

## THE PROBLEM WITH HIERARCHY: ORDERED RELATIONS IN GOD AND MAN

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For nearly two millennia, Christians grew up in families headed by fathers, attended churches headed by priests, and lived in countries ruled by kings. Experience taught them most of what they needed to know about fatherhood, priesthood, and kingship. They understood each intuitively and needed little rational justification for the honor and obedience they owed to each.

Today, however, more and more people are growing up in families without fathers, in countries without kings, and in no church at all. They know fathers, priests, and kings only through images in the major media, images often distorted by a popular prejudice against authority figures, a prejudice expressive of the modern world's worship of individual autonomy, social equality, political democracy, and moral relativism.

Prevailing conditions present a special challenge to the Orthodox Church. We worship God as Father, Master, Lord, and King and still preserve a more or less traditional understanding of fatherhood, priesthood, and kingship, but it is becoming increasingly difficult to explain the Orthodox understanding of properly ordered relations to both believers and unbelievers, whose perceptions are unavoidably influenced by the world's anti-authoritarian prejudice. Some heterodox communions have tried to accommodate the Christian Gospel to today's anti-authoritarian audience by "re-imagining" the Christian God, replacing *Father*, *Master*, *Lord*, and *King* with less offensive forms of address while also radically revising their teaching on relations between husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants, rulers and their people. The Orthodox cannot so easily turn their backs on two thousand years of holy tradition. They must therefore offer a

better explanation of interpersonal relations so as to remove the stigma of tyranny from ordered relations and enable both believers and unbelievers to distinguish fallen forms of order from the divine ideal.

The following will attempt an explanation by contrasting the concept of *hierarchy*, commonly understood as involving inequality and subordination, with a new concept called *archy*, understood herein as a relation involving equality, unity, intimacy, and order based on *archē* or "sourceness." Relations within the Trinity are herein described as *archival* and not *hierarchical*. Relations within man are described as fundamentally archival, in the image of God, but also hierarchical on account of the fall. Accordingly, the distinction of gender is explained as naturally archival and only economically hierarchical. The basic concept of *archē* is also contrasted with the concept of *kratos*, defined herein as the use of force. *Archē* and *kratos* are furthermore distinguished from the more familiar Latin concepts of *auctoritas* and *potestas*. They are also seen as represented in the Byzantine duality of church and state as well as in the dual role of Christ as Archpriest and Pantocrator.

### *The Problem with "Hierarchy"*

At present, the Church's own dialectic of interpersonal relations is not well suited to distinguish fallen forms of order from the divine ideal. It lacks the terms and concepts to distinguish good order from bad order and has in fact contributed significantly to the current confusion through its own ambiguous social and political teaching. On one hand, the Church has taught that "whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all" (Mk 10:44, cf. Mk 9:35) and that in Christ "there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male and female" (Gal 3:28). On the other hand, the Church has largely taken subordination for granted, based its own ecclesiastical order on the concept of hierarchy, which is at odds with the concept of equality, and left many other relevant relational concepts largely undefined (e.g., power, authority, subordination, submission, subjection, dominion, domination, autocracy, democracy).

Arguments based on current terms and concepts often end up forcing the participants to choose between unordered equality and unequal subordination. Witness the January 2007 meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, where “complementarians” debated “egalitarians” over the issue of gender and its relation to the Trinity. The complementarians argued that the woman is subject to the man as the Son is subject to the Father; the egalitarians argued for the absolute equality of the man and the woman, based on the absolute equality of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

A similar dilemma appeared recently within the Orthodox Church in America (OCA). Faced with allegations of wrongdoing, some hierarchs used their prerogatives of rank to avoid scrutiny and suppress criticism, in the view that the Church is a hierarchical institution in which bishops are accountable to Christ, to each other, and to other Orthodox Churches, but not to their own clergy or laity. Critics of the same hierarchs disagreed and peppered their criticisms with complaints about clericalism, imperialism, autocracy, hierarchy, authority, and power. To soften hearts, then-Bishop Jonah Paffhausen of Fort Worth, speaking on the Synod’s behalf at the 2008 All American Council, felt it necessary to explain the meaning of authority, hierarchy, obedience, and leadership. “Authority is responsibility. Authority is accountability, it is not power,” he said. “Hierarchy is only about responsibility. It’s not all this imperial nonsense.” He also spoke of “leadership within,” based upon the principle of synergy or cooperation, which he said is essential to Orthodox theology, soteriology, Christology, and ecclesiology.

The conflict itself and Metropolitan Jonah’s discussion of it should alert us to a critical weakness in the Church’s teaching on interpersonal relations—in the doctrine itself, in the communication of that doctrine, or in both. This is a great shame, since Christianity, of all the world’s religions, should be *best* able to offer an explanation of interpersonal relations. After all, interpersonal relations are the very basis of our unique theology of one God in three Persons. Interpersonal relations are also the basis of our anthropology of

man's complete creation as man and woman, *ish* and *isha*; yet on that subject, as on other socio-political subjects, the Church all too often stumbles along with the rest of the world, unable to say exactly what it believes without being misunderstood both within and without the Church.

Much of the problem lies with the words we use to speak of interpersonal relations. Hardly any come with discrete definitions that allow for rational discussion by opposing sides without considerable misunderstanding. Some are so well worn—after five centuries of passionate argument—that they are nearly useless. *Authority* is one such word. It might entail responsibility and accountability, as Metropolitan Jonah says, or it might mean simply power, or the right to use power, or a fraudulent excuse for using power. Many modern Westerners are viscerally frightened by “authority.” Should they be? Some would say yes, others would say no, and the yes’s and the no’s might not agree among themselves on what authority is.

When the language is the problem, we must change our language to communicate. When old words won’t work, new words are needed. New words and definitions can make possible a new dialectic that better explains relations within the Trinity as well as relations between human persons at different stages in man’s relation to God (created, fallen, and glorified). They can also challenge us to rethink our understanding of several familiar concepts, especially the concept of hierarchy. Since its appearance in the sixth century, *hierarchy* has tended more to obscure than to illumine a proper Christian anthropology. In recent years, it has also tended more to obscure than to illumine a proper Christian theology, as evidenced in the personalist philosophy of John Zizioulas, Metropolitan of Pergamon.

