

## QUESTION 39

### The Persons in Comparison to the Essence

Now that we have discussed the divine persons taken absolutely, we must consider the persons in comparison to the essence (question 39), to the properties (question 40), and to the notional acts (question 41), and then we must compare the persons with one another (questions 42 and 43).

With respect to the first of these topics there are eight questions: (1) Is the essence in God the same as a person? (2) Should one say that the three persons are ‘of one essence’? (3) Should the names of the essence be predicated of the persons in the singular or the plural? (4) Can the notions in their adjectival forms—whether verbs or participles—be predicated of the names of the essence taken in their concrete forms? (5) Can the notions in their adjectival forms be predicated of the names of the essence taken in their abstract forms? (6) Can the names of the persons be predicated of the names of the essence in their concrete forms? (7) Should the attributes of the essence be appropriated to the persons? (8) Which attributes should be appropriated to which persons?

#### Article 1

#### Is the essence in God the same as a person?

It seems that in God the essence is not the same as a person:

**Objection 1:** If the essence is the same as a person or suppositum (*persona seu suppositum*) in any given thing, then there must be just one suppositum per nature—as is clear in the case of all separated substances. For when things are the same in reality, the one cannot be multiplied without the other also being multiplied. But it is clear from what has been said above (q. 28, a. 3 and q. 30, a. 2) that in God there is a single essence and three persons. Therefore, the essence is not the same as a person.

**Objection 2:** An affirmation and corresponding negation are not true of the same thing at one and the same time. But an affirmation and corresponding negation are true of the essence and the persons. For there are distinct persons, but not distinct essences. Therefore, a person is not same as the essence.

**Objection 3:** Nothing is a subject of itself. But a person is a subject of the essence, and this is why it is called a suppositum or hypostasis. Therefore, a person is not the same as the essence.

**But contrary to this:** In *De Trinitate* 7 Augustine says, “When we say ‘the person of the Father’, we are not saying anything different from ‘the substance of the Father’.”

**I respond:** To anyone who considers God’s simplicity, the truth regarding this question is evident. For it was shown above (q. 3, a. 3) that God’s simplicity requires that in God the essence is the same as a suppositum, which in intellectual substances is nothing other than a person.

But a difficulty seems to arise because the essence retains its oneness even though the divine persons are multiplied. And since, as Boethius says, “it is the relations that multiply the Trinity of persons,” some have claimed that the essence differs from a person in God in such a way that they called the relations ‘bystanders’ (*assistantes*), taking into account only that they exist with respect to another and not that they are themselves realities (*res*).

However, as was shown above (q. 28, a. 2), just as relations exist as accidents in created things, so in God they are the divine essence itself. From this it follows that (a) in God the essence does not differ as a thing (*secundum rem*) from a person, and yet that (b) the persons are really distinct from one another. For as was explained above (q. 29, a. 4), ‘person’ signifies a relation as subsisting in the divine nature (*persona significat relationem prout est subsistens in natura divina*). Now when compared to the essence, a relation differs from it not as a thing but only conceptually, whereas when compared to an opposed relation, it has a real distinction from that relation by reason of the opposition. And so it follows

that there is one essence and three persons.

**Reply to objection 1:** In creatures there cannot be a distinction among supposita that derives from relations (*non potest esse distinctio suppositorum per relationes*); instead, a distinction among supposita must derive from the principles of the essence, since in creatures relations are not subsistent. By contrast, in God the relations are subsistent and so, insofar as the relations are opposed to one another, they can make for distinct supposita (*possunt distinguere supposita*). And yet there are not distinct essences (*neque tamen distinguitur essentia*), since it is not by reason of their being the same in reality as the essence that the relations themselves are distinct from one another.

**Reply to objection 2:** From the fact that in God the essence and a person differ conceptually, it follows that something can be affirmed of the one and denied of the other. Consequently, the one is a subject [of a given predicate] without the other being a subject [of that predicate].

**Reply to objection 3:** As was explained above (q. 13, aa. 1 and 3), we impose names on divine realities according to the mode of created things. And the reason why created individuals are called subjects or supposita or hypostases is that the natures of created things are individuated by matter, which serves as the subject of the nature of the species. It is for this reason that the divine persons are likewise called supposita or hypostases—and not because there really is in God any such thing as being an underlying suppositum or subject (*aliqua suppositio vel subiectio*).

## Article 2

### Should one say that the three persons are ‘of one essence’?

It seems that one should not say that the three persons are ‘of one essence’ (*unae essentiae*):

**Objection 1:** In *De Synodis* Hilary says that the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit “are three in substance, though one in harmony.” But God’s substance is His essence. Therefore, the three persons are not of one essence.

**Objection 2:** As is clear from Dionysius, *De Divinis Nominibus*, chap. 1, one should not affirm anything of God unless it is explicitly expressed by the authority of Sacred Scripture. But Sacred Scripture nowhere says explicitly that the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are of one essence. Therefore, this should not be asserted.

**Objection 3:** The divine nature is the same as the divine essence. Therefore, it should be enough to say that the three persons are ‘of one nature’.

**Objection 4:** It is customary to say that an essence is ‘the essence of a person’ rather than that a person is ‘the person of an essence’. Therefore, it does not seem appropriate to say that the three persons are of one essence.

**Objection 5:** Augustine explains that we do not say that the three persons are *from* one essence (*ex una essentia*), lest someone should think that the essence and a person are different in God. But just as prepositions [such as ‘*ex*’] are grammatically transitive (*transitivae*), so too are oblique cases [such as the genitive]. Therefore, by parity of reasoning, we should not say that the three persons are *of* one essence.

**Objection 6:** We should not say anything about God that can be an occasion of error. But when someone says that the three persons are of one essence or substance, an occasion for error arises. For as Hilary says in *De Synodis*, “‘One substance’, predicated of the Father and the Son, signifies either that (a) one subsistent thing has two names, or that (b) one substance has been divided and become two imperfect substances, or that (c) there is a third and prior substance which has been taken over and assumed by the two of them.” Therefore, one should not say that the three persons are of one substance.

