

The Trinity and Eternal Functional Subordination

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The Body, Soul, and Spirit

Although most theologians object to using the body, soul, and spirit of man as an analogy to understanding the trinity, because of the differences; God has given us no closer analogy of the trinity in the Bible. (Wayne Grudem says, “Scripture nowhere uses any analogies to teach the doctrine of the Trinity. The closest we come to an analogy is found in the titles ‘Father’ and ‘Son’ themselves.”¹) Since God created man, and since He “created man in his own image,” (Gen. 1:27)², it should not be surprising if both God and man are in some way three in one.

It’s insufficient to illustrate the concept of the trinity with illustrations like ice, water, and vapor, because that illustration represents modalism, three roles of only one person. Likewise, it’s insufficient to illustrate the concept of the trinity by means of a triangle, because although the bottom left corner is not the bottom right corner, corners and the lines that connect them merely comprise the definition of a triangle. Also, by turning an equilateral triangle to the right, the bottom left corner becomes the top corner, etc., whereas the persons of the trinity are not interchangeable with each other. The Bible itself compares the spirit within man to the Spirit of God. “Who knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no one, but the Spirit of God [which is in him],” 1 Cor. 2:11.

¹ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology. An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, Chapter 14 (Zondervan, 1994), accessed March 15, 2017, <https://www.biblicaltraining.org/library/trinity-wayne-grudem>.

² Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture references are taken from the King James Version.

The tripartite nature of man, which we all experience within ourselves, is our best Biblical hope, of apprehending (not fully comprehending) the trinity, and therefore shouldn't be abandoned as a starting point to understanding the trinity. Like the triune God, man is tripartite. At death, my soul and spirit leave my body, and are thus separate from my body, but the three parts of comprise one man. My soul is Wayne, my spirit is Wayne, and my body is equally, and just as essentially, Wayne. We do not receive 'new' bodies at resurrection, but only 'changed' bodies (or it wouldn't be 'resurrection'); Jesus tomb was empty. "They found the stone rolled away from the sepulcher, and they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus," Luke 24:2-3.

God created man with a spirit, soul, and body. "I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless," 1 Thes. 5:23. The soul is the volitional and emotional part of man. It's where the will is. It has intentions and makes decisions, like deciding to submit and obey. "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers," Rom. 13:1. "Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth," 1 Pet. 1:22. It's also the emotional part of man. "My soul is exceeding sorrowful," Matt. 26:38. And because it's the part most central to the man himself, the soul is often used to refer to the man himself. "We were in all in the ship two hundred threescore and sixteen souls," Acts 27:37. "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul," Matt. 15:26.

The spirit is the logical and rational part of man. It's where the mind, or understanding, is. It's the part of man that knows, thinks, and uses words. "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? ... Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but [in words] which the Holy Ghost teacheth" 1 Cor. 2:11-13. Although the words themselves symbolize logic, they are

the manifestations of the spirit. They are not the mind itself, but what the mind uses to understand. The will cannot be part of the intellect, because something must choose and direct the mind as to what to think about.

The heart represents the immaterial part of man including both the soul and the spirit. “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart [the soul and spirit], and with all thy soul [the soul], and with all thy mind [the spirit], and with all thy strength [the body]. … To love him with all the heart [the soul and spirit], and with all the understanding [the spirit], and with all the soul, and with all the strength [the body],” Mark 12:31-33. “The word of God is … sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit [of the heart], and of the joints and marrow [of the body], and is a discerner of the thoughts [of the spirit] and intents [of the soul] of the heart,” Heb. 4:12.

The body is the material part of man, that can be touched, resurrected, glorified. “The dead [bodies] shall be raised [resurrected, not replaced] incorruptible, and we [our bodies] shall be changed [glorified, not replaced], for this corruptible [body] must put on incorruption, and this mortal [body] must put on immortality [of body],” 1 Cor. 15:52-53. “Handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have,” Luke 24:39.

Although the soul primarily wills and feels emotions, it also has some capacity to think, or it couldn’t interact with the spirit, “I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years,” Luke 10:19. And it has some capacity to be seen like a body, “I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God,” Rev. 6:9.

Although the spirit primarily thinks, it also has some capacity to feel emotions, “he sighed deeply in his spirit,” Mark 8:12; and to will, “I serve [God] with my spirit in the

gospel of his Son,” Rom. 1:9. And it has some capacity to be seen in the physical realm like a body. “When they saw him walking upon the sea, they supposed it had been a spirit,” Mark 6:49. “They were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit,” Luke 24:37. “Whom shall I bring up unto thee? And he said, Bring me up Samuel. And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice,” 1 Sam. 28:11-12. “There talked with him two men, which were Moses [without a body] and Elias [with a body],” Luke 9:30.

Although the body primarily manifests the person in the physical realm, it also has some capacity to think, via the brain, so it can interact with the spirit; and to will, via the autonomic nervous system; and to feel emotions, via feelings in the belly, etc.

The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

God is a trinity of three persons. “Jesus [the Son] ... went up straightway out of the water, and ... he [John] saw the Spirit of God [the Holy Spirit] descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: and lo a voice from heaven [the Father], saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,” Matt. 3:16-17. “Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,” Matt. 28:19. “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ [the Son], and the love of God [the Father], and the communion of the Holy Ghost [the Holy Spirit], be with you all,” 2 Cor. 13:14. “Holy [Father], holy [Son], holy [Spirit], is the Lord of hosts,” Is. 6:3.

The Father is the primary person of the trinity who wills, has intentions, makes decisions, and issues commands. “According to the will of God and our Father,” Gal. 1:4.

“This is the Father's will which hath sent me,” John 6:39. And the Father is primarily the source of emotions in the trinity, “The Father loveth the Son,” John 3:35. “The Father himself loveth you,” John 16:27. “Blessed be God, even the ... Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort,” 2 Cor. 1:3. The Father is the person most central to God himself; so, the Father is often used to refer to God. “There is but one God, the Father,” 1 Cor. 8:6.