In *Being as Communion* and *Communion and Otherness*, Zizioulas posits a hierarchical order within the Trinity, based on the Father’s “willing” generation of the Son and the Son’s mediating role in the procession of the Spirit.<sup>1</sup> Zizioulas grants that the Divine Persons

1 John D. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion* (Crestwood, NY: SVS Press, 1985) and *Communion and Otherness* (London: T&T Clark, 2006). On the Father as the “will-

are all equal on account of sharing the same *ousia*, but the Father is nevertheless greater than the Son and Holy Spirit ontologically on account of being the personal source of both.<sup>2</sup> He writes:

There is always in this otherness a "greater" one (Jn 14:28), not morally and functionally but ontologically. Otherness is, by definition, "hierarchical," since it involves absolute specificity emerging not from qualities—as is the way with natural otherness—but from the gift of love as being and being other: we are not "other" by ourselves but by someone else, who in this way is "higher," that is, ontologically "prior" to us, the giver of our otherness.<sup>3</sup>

Zizioulas thus characterizes relations within the Trinity as "a-symmetrical." He argues that this "a-symmetry" is not incompatible with equality, that it is the very cause of personal identity, and that all personal relations are ontologically asymmetrical and thus hierarchical, "since persons are never self-existent or self-explicable, but in some sense 'caused' by some 'other,' by a 'giver' who is ontologically 'prior' and, in this sense, 'greater' than the recipient."<sup>4</sup>

Unfortunately, Zizioulas does not go much further in defining the terms *a-symmetrical* and *hierarchical*, and elsewhere he gives plain evidence of more openness to subordinationism than is usual among the Orthodox. Two decades ago, in *Being as Communion*,

ing one" within the Trinity, see *Communion and Otherness*, 121. On the Son's mediating role, see *Communion and Otherness*, 73.

- 2 In both works, Zizioulas stresses the priority of the person over the essence, *hypostasis* over *ousia*. He writes that Augustine of Hippo and his successors in the Christian West erred in seeking the source of divine unity in the shared *ousia* of God, whereas the Greek fathers rightly located the source of unity in the *hypostasis* of the Father. He writes, "The personal existence of God (the Father) constitutes His substance, makes it hypostases [*sic*]. The being of God is identified with the person." See *Being as Communion*, 40–41, also *Communion and Otherness*, 5, 139–40.
- 3 *Communion and Otherness*, 143.
- 4 *Communion and Otherness*, 144. Fr John Behr also notes a "fundamental asymmetry" to relations between the Persons of the Trinity "based on the derivation of the Son and the Spirit from the Father"; he does not, however, describe said relations as "hierarchical," even while stressing the monarchy of the Father. See *The Nicene Faith*, Part 2 (Crestwood, NY: SVS Press, 2004), 348.

he wrote of "a kind of subordination of the Son to the Father."<sup>5</sup> In *Communion and Otherness*, published in 2006, he avoids the troublesome word *subordination*, yet writes: "It *may* be going too far to project Jesus' obedience to an eternal obedience of the Son to the Father, but I would certainly agree with [Colin E.] Gunton in seeing, behind Jesus' obedience to the Father, the eternal response of the Son to the Father's love"<sup>6</sup> (emphasis added). Zizioulas is also more willing than most Orthodox to accept the West's addition of the *filioque* to the Creed, provided that the addition is understood hypostatically and not ontologically (i.e., the Spirit gets its being from the Father, whatever role the Son plays).<sup>7</sup>

There is much else in Zizioulas's "Patro-centric" (patriarchal?) personalism that the Orthodox might argue over. On several points, he dares to say what his favorite patristic authorities did not. The Cappadocians labored to uphold the unity and equality of the Trinity and denied every sense of subordination. The fifth- or sixth-century writer known as Dionysius the Areopagite, who is credited with having introduced the word *hierarchy*, upheld the oneness of God and never ascribed hierarchy to the Trinity. St Maximus the Confessor argued against the monothelites that the will belongs to a being's nature, whereas Zizioulas seems rather to assign the will to the person, as it is, he says, the person of the Father that wills into existence not only creation but also the Son and the Holy Spirit.<sup>8</sup>

5 *Being as Communion*, 89.

6 *Communion and Otherness*, 138. *Communion and Otherness* is also dedicated to Gunton, Zizioulas's colleague at King's College, London.

7 Citing St Maximus the Confessor, *Letter to Marinus* (PG 91, 136A-C), on the inadequacy of Latin in expressing crucial distinctions in Greek, Zizioulas writes, "This confusion of vocabulary was regarded already by St Maximus the Confessor as sufficient reason for dispelling all suspicions of heresy that the Byzantines had against the Romans concerning the *Filioque*." *Communion and Otherness*, 199–201. See also 73, 193, 205.

8 Zizioulas writes that St Gregory the Theologian's comment in his *Second Oration on Pascha* (PG 36, 660C) that all creation exists at the "good pleasure" or approval (*eudokia*) of the Father "should not be limited to the Economy; it relates also to the way the immanent Trinity exists. Although, therefore, the Son, as Athanasius insisted, is not born out of the will of God, as is the case with creation, he nevertheless is not generated unwillingly, and this because he is born 'of the Father' who, as a person and

Among other points, the Orthodox have emphatically refused and often plainly denied the addition of the *filioque*.

The specific fault at issue here, however, is Zizioulas's high regard for hierarchy. Zizioulas himself laments that the word *hierarchy* "has acquired a pejorative sense in our modern minds," but even its ancient sense is at odds with Zizioulas's usage, and neither the word's ancient sense nor its common modern sense supports Zizioulas' claim that "Otherness is, by definition, 'hierarchical.'"<sup>9</sup> The same problem appears in virtually all discussions of interpersonal relations, especially discussions of relations within the Trinity and between the man and the woman. On the one hand, we have the word *equality* and the rather straightforward concept it seems to represent; on the other hand, we have an assortment of words generally understood as entailing inequality: *hierarchy*, *domination*, *subordination*, *subjection*, *submission*, *subjugation*, *superiority*, *inferiority*, *headship*, *lordship*, etc. None of these words has been discretely defined philosophically or theologically. All are merely borrowed from common usage and applied according to convenience. The result in both politics and religion has been confusion, conflict, and error. For centuries, men have argued with each other without quite knowing what they are arguing about. Today, however, such arguments have reached such an extreme that the need for conceptual clarity and terminology precision can no longer be ignored.