**But contrary to this:** In *Contra Maximinum 2* Augustine says that the name ‘*homoousion*’, which the Council of Nicea confirmed in opposition to the Arians, signifies that the three persons are of one essence.

**I respond:** As was explained above (q. 13, aa. 1 and 3), our intellect does not name divine realities according to their own mode, since we cannot have cognition of them as such; instead, it names them according to the mode found among created things. Now among sensible things, from which our intellect takes its knowledge, the nature of any given species is individuated by matter, so that the nature has the character of a form and the individual has the character of a suppositum of that form. So likewise in God, as far as the mode of signifying is concerned, the essence is signified as the form of the three persons.

Now among created things we say that a form is ‘of’ that whose form it is, e.g., the health ‘of’ a man or the beauty ‘of’ a man. But we do not say that the thing that has the form is ‘of’ the form, unless an adjective is added that modifies the form. For instance, we say ‘This is a woman of handsome figure’ or ‘This is a man of perfect virtue’. Similarly, since in God the essence is not multiplied despite the fact that the persons are multiplied, we say that there is one essence ‘of the three persons’; and we also say that there are three persons ‘of one essence’, since the genitive construction ‘of one essence’ (*unius essentiae*) is understood as designating a form.

**Reply to objection 1:** In this passage ‘substance’ is being taken for ‘hypostasis’ and not for ‘essence’.

**Reply to objection 2:** Even though Sacred Scripture does not say in these exact words that the three persons are of one essence, this is nonetheless the meaning of passages such as “The Father and I are one” [John 10:30], and “I am in the Father and the Father is in me” [John 10:38]. And the same thing can be shown by appeal to many other passages.

**Reply to objection 3:** Since ‘nature’ designates a principle of *action*, whereas ‘essence’ is taken from *being*, there are some things that can be said to be of one nature because they agree in some act—e.g., all things which produce warmth—but cannot be said to be of one essence if they do not share the same *esse*. And so God’s oneness is better expressed by saying that the three persons are of one essence than by saying that they are of one nature.

**Reply to objection 4:** A form, taken absolutely, is normally signified as being ‘of’ that whose form it is—as, for instance, the virtue ‘of’ Peter.

By contrast, a thing that has a form is not normally signified as being ‘of’ the form. This happens only when we wish to determine, i.e., to modify, the form in question. And in such a case what is required is either (a) two genitives, one of which signifies the form and the other of which signifies the modification of the form—as, for instance, when we say ‘Peter is someone of great virtue’ (*magnae virtutis*)—or (b) one genitive that has the force of two genitives—as, for instance, when we say ‘He is a man of blood’ (*sanguinis*), i.e., a spiller of much blood (*multi sanguinis*).

Therefore, since God’s essence is signified as a form in relation to the persons, one can appropriately say ‘the essence of a person’. But the converse does not hold, unless something is added to modify the essence—as, for instance, when someone says that the Father is a person of the divine essence (*divinae essentiae*), or that the three persons are of one essence (*unius essentiae*).

**Reply to objection 5:** The preposition ‘from’ (*ex* or *de*) does not signify the character of a formal cause, but instead signifies the character of an efficient or material cause. The latter are in all cases distinct from the things of which they are causes. For nothing is its own matter; nor is anything its own active principle. However, there are things that are their own forms, as is clear in the case of all immaterial things. And so when we say that the three persons are ‘of’ one essence, thus signifying the essence as having the character of a formal cause, this does not show that the essence is different from a

person—as it would if we were to say that the three persons are ‘from’ (*ex*) the same essence.

**Reply to objection 6:** As Hilary puts it in *De Synodis*, “It would be prejudicial to holy things if the fact that some do not hold them to be holy meant that they should not be held as holy . . . So if someone understands ‘*homoousion*’ incorrectly, what is that to me, as long I understand it correctly? . . . Therefore, there is the one substance proper to the generated nature (*sit una substantia ex naturae genitae proprietate*), but it is not one by being a part or by union or by communion.”

### Article 3

#### May the names of the essence be predicated in the singular of the three persons?

It seems that the names of the essence, e.g., the name ‘God’, may be predicated in the plural of the three persons, but not in the singular:

**Objection 1:** Just as ‘man’ signifies *one having human-ness* (*habens humanitatem*), so ‘God’ signifies *one having divinity* (*habens divinitatem*). But the three persons are three who have divinity. Therefore, the three persons are three Gods.

**Objection 2:** In Genesis 1:1, when it says, “In the beginning God created heaven and earth,” the Hebrew text has ‘Elohim’, which can be translated as ‘gods’ or ‘judges’. And it says this because of the plurality of persons. Therefore, the three persons are three Gods and not one God.

**Objection 3:** When the name ‘thing’ (*res*) is taken absolutely, it seems to pertain to substance. But this name is predicated in the plural of the three persons. For instance, in *De Doctrina Christiana* Augustine says, “The things which are to be enjoyed are the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.” Therefore, the other names of the essence can likewise be predicated in the plural of the three persons.

**Objection 4:** Just as the name ‘God’ signifies *one having divinity*, so the name ‘person’ signifies *one subsisting in an intellectual nature*. But we say ‘three persons’. Therefore, for the same reason we can say ‘three Gods’.

**But contrary to this:** Deuteronomy 6:4 says, “Listen, Israel, the Lord your God is one God.”

**I respond:** Some names of the essence signify the essence substantively (*substantive*), while others signify it adjectivally (*adiective*). The names that signify the substance substantively are predicated of the three persons only in the singular and not in the plural, whereas those that signify the essence adjectivally are predicated of the three persons in the plural. The reason for this is that substantival names signify a thing in the mode of a substance, whereas adjectival names signify a thing in the mode of an accident that inheres in a subject. Now just as a substance has *esse per se*, so too it has oneness or manyness *per se*, and so the form signified by a substantival name determines whether it is singular or plural. By contrast, just as accidents have *esse* in a subject, so too they take their oneness and manyness from their subject, and so the supposita determine whether adjectival names are singular or plural.

