

QUESTION 41

The Persons in Comparison to the Notional Acts

Next we must consider the persons in comparison to the notional acts (*actus notionales*). On this topic there are six questions: (1) Should the notional acts be attributed to the persons? (2) Are the notional acts necessary or voluntary? (3) In these acts, does the person proceed from nothing or from something? (4) Should one posit in God a power with respect to the notional acts? (5) What does this sort of power amount to? (6) Could a notional act terminate in more than one person?

Article 1

Should the notional acts be attributed to the persons?

It seems that the notional acts should not be attributed to the persons:

Objection 1: In *De Trinitate* Boethius says, “When one turns to divine predication, all the genera, with the exception of *relation*, are changed to *substance* in God.” But *action* is one of the ten genera. Therefore, if an action is attributed to God, it will pertain to His essence and not to a notion.

Objection 2: In *De Trinitate* 5 Augustine claims that everything said of God is predicated either with respect to the substance or with respect to a relation. But things that pertain to the substance are signified by the attributes of the essence, whereas things that pertain to the relations are signified by the names of the persons and the names of the properties. Therefore, the notional acts should not be attributed to the persons over and beyond these things.

Objection 3: It is proper to an action that a passion should be inferred from it. But we do not posit passions in God. Therefore, neither should the notional acts be posited there.

But contrary to this: In *De Fide ad Petrum* Augustine says, “It is proper to the Father that He begot the Son.” But generation is a certain act. Therefore, the notional acts should be posited in God.

I respond: The distinctions among the divine persons derive from their origins. But origins cannot be correctly designated except by certain acts. Therefore, to designate the order of origins among the divine persons, it was necessary to attribute the notional acts to the persons.

Reply to objection 1: Every origin is designated by an act. Now there are two orders of origin that can be attributed to God.

The one has to do with the procession of creatures from God, and this order is common to the three persons. So the actions that are attributed to God in order to designate the procession of creatures from Him pertain to the essence.

The other order of origin in God has to do with the procession of person from person. Hence, the acts that designate the order of this sort of origin are called notional acts. For as is clear from what has been said (q. 32, a. 2-3), the notions belonging to the persons are relations that the persons bear to one another.

Reply to objection 2: The notional acts differ from the relations had by the persons only in their mode of signifying, and they are altogether the same as the relations in reality. Thus, in 1 *Sentences*, dist. 26, the Master says that ‘generating’ and ‘being begotten’ (*nativitas*) are just other names for the Paternity and the Filiation.

To see this clearly, notice that it was through movement that we were first able to guess the origin of one thing from another. For if a thing changed its disposition through movement, it was clear that this happened because of some cause. And so according to its primary imposition, the name ‘action’ implies an origin of movement. For just as a movement is called a passion insofar as it exists in a thing moved by another, so too the origin of the movement is itself called an *action* insofar as the movement begins

from another and terminates in that which is moved. Therefore, if the movement is excluded, then ‘action’ implies nothing other than an order of origin, insofar as the action proceeds from some cause or principle to that which is from the principle.

Thus, since there is no movement in God, the personal action of producing a person is nothing other than the relationship of the principle to the person who is from the principle—and this is just the relation or notion itself. However, we ourselves cannot talk about divine and super-sensible (*intelligibilia*) things except according to the mode of sensible things, from which we take our cognition and among which actions and passions, insofar as they imply movement, are distinct from the relations that follow upon those actions and passions; and so we had to signify the relationships of the persons to one another in the mode of acts separately from signifying their relationships to one another in the mode of relations. This makes it clear that the acts are the same as the relations in reality, and that they differ only in the mode of signifying.

Reply to objection 3: It is insofar as ‘action’ signifies the origin of a movement that a passion is inferred from it. But it is not the case that an action in this sense is posited in the divine persons. Hence, passions are not posited there except grammatically speaking, because of the mode of signifying, in the way that we attribute *generating* to the Father and *being generated* to the Son.