The Holy Spirit is the primary person of the trinity who thinks and uses words. “Who knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no one, but the Spirit of God [which is in him]. Now we have received ... the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things ... of God. ... Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but [in words] which the Holy Ghost teacheth. ... For who hath known the mind of the Lord,” 1 Cor. 2:11-16. Although the Son, the Word is logic, or ‘logos’, he is the manifestation of the Spirit in the world. He is not the mind of God, but the content of the mind that the Spirit teaches. “When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak. ... He shall receive of mine [from the Father], and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he [the Spirit] shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you,” John 16:13-15.

The Son is the primary person of the trinity who is manifest in the physical world. “No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him,” John 1:18. For that reason, he's also called the Word, “the Word was with God, and the Word was God,” (John 1:1), since words are the manifestations of spirit. “Out of the abundance of the heart [including the spirit] the

mouth speaketh,” Matt. 12:34. God the Father is transcendent and unknowable in Himself, but manifest through his Son. “Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him,” Matt. 11:27.

Although the Father primarily wills and feels, he also thinks, or he couldn’t interact with the Spirit. “He that searcheth the hearts [the Father] knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he [the Spirit] maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God [the Father],” Rom. 8:26-28. And the Father sometimes manifests himself directly in the physical world. “A voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son,” Luke 3:22. “Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live. ... Thou shalt see my back parts,” Ex. 33:20-23.

Although the Holy Spirit primarily thinks, he also feels some emotions, “grieve not the holy Spirit of God,” Eph. 4:30. And he also makes some decisions. “For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit, ... to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, ... to another the interpretation of tongues: but all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will,” 1 Cor. 12:8-10. And he sometimes manifests Himself in the physical realm. “The Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him,” Luke 3:22. “There appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, ... and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost,” Acts 2:3-4. “The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given ... the gifts of healing, ... to another the working of miracles, to another divers kinds of tongues,” 1 Cor. 12:7-10.

Although the Son primarily manifests God in the physical realm, he also thinks and knows, “Jesus knew their thoughts,” Matt. 12:25. “Immediately when Jesus perceived in

his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves,” Mark 2:8. “Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee,” John 21:17. The Son also wills and feels emotions, “Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God,” Psalm 40:7.

So, there are similarities between the soul, spirit, and body of man; and the Father, Holy Spirit, and Son, of God. There are also major differences, because God is God, and we are men. For example, the soul, spirit, and body, are parts of man; but the Father, Spirit, and Son, because they are divine, are more complete and self-sustaining than parts, and are instead persons of God, and yet are not so complete and separate as to be three gods. In man, “the body without the spirit is dead,” James 2:26; but each person of God has life within himself. As the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself,” John 5:26. “The Spirit is life,” Rom. 8:1. And each person of God gives life. “As the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will,” John 5:24. “The spirit giveth life,” 2 Cor. 3:6.

The Trinity in Computer Programming

While reading Aquinas or other theologians who try to describe the trinity, it's often difficult to know specifically what they're saying. It's unfortunate computer programming wasn't invented in time for the theologians of the past to describe their understanding of the trinity in computer code that could be tested to see if it's complete and consistent enough to compile and run.

As a computer programmer, as I read Aquinas, I wonder about the simplest programming questions, like where does the class definition (form?) end and class instantiation (being/existence?) begin, especially in the sequence from form/nature to essence to person/suppositum/hypostasis to relation. Class definitions ‘exist’ at compile time (when the code is converted to a runnable program), but only as definitions; whereas instantiations are ‘objects’ that completely exist, but only at run time (while the program is running).

Maybe in the sequence above, the relations are instances, and the persons, or suppositum, are class definitions. But per Aquinas, “The divine Persons are the relations themselves as subsistent [persons = relations].”³ “In God, the relations themselves are the persons [persons = relations].”⁴ “In God, the relation signified by the name “Father” is a subsisting person [persons = relations].”⁵ So, both the persons and relations are instantiated, and so are the suppositum/hypostasis. “When we say the person of the Father we mean nothing else but the substance of the Father. [person = suppositum]”⁶ “It is called suppositum or hypostasis [suppositum = hypostasis].”⁷

Maybe essence is the class definition, because Aquinas says, “In God, the essence is taken as the form of the three persons.”⁸ But then he also says there’s no “distinction

³ Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, 1a.41.5.

⁴ Ibid., 1a.42.3.

⁵ Ibid., 1a.33.2.

⁶ Ibid., 1a.39.1.

⁷ Ibid., 1a.39.2.

⁸ Ibid., 1a.39.2.

between the essence and persons in God [essence = persons].”⁹ “In God, essence is not really distinct from person [essence = persons].”¹⁰ “Homoousion ... means that the three persons are of one essence [essence = persons].”¹¹ “In God, essence is the same as suppositum, which ... is nothing else than person [essence = persons/suppositum].”¹² “The substance of God is his essence [essence = suppositum].”¹³ “In creatures, relations are accidental, whereas in God they are the divine essence itself [essence = relations].”¹⁴ “All the relations are one in essence and being [essence = relations].”¹⁵ So, the essence is also instantiated.

So, the only thing left, nature and form must be the class definition. And for creatures, Aquinas says, “the nature is as the form, and the individual is the suppositum [instantiation] of the form.”¹⁶ And, “one nature ... agree in some action [like heat], ... one essence ... [has] one being [instantiation].”¹⁷ But for God, Aquinas says, “The divine nature is the same as the divine essence [nature = essence],”¹⁸ and “the divine nature is the divine

⁹ Ibid., 1a.39.2.

¹⁰ Ibid., 1a.39.1.

¹¹ Ibid., 1a.39.2.

¹² Ibid., 1a.39.1.

¹³ Ibid., 1a.39.2.

¹⁴ Ibid., 1a.39.1.