I have dealt with the need for clarity in the political realm in a recent work of political theory, *Eight Ways to Run the Country*, which uses pre-modern Christian political concepts to explain differences between modern political perspectives.<sup>10</sup> Here those same concepts shall be applied to patristic teaching on God and man, carrying those concepts forward, step by step, to a fuller view of divine and human relations consistent with Christian scripture

not substance, is the 'willing one.'" *Communion and Otherness*, 121. See also *Being as Communion*, 44, where Zizioulas writes that "the Father as a person freely wills this communion."

9 *Communion and Otherness*, 143.

10 Brian Patrick Mitchell, *Eight Ways to Run the Country: A New and Revealing Look at Left and Right* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2006).

and tradition. The result will be a basic view of ordered interpersonal relations typified by the Trinity and reflected, as an aspect of the image of God, in all healthy human relations.

### *Archē versus Kratos*

*Eight Ways to Run the Country* is based on the distinction of two fundamental concepts of political thinking: the use of force and the recognition of rank. These concepts are directly relevant to the theological problem of ordered relations, for our present political differences originated in the Reformation as theological differences that pitted Rome's implacable insistence on clerical authority against the Reformers' passionate determination to "call no man your father" (Mt 23:9). The five centuries that followed the Reformation have only compounded the confusion. To move forward, we must first turn back to pre-Reformation Christian thinking, for a fresh look at fundamental concepts.

The fundamental political fact of Christendom was the existence of the Church as an autonomous social organization, often allied with but normally independent of the political organization of the State. There were, it was said, two swords by which the Christian commonwealth was governed, "the sacred authority [*auctoritas*]" of the priesthood and the royal power [*potestas*]," as Pope Gelasius I reminded the emperor Anastasius in 494.<sup>11</sup> The key words of this so-called Two Swords Doctrine echo Cicero's distinction of the people's *potestas* and the senate's *auctoritas*, but the understanding was quite different. Cicero's understanding was closer to modern thinking: a sovereign people headed by a representative senate. In contrast, the Christian understanding identified two separate organizations with distinct responsibilities, both receiving their charge from God, one to use force, the other to unite men in right relation to God and each other.

The problem is that the familiar words relating to the distinction of church and state—*auctoritas* and *potestas*, whence *authority* and

11 Marvin Perry, et al, eds, *Sources of the Western Tradition* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1987), Vol. 1, 199–200.



power—come laden with both modern prejudices and Roman preconceptions that it is best to avoid. They have been argued over too much to be of use to us. We need new terms for what will be a new way of thinking, but new terms grounded in Christian tradition.

Instead of *potestas*, let us speak of *kratos*. The basic sense of the Greek word *kratos* is force. The word comes from the same Indo-European root as the English word *hard*. (The Ionic and Epic form of *kratos* is *kartos*.) *Kratos* starts out as bodily strength or hardiness and thus becomes strength, might, power, sovereignty, dominion, authority, or rule. In Modern Greek, *to kratos* means “the state.”

Instead of *auctoritas*, let us speak of *archē*. The basic sense of *archē* is that of beginning. The word can thus also mean origin, source, or principle, and sometimes—by extension to politics—sovereignty, dominion, authority, rule, or power. That which begins also in some sense governs. It sets the course, it determines the direction, it establishes the rule for things to follow.

Among the ancient Greeks, these two words, *archē* and *kratos*, were often synonymous. Discussion of monarchy, oligarchy, democracy, and aristocracy turned not on the difference of *archē* and *kratos*, but on the difference of the one, the few, the people, and the best. But to the Byzantines, *archē* and *kratos* also suggested a difference of rank and force. In Constantinople, the factions or *dēmoi* known as the Blues and the Greens were each headed by a civil leader called a *dēmarchos* (responsible for public works) and a military leader called a *dēmokratōr* (responsible for civil defense). At a higher level, the Church was headed by a *patriarchos* and the empire by an *autokratōr*. At the highest level, the two concepts of *archē* and *kratos* were united in one person, Jesus Christ, Archpriest and Pantocrator.

Unfortunately, many modern English uses of *archē* obscure this distinction. As commonly understood, *anarchy* means no government, *oligarchy* means corrupt government, and *monarchy* means tyrannical government, inasmuch as it is “autocratic” and not “democratic.” Modern man prefers the *kratos* of the *dēmos* to the *archē* of any single person. His pretension to enlightenment is fundamentally *an-archic*. Indeed, the modern age might well

be called the Age of Anarchy. It began five centuries ago with a religious rebellion against hierarchy, which led in time to a political rebellion against monarchy, which has culminated in our own day with a social rebellion against patriarchy. In each of these rebellions, the thing to be thrown off was not the use of force, for the rebels themselves often used force to get their way. Instead, the thing to be thrown off was a personal *archy*, according to which certain persons were obliged to follow certain other persons.

### *Archy versus Hierarchy*

The next step in our new understanding is to distinguish the basic concept of archy from the later concept of hierarchy. The key to this distinction is the mediation that hierarchy adds to archy. For the Pseudo-Dionysius, hierarchy is a "holy order" for the purification, illumination, and perfection of lower creatures by higher creatures. Hierarchy is thus based necessarily on natural, conditional, or charismatic dissimilarity and inequality. Dionysius is quite clear on this:

Each rank around God conforms more to him than the one farther away. Those closest to the true Light are more capable of receiving light and of passing it on. Do not imagine that the proximity here is physical. Rather, what I mean by nearness is the greatest possible capacity to receive God.<sup>12</sup>

The higher one's rank, the more illumination one is able to transmit to lower ranks. There is no ascension through the ranks, however. Each creature's goal is to be "lifted up to the illuminations given it from God, and correspondingly toward the imitation of God."<sup>13</sup> For Dionysius, a mediating order even exists among beings of the same nature:

For not solely in the case of higher and lower natures, but also for co-ordinate natures, this Law has been established by its superessential original Author: that within each Hierarchy

12 *Letter to Demophilus*, PG 3, 1092B. <http://www.esoteric.msu.edu/VolumeII/CelestialHierarchy.html>, accessed June 23, 2008.