Now in creatures it is not the case that a single form exists in more than one suppositum except in virtue of a unity of order, i.e., as the form of an ordered multitude. Hence, if the names that signify such a form are substantival, then they are predicated of many in the singular—but not if they are adjectival. For instance, we say that many men are a college or an army or a people, but we say that several men are collegians.

By contrast, as was shown above (q. 3, a. 7 and q. 11, a. 4), in God the divine essence is signified in the mode of a form which, as was explained above (a. 2), is simple and maximally one. Hence, names that signify the divine essence substantively are predicated of the three persons in the singular and not in

the plural. Thus, the reason why we say that Socrates and Plato and Cicero are three men, but that the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are one God and not three Gods, is that there are three humanities in the three supposita with a human nature, whereas there is a single divine essence in the three persons. On the other hand, the names that signify the divine essence adjectivally are predicated in the plural of the three persons because of the plurality of supposita. For instance, we call them three existents, or three who are wise, or three who are eternal and uncreated and unmeasured (*dicimus tres existentes vel tres sapientes aut tres aeternos et increatos et immensos*), as long as these names are taken adjectivally. By contrast, if the names are taken substantivally instead, then we say “the uncreated, unmeasured, and eternal one,” as the Athanasian creed puts it.

**Reply to objection 1:** Even though ‘God’ signifies *one having divinity*, it is nonetheless the case that the two expressions have different modes of signifying. For ‘God’ is said substantivally, whereas ‘one having divinity’ is said adjectivally. Hence, even though there are three who have divinity, it does not follow that there are three Gods.

**Reply to objection 2:** Different languages have different ways of speaking. Hence, just as the Greeks say ‘three hypostases’ because of the plurality of the supposita, so too in Hebrew ‘Elohim’ is said in the plural. We, however, do not say either ‘Gods’ or ‘substances’ in the plural, lest this plurality be referred to the substance.

**Reply to objection 3:** The name ‘thing’ (*res*) is a transcendental. Hence, insofar as it pertains to a relation, it is predicated in the plural of God, whereas insofar as it pertains to the substance, it is predicated in the singular. Thus, in the same place Augustine says, “The same Trinity is a certain highest thing.”

**Reply to objection 4:** The form signified by the name ‘person’ is not the essence or the nature but instead personhood (*personalitas*). Hence, since in the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit there are three personhoods, i.e., three personal properties, ‘person’ is predicated of the three in the plural and not in the singular.

#### Article 4

##### Can the concrete names of the essence supposit for a person?

It seems that the concrete names of the essence cannot supposit for a person in such a way that the proposition ‘God begot God’ is true:

**Objection 1:** As logicians put it, a singular term signifies and supposits for the same thing. But the name ‘God’ seems to be a singular term, since, as has been explained (a. 3), it cannot be predicated in the plural. Therefore, since it signifies the essence, it seems to supposit for the essence and not for a person.

**Objection 2:** A term in the subject position is not restricted by a term in the predicate position in virtue of the latter’s signification; rather, it is restricted only in virtue of the co-signified tense. But when I say “God creates”, the name ‘God’ is suppositing for the essence. Therefore, when one says, ‘God begot’, the term ‘God’ cannot supposit for a person just because of the notional predicate.

**Objection 3:** If ‘God begot’ is true because the Father generates, then by parity of reasoning ‘God does not generate’ is true because the Son does not generate. Therefore, there is a generating God and a non-generating God. And so it seems to follow that there are two Gods.

**Objection 4:** If God begot God, then either He begot Himself as God or else He begot another God. But He did not beget Himself as God, since as Augustine says in *De Trinitate* 1, “No entity

generates itself.” Nor did He beget another God, since there is just one God. Therefore, ‘God begot God’ is false.

**Objection 5:** If God begot God, then either He begot a God who is God the Father or He begot a God who is not God the Father. If He begot a God who is God the Father, then God the Father is begotten. If He begot a God who is not God the Father, then there is a God who is not God the Father—which is false. Therefore, one cannot say that God begot God.

**But contrary to this:** The creed says, “God from God.”

**I respond:** Some have claimed that, by their nature, the name ‘God’ and similar names properly supposit for the essence, but that they are drawn into suppositing for a person when a notional term is joined to them. This opinion seems to have arisen from a consideration of God’s simplicity, which requires that in God the one who has is the same as what is had, and so the one who has divinity, which is signified by the name ‘God’, is the same as the divinity.

However, among the properties of locutions, one must pay attention not only to the thing signified, but also to the mode of signifying. And so, since the name ‘God’ signifies the divine essence as existing in one who has that essence—just as the name ‘man’ signifies human-ness in a suppositum—others have claimed more correctly that, because of this mode of signifying, the name ‘God’ is such that it can properly supposit for a person in the same way that the name ‘man’ can.

Therefore, the name ‘God’ sometimes supposits for the essence, as when one says, ‘God creates’, since the predicate ‘creates’ belongs to the subject by reason of the form that is signified, i.e., the divinity. Sometimes, however, ‘God’ supposits for a person—either (a) just one of the persons, as when one says, ‘God generates, or (b) for two persons, as when one says, ‘God spirates’, or (c) for three persons, as when one says with 1 Timothy 1:17, “To the king of ages, immortal, invisible, the only God . . .”

**Reply to objection 1:** Even though the name ‘God’ agrees with singular terms in the fact that the form signified by it is not multiplied, it nonetheless agrees with common terms in the fact that it is found in more than one suppositum. Hence, it need not always supposit for the essence that it signifies.

**Reply to objection 2:** This objection has force against those who claimed that the name ‘God’ does not naturally supposit for a person.