¹⁵ Ibid., 1a.42.4.

¹⁶ Ibid., 1a.39.2.

¹⁷ Ibid., 1a.39.3.

¹⁸ Ibid., 1a.39.3.

essence [nature = essence].”¹⁹ “Generation is the procession of the divine person into the divine nature [nature = persons].”²⁰ “This name “person” in God signifies a relation subsisting in the divine nature [nature = persons].”²¹ “In God, the relations themselves are the persons subsisting in one nature [nature = persons = relations].”²² So, the nature and form are also instantiated and have being. Where’s the class definition? Maybe for God, the class definition is the same as the instantiation, since for an eternal God, there’s no compile time or run time to be substantiated in.

We can also consider whether the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit can all be derived (inherited) from the same class definition of divinity. The colon “:” in the class definitions means “inherited from.”

```
public class God {  
    public bool eternal = true;  
    public GodTheFather objGodTheFather;  
    public GodTheSon : objGodTheSon;  
    public GodTheSpirit : objGodTheSpirit;  
    //code to insure single instantiation (omitted for brevity)  
}  
public class GodTheFather : God {  
    //code to control instantiation (omitted for brevity)  
}  
public class GodTheSon : God {  
    //code to control instantiation (omitted for brevity)  
}  
public class GodTheSpirit : God {  
    //code to control instantiation (omitted for brevity)  
}
```

¹⁹ Ibid., 1a.42.3.

²⁰ Ibid., 1a.43.2.

²¹ Ibid., 1a.33.3.

²² Ibid., 1a.42.3.

But inheritance creates an “is a” relationship, and thus when you ask “what kind of objects” the instantiated Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are, you get the answer, “God,” for all three, and end up with three Gods, or tritheism.

```
WriteLine(objGod.objGodTheFather.GetType() == typeof(God)); //true  
WriteLine(objGod.objGodTheSon.GetType() == typeof(God)); // true  
WriteLine(objGod.objGodTheSpirit.GetType() == typeof(God)); // true
```

Perhaps it would be better to portray the Father begetting the Son, and the Father and Son spirating the procession of the Spirit.

```
public class GodTheFather {  
    public bool eternal = true;  
}  
  
public class GodTheSon : GodTheFather {}  
  
public class GodTheSpirit : GodTheFather, GodTheSon  
    //(if C# had multiple inheritance)  
}
```

But then the Son would also be a Father, and the Spirit would also be a Father and a Son.

```
WriteLine(objGod.objGodTheSon.GetType() == typeof(GodTheFather));  
// true  
WriteLine(objGod.objGodTheSpirit.GetType() == typeof(GodTheFather));  
// true  
WriteLine(objGod.objGodTheSpirit.GetType() == typeof(GodTheSon));//  
true
```

So, these very simple attempts to model the trinity in code were not very satisfactory. But many other approaches and combinations are possible, perhaps using

composition instead of inheritance, abstract classes and interfaces, static variables, etc. Modeling the trinity, the nature of man, and other things in programming code would let us know exactly what each theologian is saying, and the places where the concepts are beyond coding would also be instructive as to which parts must remain mystery.

The Incarnation

The Son is called the Word, and he created all things. “In the beginning was the Word, and ... all things were made by him,” John 1:1-3. We see a veiled reference to him in the third verse of the Bible. “In the beginning God [the Father] created the heaven and the earth, ... and the Spirit of God [the Spirit] moved upon the face of the waters. And God said [the Word], Let there be light: and there was light,” Gen. 1:1-3. The Father created everything through the Word, “his Son, ... by whom ... he made the worlds,” Heb. 1:2. Since “no man hath seen God [the Father] at any time,” (John 1:18), the presence that walked in the garden of Eden must have been the Word. “They heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God,” Gen. 3:8. And when “Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him,” (Gen. 5:24), that walking may be more literal than we might think.

The Son is known as the angel of the LORD in Genesis 16. “The angel of the Lord said unto her [Hagar], I will multiply thy seed exceedingly. ... Thou ... shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael. ... And she called the name of the Lord that spake unto her, Thou God seest me: for she said, Have I also here looked after him that seeth me?” Gen. 16:10-13.

The angel of the Lord looked like an angel, and angels look like men. Cheribim are multi-winged, multi-faced angels. “The cherubims, ... every one had four faces apiece, and every one four wings,” Ez. 10:19-21. And seraphim are 6-winged, fiery angels, “the seraphims: each one had six wings,” (Isa. 6:2), and seraph means “fiery” in Hebrew. But ‘common’ angels, led by, “Michael, the archangel,” (Jude 1:9), are single-faced and un-winged, which is why they are often mistaken for men.

The angel of the LORD accompanied by two angels visited Abraham to announce Isaac’s birth in Genesis 18, and all three looked like men. “The Lord appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre. ... Three men stood by him: and ... he ran to meet them, ... and bowed himself toward the ground,” Gen. 18:1-2. After Abraham received the promise regarding Isaac, the two angels went on to Sodom, but the angel of the LORD stayed to talk with Abraham. “The men ... went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before the Lord. ... And there came two angels to Sodom at even,” Gen. 19:1.

The angel of the Lord, was not an angel, “he took not on him the nature of angels,” Heb. 2:16 (though this verse is translated as “not to angels, doth he give help,” in the ASV and other versions). But the angel of the LORD was angel-like, thus his title. He spoke to Hagar again in Genesis 21, and to Abraham again in Genesis 22. “The angel of the LORD called unto him [Abraham] out of heaven, and said, ... Lay not thine hand upon the lad [Isaac]. ... In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed,” Gen. 22:11-18.

Jacob wrestled with the angel of the LORD in Genesis 32 before meeting Esau, and he is described as a man. “There wrestled a man with him [Jacob] until the breaking of the day. ... And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel, ... and he blessed him there. And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face

to face, and my life is preserved,” Gen. 32:24-30. Hosea confirms the man Jacob wrestled with was the angel of the LORD. “He took his brother by the heel in the womb, and by his strength he had power with God: Yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed,” Hos. 12:3-4.