13 *Celestial Hierarchy*, 3, PG 3, 164D.

there are first, middle, and last ranks and powers, and that the higher are initiators and guides of the lower to the divine approach and illumination and union.<sup>14</sup>

Dionysius defines three orders of spiritual beings participating in the celestial hierarchy, with three choirs of beings in each order. The first order consists of Seraphim, Cherubim, and Thrones; the second, of Dominions, Virtues, and Powers; the third, of Principalities, Archangels, and Angels. Likewise, he defines two orders of human beings participating in the ecclesiastical hierarchy, with three ranks in each order: a clerical order of bishops, presbyters, and deacons, and a lay order of monks, "holy people," and those in need of instruction, correction, or strengthening.<sup>15</sup>

Significantly, Dionysius does not ascribe hierarchy to the sexes, neither does he ascribe it to God. The Church in general has followed suit at least as far as God is concerned. Only very recently have some Orthodox theologians such as Zizioulas begun to speak of hierarchy in God. But Zizioulas and others use the word *hierarchy* loosely, and one might even say wrongly, when they fail to define the word in contradistinction to the word's original Christian and contemporary secular definitions. As commonly understood, a hierarchy is a ranking order of unequal entities. It is therefore difficult if not impossible to avoid the implication of inequality and subordination when applying the word *hierarchy* to interpersonal relations.

But if we cannot describe relations within the Trinity as "hierarchical" without implying the inequality and subordination of the Son to the Father or the Holy Spirit to the Son, we can describe relations within the Trinity as "archical" on account of the identification of the Father as the *archē* of both the Son and the Holy Spirit.<sup>16</sup> Even this some "social trinitarians" would deny.

14 *Celestial Hierarchy*, 4, PG 3, 181A.

15 *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, 6.1. PG 3, 532A–33A.

16 St Gregory Palamas writes: "The Father is called Father only in relation to His Son [i.e., not in relation to the Spirit]. In relation to both the Son and Spirit, He is called *archē*, even as He is called *archē* in relation to the creation. The Son is also *archē*, though they do not constitute two *archēs*, but one. For the Son is called *archē* in rela-

Reasoning from divine equality to an anarchical understanding of the Trinity that denies the Father his archic honor, they conceive of God as a divine communion of persons not only equal in nature but also unordered in relation, without rank or precedence, a conception consistent with the modern preference for anarchical relations among human persons.<sup>17</sup> But God is not a band of brothers; He is first of all "one God, the Father almighty, Maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible," "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," the "God" and "Father" to whom we address the prayers of the Anaphora, and the "Our Father" of the Lord's Prayer, who is known to us only through his Son, who is also God on account of being begotten by the Father, as is also the Spirit on account of the procession.<sup>18</sup> And these three are each free, equal, fully God, and perfectly one *not despite of but because of* their archical relation in the Father. The Son and the Spirit relate to each other through the Father, who is the principle of their very being, the origin of all that they are, and thus the impetus of their every action. All that they do begins with him; all that they say they hear first from him. "The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what he sees the Father do: for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does" (Jn 5:19–30). And, "I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I seek not My own will, but the will of the Father who sent Me" (Jn 5:30). The same applies to the Holy Spirit, "who shall not speak for himself, but whatsoever shall he hear, that shall he speak" (Jn 16:13). In sum, St John of Damascus writes, "All then that the Son and the Spirit have is from the Father, even their very being, and unless the Father is, neither the Son nor the Spirit is. And unless the Father possesses a certain attribute, neither the Son nor the Spirit possesses it."<sup>19</sup>

tion to creation" (Chapter 132; PG 150, 1213B–C). See also St John of Damascus, *Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, viii, PG 94, 820A–824B.

17 See Karen Kilby, "Perichoresis and Projection: Problems with the Social Doctrine of the Trinity," *New Blackfriars*, October 2000, 432–45.

18 See Behr, *The Nicene Faith*, Part 2, 317–18.

19 *Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, viii, PG 94, 824B.

### *Archy versus Anarchy*

In the midst of the fourth-century Eunomian controversy, the Cappadocians tried their best to avoid anything that might suggest the subordination of the Son to the Father, yet the archical order of the Holy Trinity was already well established in Christian tradition.<sup>20</sup> Let us look at just three ways in which a concrete sense of the Father's archy is communicated to us.

First, there are the divine names *Father* and *Son*, which are not of our own devising but given to us by God, as John of Damascus acknowledges.<sup>21</sup> Never mind for the moment their gender; the point here is that the terms themselves suggest a relationship that anarchistic egalitarians despise and resist by disrespecting father figures and deferring unnaturally to the young. Obsessed by the abstraction of equality, they suspect all fathers of patriarchal tyranny. Some even disown the name of "Dad" and desist from directing their own sons in the way they should go, urging them instead to choose their own path, even their own religion. If such fathers do wrong, then fatherhood must mean something more than biological begetting.

Second, there is the invariable sequence of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, which suggests a precedence or seniority even among admitted equals (Mt 28:19). There is no question of this being a precedence or seniority in time, for God created time, but there is an honor due to the Father that must be rendered before the honor due to the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Father is, as we say, the First Person of the Trinity; the Son, the Second Person; and the Holy Spirit, the Third. This is inconsistent with modern thinking, for it suggests a ranking order among persons that anarchistic egalitarians are keen to deny. Thus feminists insist on reordering the sexes, to speak of "women and men" instead of men and women, and to

20 St Gregory the Theologian famously refrained from calling the Father *archē* in his *Oration on Holy Baptism*, for fear of introducing a hierarchical inferiority into the Trinity (PG 36, 420B), but in his *Second Oration on Easter*, Gregory himself acknowledged the Father as *archēn achronon*—the "eternal principle" (PG 36, 660C).

21 *Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, viii, PG 94, 820A–B.

name the wife first and then the husband, contrary to Christian custom, so as to deny Christian conception.<sup>22</sup>

Third, there is the fact that when God acted to redeem creation by coming in the flesh, it was the Son and not the Father who "humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil 2:8). This must, of course, be understood in accordance with the Church's teaching on the one will of God and the two wills of Christ. In the Incarnation, the Son takes on a human will, with all its desires for safety, comfort, and pleasure, and it is this human will that Christ brings under obedience to the one divine will. Still, it was the Son and not the Father who took on the task of humility, submission, and obedience, and it was to the Father alone that the Son expressed this submission. The Son does not pray to the Holy Spirit, neither does he speak inclusively of "our will" but of the Father's will. In so doing, the Son acknowledges the Father as the source of the one divine will. It is the Father who shows (Jn 5:19–20, 5:30, 16:13), gives (Jn 5:22, 5:26–27, 5:36, 6:37, 17:2, 17:4), sends (Jn 5:23–24, 5:30, 5:36–37, 6:38–39, 6:44, 6:57, 12:44–45, 12:49, 17:18, 17:23, 17:25), and commands (Jn 12:49–50, 14:31, 15:10). And it is the Father to whom the Son returns (Jn 14:12, 14:28, 16:28, 17:11, 17:13, 20:17), "for the Father is greater than I" (Jn 14:28).

