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THE TRINITY AND GOD THE CREATOR

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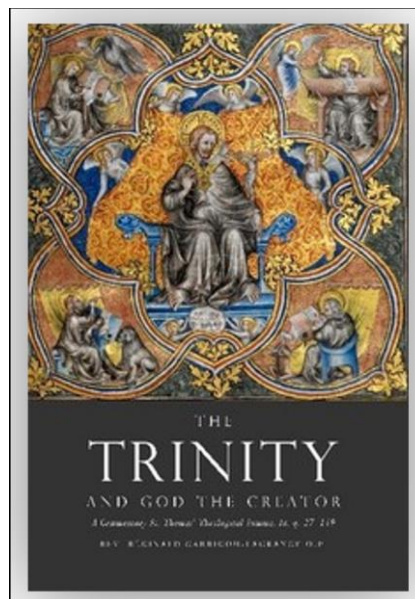
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R. Garrigou-Lagrange

THE TRINITY AND GOD THE CREATOR

PREFACE

In his motu proprio, "Doctoris Angelici", of June 29, 1914, Pope Pius X commanded that the universities and institutions of learning which were empowered to grant academic degrees and the doctorate in sacred theology should use the "Summa theologica" of St. Thomas as their text.

On March 7, 1916, the Sacred Congregation of Seminaries and Universities interpreted this decree as follows: "The "Summa theologica" of St. Thomas must be accepted as the text for the lectures inasmuch as they treat of the scholastic part of the questions. The method to be followed is this: the "Summa theologica" is to be consulted frequently and explained together with some other text which presents the logical order of the questions and the positive teaching" ("Acta Apost. Sedis", VIII, 157).

To meet this demand, we have already published three treatises: "De revelatione ab Ecclesia proposita, De Deo uno, De Eucharistia". The first part of this present work treats of the Trinity. After presenting the testimony of the Scriptures and the Fathers, we explain the questions in St. Thomas' "Summa theologica", article by article, comparing his doctrine with the teaching of earlier and later theologians.

We have laid great stress on St. Thomas' concept of relation because from it flow all the other conclusions in this treatise, and these conclusions will appear to be in accord with the fundamental thesis of the Thomistic treatise on the one God which establishes that God is self-subsisting Being and that consequently there is but one nature in Him although the real relations in God are really distinct from one another.

In this way we shall show how St. Thomas perfected St. Augustine's teaching on the Trinity. As St. Augustine solved many difficulties

remaining in the doctrine of the Greek Fathers on the Trinity, so St. Thomas explained many of St. Augustine's doubts about the processions, relations, and persons. This will become abundantly clear as we proceed to the different parts of the present treatise. We shall give particular attention to the indwelling of the Holy Trinity in the souls of the just.

With regard to the questions on creation, the distinction of things, their preservation, and on evil, we shall explain each article because they are all of great importance. In the treatises on the angels, corporeal creatures, and man, we shall study only the more important questions, laying special emphasis on the principles which throw light on the whole matter. It is well to descend from these principles to the conclusions and then rise from the conclusions to the principles, so that the unity of our science will become clear and that our study may dispose to a contemplation of divine things and to a true union with God.

We hope that in some degree at least we shall attain the goal envisaged by the Vatican Council: "Human reason illumined by faith, when it inquires diligently and piously and sincerely, will with God's help attain to a most fruitful understanding of the mysteries both from the analogies of those things which it knows naturally and from the interconnection between the mysteries themselves and between the mysteries and man's ultimate end."

THE TRINITY

1. THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS TREATISE

If we read the Fathers of the Church and the ancient theologians, I we shall see that for them the dogma of the Trinity, however obscure it may have been for them, was of the greatest importance. Thus Tertullian[1] asked: "What is the substance of the New Testament, except that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, believed to be three, are one God?" The words of St. Hilary[2] on this mystery, expressed in the sign of the cross, with which Christians sign themselves, have been quoted many times; "This is what the Church understood, what the synagogue did not believe, what philosophy could not grasp." The dogma of the Trinity, therefore, is that fundamental truth by which believing Christians are distinguished from the Jews and pagans.