The angel of the LORD usually shines in bright glory. Apparently, he veiled his glory when he appeared to Abraham and when he wrestled with Jacob, but not when he appeared to Moses in Exodus 3. “The angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. ... God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, I am the God of thy father[s]. ... And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God. And the Lord said, ... I am come down to deliver them [the Israelites] out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them ... unto the place of the Canaanites. ... Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I Am [Jesus, per John 8:58] hath sent me unto you,” Ex. 3:2-4:26.

The word “glory” in 1611 English usually meant “brightness.” Webster’s 1828 dictionary defines glory as “1. Brightness; luster; splendor,” and luster as “1. Brightness; splendor; ... as the luster of the sun or stars,” and splendor as “1. Great brightness; brilliant luster; as the splendor of the sun.” Thus, the KJV says “there is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory,” 1 Cor. 15:41. Paul was blinded by the brightness of Jesus as he travelled to Damascus, and “could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me,” Acts 22:11.

The glory of the angel of the LORD in the bush that burned without being consumed is the shekinah glory. And as He promised to “bring them ... unto the place of

the Canaanites,” he personally did exactly that. “The Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light,” Ex. 13:21. The brightness of the angel of the LORD in the shekinah glory cloud only made the cloud bright during the day, but shone through the cloud like fire after dark. Notice that the angel of the LORD was in the cloud. “The angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them,” Ex. 14:19.

The angel of the LORD in the cloud continued to lead Israel during their forty years of wilderness wandering until He brought them to Canaan. “Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in him. But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries. For mine Angel shall go before thee, and bring thee in unto the Amorites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, ...,” Ex. 23:20-23.

Once the angel of the LORD brought them safely to Canaan, he no longer led them daily in the cloud, but he appeared with his glory hidden to Joshua to begin the conquest. “The manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land. ... And ... Joshua ... lifted up his eyes and ... there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand. ... And he said, ... as captain of the host of the Lord am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship. ... And the captain of the Lord's host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy,” Joshua 5:12-15.

Ezekiel gives us more details about the composition of the shekinah glory. The shekinah glory has “the appearance of a man,” (Ez. 1:26) who shines bright like the “appearance of fire,” (Ez. 1:27), in it, accompanied by four brightly shining Cherubim. “A whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it. ... Also, out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures. ... Every one had four faces, and every one had four wings. ... Their appearance was like burning coals of fire, ... and the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning. ... As for their rings, they were so high that they were dreadful; ... the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels. ... I heard the noise of their wings, like the noise of great waters, as the voice of the Almighty, the voice of speech. ... And there was a voice from the firmament that was over their heads. ... And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, ... and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it. ... From the appearance of his loins even upward, and from the appearance of his loins even downward, I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and it had brightness round about. ... This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord,” Ez. 1:4-28.

This same shekinah was on Mount Sinai for the giving of the Law, “the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel,” (Ex. 24:17); and dwelt in the Tabernacle, “the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle,” (Ex. 40:34), until the time of Eli when, “the glory is departed from Israel: for the ark of God is taken,” (1 Sam. 4:22), and dwelt in Solomon’s Temple from the time, “the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord,” (1 Kings 8:11-12), until it reluctantly departed from the temple before the

Babylonian captivity. “The glory of the Lord went up from the cherub, and stood over the threshold of the house. ... Then the glory of the Lord departed from off the threshold of the house, and stood ... at the door of the east gate of the Lord's house. ... And the glory of the Lord went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city [the Mount of Olives],” Ez. 10:4-11:23.

Thus, the Son, the Word, the angel of the LORD, the one like a man in the shekinah glory, that was manifest in the world throughout Israel’s history, is the person of God that “became flesh,” John 1:14, at the incarnation, to manifest God in the world and redeem mankind. “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father. ... No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him,” John 1: 14-17. The shekinah glory appeared shortly after Jesus’ birth without the angel of the LORD. “the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. ... And when they were come into the house, they ... fell down, and worshipped him,” Matt. 2:9-11 (stars don’t move and then stand over one house). After the incarnation, there was no longer any “angel of the LORD,” because the Son was henceforth only manifest in the “one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,” 1 Tim. 2:5.

And Jesus currently shines brightly as John saw him after his resurrection and glorification. “His eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters, ... and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength,” Rev. 1:14-16. So both before the incarnation and

after Jesus resurrection and glorification he is, “his Son, ... the brightness of his [God’s] glory, and the express image of his person,” (Heb. 1:2-3).

It will be the glorious Jesus who will reenter the future Messianic Kingdom temple the same way he left as the angel of the LORD in the shekinah glory just before the Babylonian captivity. “I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle. ... Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations. ... And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east. ... And the Lord my God shall come. ... It shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light. ... And the Lord shall be king over all the earth,” Zech. 14:2-9. “The glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east [the Mount of Olives], and his voice was like a noise of many waters: and the earth shined with his glory. ... And the glory of the Lord came into the house by the way of the gate whose prospect is toward the east. ... And, behold, the glory of the Lord filled the house. ... And I heard him speaking unto me out of the house. ... And he said unto me, Son of man, the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever,” Ez. 43:2-7.

Jesus will be a light to the Millennial Jerusalem. And he will a light to the New Jerusalem in the eternal state. “I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem. ... The city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof,” Rev. 21:2-23.