From the above, it is easy to see why subordinationism was such a temptation for so many centuries. Even granting all the Church has taught on the divinity of Christ, there remains the archic character of the Father confounding our modern insistence on anarchical equality. In this truer understanding, archy is the very basis of equality, for whereas hierarchy is a ranking order based on dissimilarity, inequality, and mediation, archy is a ranking order based on *sourcefulness* and characterized by similarity, equality, and intimacy between persons on account of their shared nature and

22 Commenting on the mention of "Mary and Joseph" in Lk 2:16, St Jerome writes: "If she were truly wife, it would be improper to say, they found the wife and the husband; but the Gospel named the woman first, then the man. What does Holy Writ say? 'They found Mary and Joseph': they found Mary, the mother, and Joseph, the guardian." Homily 88 on the Nativity, in *The Homilies of Saint Jerome*, Vol. 2, Marie Liguori Ewald, trans. (Washington, DC: The Catholic University Press, 1966), 224.

derivative being, one person sharing his existence with another person. Thus St Basil the Great writes,

Why is it necessary, if the Spirit is third in dignity and rank [*tō axiōmati kai tē taxei*], for him to be also third in nature? ... Just as the Son is second to the Father in rank because he derives from him ... but not second in nature, for the deity is one in each of them, so also is the Spirit.<sup>23</sup>

### Archy among Men

God would that all men live as one in the same manner as the Father and the Son, as our Lord himself prayed at the Last Supper: "that they may be one, even as we are one" (Jn 17:22). Yet if man is truly to be one as God is one, and if perfect oneness exists in God only archically, we might reasonably expect that man, made in the image and likeness of God, would come closest to such oneness in similarly archical unions.

The sin of the fall complicates the matter with a multiplicity of contentious wills and unequal conditions, making human unity all but impossible without the inequality inherent in hierarchy, the submission required by subjection, or the force inflicted by subjugation (from the Latin *jugum* meaning "yoke"). But even bad unions bear some semblance, however sullied by sin, to the archy in God. The essence of Christian fatherhood, priesthood, and kingship is first of all archical. Within families, churches, and countries, there may also exist hierarchy, subjection, and subjugation on account of the fall, but ideally and essentially, families, churches, and countries are archical unions mirroring relations within the Trinity.

Even military units are ideally and essentially archical within themselves. (I write as a veteran.) They function best when this is all that they are. They become hierarchical only when the inequalities of competence intrude. They become subjections only when men disagree and leaders are obliged to "pull rank." They become subjugations only when force must be used to restrain bad behavior. Not all units become thus degraded. Some small elite units can

23 *Contra Eunomium*, 3.1; PG 29, 653B–656A.

function merely archically, with no inequality of competence and no need to pull rank or use force. But take away their archical arrangement and they cease to be "units." To function as one, they must have one of their number to begin things, to give direction, to lead the way, to assume responsibility for the whole. That is the essence of *archē*.

Far from being the bane of our existence, archy is our salvation. Men of goodwill will readily recognize an archical arrangement among themselves and actually take great comfort from that mutual recognition, knowing that the alternatives are either (a) a competitive hierarchy headed by the able and ambitious, based ostensibly on the merit of superior qualifications but often in reality on the will to power, or (b) a contentious anarchy tending toward the dissolution of fellowship, with no one deferring to anyone else out of jealousy or fear.

The rejection of archy is what anarchy is all about. The true anarchist looks to no one as his guide. He refuses to honor priests as sources of faith, kings as sources of safety, fathers as sources of life, God as the source of everything. He views the rule of priests, kings, fathers, and God as vile tyrannies inhibiting his individuality and "authenticity." He views himself as *sui generis*, of his own beginning, without reference to any originating *archē* and therefore un beholden to any governing person or principle. This is the spirit behind the two competing passions of our age, libertine individualism and coercive egalitarianism. Both deny the moral relevance of the objective other to the subjective self. Both insist on the self as the point of origin and reference for definitions of goodness, truth, and justice, in effect replacing the first Person of the Trinity with the selfish first person—the singular "I" in the case of individualism, the plural "we" in the case of egalitarianism.

Here we see the difference between anarchism and egalitarianism, strictly speaking. An egalitarian might simply covet the comforts, honors, and privileges of others and demand the same for himself: His sin is envy. The anarchist's sin is pride: He covets most of all his personal autonomy. His heart's desire is not equality but escape—



escape from archy. He may claim equality as a means of escape, but what he really wants is to answer to no one.

In the foregoing, we have recognized the three distinct forms of subordination ordained by God for our own good. The first is the subordination of *hierarchy* based on the inequality of the various ranks of creatures in the natural and fallen world. The second is the subordination of *subjection* based on the acceptance of a lawful order whereby natural equals are obliged to submit one to another for the good of all. The third is the subordination of *subjugation* based on the use of force, whereby one creature imposes its will upon another. Submission itself also appears in three forms: (a) *deference*—between persons not related by subordination, (b) *obedience*—when subordinates submit to superordinates, and (c) *condescension*—when superordinates submit to subordinates, as when Christ changed water into wine to please the Theotokos.

Yet archy is none of these, for archy admits no inequality of nature, no imposition of will, no need for subjection, no subordination of any kind. It is an order without suborder, a *taxis* without *hypotagē*, based on shared nature, unity of will, and love for another as either one's source or one's glory, such as exists between the Father and the Son.

### *Archy Between the Sexes*

Man's imitation of the archy in God begins "in the beginning," when man is made male and female, the latter from the former. The first scriptural mention of sexual distinction appears in Gen 1:27: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." This verse could be read as a Hebrew parallelism, a poetic way of saying the same thing twice. Parallelisms abound in the Psalms, e.g., "Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sins. For I know mine iniquity, and my sin is ever before me" (Psalm 50/51). Read in such a way, Gen 1:27 would indicate a relation between the image of God and the distinction of gender. Indeed, as John Behr points out, the animals created before man are not said to be distinguished

by sex, even though they too are commanded to "be fruitful and multiply"<sup>24</sup> (Gen 1:22). Only when a creature is made in the image of God does the distinction male and female come into the picture.