Article 2

Are the notional acts voluntary?

It seems that the notional acts are voluntary:

Objection 1: In *De Synodis* Hilary says, “Not induced by natural necessity, the Father begot the Son.”

Objection 2: In Colossians 1:13 the Apostle says, “He has translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love.” But love belongs to the will. Therefore, the Son is begotten by the Father through His will.

Objection 3: Nothing is more voluntary than love. But the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son as the Love. Therefore, He proceeds in a voluntary way (*voluntarie*).

Objection 4: The Son proceeds in the mode of the intellect as the Word. But every word proceeds from someone who is speaking by his will. Therefore, the Son proceeds from the Father by His will and not by nature.

Objection 5: What is not voluntary is necessary. Therefore, if the Father did not beget the Son by His will, then it seems to follow that He begot Him by necessity. But this is contrary to what Augustine says in *Ad Orosium*.

But contrary to this: In the same book Augustine says, “The Father begot the Son neither by His will nor by necessity.”

I respond: There are two ways to understand the claim that something exists or is done by the will.

In one way, the ablative construction ‘by the will’ designates *mere concomitance*. For instance, I can say that I am a man by my will, i.e., that I will myself to be a man. In this sense, one can say that the Father begot the Son by His will—so that just as He is God by His will because He wills Himself to be God, so too He wills Himself to generate the Son.

In the second way, the ablative construction implies the status of a *cause*. For instance, a craftsman is said to work by his will, since his will is a principle of his work. Given this sense, one must say that

God the Father did not beget the Son by His will, though He did produce creatures by His will. Hence, *De Synodis* says, “If anyone claims that the Son is made as one among the creatures by the will of God, let him be anathema.” The reason for this is that nature and will differ in their causality by virtue of the fact that nature is determined to a single effect, whereas the will is not determined to a single effect. This is because an effect is assimilated to the form through which the agent acts. But it is clear that each thing has a single natural form through which it has *esse*, and so it effects things that are like itself. By contrast, the will acts not through just a single form, but through many forms, insofar as there are many intellectual conceptions. And so the will’s effect is not similar to the agent, but instead conforms to what the agent wills it to be and understands it to be. Therefore, the will is a principle of what can be one way or another, whereas nature is a principle of what cannot be other than the way it is.

Now that which can be one way or another is far removed from the divine nature, but pertains instead to the nature of creatures. For God is *per se* a necessary being, whereas creatures are made *ex nihilo*. And so when the Arians tried to prove that the Son is a creature, they claimed that the Father begot the Son by His will, in the sense in which ‘will’ designates a causal principle. We, on the other hand, must say that the Father begot the Son by nature and not by His will. Hence, in *De Synodis* Hilary says, “The will of God conferred substance on all creatures, but a perfect nativity gave to the Son a nature from the impassible and unbegotten substance. For all creatures have been created in the way that God willed them to be, but the Son, begotten of God, subsists as one who is just like God.”

Reply to objection 1: This passage is aimed against those who exclude even concomitance from the Father’s will in the generation of the Son, claiming that He begot the Son by nature in such a way that He did not even will to generate the Son—in just the way that we suffer against our will many things that occur by natural necessity, e.g., death, old age, and other defects of this sort. This interpretation is clear from what precedes and what follows the words in question. For the whole passage reads, “It is not the case that the Father willed not to beget the Son, or that He was forced to beget the Son, or that He was induced by natural necessity to beget Him even though He did not want to.”

Reply to objection 2: The Apostle calls Christ “the Son of God’s love” because He is loved superabundantly by God, and not because love is the principle of the generation of the Son.

Reply to objection 3: Insofar as it is a certain nature, even the will wills something by nature. For instance, the human will naturally tends toward beatitude. Similarly, God wills and loves Himself by nature. However, as was explained above (q. 19, a. 3), with respect to things other than Himself, God’s will is open in a certain way to both contraries.