So, we can’t have a correct understanding of the incarnation unless we know about the one who became flesh. He didn’t first become visible at the incarnation. Aquinas appears to err in this regard since he seems to consider the ministry of the Son before the incarnation to be an invisible mission. “The invisible mission was directed to the Old

Testament Fathers.”²³ Gifts “which belong to the intellect, and in respect of which we speak of the mission of the Son. Hence Augustine says (De Trin. iv, 20) that The Son is sent to anyone invisibly, whenever He is known and perceived by anyone.”²⁴ “He began to exist visibly in the world by taking our nature.”²⁵ As for the Old Testament theophanies, “They seem, however, to be like to the flame of the burning bush seen by Moses and to the column which the people followed in the desert, and to the lightning and thunder issuing forth when the law was given on the mountain. For the purpose of the bodily appearances of those things was that they might signify, and then pass away.”²⁶ But the Son’s appearances were consistently angel-like, which is the same as man-like in appearance, whether within the shekinah glory or not. And rather than occasional appearances, they were in the garden, and to Enoch, to Abraham and the fathers, to Moses and the children under the cloud, in the tabernacle until the time of Eli, and in the temple from Solomon until Ezekiel. “In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old,” Isa. 63:9.

In the same passages in which Jesus talked about how he would dwell in us, he also talked about sending the Holy Spirit to be in us. “I will pray the Father, and he shall give you ... the Spirit of truth. ... He ... shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. ... At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in

²³ Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, 1.43.7

²⁴ Ibid., 1.43.5.

²⁵ Ibid., 1.43.1

²⁶ Ibid., 1.43.7

you,” John 14:16-20. And the Holy Spirit is clearly omnipresent. “Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there,” Ps. 139:7-8. Nevertheless, in his deity, Jesus must not only be omniscient, “thou knowest all things,” (John 16:30); but also omnipresent, for “in him all things consist,” (Col. 1:17).

It was not only the Son as Jesus in his humanity that rendered obedience to and was sent by the Father, but even during the entire Old Testament history before the incarnation, the Son went where the Father sent him as the angel of the LORD. Before there was ever any question of two wills in two natures, or one will in one person, within the incarnate Son, God said, “Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice, ... for my name is in him,” Ex. 23:20-23.

Eternal Functional Subordination (EFS)

Glenn Butner asserts that “advocates of EFS run afoul of the dyothelite problem,”²⁷ and concludes that, “this ‘dyothelite problem’ leads me to conclude that EFS must be strongly opposed by evangelical systematicians in order to avoid the risk of tritheism.”²⁸ Butner is saying EFS would require wills to be part of persons instead of natures, so the Son could have his own will with which to render obedience to the Father. But that would

²⁷ D. Glenn Butner Jr., “Eternal Functional Subordination And The Problem Of The Divine Will,” Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society, 58:1 (Mar 2015), 135.

²⁸ Ibid., 132.

also require Christ to have only one will in his one person, which would mean Christ could not save our human wills since he would not have both a divine and a human will as part of his divine and human natures.

Even Wayne Grudem, who believes in EFS, says, “it seems necessary to say that Jesus had two distinct wills ... and that the wills belong to the two distinct natures of Christ,”²⁹ in order for Jesus to be fully human “for representative obedience,”³⁰ since, as Gregory Nazianzus said, “That which [Christ] has not assumed he has not healed.”³¹ Butner says “it seems that Grudem is unaware that making will a property of a hypostasis [person] jeopardizes this representative obedience.”³²

Butner also questions Robert Letham for both denying three wills in the trinity and yet also adhering to EFS.

Robert Letham is most explicit: “to speak of three wills is heterodox, implying tritheism.” Yet in the same article that Letham makes this claim, he advocates the eternal submission of the Son, defining submission as a “free action chosen willingly by the one who submits.” How the Son can willingly chose qua hypostasis to submit to the Father without suggesting that the Son has a distinct will from the Father’s will is not explained.³³

If Butner’s position is correct that EFS would require three wills in the trinity, which in turn would require one will in Christ, then EFS would indeed be unorthodox,

²⁹ Grudem, *Systematic Theology* 560.

³⁰ Ibid., 540.

³¹ Gregory of Nazianzus, “To Cledonius Against Apollinaris (Epistle 101),” in *Christology of the Later Fathers* (ed. Edward R. Hardy; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1954), 218.

³² Butner, *Eternal Functional Subordination* 137.

³³ Ibid., 138.

since the Third Council of Constantinople (A.D. 680-681) said, “From these truthful testimonies it is also demonstrated that these venerable fathers predicated in the one and the same Lord Jesus Christ two natural wills, viz.: a divine and a human.”³⁴

It might seem like an easy task to show that the Son is always in perfect submission to the Father, but Butner, like the other EFS opponents, says we can’t use any verses about the Son’s obedience after his incarnation and before his return to heaven because that obedience occurred in his human nature only.

Many of the scriptural passages that speak of the Son submitting to or obeying the Father or doing the will of his Father can be interpreted as referring to his obedience qua humanity (John 4:34; 6:38; 8:28-29; etc.). While the Son was incarnate, he obeyed the Father’s will as a human being. Both sides of the debate are in agreement on this. Wayne Grudem claims that “at least 31 verses teach the authority of the Father and the submission of the Son prior to Christ’s earthly ministry and after he returned to heaven.”³⁵

We may have conceded this point too easily.

My Father worketh hitherto, and I work [in my divine nature]. ... [He] said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God [in his divine nature]. ... The Son can do nothing of himself [in his divine nature], but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise [in his divine nature]. For the Father loveth the Son [in his divine nature], and sheweth him all things that himself doeth [in his divine nature]: and he will shew him greater works than these [in his divine nature?]. ...For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will [in his divine nature]. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son [in his divine nature?]: That all men should honour the Son [in his divine nature], even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him [in his HUMAN nature]. ... He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me [in my HUMAN nature], hath everlasting life, and shall not come into

³⁴ Third Council of Constantinople (A.D. 680-681).