Both the Greek and the Latin Fathers wrote long treatises on the Trinity, at first as positive and apologetic theology and later as speculative theology. Among the Greek Fathers we find St. Athanasius,[3] St. Basil,[4] St. Gregory Nazianzen,[5] St. Gregory of Nyssa,[6] Didymus,[7] Cyril of Alexandria,[8] St. John Damascene;[9] and among the Latin Fathers, St. Hilary,[10] St. Ambrose,[11] St. Augustine,[12] St. Fulgentius,[13] and Boetius.[14]

Among the Scholastics, all the great theologians and their commentators wrote speculative treatises on the Trinity; among modern positive theologians, Petau and Thomassin wrote at length on this dogma. Finally, the more recent theologians have accorded this dogma the same importance, as Franzelin, Scheeben,[15] Kuhn, Billot, Buonpensiere, de Regnon[16] (who wrote four volumes, 1892-98), and J. Lebreton.[17] Father Jugie's recent work is based on the sources of revelation and the teachings of the dissident Oriental Churches.[18] A. d'Ales wrote his "De Deo Trino" in 1934; P. Galtier wrote "De SS. Trinitate in se et in nobis" in 1933; L. Choppin, "La Trinite chez les Peres, Apostoliques" in 1925; F. Cavalerra, "Les premieres formules trinitaires de S. Augustin" in 1925, and M. Schmaus, "Die Psychologie Trinitatslehre des hl. Augustinus" in

1927.[19]

In view of this theological activity it is surprising that toward the end of the last century the question of the importance of this dogma should have arisen.[20] With regard to this question three positions may be distinguished.

Certain Protestants, holding that this mystery is incomprehensible, declared that God revealed it as an enigma to humble human reason, which seeks to measure all things according to its own principles, and not in order to perfect our intellects by sublime and fruitful knowledge.

This position, which is in opposition to the whole tradition of the doctors, exaggerates and distorts a truth. It is indeed true that in the revelation of this mystery God shows us that His intimate life and His divinity transcend even our highest and most universal analogical concepts, the concepts of being and unity. For the Deity as such, naturally unknowable, is in a sense above the being and unity which are naturally knowable, as Cajetan said so well.[21] The revelation of the mystery of the Trinity shows that the Deity is also above the absolute and the relative for, as we shall see, the Deity as it is in itself is not really distinct from the divine relations, from paternity, filiation, and spiration. Thus it is not something merely absolute nor merely relative, but something above these, the supreme enigma. But must we conclude that the manifestation of this enigma was intended solely to humble our reason and not also to perfect and illuminate it?

Many other Protestants during the nineteenth century, and some Catholics too, like Hirscher, declared that this dogma indeed illuminated our minds, but only in an extrinsic manner. They thought that for us the Trinity had no intrinsic importance, but that it served only to obviate contradictions in the other mysteries of the incarnation of the Son of God and the sending of the Holy Ghost, which in themselves are of great value to us.

The basis of this position, as its authors declared, is that the dogma of the Trinity taken intrinsically, prescinding from the other truths with which it is connected, cannot perfect our inner life, our faith, hope, and charity. They argue as if it mattered not to our interior life whether we believe that there are four divine persons, or that the

divine persons are not really distinct from one another. Since, according to these men, God did not reveal this mystery because of its intrinsic validity, any theological attempt to penetrate it is futile, and therefore the treatise on the Trinity is merely an introduction to the treatises on the redemptive Incarnation and the mission of the Holy Ghost, which perfect our faith, hope, and charity.

Such an introduction, they said, is necessary to prevent any contradiction between the essential truths intrinsically necessary for the Christian life: between 1. the unity of God, which is the fundamental truth of the Old Testament; 2. the divinity of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who, according to the Gospels, is not entirely identified with His Father; and 3. the divinity of the Holy Ghost, the Paraclete and Sanctifier, sent by the Father and the Son. These are the essential dogmas of Christianity, which cannot be reconciled without the distinction and the consubstantiality of the three divine persons, as is clear from the first centuries, when Sabellianism denied the real distinction between the three divine persons, and when Arius and others denied the consubstantiality of the Son and the Holy Spirit. According to this position the dogma of the Trinity was revealed to illuminate our minds but solely in an extrinsic manner to prevent contradictions in the other mysteries.