Now the Holy Spirit proceeds as the Love insofar as God loves Himself. Hence, the Holy Spirit proceeds by nature, even though He proceeds in the mode of the will.

Reply to objection 4: Among intellectual conceptions there is likewise a reduction to primary things that are understood by nature. But God understands Himself by nature. Accordingly, the conception of the divine Word is natural.

Reply to objection 5: A thing can be said to be necessary either through itself (*per se*) or through another (*per aliud*).

There are two ways for a thing to be necessary through another (*per aliud*).

In one way, the thing is necessary because of some cause that acts on it and coerces it; and what is necessary in this sense is the violent.

In the second way, it is necessary because of a final cause—as when something is said to be necessary as a means to an end because without it the end cannot exist, or cannot exist in the best way. The divine generation is not necessary in either of these two ways. For God does not exist for the sake of any end, and there is no coercion in God.

A thing is called necessary through itself (*per se*) when it is such that it is impossible for it not to

exist. It is in this sense that God's existing is necessary, and it is also in this sense that the Father's generating the Son is necessary.

Article 3

In the notional acts, do the persons proceed from something or from nothing?

It seems that the notional acts are not from anything (*non sint de aliquo*):

Objection 1: If the Father generates the Son from (*de*) something, then it is either from Himself or from something else.

If it is from something else, then since that from which something is generated exists in that which is generated, it follows that something other than the Father is in the Son. But this is contrary to Hilary in *De Trinitate* 7, where he says, "There is nothing diverse or different in them."

Suppose, on the other hand, that the Father generates the Son from Himself. Now if that from which something is generated is a permanent being, then what is generated is predicated of it. For instance, since a man is a permanent being, we say that a man is white when he goes from being non-white to being white. Therefore, it follows either that (a) the Father is not a permanent being when the Son is begotten or else that (b) the Father is the Son, which is false.

Therefore, the Father generates the Son from nothing (*de nihilo*) and not from something.

Objection 2: That from which something is generated is a principle of that which is generated. Therefore, if the Father generates the Son from His essence or nature, it follows that the Father's essence or nature is a principle of the Son. But it is not a material principle, since matter has no place in God. Therefore, it is some sort of active principle, in the sense that what generates is an active principle of what is generated. And so it follows that the essence generates—which was disproved above (q. 39, a. 5).

Objection 3: Augustine says that the three persons are not from (*ex*) the same essence, since the essence is not something other than the persons. But the person of the Son is not something other than the essence of the Father. Therefore, the Son is not from (*de*) the essence of the Father.

Objection 4: Every creature is from nothing (*ex nihilo*). But in Sacred Scripture the Son is called a creature; for instance, Ecclesiasticus 24:5 says in the person of Begotten Wisdom, "I came out of the mouth of the most High, the firstborn before all creatures," and afterwards (24:14) says in the person of that same Wisdom, "From the beginning, and before the world, was I created." Therefore, the Son is begotten from nothing and not from something.

Similarly, the same objection can be made concerning the Holy Spirit in light of the fact that (a) Zacharias 12:1 says, "Thus says the Lord, who stretches forth the heavens, and lays the foundations of the earth, and creates the spirit of man in him," and that (b) Amos 4:13 says (according to the alternate version), "I who form the mountains and create the spirit."

But contrary to this: In *De Fide ad Petrum* Augustine says, "From the beginning, God the Father begot from His nature a Son equal to Himself."

I respond: The Son is generated not from nothing (*de nihilo*) but from the substance of the Father. For it was shown above (q. 27, a. 2 and q. 33, aa. 2-3) that 'Paternity' and 'Filiation' and 'Nativity' are truly and properly predicated of God.

However, there is a difference between a *true generation*, through which someone proceeds as a son, and a *making*, where the maker makes something from some external matter; for instance, a craftsman makes a bench from wood, whereas a man generates a son from himself.