Until now, however, it has been difficult to relate "image of God" to "male and female" without imputing femininity to God, which the Fathers were loathe to do. Gen 1:27 was most often taken to mean simply that man was made in the image of God *and* male and female. Augustine of Hippo, in an early anti-Manichean work, likened the man to the rational soul and the woman to the irrational body, taking the woman's subjection to the man as an illustration of the soul's rule over the body.<sup>25</sup> Similarly, St Gregory of Nyssa, in Behr's view, regarded the mention of "image of God" and "male and female" in Gen. 1:27 as a revelation of the composite nature of man, who is spiritual and rational (the image) but also material and irrational (male and female).<sup>26</sup> More commonly, Nyssa is understood as regarding the mention of male and female in Gen 1:27 as a prevenient "second fashioning," in expectation of the fall, when some form of procreation will be needed.

Now, however, having defined a new category of relation that is not strictly sexual, of which sexual distinction is but one example, we can conceive of a way to read Gen 1:27 as a true Hebrew parallelism, relating the image of God to the distinction of gender without running the risk of imputing femininity to God and thereby conjuring male and female deities. In this new understanding, gender is just the first among many kinds of archical relations, all patterned upon relations within the Trinity.

In the Genesis account of the creation and fall, the original relationship between the man and the woman resembles the archical relationship later revealed between the Persons of the Trinity. The Father is the beginning, source, and origin of the Son and Holy Spirit; the man is the beginning, source, and origin of the woman.

24 John Behr, "Marriage and asceticism," *Sobornost* 29:2 (2007): 27.

25 Augustine, *On Genesis Against the Manichees*, 2.11, in *Saint Augustine on Genesis*, Roland J. Teske, tr. (New York: Fathers of the Church, Inc., 1991), 111–12.

26 John Behr, "The Rational Animal: A Rereading of Gregory of Nyssa's *De Hominis Opificio*," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 7 (1999): 219–47.

The Father does not willfully create the Son or the Holy Spirit; the man does not willfully create the woman. The Godhead is complete in three distinct Persons; mankind is complete in two distinct sexes. The Persons of the Trinity share a common divine nature; the man and the woman share a common human nature. The Son and the Holy Spirit are "one in essence" with the Father; the woman is "bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh" (Gen 2:23). The Trinity is of one will; the man and the woman at least begin in a harmony of wills. The Son and the Holy Spirit look ever unto the Father; the woman at first looked to the man, receiving from him her own name (twice), the names of the creatures, and the commandments of God. By the Son all things were made; by the woman the human race was multiplied. The Son comes "in the glory of his Father" (Mt 16:27); the woman is the "glory of the man" (1 Cor 11:7). Early Christians honored both Christ and the Holy Spirit as the "Giver of Life"; Adam named the woman Life "because she was the mother of all living" (Gen 3:20). Yet the Father is still the source, and the man is still the seed.

The creation of the woman from the man completed the creation of the world. Procreation was not required for this completeness; it is what the man and the woman do when their archical union is complete, just as creation is what God does in the archical union of the Trinity. God was creating creatures in the image of God; He therefore created man as a loving union of archical equals, blessing the first man with a mate made from him, like him, and for him, in the sense that without such a mate mankind could not know true love, which is to say, the archical love that is within the Trinity.

Virtually every detail of the account of creation in Gen 2-3 communicates either the likeness of the sexes or their archical relation. The flesh and bone from which the woman is fashioned is taken from the man's side, not from his feet or from his head. Her name in Hebrew is taken from his: he is man (*ish*), she is woman (*isha*) (Gen 2:23). God could have sentenced the man only for eating of the tree, but he prefaces that charge with, "Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife ..." (Gen 3:17). If

every sex-specific detail of the account were deleted, there would be little left. Two whole chapters would fit into a single sentence: God created humans, gave them dominion over creation, told them not to eat of the tree, and punished them when they did. Nearly everything else about the creation, the commandments, the naming of creatures, the temptation, the transgression, and the sentencing relates to either the man or the woman, but not to both. Yet too often exegetes treat the fall as a matter of simple disobedience, a single transgression instead of a series of anarchies unraveling the order of creation.

In these acts of anarchy, the man and the woman turn away from their *archē* and act contrary to their divine ordination as male and female, thereby destroying the natural relation between them and between creation and God. It begins with the Arch-anarchist, who, entering the body of a lowly serpent, offers the woman equality with God. Why the woman? Because she fits the devil's own anarchistic view of the world, his own deceitful dialectic of domination by the Creator justifying rebellion by the creature. Thus tempted, the woman turns away from the man to follow the serpent; the man then turns away from God to follow the woman.

Some of the Fathers, under the influence of Neoplatonism, have viewed the fall as a turning away from things rational and spiritual toward things irrational and material. Eve does indeed notice that the tree is "good for food" and "pleasant to the eyes" as well as "a tree to be desired to make one wise" (Gen. 3:6), but the serpent's temptation makes use of only the last aspect. It is not Eve's bodily hunger or her desire for physical pleasure that turns her attention to the tree, but her desire for enlightenment and equality with God: "Your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil" (Gen 3:5).

### *Factoring in the Fall*

God calls them to account in their proper order but sentences them in reverse order, humbling the serpent first, then the woman, and then the man. To keep the man and the woman together, God commits

the woman to the man's charge, saying, "thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee" (Gen 3:17). In the Septuagint, the word in the place of "desire" is *apostrophē*. The verse could thus be translated, "thy turning back shall be to thy husband," suggesting that the woman's salvation requires her redirection toward her archic head, who is now ordained as her lord: "*kai auto sou kyrieusei*." Modern exegetes now commonly interpret this verse as merely a prediction of male oppression, but the clear consensus of the Fathers is that the man's rule over the woman is a matter of law. "For with us indeed the woman is reasonably subjected to the man, since equality of honor causeth contention," says St. John Chrysostom.<sup>27</sup>

This is the first of many subjections ordained by God after the fall. All no doubt are subject to abuse by fallen men, but all also provide a large measure of mercy inasmuch as they bind fallen men together for their own good. Subjection is the rope God uses to draw many-willed man back together and up to Him, as Chrysostom attests: "And from the beginning He made one sovereignty only, setting the man over the woman. But after that our race ran headlong into extreme disorder, He appointed other sovereignties also, those of Masters, and those of Governors, and this too for love's sake."<sup>28</sup> The alternative would have been to allow the man and the woman to go their separate ways, to live alone and die alone without giving life to the world. This is, as we see today, the sterile fruit of modern feminism, which so alienates men and women that they become increasingly unwilling or unable to marry and have children.