The Modernists, however, like Le Roy, extended this position in a pragmatic sense, declaring, "The dogmas of faith are to be accepted only in a practical sense, that is, only as preceptive norms of action and not as rules of faith."[22] Thus, for the Modernists the formula of the dogma of the Trinity was introduced into the professions of faith to prevent such heresies as oppose the Christian life.

This position is similar to Locke's Nominalist philosophical position. Locke taught that the principle of contradiction is a solemn futility, in itself of slight importance but necessary nonetheless to obviate absurdity in our thought and speech.

If a principle is necessary to avoid error, is it without all intrinsic value? Certainly contradictions are not eliminated from our thinking without some positive illumination, and the principle of contradiction precludes all absurdity only because it is a fundamental law of real being and of thought. Thus, ontology is not a solemn futility but an important part of metaphysics which, in opposition to absolute evolutionism, defends the validity of the principles of contradiction

and identity, which was denied by Heraclitus when he said," ll things are becoming and nothing exists and in the becoming itself being and non-being are identified."

So also in the spiritual order, charity dispels all discord because it is the supreme virtue uniting the soul with God and also uniting souls to one another. Similarly, the mystery of the Trinity would not exclude every contradiction in the other mysteries of the incarnation of the Son and the sending of the Holy Spirit unless it were the expression of the intimate life of God in the most sublime aspect of that life.

The third position is the traditional view of those who hold that the dogma of the Trinity possesses intrinsic value of the greatest importance for us. This position was defended during the nineteenth century by Kleutgen ("Theologie der Vorzeit") and Scheeben, whose fundamental reasoning may here be stated briefly and later developed during the course of this treatise. This dogma 1. perfects our natural knowledge of God the Creator, 2. it gives us supernatural knowledge of the intimate life of God, and 3. it throws light from above on other supernatural mysteries.

The first reason is found in St. Thomas: "The knowledge of the divine persons was necessary for right thinking about the creation of things. For when we say that God made all things by His Word we avoid the error of those who say that God made all things necessarily because of His nature. But when we discover in God the procession of love we see that God produced creatures not because of any need, nor because of any extrinsic cause, but because of the love of His goodness."[23] This is to say, as Scheeben points out, that the revelation of the mystery of the Trinity perfects and confirms our natural knowledge of God the Creator and of creation as an entirely free act of God "ad extra". This will be all the more apparent when we remember that many philosophers denied the freedom of creation because of the Platonic and Neoplatonic principle that the good is essentially diffusive of itself. But God is the highest good. Therefore God is essentially and to the greatest degree diffusive of Himself even as the sun radiates its light and heat everywhere by its very nature.

Reply. That good is diffusive of itself according to its particular aptitude, I concede; that it is always so because of its actuality, I

deny. On this principle St. Thomas[24] showed that creation was fitting and proper, but in his following article he went on to say that, although creation is fitting it is entirely free because "the goodness of God is perfect and is able to be without other beings since nothing of perfection accrues to it from other beings." Some obscurity remains, however; for if God had created nothing, how would the principle that good is diffusive of itself be verified in God? In the first place how could there be an end eliciting the action of creation, and secondly how would creation be effected? Here Leibnitz erred by saying that creation is not physically but morally necessary, and that God would not be perfectly wise and good if He had not created, and moreover if He had not created the best of all possible worlds. Such was also the teaching of Malebranche. This obscurity is clarified by the revelation of the mystery of the Trinity, for, even if God had created nothing, there would still be in Him the infinite fecundity of the generation of the Son and the spiration of the Holy Ghost. Thus the principle that good is diffusive of itself is perfectly verified in God. Indeed the highest good is necessarily diffusive of itself within itself but not by causality; by a communication which is not only a participation in its nature but a communication of His entire indivisible nature, of His entire intimate life in the generation of His Son, who was not made, and in the spiration of the Holy Ghost.

