs.) I haven't seen it confirmed that Athanasius rejected any subordination

of the Son to the Father at the time of the Council of Nicea. Anyway, I believe it is totally clear that the Son was/is of the substance of the Father. Tertullian believed that the Son is of the substance of the Father, but he also believed in the eternal subordination of the Son while Athanasius ended up rejecting any subordination of the Son.

When did Athanasius "[make] it perfectly clear" that he understood that "homoousios" did not leave any room for the subordination of the Son? Prestige went on to say that it must be doubted that this fuller viewpoint was expressed at Nicea. For one thing, it was clear that there would be a very strong reaction against that fuller viewpoint. Apparently Athanasius made these things perfectly clear at a later time. I'll quote a relevant sentence from Khaled Anatolios from section 11 of this paper: "And although Athanasius probably was not a significant figure at Nicea and MAINTAINED A DISCREET SILENCE ABOUT THAT COUNCIL FOR OVER A DECADE [(my emphasis) even though he became the bishop of Alexandria in 328, which was a bishopric of key importance], he did emerge in the 350s as one of its [the Council of Nicea and the Nicene Creed's] leading defenders [which included understanding "homoousios" of the Nicene Creed in a way that ruled out any eternal subordination of the Son, for one thing]" (page 28).] ... (pages 211-213).

Like I mentioned, I don't know what Athanasius believed regarding the fuller sense of homoousios at the time of the Council of Nicea (perhaps the information is available, but I haven't seen it). Did that fuller sense exclude all eternal subordination of the Son to the Father? Whether it did, or didn't, I believe that the Bible teaches some eternal subordination of the Son, but an eternal subordination that is fully compatible with the full deity of God the Son. Furthermore, did that fuller sense of homoousios include for Athanasius at the time of the Council of Nicea the ideas (ideas accepted by him and many others later) of one center of consciousness with one mind and one will in the identical same-substance unity of the one God that cannot be divided? Anyway, as we have discussed, apparently Athanasius (and those who agreed with him) did not argue for these things at the Council of Nicea, even if they believed in them at that time, knowing that they would be rejected.

I'll also quote a little from chapter 11, "Identity of Substance." "The employment of homoousios by Athanasius to express substantial identity [identity of substance] was a new development in the Greek language. ... But there were precedents in another tongue [Latin]. It has been well observed that Athanasius did not invent the term, nor set great store by the word itself, as distinct from the truth which it was meant to convey. The same is true of the Nicene fathers; they found it the most apt expression for their purpose of excluding Arianism. The only bishops, present at Nicea, to whom the word antecedently implied unity as well as equality in the godhead, were the five or six

Westerns, of which Hosius was chief.... ..they [the Westerns] perceived that it [homoousios] was a convenient translation of their own formula 'unius substantis' ["one substance" in Latin]" (pages 219-220). He went on to mention that Tertullian (AD160-230), who was of the Western church and wrote in Latin, spoke of the "one substance" of the three Persons long before the days of the Council of Nicea (AD 325) and the days of Athanasius (AD296-373). It is very important to point out though that Tertullian also believed in the eternal subordinate role of the Son of God, but not in a way that denied His full deity. I also want to repeat the important point that many Christians who believe in the identical, same-substance unity of the three Persons/the ontological equality of the three Persons also believe in the eternal subordination of the Son to the Father. This can get a little complicated, but the dominant point that I want to make in this paper seems clear to me: The Son of God is eternally subordinate to God the Father in His role. And I have to believe that any understanding of the same-substance unity/ontological equality of the three Persons that rules out the eternal subordinate role of the Son, or that requires belief in one center of consciousness with one will and one mind in the Trinity IS WRONG. However, we must believe in the full deity of the Son.

24. Some Excerpts from "Athanasius: A Theological Introduction" by Thomas G. Weinandy (MPG Books Ltd., 2007, 150 pages).

In the first sentence of the Preface, Weinandy points out that Athanasius (about AD296-373), along with Basil (about 330-379), Gregory of Nazianzus (about 329-389), and Chrysostom (about 347-407) are traditionally considered the four great Doctors of the Eastern Church. Later on that page (page 21) he says, "Chapter four [of this book] looks at Athanasius' understanding of the ontological relationship between the Father and the Son so as to establish their oneness of being." That is the primary chapter that I am interested in for this paper. "...the Son is equally God in unity of being with the Father" (page 24). This book makes it clear that Athanasius also differentiated between the three Persons of the Trinity. The Father is the source of the Son's existence, yet "they are one as water remains united to the source from which it springs." And "the Father created and governs all in and through the Word [the Son]" (page 23).

Chapter 4, "Athanasius: Defender and Interpreter of Nicea" (pages 49-80).