Now as will be shown below (q. 45, a. 2), in the same way that a created craftsman makes something from matter, so God makes something from nothing (*ex nihilo*)—not because nothingness enters into the substance of the thing, but because the total substance of the thing is produced by God without presupposing anything else. Therefore, if the Son proceeded from the Father in such a way that He was from nothing, then He would be related to the Father as an artifact is related to a craftsman, and it is clear that this relation could bear the name ‘filiation’ only according to a certain likeness and not properly speaking. Hence, it follows that if the Son of God proceeded from the Father in such a way that He was from nothing, He would not be truly and properly a son. But 1 John 5:20 (“That we might be in His true Son, Jesus Christ”) asserts the contrary of this. Therefore, the true Son of God is not from nothing, nor is He made; rather, He is simply begotten.

Moreover, if anyone who is created by God *ex nihilo* is called a son of God, this will be a metaphorical predication, insofar as that creature is in some way assimilated to the one who is truly the Son. Hence, it is because He is the only true and natural Son of God that He is called ‘the only-begotten’, in accord with John 1:18 (“The only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him”). However, insofar as others are called adoptive sons by assimilation to Him, He is metaphorically called ‘the firstborn’, according to Romans 8:29 (“For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be made conformable to the image of His Son: that He might be the firstborn among many brethren”). Therefore, it follows that the Son of God is generated from the substance of the Father.

However, it is otherwise with the son of a man. For it is a part of the substance of the man who generates that passes into the substance of the one who is begotten, whereas the divine nature cannot be divided into parts (*est impartibilis*). Hence, it must be the case that in generating the Son, the Father did not transfer a part of His nature to Him but instead communicated the whole of His nature to Him, whereas the distinction between them remained only according to origin—as is clear from what has been said (q. 40, a. 2)

Reply to objection 1: When one says ‘The Son is begotten of the Father’, the preposition ‘of’ (*de*) signifies a consubstantial generating principle and not a material principle. For that which is produced from matter is made through a transmutation of that from which it is produced into some form. The divine essence, however, is not transmutable and not susceptible to another form.

Reply to objection 2: According to the Master’s explanation in 1 *Sentences*, dist. 5, the proposition ‘The Son is begotten of (*de*) the essence of the Father’ designates some sort of active principle. The Master expounds the proposition as ‘The Son is begotten of the essence of the Father, i.e., the Father-essence’. This is why, in *De Trinitate* 15 Augustine says, “I say ‘of the Father-essence’, as if to say ‘of the essence of the Father’ in a more expressive way.”

However, this does not seem to capture the meaning of the sort of locution in question. For we can likewise say that a creature is from (*ex*) the God-essence, and yet it is not the case that a creature is from the essence of God.

Hence, we must reply along other lines that the preposition ‘of’ (*de*) always denotes consubstantiality. Hence, we do not say that a house is of the builder, since the builder is not a consubstantial cause of the house. However, we can say that one thing is ‘of’ another if the latter is in some way signified as a consubstantial principle—whether it be (a) an *active* principle, in the sense in which a son is said to be ‘of’ his father, or (b) a *material* principle, in the sense in which a knife is said to be ‘of’ iron, or (c) a *formal* principle, as in the case of things in which the forms themselves are subsistent and do not come to inhere in another; for instance, we can say that an angel is ‘of’ an intellectual nature. And it is in this last way that we say that the Son is begotten of the essence of the Father, since the essence of the Father, communicated to the Son through generation, subsists in him.

Reply to objection 3: When one says ‘The Son is begotten of the essence of the Father’, one is adding something with respect to which the distinction between them can be preserved. But when one

says ‘The three persons are of the divine essence’, nothing is posited with respect to which the distinction signified by the preposition ‘of’ can be conveyed. And so the two cases are not parallel.

Reply to objection 4: The proposition ‘Wisdom is created’ can be interpreted as referring not to the Wisdom that is the Son of God, but to the created wisdom that God pours into creatures. For Ecclesiasticus 1:9-10 says, “He created her [*read: wisdom*] in the Holy Spirit and He poured her out upon all His works.” Nor is it inappropriate that in one and the same context Sacred Scripture should speak of both begotten Wisdom and created wisdom, since created wisdom is a participation in uncreated Wisdom.