³⁵ Butner, Eternal Functional Subordination 143.

condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. ... The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God [in my divine nature]: and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself [in his divine nature]; And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man [in his HUMAN nature?]. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice. ... I can of mine own self do nothing [in my divine nature]: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will [in my HUMAN nature], but the will of the Father which hath sent me. ... Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you [in his divine nature?]: for him hath God the Father sealed [in his person]. ... This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent. ... My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven [in his HUMAN nature?], and giveth life unto the world [in his divine nature?]. ... I am the bread of life [in his divine nature?]: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. ... For I came down from heaven [in my HUMAN nature], not to do mine own will [in my HUMAN nature], but the will of him that sent me [in my HUMAN nature]. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me [in my HUMAN nature], that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing [in my divine nature], but should raise it up again at the last day [via my divine nature]. And this is the will of him that sent me [in my HUMAN nature], that every one which seeth the Son [in my HUMAN nature], and believeth on him [in his person], may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up [via my divine nature?] at the last day. ... No man can come to me [in my person], except the Father which hath sent me [in my HUMAN nature] draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day [via my divine nature]. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me [in my person]. Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God [in his divine nature], he hath seen the Father [in his divine nature]. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me [in my person] hath everlasting life. I am that bread of life [in my divine nature]. ... This is the bread which cometh down from heaven [in his divine nature], that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven [in my divine nature]: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever [via my divine nature]: and the bread that I will give is my flesh [in my HUMAN nature], which I will give [in my HUMAN nature] for the life of the world. ... Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man [in his HUMAN nature], and drink his blood [in his HUMAN nature], ye have no life in you [via his divine nature]. Whoso eateth my flesh [in my HUMAN nature], and drinketh my blood [in my HUMAN nature], hath eternal life [via my divine nature]; and I will raise him up at the last day [via my divine nature]. For my flesh is meat indeed [in my HUMAN nature], and my blood is drink indeed [in my HUMAN nature]. He that eateth my flesh [in my HUMAN nature], and drinketh my blood [in my HUMAN nature], dwelleth

in me [in my divine nature], and I in him [via my divine nature]. As the living Father hath sent me [in my HUMAN nature], and I live by the Father [in my divine nature]: so he that eateth me [in my HUMAN nature], even he shall live by me [via my divine nature]. This is that bread which came down from heaven [in my HUMAN nature?]: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread [in my HUMAN nature] shall live for ever [via my divine nature]. ... What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? ... The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life [via my divine nature]. ... No man can come unto me [in my person], except it were given unto him of my Father. ... Then Simon Peter answered him, ... thou hast the words of eternal life [via your divine nature]. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ [in your person], the Son of the living God [in your divine nature]. If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true. There is another that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true. ... I receive not testimony from man. ... But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me [in my divine nature?] to finish, the same works that I do [via my divine nature?], bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me [in my HUMAN nature]. And the Father himself, which hath sent me [in my HUMAN nature], hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape. And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent [in his HUMAN nature], him ye believe not [in his person]. John 5:17-6:69.

What an unintelligible discourse! How potentially misleading at every step! Now it's not impossible that God would give us such a mixture as an exercise for us to learn about the God-man, but it seems God could have communicated Aquinas' essence/person doctrines more intelligibly if he had given us the writings of Thomas Aquinas as scripture instead. While there are some scriptures that clearly speak of Christ's divinity, "before Abraham was, I am," (John 8:58); and some that clearly speak of his humanity, "I thirst," (John 19:28); if the Son does not hear, go, and obey his Father in both his divine and human nature, we don't have a Bible that common, humble believers can hide in their hearts, meditate on, and flourish thereby; and it might not produce much fruit in theologians either.

Aquinas also apparently didn't believe in EFS, since he says eternal Sonship did not involve the Father commanding or the Son obeying. "Mission implies inferiority in the one sent, when it means procession from the sender as principle, by command or counsel; forasmuch as the one commanding is the greater. ... In God, however, it means only procession of origin, which is according to equality."³⁶

If theology proper is one of the most important parts of theology; and if meditating on God is an important means of spiritual growth, then these revelations Christ gave us in the gospel of John regarding the relationship between himself and the Father are some of the most important revelations of all scripture, because they give us insight into the inner life of God, and have colossal practical implications metaphysically, socially, and personally in every area of life. But if they tell us only how the Father and the Son related temporarily during the years of the redemptive mission, then we are left with nothing about the trinity itself but the philosophical speculations of Aquinas and his description of the distinction of the persons as consisting of nothing but pure relational origin, as mentioned above.

As was shown at the beginning of this paper, the body of man has some capacity to will even though the soul is the primary domain of willing in man; and the eternal Son has some capacity to will even though the Father is the primary domain of willing in the trinity. So, it is not necessary for there to be three wills in the trinity for the Son to render eternal obedience to the Father. Also, as Michael Bird points out, "the Reformed tradition

³⁶ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 1.43.1.

has felt no insurmountable problem in suggesting a Covenant of Redemption with its similar issues,” of the distinct persons of the trinity making decisions.³⁷

By whatever means EFS is accomplished in the Godhead, the Bible indicates EFS is accomplished within the Godhead. As Wayne Grudem quotes from Bruce Ware’s reply to Goligher and Trueman:

Notice that the Father elects us in the Son (Eph. 1:4-5), creates the world through the Son (John 1:2, 1 Cor. 8:6, Heb. 1:2), sends the Son into the world (John 3:16), and delegates judgment to the Son (Rev 2:27), while the Son after his Ascension sits at the right hand of the Father (Acts 2:32-35), receives from the Father the authority to pour forth the Holy Spirit in New Covenant fullness (Matt 28:18; Acts 2:33), makes intercession before the Father (Heb. 7:25), receives revelation from the Father to give to the church (Rev. 1:1), and will eternally be subject to the Father (1 Cor. 15:26-28). Again, not one of these relationships is ever reversed – the Son does not elect us in the Father, does not create the world through the Father, does not send the Father into the world, does not delegate judgment to the Father, nor does the Father sit at the right hand of the Son, or bring intercessory prayers to the Son, or receive revelation from the Son to give to the church, or become eternally subject to the Son. We agree that the actions of any one divine person involve the other Trinitarian persons in corresponding ways. But whenever Scripture specifies actions that occur between two or more members of the Trinity, the position of greater authority is always held by the Father, while the position of submission to that authority is always held by the Son and the Spirit. This principle is simply inviolable in Scripture.³⁸

Grudem also says:

These relationships between the Father and the Son are never reversed, not once in the entire Bible. The Son does not predestine us in the Father. The Son does not create through the Father. The Son does not send his only Father into the world. The Father does not come and obey the Son’s will.