"Almost everyone prior to the Council of Nicea...presupposed that the Father alone and singularly constituted the fullness of the Godhead, when they attempted to conceive and articulate the Christian understanding of the unity and distinction between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. ... However, because of this presupposition, there was also an inbuilt necessity to conceive the Son and the Holy Spirit not only as deriving their

being from the Father, but also as less divine than the Father and so subordinate to him, for he alone embodied the whole of the Godhead. There was a hierarchical conception within the Trinity. [[I have a problem with Weinandy's words "less divine." From my point of view, since the Son is deity (God, God the Son) in a totally full sense, I cannot conceive Him being "less divine" (deity) than God the Father, but I totally agree that the pre-Nicene Christians believed (and I do to) that the Son has an eternal subordinate role to God the Father in the Trinity. (But that doesn't make the Son "less divine." He isn't the Father, but He is FULLY God, God the Son!) As we discuss throughout this paper, the Bible demonstrates the eternally subordinate role of the Son to the Father. The apostles and those taught by them believed this; the pre-Nicene Christians believed this; and most of the Christians who signed the Nicene Creed believed this. They also believed in the unity of the three Persons (of the same substance), with a mutual love beyond measure. They did not believe in three Gods.]]" (page 50).

"The non-scriptural 'homoousios' [the word wasn't used in the Bible] is that controversial word and concept that was conscripted to secure the full divinity of the Son and so protect the right reading and interpretation of the New Testament faith [He has a footnote which I'll skip]" (page 62). Weinandy goes on to say that there has been much difference of opinion regarding how those who signed the Nicene Creed understood the meaning of the word. He discusses two viewpoints. The first view (I believe it is the correct view), which represents "the common scholarly opinion [but many disagree too]" that "the majority of the Fathers...simply wanted to uphold the full divinity of the Son without addressing the question of the divine unity [I'll skip his footnote]. [They clearly believed in unity between the Father and the Son; the New Testament makes this point clear, but they did not believe in an identical, same-substance (oneness, but not modalism) unity that cannot be divided that doesn't leave room for the eternal subordination of the Son to the Father (or that requires Christians to believe in one center of consciousness with one will and one mind in the Trinity).] Eusebius of Caesarea, who provides a rather grudging endorsement of the Council's creed in his letter to his diocese, emphasizes only that the Son is fully divine, and never addresses the question of divine unity [I'll skip his footnote]" (pages 62-63). It is clear that Eusebius strongly believed in the eternal subordinate role of the Son, and that 'homoousios' can be understood in a way, and was understood in a way, at Nicea that leaves room for that subordination.

"The second option would be to understand 'homoousion' as the Father and the Son being one and the same substance in the sense that they were one and the same being or entity - one and the same God. Scholars have tended to think that this interpretation is highly unlikely. [[Even though this view excludes modalism/oneness the way they

explain it, I don't believe it is correct. Although large numbers of Christians have accepted this viewpoint (to some significant extent because of the after-Nicea teaching of Athanasius, the Cappadocians, and Augustine), I don't believe it is supported by the Bible, not to mention that the pre-Nicene believers and most of the bishops at Nicea did not agree with this view that includes the ideas that in "this one and the same being or entity" there is no room for any eternal subordination of the Son to the Father or that there is one center of consciousness with one will and mind. My primary reason for writing this paper is to try to show that, although the Son of God is fully deity with the Father, He is eternally subordinate to the Father in His role. And as I have mentioned, I believe the Son Himself is the primary Person (along with the Holy Spirit) who wants to emphasize the preeminent role of the Father and to see the Father glorified to the max. Weinandy goes on to show that he doesn't agree with the "scholars [who] have tended to think that this second option is highly unlikely."] ... What Nicea had done, and it will fall to Athanasius to defend, to clarify and interpret this proper understanding [the "second option"], IS RADICALLY TO RECONCEIVE THE WHOLE CHRISTIAN UNDERSTANDING OF GOD [my emphasis]. [This is a significant point that Weinandy is making here, but I don't believe "the whole Christian understanding of God" needed to be radically reconceived. Many changes introduce errors.] No longer does the Father alone embody or constitute the one nature of God, but rather, since God is the Father, the one nature of God, what the one God is, is the Father begetting the Son. The Father begetting the Son is eternally and so immutably and unalterably, constitutive of what the one God is. ...there is one God and the one God is the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.... The Nicene doctrine of the 'homoousion' [He is speaking of a later interpretation of 'homoousios,' one that didn't play much of a role, if any, at Nicea, one that, for one thing, doesn't leave any room for the eternal subordination of the Son to the Father that we read about in the Bible] is one of the most important breakthroughs and one of the most significant insights in the whole of Christian history of Christian doctrine. How many of the fathers themselves realized its significance cannot be answered, but, as we will shortly see, Athanasius, in the course of his long, ardent and passionate defense, did" (pages 63-64).

"The simple truth that Athanasius is emphatically confirming is that 'when we call God Father, at once with the Father we signify the Son's existence' ["Contra Arianos, 3.6]" (page 67). "...the Son, as the Father's Word and Wisdom, must eternally co-exist with the Father as radiance must by necessity accompany light and as water must by necessity spring forth from a fountain [See 'Contra Arianos, 1.11-12, 19, 25 and 2.34-36, 40. Also 'De Decretis 12.]" (page 68). I wouldn't object to much of this if it was not being used to supposedly prove that the Son cannot be eternally subordinate to the Father, etc. The Bible, it seems to me, clearly shows that the Son is eternally subordinate to the Father in His role, and it speaks repeatedly of the three distinct Persons, not of an

identical, same-substance/essence (oneness, but not modalism) unity of the three Persons that cannot be divided.