**Reply to objection 3:** The name ‘God’ and the name ‘man’ supposit for a person in different ways.

Since the form signified by the name ‘man’, i.e., human-ness, is in reality divided into diverse supposita, the name ‘man’ supposits *per se* for a person even if nothing is added to determine it to a person that is a distinct suppositum. On the other hand, human nature’s being one or being common is not something real but only something conceptual, and so the term ‘man’ does not supposit for the common nature except because of the demands of something added to it, as when one says, ‘*Man* is a species’.

By contrast, the form signified by the name ‘God’, viz., the divine essence, is both one and common in reality. Hence, ‘God’ supposits *per se* for the common nature, whereas its supposition is delimited to a person by something added to it. Hence, when one says ‘God generates’, the name ‘God’ supposits for the person of the Father by reason of the notional act. By contrast, when one says ‘God does not generate’, nothing is added that delimits this name to the person of the Son, and so the proposition entails that generation is incompatible with the divine nature. However, if something pertaining to the person of the Son is added, then the proposition will be true—as, for instance, if one were to say ‘The God who is begotten does not generate’. Hence, it is also the case that ‘There is a generating God and a non-generating God’ does not follow unless something pertaining to the persons is posited—as, for instance, if we were to say ‘The Father is a generating God and the Son is a non-generating God’. And

so it does not follow that there is more than one God, since the Father and the Son are one God, as has been explained (a. 3).

**Reply to objection 4:** ‘The Father generated Himself as God’ is false, since ‘Himself’ is a reflexive pronoun and refers to the same suppositum [as ‘Father’ does]. Nor is this contrary to what Augustine says in *Ad Maximinum*, viz., that the Father begot another self. For either (a) ‘self’ is in the ablative case, and then the meaning is ‘He begot someone other than Himself’ (*alterum a se*) or (b) ‘self’ induces a simple relation and thus refers to an identity of nature, in which case the proposition is improper or emphatic and has the following sense: ‘He generated another exactly similar to Himself’.

Similarly, ‘The Father generated another God’ is false. For as was explained above (q. 31, a. 2), even though the Son is other than the Father (*alius a patre*), it must not be said that He is another God (*alius Deus*). For ‘another God’ would be understood in such a way that the adjective ‘another’ adds its own entity (*res*) to the substantival term ‘God’, and so it would signify that there are distinct divinities. To be sure, some concede ‘The Father begot another God’, as long as ‘another’ is the substantival term and ‘God’ is taken as apposite to it. But this is an improper way of speaking and should be avoided, lest it provide an occasion for error.

**Reply to objection 5:** ‘God begot a God who is God the Father’ is false. For since ‘Father’ is taken as apposite to ‘God’, it restricts ‘God’ to standing for the person of the Father. As a result, the meaning would be ‘The Father begot a God who is Himself the Father’, and so the Father would be begotten—which is false. Hence, this negative proposition is true: ‘The Father begot a God who is not God the Father’.

On the other hand, if the construction ‘who is God the Father’ were understood not as being apposite but as interposing something, then, conversely, the affirmative proposition would be true and the negative proposition would be false. For the meaning of the affirmative proposition would be this: ‘The Father begot a God who is the God who is the Father’. However, this reading [of the original proposition] is strained. Hence, it is better simply to deny the affirmative proposition and concede the negative proposition.

By contrast, Praepositinus maintained that both the affirmative proposition and the negative proposition are false, since the relative pronoun ‘who’ can refer to a suppositum in the affirmative proposition, whereas in the negative proposition it refers both to the thing signified and to a suppositum. On this reading, the implication of the affirmative proposition is that being God the Father belongs to the person of the Son, and the implication of the negative proposition is that being God the Father is denied not only of the person of the Son but also of His divinity. However, this position seems unreasonable. For according to the Philosopher, if anything is such that there is an affirmation with respect to it, then there can also be a negation with respect to that very same thing.

## Article 5

### Can the names of the essence, taken in their abstract forms, supposit for a person?

It seems that the names of the essence, taken in their abstract forms, can supposit for a person, so that ‘The essence generates the essence’ is true:

**Objection 1:** In *De Trinitate* 7 Augustine says, “The Father and the Son are one wisdom, since they are one essence, and, taken singly, wisdom is from wisdom, just as essence is from essence.”

**Objection 2:** When we are generated and corrupted, the things that exist in us are generated and corrupted. But the Son is generated. Therefore, since the divine essence exists in the Son, it seems that the divine essence is generated.

**Objection 3:** As is clear from what was said above (q. 3, a. 3), God is the same as the divine essence. But as has been explained (a. 4), ‘God generates God’ is true. Therefore, ‘The essence generates the essence’ is true.

**Objection 4:** Everything is such that whatever is predicated of it can supposit for it. But the divine essence is the Father. Therefore, ‘essence’ can supposit for the person of the Father. And so the essence generates.

**Objection 5:** The essence is a thing that generates, since the essence is the Father, who generates. Therefore, if the essence does not generate, the essence will be a thing that both generates and does not generate—which is impossible.

**Objection 6:** In *De Trinitate* 4 Augustine says, “The Father is the source (*principium*) of the whole divinity.” But He is not the source except by generating and spirating. Therefore, the Father generates (or spirates) the divinity.

**But contrary to this:** In *De Trinitate* 1 Augustine says, “Nothing generates itself.” But if the essence generates the essence, then it generates nothing other than itself, since there is nothing in God that is distinct from the divine essence. Therefore, it is not the case that the essence generates the essence.

**I respond:** Abbot Joachim was mistaken on this question when he asserted that just as one says ‘God begets God’, so too one can say ‘The essence generates the essence’; he was thinking that because of God’s simplicity, God is not other than the divine essence.