³⁷ Michael F. Bird, The Son Really, Really Is The Son: A Response To Kevin Giles, *Trinity Journal* 30:2 (Fall 2009) 263.

³⁸ Wayne Grudem, “Whose Position on the Trinity is Really New?”, June 9, 2016, <http://cbmw.org/public-square/whose-position-on-the-trinity-is-really-new>.

The Father does not sit at the Son's right hand. The Father does not pray to the Son or intercede for his people before the Son. The Father does not, at "the end" of the age, subject himself to the Son. If the "temporary submission" view is correct, we would expect to see at least some variety, some reversal in these relationships. But there is none.³⁹

Servants have the same nature as their masters, so servants only need to obey their masters as long as they're servants; but someday they might become a master, and their master might become their servant. "Art thou called being a servant? Care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather," 1 Cor. 7:21. But, though Adam and Eve were both created equal and perfect, Eve was created with a female nature fitting to her helping role, so it can never be appropriate for men and women to switch roles.

In the Messianic Kingdom, David, the King of Israel (under Yeshua, the King of Kings) is male, "they shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them," Jer. 30:9. And the rulers of each tribe will be male. "In the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye [the twelve apostles] also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel," Matt. 19:28. And all the priests and Levites will be male, "This gate shall be shut ... because the Lord, the God of Israel, hath entered in by it. ... The priests the Levites, the sons of Zadok, ... shall come near to me to minister unto me, ... and they shall keep my charge," Ezek. 44:2-16.

³⁹ Wayne Grudem, "Biblical Evidence for the Eternal Submission of the Son to the Father," in *The New Evangelical Subordinationism?* edited by Dennis W. Jowers and H. Wayne House (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2012), 26.

As Eve's being taken from man fit her to her role, so the Son's being begotten from the Father fits him to his role. For creatures, their existence is in their persons, which are instantiated from their (class definition) natures, but orthodoxy says that God's existence is in his (class definition) nature itself. Could there be a difference in the nature of the Father and the Son to fit them to their roles, or is the difference in their persons as orthodoxy says? Can there be three perfect, though different, natures of God the same way Adam and Eve are based on two perfect but different natures of man? Is there a way three persons could each be instantiated in one God, like the three parts of man are instantiated as instantiated objects inside one man, while still avoiding tritheism? Isn't a single instantiation of God's nature, shared by the three persons, modalism? Michael Bird does not believe there is any difference in the nature of the Father and the Son but he does say, "There is something "fitting," and thus revelatory about the relationship between the Father and the Son, in the sending of the Son."⁴⁰

The Goodness of Subordination

The problem with egalitarians' opposition to the idea of EFS in the Godhead is that it implies subordination and submission are not good in themselves, and thus are not something Christians should strive to perfect in themselves. If God made women especially suited by nature to a spiritual ministry of submission, then it's a huge disservice to them to insist their God-created nature and urges are demeaning and not of value. But

⁴⁰ Michael F. Bird, "The Son Really, Really Is The Son: A Response To Kevin Giles," Trinity Journal 30:2 (Fall 2009), 261.

egalitarianism causes more problems than assailing the ministry of submission for women. Devaluing submission means that neither men nor women will seek to cultivate the virtue of humility, obedience, and submission to others in their lives.

Those who devalue submission eagerly await the time when human authority structures will be no more and all people will co-exist in one big egalitarian, structure-less plain. But this is not only a harmful philosophy based on the natural rights of Locke and the natural laws of the Stoics, but also a false hope. Gilbert Bilezikian says:

At the very end, when Christ's self-subjection will have achieved its redemptive purpose and as he is universally acclaimed as Lord, his reintegration to supreme preeminence will also bring glory to God the Father (Phil 2:11). ... Because there was no order of subordination within the Trinity prior to the Second Person's incarnation, there will remain no such thing after its completion. If we must talk of subordination it is only a functional or economic subordination that pertains exclusively to Christ's role in relation to human history. Christ's kenosis affected neither his essence nor his status in eternity.⁴¹

Does Bilezikian believe Christ will become un-incarnate after the completion of the redemptive mission? Revelation calls the Son the Lamb twenty-seven times, five times of which are in the last two chapters regarding the eternal state, whereas he is only called the Son of God once in the book. The incarnation will not be undone. It has forever altered the Son who will be forever praised in his 'new' role as the Lamb, though he was "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," Rev. 13:8.

⁴¹ Gilbert Bilezikian. "Hermeneutical Bungee-Jumping: Subordination In The Godhead." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 40, no. 1 (Mar 1997), 60.

From the first four chapters of the Bible and the moment God created Eve as “a help,” (Gen. 2:18), and the first time a man was born under the authority of his parents as Eve exclaimed, “I have gotten a man from the Lord!” (Gen. 4:1); until the time of the eternal state in the last two chapters of the Bible, when the “new Jerusalem, [will come] down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband,” (Rev. 21:2), and not as a husband adorned for his bride; men always have and always will continue to live in a world of God-ordained, non-egalitarian, vertical, human authority relationships. There will continue to be “nations … and … kings of the earth,” (Rev. 21:24) in the eternal state. Not only will “his servants shall serve him,” (Rev. 22:3), but also “they shall reign for ever and ever,” (Rev. 22:6), which also means some will be reigned over. Jesus said, “my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be,” (Rev. 22:12), when he says, “Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities,” (Luke 19:17).