"For Athanasius, the Father and Son are not identical as to who they are, in that they do not possess one and the same substantial identity as a single subject ('monoousion'). Rather, the Father and the Son, as distinct subjects, are identical as to what they are ('homoousion'), that is, they are both the one God [See 'De Decretis, 23]' (page 77).

25. Philip Schaff Discusses the Fact that the Nicene Fathers, Like their Predecessors (the Pre-Nicene Fathers) Teach the Eternal Subordination of the Son to the Father. (Volume 3, "Nicene and Post-Nicene, Christianity," [Eerdmans, 1984 reprint, copyright 1910], pages 670-683). On page 683 he has a lengthy footnote that lists quite a few scholars who wrote in the last few hundred years who agree with the eternal subordination of the Son to the Father. (Schaff wrote this in 1910.) I'll just quote part of his long first sentence of the footnote and one other sentence here: "All important scholars since Petavius [according to Wikipedia he was a French Jesuit theologian (1583-1652)] admit the subordination in the Nicene doctrine of the Trinity; e.g., Bull [George Bull, English theologian (1634-1710)], in the fourth...section of his famous *Defensio fidei Nicea*...treats quite at large of the subordination of the Son to the Father.... But while Baur and Dorner (though from different points of view) recognize in this a defect of the Nicene doctrine [in other words, they believe the Nicene fathers were wrong to allow the subordination of the Son to the Father], to be overcome by the subsequent development of the church dogma [Schaff's viewpoint fits here], the great Anglican divines Cudworth...Pearson, Bull, Waterland (and among American divines Dr. Shedd) regard the Nicene subordinationism as the true, Scriptural, and final form of the trinitarian doctrine and make no account of Augustine, who went beyond it [in other words, they don't agree with Augustine]."

26. Some Excerpts from Chapter VI, "The Trinity," of Vol. 1 of "Systematic Theology" by Charles Hodge (Eerdmans, 1986 reprint, originally published 1871-73). I'll quote part of what Hodge says under the heading "The Mutual Relation of the Persons of the Trinity." "On this subject the Nicene Doctrine includes: 1. The principle of the subordination of the Son to the Father.... But this subordination does not imply inferiority. For as the same divine essence with all its infinite perfections is common to the Father, Son, and Spirit, there can be no inferiority of one person to the other in the Trinity. ...for the divine essence common to the several persons is self-existent and eternal. The subordination intended is only that which concerns the mode of subsistence and operation, implied in

the Scriptural facts that the Son is of the Father...and that the Father operates through the Son...."

The view expressed by Wayne Grudem (and some others) in this paper has much in common with what Hodge says here. Grudem speaks of ontological equality and relational subordination. Many, including Kevin Giles, say that you cannot believe both of these things. As I have mentioned, I am sidestepping that question to some extent, which gets into some complicated issues (including the definition of some words and concepts) and tends to get into some philosophical speculation regarding the Trinity. However, as I have mentioned, I believe that any view regarding the same-substance (homoousios) unity of God (including those of Athanasius, Augustine, and Giles), or regarding ontological equality, that doesn't leave room for the eternal subordination that I read about in the Bible must be wrong; so too regarding any viewpoint that requires believing that there is one center of consciousness and one will and one mind in the Trinity.

It's not easy to try to analyze God (this is holy ground and we need to exercise humility!), and we are limited to what He has chosen to reveal to us. "Facts" that scientists thought they understood regarding the basics of the physical universe, things like space, time, energy, matter, and velocity have been recently upended (in the last hundred years or so) through the now (to a significant extent) proven theories of Einstein. Who would have believed that an increase in velocity or gravitational forces slow down time, for example, but these things are demonstrated every day, for example, where the clocks on satellites need to be calibrated to compensate for the effects of the decreased gravity of the earth for a satellite in orbit (being above the earth), which speeds up time, and the increased velocity of the satellite by putting it in orbit, which slows down time. How much more should we be humble when we make pronouncements about the Trinity who created our universe. Learning more about the basics of the existence of the triune God and His non-physical dimension may well upend some of our (for-sure?) ideas about the three Persons of the Trinity. However, I believe the preeminent role of God the Father stands fixed by the Scriptures. So too for three centers of consciousness, with three wills and three minds, in the three Persons of the Trinity.

I'll quote part of what Hodge says under his #3: "The third point decided [at the Council of Nicea] concerning the relation of the persons of the Trinity, one to the other, relates to their union. As the essence of the Godhead is common to the several persons, they have a common intelligence, will, and power. ... The three are one God, and therefore have one mind and one will. ..." (pages 460-462). Hodge is agreeing here with much that Athanasius and many others have said. In agreement with Grudem and many

others, I don't believe this viewpoint lines up with the Bible. I believe it reads too much into what homoousios means, quite a bit more than what most of the bishops who signed the Nicene Creed believed it means. However, it is significant that Hodge (unlike Athanasius and many others) believes in the "subordination [of the Son] as to mode of subsistence and operation."