However, he was deceived in this, since, as has been pointed out (a. 4), for the truth of a proposition one must take into account not only the things signified but also the mode of signifying. Even though in reality God is the same as the divine essence (*deitas*), nonetheless, the mode of signifying is not the same in the two cases. For since the name ‘God’ signifies the divine essence as existing in one who has it, its mode of signification is by nature such that it can supposit for a person; and so the things that are proper to the persons can be predicated of the name ‘God’, as when one says ‘God is begotten’ or ‘God generates’, as has been explained (a. 4). By contrast, the name ‘essence’, given its mode of signification, is not such that it supposits for a person, since it signifies the essence as an abstract form. And so the things which are proper to the persons and by which they are distinguished from one another cannot be attributed to the essence. For that would mean that there are distinct divine essences in the same way that there are distinct divine supposita.

**Reply to objection 1:** In order to express the oneness of the essence and the persons, the holy doctors sometimes put things more strongly than the strict meaning of their phrases would allow. Hence, those phrases should not be given an extended sense, but should instead be understood in such a way that the concrete terms, or even the names of the persons, are substituted for the abstract terms. So, for instance, when someone says ‘essence from essence’ or ‘wisdom from wisdom’, the meaning is ‘The Son, who is the essence and wisdom, is from the Father, who is the essence and wisdom’. However, a certain order must be observed with these abstract names. For those that pertain to acts are more closely tied to the persons, since the acts belong to the supposita. Hence, ‘nature from nature’ or ‘wisdom from wisdom’ is less improper than ‘essence from essence’.

**Reply to objection 2:** In the case of creatures, what is generated does not have numerically the same nature had by the one who generates, but instead has a numerically distinct nature that begins to exist in it *de novo* through generation and ceases to exist through corruption. And so the nature as such is generated and corrupted *per accidens*. By contrast, the Begotten God receives numerically the same nature had by the one who generates. And so the divine nature is not generated in the Son, either *per se* or *per accidens*.

**Reply to objection 3:** Even though God is the same as the divine essence in reality, still, because



of the differing modes of signifying, one must speak in different ways of the two of them.

**Reply to objection 4:** The divine essence is predicated of the Father in the mode of identity because of the divine simplicity. However, it does not follow that ‘divine essence’ can supposit for the Father, and this because of the different modes of signifying.

Still, the objection does go through in those cases in which one thing is predicated of another as a universal of a particular.

**Reply to objection 5:** The difference between the substantival names and the adjectival names is that the substantival names carry with them their own suppositum, whereas the adjectival names do not. Instead, the adjectival names posit the thing they signify with respect to a substantival name. Hence, logicians say that substantival names have ‘supposition’, whereas adjectival names have ‘copulation’ and not supposition.

Therefore, because of a real identity of the persons with the essence, the substantival names of the persons can be predicated of the essence. Nor does it follow that each personal property makes for a distinct essence; rather, such a name is posited with respect to the suppositum implied by the substantival name.

By contrast, adjectival names of the notions and persons cannot be predicated of the essence unless a substantival name is joined to them. Hence, we cannot say that the essence generates. But we can say that the essence is a thing (*res*) that generates or that the essence is the God who generates, as long as ‘thing’ and ‘God’ are suppositing for a person—though not if they are suppositing for the essence. Hence, there is no contradiction involved in saying that the essence is a thing that generates and a thing that does not generate. For in the first conjunct ‘thing’ is being taken for a person, whereas in the second conjunct it is being taken for the essence.

**Reply to objection 6:** Insofar as the divinity is one thing in many supposita, it agrees with the form of a collective name. Hence, when one says ‘The Father is the source of the whole divinity’, this can be taken for the collection of persons, viz., insofar as He is the source in every divine person. Nor does this require that He be the source of Himself; in the same way, someone who is one of the people is said to be the ruler of all the people, but not the ruler of himself.

An alternative reply is that the Father is the source of the whole divinity not because He generates it and spirates it, but rather because He communicates the divinity by generating and spirating.

## Article 6

### Can the names of the persons be predicated of the names of the essence in their concrete forms?

It seems that the [names of the] persons cannot be predicated of the names of the essence in their concrete forms, as by saying ‘God is three persons’ or ‘God is a Trinity’.

**Objection 1:** ‘A man is every man’ is false, since there cannot be a suppositum for which it is true. For Socrates is not every man, and Plato is not every man, and no other man is every man. But the same holds for ‘God is a Trinity’, since there cannot be a suppositum with a divine nature for which it is true. For the Father is not a Trinity, and the Son is not a Trinity, and the Holy Spirit is not a Trinity. Therefore, ‘God is a Trinity’ is false.

**Objection 2:** A logical inferior cannot be predicated of its logical superior except by a *per accidens* predication, as when I say, ‘An animal is a man’. For it is accidental that an animal should be a man. But, as Damascene says, the name ‘God’ is related to the three persons as a common name to its

logical inferiors. Therefore, it seems that the names of the persons cannot be predicated of the name ‘God’ except accidentally.

**But contrary to this:** In the sermon *De Fide* Augustine says, “We believe that the one God is a Trinity with the divine name.”

**I respond:** As has already been explained (a. 5), even though the adjectival names of the persons and notions cannot be predicated of the essence, their substantival counterparts can be—and this because of the real identity of the essence with a person. But the divine essence is not only really the same as one person, but also really the same as the three persons. Hence, one person or two persons or three persons can be predicated of the essence, as by saying ‘The essence is the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit’. And since, as has been explained (a. 4), the name ‘God’ is *per se* such that it suppositis for the essence, it follows that just as ‘The essence is three persons’ is true, so too ‘God is three persons’ is true.

**Reply to objection 1:** As was explained above (a. 4), the name ‘man’ is *per se* such that it suppositis for a person, but when something else is joined to it, it is such that it stands for the common nature. And this is why ‘A man is every man’ is false. For there is no suppositum for which it can be true.

By contrast, the name ‘God’ is *per se* such that it stands for the essence. Hence, even though there is no suppositum with a divine nature for whom ‘God is a Trinity’ is true, the proposition is nonetheless true for the essence. It is because he did not pay attention to this point that Gilbert de la Porrée denied the proposition.