In the absence of an agreement between wills, when the archical bond has been broken, God ordains that subjection take its place to bandage up what has been torn apart, until the sinews of love have grown strong enough to hold on their own. Archy is still the *telos* toward which we strive through the loving condescension of heads and the humble obedience of bodies (Eph 5:22–33). It is not such an impossible ideal for married couples, who often achieve in their years together a largely archical relationship, based on love, trust,

27 *Homily 26 on First Corinthians*, PG 61, 215.

28 *Homily 34 on First Corinthians*, PG 61, 291.

and a life as one. In such relationships, the language of command, "Do as I say," gives way to the language of accord, "Let's do this," echoing God's own manner of speaking in Gen 1:26: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." This verse is the first hint in Scripture of the plurality of persons in the Godhead, and it comes just as God turns to making man in His own image. Only then does God speak of "us" and "our."

It is in this light that we must understand the apostolic teaching on the relations of husbands and wives. On one hand, there is an archical relation of love, expressed by the analogy of Christ as bridegroom and the Church as bride (Eph 5:25-33, cf. Gen 2:24). On the other hand, there is the subjection of the woman to the man on account of the fall (1 Tim. 2:11-14; cf. Gen 3:16). The familiar head-and-body analogy could be read both ways, as expressing either natural archy or economic subjection (1 Cor 11:3-16; Eph 5:23). Other passages (1 Cor 14:34-35, Eph 5:22-33, Col 3:18-19, 1 Tim 2:11-15, Titus 2:4-5, 1 Peter 3:1-7) refer less ambiguously to the woman's subjection. She is commanded to obey her husband, revere him as her head, remain silent in church, and cover her head when she prays as a symbol of her subjection.

A minority opinion among the Fathers regarded the distinction of gender as an unfortunate "division" occasioned by the fall but overcome by Christ, in whom "there is neither male nor female" (Gal 3:28). The leading exponent of this essentially negative view of sexual distinction was Maximus the Confessor:

God-made-man has done away with the difference and division of nature into male and female, which human nature in no way needed for generation, as some hold, and without which it would perhaps have been possible. There was no necessity for these things to have lasted forever.<sup>29</sup>

By "as some hold," he means Gregory of Nyssa, who, according to Johannes Zachhuber, borrowed his understanding of sexual

29 *Difficulty 41*, tr. Andrew Louth, *Maximus the Confessor* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 159.

distinction from Plato via Philo via Origen.<sup>30</sup> Yet this peculiar view finds little support in scripture and tradition and betrays an underlying Neoplatonic hostility to material existence, obvious in our own day in the thinking of Zizioulas, who disparages sexual reproduction as a “mechanism of death.”<sup>31</sup>

In contrast, the consensus of the Fathers supports both ordinations, the natural archy of the man and the woman and the woman’s economic subjection to the man. The Fathers did not always clearly distinguish the two ordinations. Many stood with St Irenaeus in believing that “both nature and the law place the woman in a subordinate condition to the man.”<sup>32</sup> But none among them doubted that the sexes are both equal and yet ordered in a manner the Apostle Paul likens to the Trinity: “But I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God” (1 Cor 11:3). Says Chrysostom, “For what if the wife be under subjection to us? It is as a wife, as free, as equal in honor. And the Son also, though he did become obedient to the Father, it was as the Son of God, it was as God.”<sup>33</sup>

### *Implications and Conclusion*

The foregoing sections have attempted to bring much needed conceptual clarity and terminological precision to our understanding of interpersonal relations. We have defined three distinct forms of subordination (hierarchy, subjection, and subjugation) as well as three distinct forms of submission (deference, obedience, and condescension). We have also defined a new category of relation that does not involve subordination or submission. We have identified

30 See Johannes Zachhuber, *Human Nature in Gregory of Nyssa: Philosophical Background and Theological Significance* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 169–73. See also Peter C. Bouteneff, *Beginnings: Ancient Christian Readings of the Biblical Creation Narratives* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 30–31. Behr regards this as a misreading as far as Nyssa is concerned. See “The Rational Animal.”

31 Zizioulas sees the Confessor confirmed by modern biology, which regards the death of cells as a natural part of the organism’s life-cycle, programmed into each cell at its beginning. See *Communion and Otherness* (London: T&T Clark, 2006), 58–59.

32 *Fragment 33*, PG 7, 1245C.

33 *Homily 26 on First Corinthians*, PG 61, 214–15.

this new category—archy—as the basis of natural relations within the Trinity and between the man and the woman, and we have distinguished this natural order before the fall from the economical subjection ordained after the fall. The latter has been obvious all along, in both scripture and tradition, but our familiarity with it has obscured our vision of the former, causing us to lose sight of our natural end, our intended *telos*. The two mountains have appeared to us as one; only in the light of Christ are we able to distinguish them as two, so as to map our trek through the one to the other.

This new understanding avoids many of the problems encountered by other attempts to explain the distinction of gender. Instead of projecting gender on God, it projects divinity on gender, fitting gender into the broad assortment of human relations that each in some way bear the image of God, even in their fallen state. This avoids the ascription of masculinity or femininity to the Persons of the Trinity as well as the identification of patron Persons for each gender (e.g., the Son for men, the Holy Spirit for women). The incarnate Christ certainly is masculine, consistent with the Son's archical relation to creation; He is nevertheless still the Archetype of man in both genders. He took the "form of a servant" (Phil 2:7) before the Father in becoming man; He did not take the form of a servant before men to become a woman, a slave, an invalid, or a simpleton. He came as a king and was received as such by men of faith. He behaved as a king throughout His life on earth, showing us the character of true kingship, which is first of all archical and only hierarchical and domineering on account of our sins. There is, therefore, in His humility nothing feminist or anarchical or egalitarian (in the modern anarchical sense).

Our new understanding also avoids the dueling dangers of subordinationism and anarchism. We can use what has been revealed to us about relations within the Trinity to illumine our understanding of relations in man and between men and women without projecting on God the inequality and subordination we find among all men (male and female) in the fallen world. We can



also avoid the modern, anarchical understanding of equality, based not on same nature and shared life but on a prideful refusal to honor others as we should. We can furthermore embrace a more patristic theology than Zizioulas's asymmetrical hierarchy and a much more positive anthropology than St Maximus the Confessor's unfortunate "division of nature" and Zizioulas's "mechanism of death." Finally, we can see that the Orthodox Church was right to reject the *filioque*, which necessarily implies the very inequality within the Trinity that the Church has fought hard to resist.