Hodge has a lot more to say, but I'll just quote a few sentences from his page 464 under the heading "Subordination." "Gieseler says that Augustine effectually excluded all idea of subordination in the Trinity by teaching the numerical sameness of essence [the identical, same-substance unity] in the persons of the Godhead. This does indeed preclude all priority and all superiority as to being and perfection. But it does not preclude subordination as to mode of subsistence and operation. This is distinctly recognized in Scripture, and was as fully taught by Augustine as by any of the Greek fathers, and is even more distinctly affirmed in the so-called Athanasian Creed, representing the school of Augustine, than in the Creed of the Council of Nice." However, as we discuss in this paper, both Augustine and the Athanasian Creed ruled out all eternal subordination of the Son to the Father.

27. A Little Information Regarding the Cappadocians and the Greek Noun "Homoiousios [Note the "oi," not "oo," in the middle of this word]."

I'll quote a little from what Robert Letham says under the heading "Homoiousians," note the "oi" ("The Holy Trinity" [P&R Publishing, 2004], pages 124, 125). This movement that started in the 350s (some 25 years after the Council of Nicea) was led at first by Basil of Ancyra. "Since they claimed that the Son is of similar or like substance ('homoiousios' [that is the meaning of this Greek noun]) to the Father, they were anti-Arian, but wanted to avoid the Sabellianism [believing in one-Person oneness of God] that they saw inherent in the Nicene 'homoousios.' ... ACCORDING TO THE HOMOIOUSIANS, THE SON IS *LIKE* THE FATHER, WITH FULL DIVINITY AND PERSONAL DISTINCTION [my emphasis]. Likeness of 'ousia,' it was felt, preserves against the twin dangers of seeing the Son as a creature, on the one hand, and of confusing the Son with the Father, on the other. The distinction is that the Father generates and the Son is generated. The Father and the Son are father and son in a *real* sense, and the Son is coeternal with the Father.

... [Basil of Ancyra] considered the *homoousios* blurs the distinction between the Father and the Son by identifying them. [That is a very real problem.] ...

It is from the ranks of the homoiousians that the main forces for the Trinitarian settlement emerged - Basil the Great and the other Cappadocians." Athanasius, who was strong for the identical, same-substance unity of the three Persons of the Trinity that cannot be divided, considered these Christians to be brothers in the Lord, which opened a dialogue that eventually led to large numbers of the homoiousians, including the Cappadocians, to adopt the viewpoint of Athanasius. However, the Cappadocians put a strong emphasis on the three Persons too.

I'll quote a little from the eleven-page article "Trinitarian Dogma of Cappadocian Fathers" by Christopher W. Myers that was submitted to Liberty University. "It was from the *homoiousios* tradition that the Cappadocians emerged. Because of their origin of thinking, we observe their explanation of the Trinity to begin with an explanation of the three and then moving to the one. ... Basil was the theologian of the East who adopted the *homoousion* language for the Godhead and showed his fellow Homoiousians that the Nicene faith indeed did not engender any Sabellian [one Person oneness] tendencies. ... (page 2).

For one thing, Basil realized that the Arians would accept homoiousios, but not homoousios (see page 3). The anti-Arians didn't want to use words that the Arians would accept. They wanted to show where they were wrong, seriously wrong.

28. Some Excerpts from "The Trinity & Subordinationism: The Doctrine of God & the Contemporary Gender Debate" by Kevin Giles (InterVarsity Press, 2002, 282 pages). Based on what I have read, Kevin Giles can probably be considered the number-one critic of the idea of the eternal subordination of the Son to the Father in our day. He has done his homework, and you can learn from what he says, but I believe he is wrong to deny that there is an eternal subordination of the Son to the Father in His role. However, I believe, with Giles and all true evangelicals, that we must agree that the Son is fully deity with the Father. He was not created out of nothing, as Arius said, but one way, or another, He is of the substance of the Father. I also agree with Giles that some who believe in the eternal subordination of the Son to the Father in His role have wrongly stated that Athanasius, Augustine, and the Athanasian Creed (and others) support their viewpoint.

The pre-Nicene (before the Council of Nicea) Christians believed in the deity of the Son and there was widespread agreement that one way, or another, He was of the substance of the Father (He certainly wasn't begotten out of nothing), but they also believed in the eternal subordination of the Son, and not just during the few years that He lived on the earth. What Giles says on pages 60-62 under the heading "Ante-Nicene

Subordination" is very important. (Ante-Nicene means the same thing as pre-Nicene: before the Council of Nicea in AD 325.) His first sentence is, "It is generally conceded [including being conceded by Giles] that the ante-Nicene Fathers were subordinationists." He goes on to give examples to the end of page 62.

Giles is sure, however, that any subordination is an error on their part, except for the subordination of the Son that took place during the brief time He lived on the earth as a man (the God-man). As I have mentioned, I don't believe that everything those early Fathers said regarding the subordination of the Son was fully adequate, but I believe that they learned of the deity and the eternal subordination of the Son (not that these two items are of equal importance) from the teaching of the apostles (which includes the all-important New Testament), who learned it from the Lord Jesus and revelation from God.

It seems clear to me that Giles needs to consider a question (I don't believe he addresses this question in this book): How is it that there was a supposed rather total acceptance at the Council of Nicea of the idea that the Son could not be eternally subordinate to the Father in His role? What brought about that large change from what the pre-Nicene Christians believed? Giles believes that the Nicene Creed rejected the idea of the eternal subordination of the Son, and many agree with him. I'm sure they are wrong.