An alternative interpretation is that the proposition refers to the created nature assumed by the Son, so that its meaning is, ‘I was created from the beginning and before all ages, i.e., I was foreseen as united to a creature’.

On yet another interpretation, the fact that created wisdom and begotten Wisdom are mentioned together intimates to us the mode of divine generation. For in generation, what is generated receives the nature of what generates, and this bespeaks perfection, whereas in creation the creator does not change and what is created does not receive the nature of the creator. Therefore, the Son is both created and begotten, so that on the basis of creation we grasp the Father’s immutability, and on the basis of generation we grasp the oneness of nature in the Father and the Son. And that is how, in *De Synodis*, Hilary explains the meaning of this passage from Sacred Scripture.

Now the other passages that are adduced speak not of the Holy Spirit, but of a created spirit, where ‘spirit’ is the name sometimes given to the wind, sometimes to the air, sometimes to human breath, and sometimes even to the soul or some other invisible substance.

Article 4

Is there power in God with respect to the notional acts?

It seems that there is no power in God with respect to the notional acts:

Objection 1: Every power is either active or passive. But neither type can fit in this case. For as was shown above (q. 25, a. 1), there is no passive power in God. And no active power can belong to one person with respect to another, since, as has been shown (a. 3), the divine persons are not made. Therefore, in God there is no power with respect to the notional acts.

Objection 2: ‘Power’ is predicated with respect to what is possible. But the divine persons are numbered among the things that are necessary and not among the things that are possible. Therefore, one should not posit power in God with respect to the notional acts by which the divine persons proceed.

Objection 3: The Son proceeds as the Word, i.e., as a conception of the intellect, whereas the Holy Spirit proceeds as the Love, which pertains to the will. But as was shown above (q. 25, a. 1), ‘power’ is predicated of God with respect to His effects, and not with respect to His act of understanding and willing. Therefore, one should not claim that there is a power in God with respect to the notional acts.

But contrary to this: In *Contra Maximinum Haereticum* Augustine asks, “If God the Father was unable to generate a Son equal to Himself, then where is the omnipotence of God the Father?” Therefore, there is a power in God with respect to the notional acts.

I respond: Just as the notional acts are posited in God, so too it is necessary to posit in God a power with respect to acts of this type, since ‘power’ signifies nothing other than the principle of some act. Hence, since we understand the Father to be the principle of the generation, and the Father and the Son to be the principle of the spiration, we must attribute to the Father the power to generate, and we

must attribute to the Father and the Son the power to spirate. For ‘power to generate’ signifies that by which the one who generates generates, and everything that generates generates by something. Hence, the power to generate must be posited in anything that generates, and the power to spirate must be posited in anything that spirates.

Reply to objection 1: Just as none of the persons proceeds as *made* in a notional act, so too neither is power with respect to the notional acts in God a power with respect to a person who is *made*. Rather, it is merely a power with respect to a person who *proceeds*.

Reply to objection 2: The possible, insofar as it is *opposed to* the necessary, follows upon a passive power, which does not exist in God. Hence, there is nothing in God that is possible in that sense. Rather, whatever is possible in God is possible only in the sense in which the possible is *included under* the necessary. In this latter sense, one can say that just as it is possible for God to exist, so too it is possible for the Son to be generated.

Reply to objection 3: ‘Power’ signifies a principle. But a principle implies a distinction from that which it is a principle of.

Now there are two kinds of distinction among those things that are predicated of God, viz., (a) a distinction in reality (*distinctio secundum rem*) and (b) a merely conceptual distinction (*distinctio secundum rationem tantum*).

By a distinction in reality, God is distinct in His essence from those things whose principle He is through creation, and one person is distinct from another whose principle He is through a notional act. However, within God an action is not distinct from its agent except by a merely conceptual distinction, since otherwise actions would be accidents in God.