**Reply to objection 2:** When one says ‘God is the Father’ or ‘The divine essence is the Father’, there is a predication through identity, but not in the sense that a logical inferior is being predicated of a logical superior. For in God there is no universal and singular. Hence, just as ‘The Father is God’ is a *per se* predication, so too is ‘God is the Father’, and it is in no sense *per accidens*.

## Article 7

### Should the names of the essence be appropriated to the persons?

It seems that the names of the essence should not be appropriated to the persons:

**Objection 1:** Anything that can verge on an error from the perspective of the Faith should be avoided with respect to God. For as Jerome says, “Heresy arises from words that are used incorrectly.” But to appropriate to one person the things that are common to the three persons can verge on an error from the perspective of the Faith, since it can be taken to mean either that (a) those things belong only to the person to whom they are appropriated or that (b) they belong to that person more than to the others. Therefore, the attributes of the essence should not be appropriated to the persons.

**Objection 2:** The attributes of the essence, signified in the abstract, signify in the mode of a form. But it is not the case that one person is related to another as a form, since a form is not distinct in suppositum from that of which it is the form. Therefore, the attributes of the essence, especially when signified in the abstract, ought not to be appropriated to the persons.

**Objection 3:** What is proper is prior to what is appropriated, since what is proper is part of the nature of what is appropriated. But according to our mode of understanding, the attributes of the essence are prior to the persons in the way that what is common is prior to what is proper. Therefore, the attributes of the essence should not be appropriated.

**But contrary to this:** In 1 Corinthians 1:24 the Apostle says, “Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God.”

**I respond:** In order to make the Faith manifest, it was fitting for the attributes of the essence to be appropriated to the persons. For even though, as was explained above (q. 32, a. 1), the Trinity of persons cannot be proved by a demonstration, it is nonetheless fitting for it to be clarified by means of certain more manifest things. But the attributes of the essence are more manifest to us according to reason than are the properties of the persons, since on the basis of creatures, from which we take our cognition, we can arrive with certitude at the cognition of the attributes of the essence—though not, as was explained above (q. 32, a. 1), at the cognition of the properties of the persons. Therefore, just as we use the likeness of a vestige or an image found among creatures to make the divine persons more manifest, so too we can make use of the attributes of the essence in the same way. And this manifestation of the persons through the attributes of the essence is called *appropriation*.

Now there are two ways in which the divine persons can be made manifest through the attributes of the essence.

The first way is the *way of likeness (via similitudinis)*. For instance, things that have to do with the intellect are appropriated to the Son, who proceeds as the Word in an intellectual mode.

The second way is the *way of unlikeness (via dissimilitudinis)*. For instance, as Augustine points out, the fathers among us are often weak because of old age, and so, lest we suspect something like this in the case of God, power is appropriated to the Father.

**Reply to objection 1:** As was just explained, the attributes of the essence are appropriated to the persons not in order to assert that they are proper to the persons, but rather in order to make the persons manifest through the ways of likeness and unlikeness. Hence, no error follows from the perspective of the Faith; instead, this is a manifestation of the truth of the Faith.

**Reply to objection 2:** If the attributes of the essence were appropriated to the persons in such a way that they were proper to the persons, then it would follow that one person is related to another in the manner of a form. In *De Trinitate* 7 Augustine excludes this view, showing that the Father is not wise by the wisdom He has begotten—as if the Son alone were wise, in which case the Father and the Son could be called wise together, but not the Father without the Son.

However, the Son is called the wisdom of the Father because He is wisdom from the Father who is wisdom, and both are wisdom *per se*, and together are both one wisdom. Hence, the Father is not wise by the wisdom He has begotten; instead, He is the wisdom which is His essence.

**Reply to objection 3:** Even though, according to our mode of understanding, an attribute of the essence is by its proper nature prior to a person, nonetheless, insofar as an attribute has the character of being appropriated, there is nothing to prevent what is proper to a person from being prior to what is appropriated. In the same way, *color* is posterior to *body qua body*, but *color* is naturally prior to *white body qua white*.

## Article 8

### Have the holy doctors correctly assigned the attributes of the essence to the persons?

It seems that the holy doctors have not correctly assigned the attributes of the essence to the persons:

**Objection 1:** In *De Trinitate* 2 Hilary says, “*Eternity* is in the Father, *species* is in the Image, and *use* is in the Bounty (*munus*).” With these words he uses three proper names of the persons, viz., the name ‘Father; the name ‘Image’, which is proper to the Son, as was explained above (q. 35, a. 2); and the name ‘Bounty’, i.e., ‘Gift’ (*donum*), which is proper to the Holy Spirit, as was also explained above

(q. 38, a. 2). He also posits three appropriated attributes. For he appropriates *eternity* to the Father, *species* to the Son, and *use* to the Holy Spirit. But it seems that he does so unreasonably. For eternity implies a duration of being, species is a principle of being, and use seems to pertain to operation. But the essence and the operation are not appropriated to any person. Therefore, these attributes seem to be appropriated incorrectly to the persons.

**Objection 2:** In *De Doctrina Christiana* 1 Augustine says, “In the Father there is *oneness*, in the Son *equality*, and in the Holy Spirit the *harmony* of oneness and equality.” But this seems incorrect. For one person is not formally denominated by that which is appropriated to another person. For instance, it is not the case that the Father is wise by a begotten wisdom, as has already been explained (a. 7). Yet Augustine adds in the same place, “The three are all one because of the Father, they are all equal because of the Son, and they are all connected because of the Holy Spirit.” Therefore, these attributes are not correctly appropriated to the persons.

**Objection 3:** According to Augustine, *power* is attributed to the Father, *wisdom* to the Son, and *goodness* to the Holy Spirit. But this seems incorrect. For strength (*virtus*) pertains to power (*potentia*). Yet according to 1 Corinthians 1:24 (“Christ, the strength of God”), strength is appropriated to the Son, and according to Luke 6:19 (“Strength went forth from Him, and He healed everyone”), strength is attributed to the Holy Spirit. Therefore, power should not be appropriated to the Father.