There is no basis that I know of to say that the viewpoint of the Christians (especially the bishops who had to accept or reject the Nicene Creed) who gathered to Nicea in AD 325 had changed from the pre-Nicene viewpoints. I'll mention the dates of the death of several pre-Nicene Fathers that were all within a hundred years of AD 325: Tertullian (AD 230); Hippolytus (236); Origen (about 255) and Novatian (257). And Eusebius of Caesarea (AD263-339), a Christian church historian, who was a key leader at Nicea, was strong on the eternal subordinate role of the Son of God. He is often mentioned in discussions of the Council of Nicea.

We have already discussed the fact that most of those gathered to Nicea did not agree with the idea that the Nicene Creed (very much including the word "homoousios" that became part of the creed) didn't leave any room for the eternal subordination of the Son to the Father, and we will discuss this further as we continue. They did agree, of course, that the creed ruled out the heretical subordination of Arius and those who followed him, a subordination that effectively denied the deity of the Son.

It is true that by sixty years after the Council of Nicea many Christians would have agreed with the viewpoint that the Nicene Creed ruled out any eternal subordination of

the Son to the Father, and apparently the numbers would have continued to increase as time went on. As we have discussed, a big part of that change took place through the ministries of Athanasius (AD296-373), Augustine (AD354-430), and to some significant extent the three Cappadocians (Gregory of Nyssa, AD355-394; Basil of Caesarea, AD330-379; and Gregory of Nazianzus, AD329-389). Giles discusses all of them in this book. I'll quote a little of that as we continue.

It seems clear to me and many others that the original intent of those who signed the Nicene Creed, along with the dominant view of the pre-Nicene Christians, along with the much more important teaching of the apostles and the New Testament itself, agree with the eternal subordination of the Son in His role to the Father, along with His full deity. This is important information. I base what I believe first and foremost on the Bible, but it seems quite significant that the pre-Nicene Christians and the original intent of the Nicene Creed agree with what I believe the Bible teaches. I don't believe we should assume that the changes brought about to some significant extent by Athanasius, the three Cappadocians, and Augustine finally brought us to the truth. It seems clear to me that they read too much into what it means for the Son to be of the same-substance as the Father, very much including their idea that the Son cannot be eternally subordinate to the Father in His role. As I mentioned, some changes are bad - they take us away from the truth. Church history is packed with examples.

It seems clear to me that we should not discard that pre-Nicene view, which made room for some eternal subordination of the Son to the Father, and especially when that early view lines up with what I believe the Bible teaches. At the same time, we always need to be looking for the balanced truth of what the Bible teaches, and there is room to incorporate some of the insights of Christians like Athanasius, the Cappadocians, Augustine (and Giles). They were trying to be faithful to the Bible. I am not attempting to answer every question in this paper. I am mostly just trying to show that the Bible teaches an eternal subordination of the Son to the Father in His role, and it is quite important to see that the Bible doesn't teach there is one center of consciousness in the Trinity, with one will and one mind.

"Athanasius rejected the idea that the Son was eternally subordinated either in his being or in his works or functions. For Athanasius the three divine persons are one in being and one in action. *Who they are and what they are* cannot be separated. Thus Athanasius never depicts the Father commanding [commanding clearly seems to be the wrong word to use, but the Son always perfectly does the Father's will] and the Son obeying. ... Athanasius's key allies in the fight against Arianism in the latter part of his life were the Cappadocian fathers.... ..." (page 14).

Giles speaks quite a bit about Augustine's viewpoint in this book. I have dealt with Augustine's viewpoint earlier in this paper. I'll quote a sentence and a paragraph from Giles that deal with Augustine from page 15: "In his presentation of this doctrine he begins with the unity of the triune God: he is one substance. ... After Augustine's death, his conception of the Trinity was encapsulated in the so-called Athanasian Creed. [[On page 51 he mentions that that creed was written "about A.D. 500," and he mentions that "For Lutherans, Roman Catholics and Anglicans (such as myself [Giles]), it is a binding documental norm." And on page 52 Giles says that "Right at the heart of this Creed we have an explicit condemnation of those who say the Son is eternally subordinated to the Father in any way."]] This creed stresses the unity of the Trinity and the equality of the persons. ... [Giles quotes a small part of the creed:] 'In this Trinity none is before, or after other; none is greater, or less than another; ...the whole three Persons are...equal.' The Son is only 'inferior to the Father as touching his manhood.' A more explicit rejection of the eternal subordination of the Son in being, function or authority is hard to imagine." I agree that the Athanasian Creed does communicate that idea, but I don't believe it is accurate on this point, that it is in agreement with the Bible.

On pages 37-38 Giles mentions that Athanasius used John 10:30 ("The Father and I are one") and John 14:9 ("Whoever has seen me has seen the Father") to demonstrate "the unity of the one Godhead." I don't believe either one of these verses, or any other verses, support all that Athanasius meant by "unity of the one Godhead," including his idea that the Son cannot be eternally subordinate to the Father in His being, function, role or work, any more than they support oneness (modalism). (I discussed these verses and some similar verses in my paper "More on the Trinity," for one place.) "For Athanasius, without any caveats, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are one in being *and* action" (page 41).