Thus, with respect to those actions by which real things proceed as distinct from God’s essence or from a divine person, power can be attributed to God in the proper sense of a principle. And so just as we posit in God the power to create, so too we posit the power to generate or to spirate.

By contrast, understanding (*intelligere*) and willing (*velle*) are not acts of the sort that mark the procession of a real thing distinct from God’s essence or from a divine person. Hence, with respect to these acts the nature of power can be preserved in God only according to our mode of understanding and mode of signifying, i.e., insofar as in God the intellect (*intellectus*) and the act of understanding are signified in different ways, despite the fact that God’s act of understanding is in reality His essence and thus has no principle.

Article 5

Do ‘power to generate’ and ‘power to spirate’ signify a real relation or instead God’s essence?

It seems that ‘power to generate’, or ‘power to spirate’, signifies a real relation in God and not God’s essence:

Objection 1: As is obvious from its definition, ‘power’ signifies a principle, since, as is clear from *Metaphysics 5*, an active power is a principle of acting. But in God ‘principle’ is predicated of a person in virtue of a notion. Therefore, in God ‘power’ signifies a relation and not the essence.

Objection 2: In God, *having the power to act (posse)* does not differ from *acting (agere)*. But ‘act of generating’ (*generatio*) signifies a relation in God. Therefore, so does ‘power to generate’.

Objection 3: Names that signify the essence in God are common to the three persons. But ‘power to generate’ is proper to the Father and not common to the three persons. Therefore, ‘power to generate’

does not signify the essence.

But contrary to this: Just as God is able to generate a Son, so too He wills to generate a Son. But ‘wills to generate’ signifies the essence. Therefore, so does ‘power to generate’.

I respond: Some have claimed that ‘power to generate’ signifies a relation in God. But this cannot be true. For what is properly called a power in any agent is that by which the agent acts. But anything that produces something by its action produces something similar to itself with respect to the form by which it acts. For instance, a man who is begotten is similar to the one who begets him with respect to human nature, by the power of which the father is able to generate a man. Therefore, the generative power in that which generates is the power by which what is generated is made similar to what generates it.

Now it is with respect to the divine nature that the Son of God is assimilated to the Father who begets Him. Hence, it is the divine nature in the Father which is His power to generate. This is why Hilary says in *De Trinitate* 5, “The nativity of God cannot but contain that nature from which it proceeded; for He does not subsist from any source other than God, and He does not subsist as anything other than God.” Therefore, one must claim, as the Master does in 1 *Sentences*, dist. 7, that ‘power to generate’ principally signifies the divine essence and not just a relation.

Nor does ‘power to generate’ signify the essence just insofar as the essence is the same as the relation, as if it signified both of them on a par. For instance, even though the Paternity is signified as the form of the Father, it is nonetheless a property that pertains to the person and is related to the person of the Father in the way that an individual form is related to a created individual. But among created things, even though an individual form constitutes the *person* who generates, it is not *that by which* he generates; otherwise, Socrates would generate Socrates. Hence, the Paternity cannot be understood as that by which the Father generates. Instead, the Paternity is understood as that which constitutes the person of the one who generates; otherwise, the Father would generate the Father. Rather, that by which the Father generates is the divine nature, with respect to which the Son is assimilated to Him. Accordingly, Damascene says that generation is a work of the nature—not insofar as the nature is the one who generates, but insofar as the nature is that by which He generates. And so ‘power to generate’ signifies the divine nature directly and the relation indirectly.

Reply to objection 1: ‘Power’ does not signify the very relation *principle of*; otherwise, it would be in the genus *relation*. Instead, it signifies that which is a principle—not in the sense in which an agent is called a principle, but rather in the sense in which that by which an agent acts is called a principle. Now even though an agent is distinct from what is effected, and even though that which generates is distinct from what it generates, still, *that by which* an agent (*generator*) generates is common both to that which generates and that which is generated—and the more perfect it is, the more perfect the act of generating is. Hence, since the divine act of generating is the most perfect of all, that by which the generator generates is common both to what is generated and to the one who generates, and it is *numerically* the same in them—and not just the same in *species*, as in the case of created things. Therefore, when we say that the divine essence is the principle by which the generator generates, it does not follow that there is more than one divine essence—in the way that it would follow if one claimed that the divine essence itself generates.