**Objection 4:** In *De Trinitate* Augustine says, “One should not interpret in a conflated way (*confuse*) what the Apostle says, viz., ‘*From Him*, and *through Him*, and *in Him*’. He says ‘*from Him*’ because of the Father, and ‘*through Him*’ because of the Son, and ‘*in Him*’ because of the Holy Spirit.” But this seems incorrect. For ‘*in Him*’ seems to imply the character of a final cause, which is the first among causes. Therefore, this sort of cause should be appropriated to the Father, who is the principle who is not from a principle.

**Objection 5:** According to John 14:6 (“I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life”), *truth* is appropriated to the Son. And so is the *book of life*, according to Psalm 39:8, “At the head of the book it is written of me,” where a Gloss says, “That is, with the Father, who is my head.” The name ‘*He Who Is*’ is likewise appropriated to the Son, since a Gloss on Isaiah 65:1 (“. . . ‘Here I am’ to a nation . . .”) says, “The one speaking is the Son, who said to Moses, ‘I am who am’.”

But all of these seem to be *proper* to the Son and not *appropriated* to Him. For according to Augustine in *De Vera Religione*, “Truth is the highest likeness of the principle, without any unlikeness at all.” And so it seems that truth belongs properly to the Son, who has a principle. Likewise, the book of life seems to be something proper to the Son, since ‘book of life’ signifies a being that is from another, since every book is written by someone. Again, the name ‘He Who Is’ seems to be proper to the Son. For if it had been the Trinity speaking when it was said to Moses, “I am who am”, then Moses could have said, “He who is the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit has sent me to you.” Therefore, further, he could have said, “He who is the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit has sent me to you,” pointing to one of the persons. But this is false, since no person is the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Therefore, this name is not common to the whole Trinity, but is instead proper to the Son.

**I respond:** Our intellect, which is led from creatures to the cognition of God, must consider God according to the mode it takes from creatures. Now in our consideration of a creature, there are four steps that occur in order: (a) first, we consider the thing itself absolutely speaking, insofar as it is a *being*; (b) second, we consider it insofar as it is *one*; (c) third, we consider the thing insofar as it has the *power* to act and to be a cause; and (d), fourth, we consider *its relation to what it has caused*. Hence, this fourfold consideration also occurs to us in the case of God.

(a) Thus, on the basis of the first consideration, by which God is considered absolutely with respect to His *esse*, we get Hilary’s appropriation [see Objection 1], according to which *eternity* is appropriated

to the Father, *species* to the Son, and *use* to the Holy Spirit.

For insofar as *eternity* designates *esse* that is not derived from any principle, it bears a likeness to what is proper to the Father, who is a principle that is not from a principle.

Again, *species*, i.e., *beauty*, has a likeness to what is proper to the Son. For three elements are required for beauty. The first is *integrity* or *perfection*, since things which are impaired are by that very fact ugly. The second is *due proportion* or *consonance*. And the third is *clarity*, so that things with bright colors are said to be beautiful. As for the first element, it has a likeness to what is proper to the Son, insofar as He is the Son who has the Father's nature truly and perfectly in Himself. Hence, to intimate this, Augustine says in his exposition, "Where [*read*: in the Son] there is the highest and first life . . ." As for the second element, it agrees with what is proper to the Son insofar as He is the expressed Image of the Father. Hence, we see that an image is said to be beautiful if it represents a thing perfectly, even an ugly thing. Augustine touches on this when he says, "Where there is such great agreement, and first equality . . ." As for the third element, it agrees with what is proper to the Son insofar as He is the Word, which is the light and splendor of the intellect, as Damascene puts it. Augustine, too, touches on this when he says, ". . . as the perfect Word to whom nothing is lacking, and as the art of the omnipotent God . . ."

*Use*, on the other hand, has a likeness to what is proper to the Holy Spirit, taking 'use' (*usus*) in a broad sense to include enjoyment as well—so that, as Augustine puts it in *De Trinitate* 10, to use something is to take it up into the faculty of will, and to enjoy it is to use it with joy. Therefore, the use by which the Father and the Son enjoy one another agrees with what is proper to the Holy Spirit insofar as He is the Love. And this is why Augustine says, "[Hilary] calls that love, pleasure, and happiness (or beatitude) by the name 'use'." On the other hand, the use by which we ourselves enjoy God bears a likeness to what is proper to the Holy Spirit insofar as He is the Gift. Augustine shows this when he says, "The Holy Spirit exists within the Trinity, the sweetness of the Begetter and the Begotten, filling us with His enormous generosity and wealth."

And so it is clear why *eternity*, *species*, and *use* are attributed or appropriated to the persons, but not the essence or the operation. For since the essence and the operation are by their nature common to all the persons, they have no likeness to what is proper to the persons.

(b) The second consideration of God is to consider Him as *one*. On this score, Augustine appropriates *oneness* to the Father, *equality* to the Son, and *harmony* or *connection* to the Holy Spirit [see Objection 2]. It is clear that all three of these imply oneness, but in different ways.

For '*oneness*' is predicated absolutely and does not presuppose anything else. And so it is appropriated to the Father, who does not presuppose any other person, since He is a principle who does not have a principle.

*Equality*, on the other hand, implies oneness with respect to another, since the equal is that which is of one quantity with another. And so equality is appropriated to the Son, who is a principle from a principle.

Now *connection* implies the oneness of two things. Hence, it is appropriated to the Holy Spirit insofar as He is from the other two.