One practical implication of our new understanding is that more respect should be paid to teaching Christians to distinguish between economical subjection, which is divinely ordained while we are in this world, and archical relation, which is what we should all strive toward in imitation of the Archetype. This task is greatly complicated by the concept of hierarchy, which has largely subverted our understanding of archy by applying a subordinationist cosmology to the Church's originally archical ecclesiology. Our Lord taught that "whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all" (Mk 10:44, cf. Mk 9:35). He revealed to us the love of the Father for the Son, helping us to see its resemblance in the love of earthly fathers for their grown sons, for their heirs, for the men to whom they entrust their entire estates, who please their fathers by surpassing them. To each of us, Christ is lord and king, but to the Church He is the Bridegroom, her lover, companion, and friend. We are a part of His very Body, for the two (He and us) become one divine flesh in the Eucharist, just as the man and the woman become one flesh in holy matrimony. The Apostle Paul relates this great mystery of Christ and the Church to the union of husband and wife, likening both to the symbiosis of head and body (Eph 5:22-33). He furthermore likens the members of the Church to the members of the body:

And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the

body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked. That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. (1 Cor 14:23–25)

How different is the Apostle's talk of eyes, hands, and feet—of “diversities of gifts” and “differences of administrations” (1 Cor 14:4–5)—from the Areopagite's vision of higher and lower, of superiors and inferiors, of an elaborate system of subordination based upon the “threefold division of every hierarchy”<sup>34</sup>—hierarchs, presbyters, and deacons, and then monks, people, and penitents (of which the “most exalted” are the monks).<sup>35</sup> Granted, there is in the Apostle an order of precedence—“first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues” (1 Cor. 14:28)—but the emphasis is on common participation in one body and the need for humility within the order: “Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves” (Phil 2:3).

The task of esteeming others better than oneself is only made more difficult by the habit of thinking of oneself as holding a higher rank within a Dionysian hierarchy. The influence of the concept of hierarchy on Church history is worth researching. Arising out of the Neoplatonism of Proclus, the concept appears to have entered Christian thinking via the possibly monophysite pseudo-Dionysius before bishops took upon themselves the honors of emperors, before the altar was walled off from the people, before the upper ranks within the ecclesiastical order began taking things from the ranks below them: presbyters taking the preparation of the offering and the distribution of the Holy Gifts from the deacons, deacons taking the readings of Scripture from the readers, and readers and chanters taking the singing from the people.<sup>36</sup> This is precisely the opposite

34 *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, 5.1.1; PG 3, 501A.

35 *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, 6.1.3; PG 3, 532C.

36 On the origin of Dionysian hierarchy, see David Bradshaw, *Aristotle East and West: Metaphysics and the Division of Christendom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 142–52, 182–86.

of what occurs within an archy, for an archy is distinguished by the first in rank giving to and sharing with the second in rank, the husband living and dying for his wife, the father giving all that he has to his son, raising his son up in glory and honor, investing him with the same dignity so that they stand together as equals—equals not despite of their fatherhood and sonship, but because of it.

In the fallen world, we have had far too little archy and far too much hierarchy. This imbalance has inspired a devilish anarchy—rank rebelling against rank, denying even the existence of ranks or orders or distinctions and demanding an equality of sameness and indistinction and a freedom of autonomy and estrangement. To find our way back, we must recognize our double bind of natural archy and economical subjection. We must also look to our own place in the order, asking what Christ expects of us and not what Christ expects of others. Those of us in the place of the body should remind ourselves of our subjection and accept it humbly, practicing obedience to those appointed over us, while those of us in the place of the head should remind ourselves of the archic devotion we owe those under us, practicing the loving generosity and self-giving that is the basis of our archy.

This is precisely the counsel the Apostle Paul gives to husbands and wives in Eph 5:22–33. He tells wives to submit, obey, and revere their husbands on account of their economical subjection; he tells husbands to love their wives even as themselves on account of their natural archy. This interpretation comports most easily with the Apostle's analogy of husband and wife to Christ and the Church, for the Church is indeed subject to Christ, owing Him submission, obedience, and reverence, yet Christ loves the Church as His own Body, nourishing it and cherishing it and giving Himself up for it. Current talk about "mutual submission" and even "mutual obedience" based on Eph 5:21—"Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of Christ"<sup>37</sup>—undermines the

37 The Greek texts favored by most modern translators say "*en phobō theou*," but most Byzantine manuscripts say "*en phobō Christou*." See Robinson and Pierpont, *The New Testament in the Original Greek: Byzantine Textform* (Southborough, MA: Chilton

Apostle's counsel by denying the archical relation of the man and the woman. It also effectively destroys the Apostle's analogies of husband and wife to head and body and to Christ and the Church. "Mutual obedience" defies a plain reading of the passage, which goes on to speak of children obeying their parents and servants obeying their masters. "Mutual submission" is less problematic, but only if we define condescension and obedience as distinct forms of submission, as we have here.

We cannot deny the subjection of the woman to the man, any more than we can deny the subjection of children to parents, servants to masters, or peoples to governments. The issue is too plain in Holy Scripture and Orthodox tradition to be honestly denied or ignored. We can, however, understand that subjection in better light. Archy is not all there is to gender; neither is gender all there is to archy. But archy is the key to the ontological relation of the man and the woman. It is also the key to the scandal of our economical subjection—of the woman to the man, of man to man, and of man to God.

To the fundamental problem of otherness, the Christian God offers a unique solution. Whereas the anarchist attempts to solve the problem by escaping all others, the world's great religions each attempt to solve the problem in their own way. The central otherness in Judaism is the distinction of Jew and Gentile, which is resolved through subjection of the nations to Israel. The central otherness in Islam is the absolute transcendence of Allah, which is resolved through abject submission (*islam*) to Allah. The central otherness in Buddhism is everything outside the self, a loneliness that ends only with *nirvana* ("extinction"), when the self escapes the curse of reincarnation by ceasing to exist as a personal entity. In Christianity, however, otherness is found in the Godhead itself, where it is resolved through the archical distinction of the Persons within the Trinity, in which there is otherness without estrangement and order without oppression, a loving union of distinct persons sharing the same

nature and therefore equal in nature, but archical in their regard for each other, the model for both our regard for God as sons by adoption and our regard for each other as men and women and as joint-heirs in Christ.