On pages 41-43 Giles discussed the Cappadocians. They strongly emphasized the unity of God, but "They took as their starting point not the one being of God [with Athanasius and Augustine] but the three divine 'persons,' whom they called 'hypostases.' ..." (page 41). And I'll quote part of a paragraph from page 43: "The Cappadocian fathers explicitly wanted to exclude subordinationism, but because they were wedded in thinking that the Father was the 'monarche' (one source or origin) of the Son and the Spirit, they were not completely successful in doing this. [Giles has a footnote: "Athanasius 'De Synodis' 16."] In their doctrinal expressions of the Trinity there is a tension between their insistence that all three persons have the one divine 'ousia' [being, essence, substance] and their insistence that the 'hypostasis' [person] of the Father alone is God in the absolute sense - and as such is the sole cause or origin of the Son and the Holy Spirit." (I should mention that Matt Paulson in "Rejoinder to Kevin Giles" [<http://www.tektonics.org/guest/psek02.html>] seems to effectively show that

Giles is wrong to deny that Athanasius believed in the monarchy of the Father. There was an earlier article by Matt Paulson, but he was using the name "Phantaz Sunlyk" at www.tektonics.org/quest/psekstasis.html) and a response by Kevin Giles to that earlier article at www.tektonics.org/gk/giles01.php. I read both of those articles.)

In a paragraph on page 44, for example, Giles demonstrates that he believes that the Nicene Creed rules out the eternal subordination of the Son to the Father. Giles attributed this viewpoint to "the bishops of Nicea." As we have discussed, it seems clear that Giles is wrong regarding the intent of the Nicene Creed as it was written and ratified by the bishops. As we have also discussed, it is clearly true that later many did begin to interpret the Nicene Creed that way. As we have discussed, this change took place to some significant extent (after Nicea) through the influence of Athanasius, the three Cappadocians, and Augustine.

On pages 46-49 Giles discusses Augustine. "The one text through which all else in Scripture about the Son should be understood is, for Augustine, Philippians 2:6." We discussed Phil. 2:6 in its context in section 2 of this paper. My understanding of this verse goes against what Augustine (and essentially all, if not all, of those who deny the eternal subordination of the Son) thinks it says. If I am right (and it's not just me), Augustine's number-one verse demonstrates the opposite of what he taught; it demonstrates the subordination of the Son at a time before He, in accordance with the Father's will, condescended to become the God-man. That great condescension, which included His suffering on the cross, resulted in our salvation and the ultimate total overthrow of Satan and all who follow him.

I'll quote a small part of what Giles says under the heading "Derivative Subordination" (pages 64-69). The first quotation will show what he means by that terminology. "The Arminians in the seventeenth century also held that the Son and the Spirit were subordinate because they were derived from the Father" (page 65), and he went on to quote from "the leading Arminian, Episcopius".... (Still quoting from Giles) "In seventeenth century England derivative subordinationism flourished. Bishop George Bull, in his famous and widely read 'Defensio Fidei Nicaenae,' taught that the Son, 'in respect of his divinity, is a degree subordinate to the Father, insomuch as he is *from* him. [I'll skip the next three footnotes.] Likewise John Pearson in his widely read book 'The Exposition of the Creed,' says, 'in respect of his nature, the Father is greater (than the Son) in reference to the communication of the Godhead.' On the basis of the exegesis of 1,251 biblical passages, Samuel Clarke concluded in his book 'Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity' (1712) that the Athanasian Creed was wrong. [I agree that it is wrong in that it doesn't leave any room for the eternal subordination of the Son to the Father in His role.] ..." (pages 65-66). (On page 56 of "Jesus and the Father," a later

book by Giles that we will discuss next, he points out that the Eastern Orthodox Churches do not endorse the Athanasian Creed. Many Protestants don't endorse it either.) I'll stop quoting from this book by Kevin Giles here, but he obviously has a lot more to say in this book.

29. I'll include some excerpts from a later book by Kevin Giles on this same topic: "Jesus and the Father: Modern Evangelicals Reinvent the Trinity" (Zondervan, 2006, 320 pages).

On page 52 Giles says, "Does not the New Testament twice speak of the Father and the Son as 'equal' (John 5:18; Phil. 2:6)?" There are ways in which the Father and the Son are equal. For one thing, although the Bible typically uses the word "God" for the Father, it is used of the Son several places. It is no little thing to be called God. Furthermore, there is zero competition between the Father and the Son. There is an infinite love relationship, and both Persons are totally motivated to see the other Person glorified to the max. However, significantly, I don't believe either one of these verses that Giles mentioned, in their contexts, argue at all against the eternal subordinate role of the Son to the Father. We discussed Phil. 2:6 earlier in this paper (in section 2); I believe this verse demonstrates the subordinate role of the Son before He became a man (the God-man); and Jesus doesn't really claim to be equal with the Father in John 5:18. Craig Keener discusses this verse, in its context, in some detail in his article "Subordination within the Trinity John 5:18 and 1 Cor. 15:28," which is chapter 3 of "The New Evangelical Subordinationism?" that was discussed earlier in this paper, but we did not discuss John 5:18 there. Keener discusses John 5:18, in its context, on pages 40-45 under the two headings "Subordination in John 5:18" and "Does Jesus Claim 'Equality'? (5:18)." Keener argues for the eternal subordinate role of the Son.