It is on this basis that one can understand Augustine when he says, "The three are all one because of the Father, they are all equal because of the Son, and they are all connected because of the Holy Spirit." For it is clear that each thing is attributed to that in which it is first found; for instance, all lower things are said to live because of the vegetative soul, in which the nature of life is first found among lower things. But oneness would be found without mediation in the person of the Father even if, *per impossible*, the other persons were removed. And so the other persons have oneness from the Father. However, if the other persons were removed, then there would be no equality in the Father; but as soon as the Son is posited, then there is equality. And so they are all called 'equal' because of the Son—not

because the Son is the principle of the Father's equality, but rather because if the Son were not equal to the Father, then the Father could not be called 'equal'. For the Father's equality is first considered with respect to the Son, and the very fact that the Holy Spirit is equal to the Father is something He has from the Son. Similarly, if the Holy Spirit, who is the union of the Father and the Son, were excluded, then one could not understand the oneness of the connection between the Father and the Son. And so all of them are said to be connected because of the Holy Spirit. For once the Holy Spirit is posited, the Father and the Son can be said to be connected.

(c) The third appropriation—viz., of *power*, *wisdom*, and *goodness*—follows upon the third consideration, by which one considers God's power as sufficient for causing [see Objection 3]. This appropriation is derived both from the way of likeness, if one considers it within the divine persons, and from the way of unlikeness, if one considers it within creatures.

For *power* has the character of a principle. Hence, it bears a likeness to the heavenly Father, who is the principle of the whole divinity. However, it is sometimes found lacking in an earthly father because of his old age.

*Wisdom* bears a likeness to the heavenly Son insofar as He is the Word, which is nothing other than the conception of wisdom. However, it is sometimes found lacking in an earthly son because of his youthfulness.

Since, on the other hand, *goodness* is the reason for and object of love, it bears a likeness to the divine Spirit, who is the Love. But it seems incompatible with an earthly spirit, insofar as the latter implies a violent impulse—in keeping with Isaiah 25:4, "For the spirit of the mighty is like a whirlwind beating against a wall."

Now *strength* (*virtus*) is appropriated to the Son and the Holy Spirit, not insofar as strength is called the very power of a thing, but rather insofar as that which proceeds from the power of a thing is sometimes called its strength, in the way that we say that a strong deed is the strength of the agent.

(d) The appropriation of *from Him*, *through Him*, and *in Him* derives from the fourth consideration, according to which God is considered in relation to His effects [see Objection 4].

The preposition '*from*' sometimes implies the character of a material cause, which has no place in the case of God. However, sometimes it implies the character of an efficient cause, which belongs to God by reason of His active power, and in this sense *from Him* is appropriated to the Father in the same way that *power* is.

The preposition '*through*' sometimes designates an intermediate cause; for instance, we say that the blacksmith operates through his hammer. And so *through Him* is sometimes not *appropriated* to the Son but is *proper* to Him in accord with John 1:3 ("All things were made through Him")—not because the Son is an instrument, but because He is a principle from a principle. Sometimes, however, '*through*' designates the character of a form through which an agent acts, as when we say that the craftsman operates through his art. In this sense, *through Him* is appropriated to the Son in the same way that *wisdom* and *art* are.

The preposition '*in*' properly designates the character of a container. Now God is a container in two ways. In one way, with respect to His likenesses, i.e., in the sense in which all things are said to exist in God insofar as they exist in His knowledge. And in this sense the expression *in Him* is appropriated to the Son. However, in the second way, things are contained in God insofar as God conserves them and governs them with His goodness, by leading them to their appropriate ends. And in this sense *in Him* is appropriated to the Holy Spirit in the same way that *goodness* is.

Moreover, even though the final cause is the first among causes, it need not be appropriated to the Father, who is a principle that is not from a principle. For the divine persons, of whom the Father is the source, do not proceed as if proceeding to an end, since each of them is the ultimate end. Rather, they proceed by a natural procession, which seems to have to do more with the character of a natural power.

As for Objection 5, which raises other questions, one should reply that since, as was explained above (q. 16, a. 1), *truth* pertains to the intellect, it is *appropriated* to the Son and is not *proper* to him. For as was explained in the same place, truth can be considered either insofar as it exists in the intellect or insofar as it exists in things. Therefore, just as ‘intellect’ and ‘thing’ are taken with respect to the essence and not with respect to the persons, so too the same holds for ‘truth’. And the definition introduced from Augustine is intended to be a definition of *truth* insofar as it is appropriated to the Son.

‘*Book of life*’ implies knowledge in the nominative case and life in an oblique case. For as was explained above (q. 24, a. 1), the book of life is God’s knowledge of those who will have eternal life. Hence, *book of life* is appropriated to the Son—even though *life* (a) is appropriated to the Holy Spirit insofar as it implies a certain interior movement and (b) is proper to the Holy Spirit insofar as He is the Love. Moreover, being written by another is not part of the concept of a book *qua* book; rather, it is part of the concept of a book only insofar as the book is an artifact. Hence, *book of life* does not imply origin and so is not the name of a person, but is instead appropriated to a person.

Now *He Who Is* is appropriated to the person of the Son not according to its proper meaning, but rather by reason of something added to it, viz., that the liberation of the human race, which is accomplished through the Son, is prefigured in what God says to Moses. Still, insofar as ‘Who’ is taken as a relative pronoun, it could sometimes refer to the person of Son and so be taken for a person—as, for instance, if one were to say, ‘The Son is the Begotten Who Is’, in the same way that ‘God Begotten’ is the name of a person. However, ‘He Who Is’, taken without modification, is a name of the essence.

Furthermore, even though the pronoun ‘that [person]’ (*iste*) seems, grammatically speaking, to pertain to a determinate person, still, any demonstrable thing can, grammatically speaking, be called a person, even a thing that is not by its nature a person. For instance, we say ‘that rock’ (*iste lapis*) and ‘that donkey’ (*iste asinus*). Hence, grammatically speaking, even the divine essence, insofar as the name ‘God’ signifies and supposits for it, can be pointed to by the pronoun ‘that [person]’ (*iste*)—this according to Exodus 15:2 (“That (*iste*) is my God, and I will glorify Him”).