Reply to objection 2: In God the power to generate is the same as the act of generating in the sense in which the divine essence is the same in reality as the act of generating and as the Paternity. However, they are not conceptually the same.

Reply to objection 3: In the expression ‘the power to generate’, the power is signified directly and the act of generating is signified indirectly—just as if we were to say ‘the essence of the Father’. Hence, with respect to the essence that is signified, the power to generate is common to all three persons, but

with respect to the notion that is connoted, it is proper to the person of the Father.

Article 6

Could a notional act terminate in more than one person?

It seems that a notional act could terminate in more than one person, so that in God there could be more than one person who is begotten or more than one person who is spirated:

Objection 1: Everything in which the power to generate exists is able to generate. But the power to generate exists in the Son. Therefore, the Son is able to generate. But He cannot generate Himself. Therefore, He is able to generate another Son. Therefore, there can be more than one Son in God.

Objection 2: In *Contra Maximinum* Augustine says, “The Son did not beget the creator. It was not that He was unable to, but that He did not need to.”

Objection 3: God the Father has a greater power to generate than does a created father. But one man is able to generate more than one son. Therefore, God can, too—especially given that the Father’s power is not diminished by the fact that one Son has already been generated.

But contrary to this: In God, the possible (*posse*) does not differ from the actual (*esse*). Therefore, if it were possible for there to be more than one Son in God, then there would be more than one Son. And so there would be more than three persons in God—which is heretical.

I respond: As the Athanasian creed says, “In God there is only one Father, one Son, and one Holy Spirit.” Four reasons can be given for this:

The first reason is based on the relations, which alone distinguish the persons: Since the divine persons are themselves subsistent relations, there cannot be more than one Father or Son in God unless there is more than one Paternity and more than one Filiation. But this could not be the case except because of a material distinction among the things, since the forms of a given species are multiplied only by matter—which does not exist in God. Hence, in God there can be just one subsistent Filiation, just as there could be only one subsistent whiteness.

The second reason is based on the manner of the processions: God understands and wills all things by a single simple act. Hence, there can be just one person who proceeds in the manner of a word, viz., the Son, and just one person who proceeds in the manner of a love, viz., the Holy Spirit.

The third reason is taken from the mode of proceeding: As has been explained (a. 2), the persons themselves proceed by nature. But nature is determined to a single effect.

The fourth reason is based on the perfection of the divine persons: The Son is perfect because the entire divine Filiation is contained in Him and because there is only one Son. And the same must be said about the other two persons.

Reply to objection 1: Even though it should be conceded without qualification that the Son has the power that the Father has, still, it should not be conceded that the Son has the power of generating, if ‘of generating’ is the gerundive of an active verb, so that the meaning is that the Son has the power to generate. Similarly, even though the same *esse* belongs to the Father and the Son, it nonetheless does not belong to the Son to be (*esse*) the Father—and this because of the added notional term ‘Father’.

However, if the expression ‘of generating’ is the gerundive of a passive verb, then the power of generating is in the Son, i.e., the power of being generated. The same holds if ‘of generating’ is the gerundive of an impersonal verb, so that ‘power of generating’ means the power by which some person is generated.

Reply to objection 2: In this passage Augustine wants to claim not that the Son was able to

generate a Son, but that it is not because of the Son's impotence that He did not generate. This will be explained below (q. 42, a. 6).

Reply to objection 3: As has been explained, God's immateriality and perfection require that there cannot be more than one Son in God. Hence, the fact that there is not more than one Son does not stem from the Father's inability to generate.