Man’s labor and woman’s submission began at creation, not at the fall. “God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. … I will make him an help meet for him,” Gen.2:15-18. What happened at the fall is that man’s labor and woman’s submission became grievous. “Unto the woman he said, … thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. … And unto Adam he said, … In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread,” Gen. 3:16-19. And in the future, God is not going to fix the problems with authority structures that began at the fall by removing the authority structures he created, but by removing the grievousness that entered into them when sin entered at the fall.

When there was “strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest,” (Luke 22:24), Jesus didn’t say, “Ok, we’re not going to have any authority structures anymore. That will solve the problem.” He said, “The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, … but he that is greatest [he’s still greatest] among you, let him be **as** the younger; and he that is chief [he’s still chief], **as** he that doth serve,” (Luke 22:25-26). And he didn’t say, “I’ll no longer be your lord. We’ll all have equality.” He said, “whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? Is not he that sitteth at meat? But I am [while still greater] among you **as** he that serveth,” (Luke 22:27). He didn’t say, “We won’t have any authority structures in the Messianic Kingdom.” He said, “ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel,” (Luke 22:30), but he taught them to rule lovingly.

Yes, Paul did say we should all be “submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God,” (Eph. 5:21), but only in ways that are appropriate for each office. Those under authority are to submit by submitting and not choosing their own will; and those in authority are to submit by loving and not choosing their own welfare. “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord … as the church is subject unto Christ. … Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.” Eph. 5:22-25. It would be just as wrong for a husband to submit to his wife by obeying her, as it would be for Christ to submit to the church by obeying the church. “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, … and, ye fathers, … bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord,” Eph. 6:1-4. It would be just as wrong for fathers to submit to their children by obeying them as it would be for Christ to submit to the church by obeying the church. “Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to

the flesh ... as unto Christ, ... and ye masters, ... [forbear] threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven," Eph. 6:5-9. It would be just as wrong for masters to submit to their servants by obeying them as it would be for Christ to submit to the church by obeying the church. Everyone submits by giving up his own welfare in love for the sake of the other, but only in the ways appropriate for each office.

Every epistle of the New Testament except 2 John addresses this topic, exalting humility, submission, and obedience as virtues to be pursued in regards to human authority structures; and condemning pride, rebellion, dissatisfaction, and murmuring.

Rom. 13:1-7. Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. ... For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. ... Wherefore ye must needs be subject. ... For this cause pay ye tribute also. ... Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.

1 Cor. 7:21, 11:3-16; 12:28; 14:34. Art thou called being a servant? Care not for it. ... The head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God. For this cause ought the woman to have power [authority] on her head. ... But if any man seem to be contentious [power hungry], we have no such custom [as contentiousness]. ... And God hath set some in the church, first apostles. ... Women ... are commanded to be under obedience.

2 Cor. 7:14-15. Titus ... remembereth the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling ye received him.

Gal. 5:19-23. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, ... strife, ... envyings, ... but the fruit of the Spirit is ... meekness.

Eph. 5:22-6:5. Wives, submit. ... Children, obey. ... Servants, be obedient.

Phil. 2:5-8. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who ... took upon him the form of a servant, and ... humbled himself, and became obedient unto death.

Col. 3:12-22. Put on ... humbleness of mind, meekness. ... Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands. ... Children, obey your parents in all things. ... Servants, obey in all things your masters.

1 Thes. 5:12. Know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord.

2 Thes. 2:2 [AMPC]. For the mystery of lawlessness (that hidden principle of rebellion against constituted authority) is already at work in the world.”

1 Tim. 2:1-12; 3:2-12; 5:17, 6:1. I exhort therefore that ... prayers ... be made ... for kings, and for all that are in authority. ... Let the woman learn ... with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man. ... A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, ... one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God? ... Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. ... Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour. ... Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed.

2 Tim. 3:1-4. In the last days perilous times shall come, for men shall be lovers of their own selves, ... proud, ... disobedient to parents, ... heady, highminded.

Titus 1:5-6; 2:4-9; 3:1-3. Ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee, if any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children. ... Teach the young women to be ... obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed. ... Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters. ... Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, ... shewing all meekness unto all men. For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived.”

Phil. 1:10-19, “I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, ... whom I would have retained with me, ... but without thy mind would I do nothing. ... For perhaps ... thou shouldest receive him for ever ... above a servant, a brother beloved. ... If he ... oweth thee ought, put that on mine account. ... I will repay it.

Heb. 13:7-17. Remember them which have the rule over you. ... Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves.”

James 4:6-10, “God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. ... Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord.

1 Pet. 2:13-18; 3:1-6; 5:5-6. Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme, or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him ... that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. ... Honour the king. Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. ... Wives, be in subjection to your own husbands In the old time

the holy women also [were] in subjection unto their own husbands, even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. ... Ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. ... Be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God.

2 Pet. 2:10-12. Them that ... despise government, presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord. But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not.

1 John 2:1, 16-17. My little children, ... the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever, little children.

3 John 1:9. I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not.

Jude 1:9-16. Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil ... durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee. But these speak evil of those things which they know not, ... as brute beasts. ... These are murmurers, complainers, ... their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration.

Rev. 21:2-24. I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ... And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. ... And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.

When it comes to authority structures, the Bible's point of view is, "Art thou called being a servant? Care not for it," (1 Cor. 7:21). We can serve God equally well in any position we are in if we, "Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you," (1 Thes. 5:16-18).

We should have an appreciation of the goodness of submission and of authority structures even within the trinity itself. And this should lead us to learn to foster the virtue

of submission in ourselves; like Yeshua, who, “though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered,” (Heb. 5:8).

Unity can never be accomplished by the replacement of authority structures with a featureless homogeneity of egalitarianism, but only by perfect loving and perfect submission within the inequality of authority structures. “The Father loveth the Son,” (John 5:20); and the Son seeks “not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.” (John 5:30). This is the only way to the most perfect oneness and harmony of “the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father,” (John 1:18).

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