On pages 53, 54 (also see his pages 60-61), Giles states that the insertion of "homoousios" in the Nicene Creed "unambiguously" demonstrated that "the divine three [are] one in being, work, and authority." For one significant thing, as we have discussed, most of the bishops who signed the Nicene Creed in AD 325 didn't have that understanding of homoousios. A primary point that I am trying to make throughout this paper is that I believe the New Testament, which was given to us through the apostles under the anointing of the Holy Spirit, demonstrates that the Son is eternally subordinate to the Father in His role, which was also the viewpoint of the pre-Nicene Fathers, so I cannot agree with what Giles says here.

I don't claim to fully understand all the details regarding the Trinity - and I don't believe we are supposed to - but I cannot agree with Giles' viewpoint, which includes the idea

that the Son is not, and cannot be, eternally subordinate to the Father in His role. Also, I cannot agree with what Giles says on page 81: he says that he believes in "one center of consciousness and one will." (We also often hear of one mind.) I agree, of course, that the will of the Son is always in alignment with the Father, but I don't believe that this happens automatically because the three Persons are "one in being, work, and authority." The perfection of the Son and the super-intense love relationship that exists between the Father and the Son is sufficient to explain that the will of the Son is always submitted to the will of the Father, not to mention that the Son knows that the will of the Father is ALWAYS right. It seems clear to me (and many others; several of them are mentioned in this paper) that the Bible demonstrates three centers of consciousness, with three wills and three minds. I want to emphasize the point though that I don't believe we can begin to fully understand the Trinity, and especially not before we are glorified.

Also, I cannot agree with what Giles says on page 53 (also see page 174): "The New Testament teaches that after His resurrection the Son of God reigns as equal God, not subordinated God." The Son clearly is subordinated to the Father's plans and timetable after His resurrection and glorification. The book of Revelation, by itself, suffices to demonstrate this point. See section 7 of this paper, which is titled "Subordination of the Son to the Father in the Book of Revelation."

Giles makes an interesting comment regarding "homoousios" and the Nicene Creed on page 69: "To make clear that what they believed was implied in Scripture they [at the Council of Nicea] decided to include in the creed of Nicea the Greek word 'homoousios,' meaning one in being [meaning "of the same substance"], to define the Father-Son relationship. In doing this they went beyond what was explicitly stated in Scripture. [[I believe the Bible makes it clear that the Son is of the substance of the Father AND that He is eternally subordinate to the Father. (Tertullian [AD160-230], for example believed both of these things.) He clearly was not begotten out of nothing; Arius contended that He had been created out of nothing. However, IF it were true that the insertion of "homoousios" necessarily includes ideas like the Son cannot be eternally subordinated to the Father in His role because they are "one in being" (as Giles believes, but I don't agree), then I have to say that in error "they went beyond what was explicitly stated in Scripture." I believe it is clear that most of the Christians at Nicea did not believe that the insertion of "homoousios" included ideas like the Son cannot be eternally subordinated to the Father in His role. They believed in the eternal subordinate role of the Son, in agreement with the pre-Nicene Fathers, and much more importantly in agreement with what the Bible teaches.]] They made an objective advance in theological definition." I'm thankful that Giles admits here that his understanding of what

they said went beyond what is explicitly stated in Scripture, even though he thinks that this is "implied in Scripture."

"[Athanasius] was the first to give the 'model' of an eternal 'coequal' Trinity where the three distinct persons are differentiated yet profoundly one, and the Son and the Spirit are not subordinated to the Father in being, function, or authority [I'll skip his footnote]" (page 134, 135). I believe his new "model" was wrong on these points. Giles mentions that John 1:1-18, especially verses 1 and 14, was important to Athanasius' understanding of the Trinity. I don't believe these verses offer any substantial support for his "model." These verses clearly show the deity of the Son (the Word), who became the God-man to save us, along with the obvious deity of God the Father, but I don't see any emphasis on their being "profoundly one," or any denial of the eternal subordination of the Son to the Father. For one thing, the Father is distinguished from the Son in John 1:1 by speaking of the Son's being with God the Father, who is referred to here with the Greek "ton theon" (which is the Greek word for God with the definite article, similar to our word "the" in English) in that the Father is the one typically referred to as God in the Bible. Also the Father created through the Son (John 1:2-3), which fits the preeminent role of the Father.

"Athanasius will not allow any disjunction between the Father and the Son. The two affirmations of Jesus he quotes the most are 'I and the Father are one' (John 10:30) and 'He who has seen me has seen the Father' (John 14:9). [I don't believe these verses demonstrate all that Athanasius thought they demonstrate, any more than they demonstrate the oneness (modalistic) viewpoint; the modalists use these verses too. These verses and some similar verses are discussed in my paper "More on the Trinity."] ... Professor Lewis Ayres says that Athanasius was the first to recognize that the unity of being of the Father and the Son implied a unity of will and work. [I believe Athanasius overstated the case, which resulted in rather significant error. And the fact that he was the first to recognize these things fit the idea that he was wrong.] He thus can be seen as the originator of one of the most basic Pro-Nicene theological principles, namely that the Father and the Son work inseparably [He has a footnote: "Ayres, 'Nicea,' pages 113-15]" (page 141).

"There is no uncertainty or ambiguity. In Athanasius we find the most thorough repudiation of the idea that the Son is in any way eternally subordinated to the Father. For him, without any caveats, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are one in being, work/function, and authority. In answer to the Arians Athanasius completely rejects the idea that the Trinity is to be understood as a hierarchy in any form. He could not allow any diminution in the Son's divinity, majesty, or authority, neither in who he is or in what he does. ... By arguing that the Son is *different in being, works, and authority*

from the Father, they [the Arians] impugned the full divinity of Christ, the veracity of the revelation of God in Christ, and the possibility of salvation through Christ [[He has a footnote: "So Athanasius argues. See 'Discourses,' in NPNF ["Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers"] 4:1-10 pages...."]]" (page 144). I don't have all of the answers regarding the Trinity, but it seems clear to me that Athanasius overstated the same-substance (oneness, but not modalism) unity of God that cannot be divided when he taught there is one center of consciousness and one will and one mind and denied any eternal subordination of the Son to the Father. Arius and the Arians needed to be refuted, but it is easy to go too far and miss the balanced truth of what the Bible teaches. This very often happens during conflicts, and I believe Athanasius did that here in a rather serious way. We desperately need the balanced truth of what God's Word teaches.

On pages 150-152 Giles speaks of the Nicene Creed of AD 325, with its inclusion of the word 'homoousios' (and the closely related words used earlier in the creed "of the being/substance/essence/nature ["ousios"] of the Father") not leaving any room for any subordination of the Son, which would have been a gigantic change from the viewpoint that had been held up until that time. Giles speaks from the point of view that that was the intention of the signers of the Nicene Creed. (Giles isn't the only one speaking from that viewpoint. It is a widely accepted viewpoint.) However, I have shown in this paper that it isn't reasonable to assume that many of those gathered to Nicea would have agreed with the idea that the Son was not eternally subordinated to the Father in His role, for one thing.

I believe I have enough information in this paper to demonstrate that Giles is not interpreting the Nicene Creed of AD 325 the way intended by the Council of Nicea. It seems clear to me that he is wrong. However, we must recognize the fact that later (to some significant extent through Athanasius, the three Cappadocians, and Augustine), the Nicene Creed has very often been interpreted in a way that excludes any subordination of the Son to the Father. This includes the later version of the Nicene Creed of AD 381 that is sometimes called the "Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed."

Anyway, to repeat myself - it is important to get this right! - I believe that any interpretation of the Nicene Creed that says there is no room for any eternal subordination of the Son to the Father in His role is wrong. I believe it goes against what the Bible teaches and it goes against what the pre-Nicene Christians believed and most (it could be essentially all) of those gathered to Nicea believed. Of course we must dogmatically insist on the Full deity of the Son of God. Being eternally subordinate to God the Father in His role does not negate the FULL deity of the Son. Who really knows enough about the triune God to say that there is no room for the subordination of the Son to the Father in His role. (Many think they do.) God has to reveal to us the details of

His being. He certainly hasn't fully revealed Himself to us, and I'm sure that there is a limit to how much He could fully reveal Himself to us, and especially before we are glorified, but based on what He has revealed, the Son is eternally subordinate to the Father in His role, and the Son boasts in the eternally preeminent role of the Father He loves with a very great love.

I appreciate this next excerpt from Giles; it seems to be an important step in the right direction, but he still maintains his total objection to any eternal subordination of the Son to the Father. "One of the important contributions to trinitarian theology made by theologians in the last thirty years has been the recognition that this emphasis on the divine unity and how it is conceptualized in the so-called Western tradition is deficient. [I certainly agree with this. It is an important recognition.] In its place a 'communal' or 'social' model of the Trinity has been advocated and widely endorsed. In this approach the unity of God is not found in 'one divine substance,' a very abstract and unitary idea, but in the most profound community of love and self-giving imaginable that characterizes the inner life of the divine persons. ..." [I certainly agree with this.] (pages 240-241). This viewpoint, which is Biblical, lends itself to seeing some eternal subordination of the Son to the Father, but there are no ideas of superiority or inferiority, or commanding and being compelled to obey, etc.

"What divides evangelicals today on the economic-immanent Trinity [where the word "economic" refers to the dealings of the Trinity with the created world and the word "immanent" refers to the inner life of God] is whether the subordination of the Son seen in the incarnation is to be read back into the immanent Trinity" (page 263). Most of what Wayne Grudem, for example (see his article "Biblical Evidence for the Eternal Subordination of the Son to the Father" earlier in this paper, section 1) believes about the subordination of the Son to the Father is based on passages of the Bible that speak of the subordination of the Son to the Father before the incarnation or after the resurrection and glorification of the Son. His view (and mine) is not based on his reading back into the immanent Trinity what we learn about the subordination of the Son in His incarnation.

May the will of God be fully accomplished through this paper and His people (very much including Kevin Giles) be edified!

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