Thus from a higher plane comes confirmation that creation is an entirely free act by which God communicates without Himself a participation of His being, His life, and His knowledge. Thus also it is more evident that God is not the intrinsic cause but the extrinsic cause of the universe, the end for which it was created, the being that created, conserves, and keeps it in motion.

If, therefore, God created actually, it was through love, to show in an entirely free act His goodness, and not in any way by a necessity of His nature, as St. Thomas taught in the passage cited above against the pantheists and against that absolute optimism which is found in the teaching of Leibnitz and Malebranche.

The second reason supporting the traditional view is that the revelation of the Trinity has intrinsic value for us and is of the greatest importance for the supernatural knowledge of God in His intimate life and immanent operations. No created intellect by its own natural powers is able to know the formal object of the uncreated intellect which is the Deity in its own proper aspect of

Deity; the created intellect knows God only according to the common and analogical terms of being, unity, truth, goodness, and so on. For if any created intellect, human or angelic, could attain even confusedly and vaguely to the formal object of the uncreated intellect, it would then be of that same nature as are the intellects of the ignorant man and the greatest philosopher. Then we would have that pantheistic confusion of the uncreated and created natures which, like sanctifying grace, would be a participation in the formal nature of God. This is profoundly explained by St. Thomas: "It is not by his natural knowledge that the angel knows what God is, because the very nature of the angel by which he attains to the knowledge of God is an effect not commensurate with the power of the cause that made it."[25]

The angel, and especially man, by his natural knowledge cannot attain to God except by those perfections in which he can share in the natural order, such as being, unity, goodness. But God as He is in Himself cannot be shared in the natural order; such participation can be only in the supernatural order by sanctifying grace. Thus even an angel in his natural knowledge is related to God as He is in Himself as the eye that perceives all the colors of the rainbow but would not perceive white light from which the colors are derived as inadequate effects. St. Thomas taught: "Revelation most properly defines God inasmuch as He is the highest cause, teaching not only that which is knowable by creatures but also communicating how He is known to Himself alone and to others in revelation."[26] This is primarily the Godhead Himself, or the intimate life of God, which is properly made known by the revelation of the Trinity.

In the Trinity we see the infinite and eternal fecundity of the divine nature, which is communicated by the Father to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost by the Father and the Son. The Protestant theologians mentioned above say that the mystery of the Trinity is an enigma without meaning for our interior life, but the traditional theologians say that in this mystery of the Trinity we come to some knowledge of the most perfect intellectual life, that is in the three persons, who in the same divine truth live by the same act of pure intelligence which is subsisting intelligence itself.

So also in this mystery there is some manifestation of the supreme life of charity in the love of the three divine persons, who in the same infinite goodness live by the same act of pure love, which is

subsisting love itself.

Here we have the supreme model of our supernatural life, the love of the three divine persons, since our adoptive sonship is the image participating in the eternal filiation of the only-begotten Son.[27] For so Christ prayed for us to the Father: "That they may be one, as We also are" (John 17:11); and St. Paul writing to the Romans said: "For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be made conformable to the image of His Son; that He might be the first-born among many brethren."[28]

By its own powers the created intellect could not know this essentially supernatural mystery, and without some revelation, more or less obscure, there would be no explicit knowledge of the intimate life of God in itself. Some implicit knowledge of the intimate life of God, however, is obtained when we believe that God is and that He is the rewarder, for we know Him not only as the author of nature but also as the author of grace and the remunerator in the order of salvation. The intimate life of God, therefore, is known from the effects of grace and salvation, but this life is known explicitly in itself in the mystery of the Trinity, although not with that clarity with which it will be seen in heaven.

This is clearly expressed by Alexander of Hales[29] and still more clearly by St. Thomas, who says: "Only this can be known about God by natural reason, that He necessarily possesses being inasmuch as He is the principle of all beings. God's creative power is common to the entire Trinity and pertains therefore to the unity of essence and not to the distinction of persons."[30]

Objection. This knowledge of the intimate life of God remains so obscure that it does not of itself throw any positive light on the human mind.

Reply. Clearly even a very imperfect knowledge of the intimate life of God is of the utmost importance for us in this life since it is an anticipation of eternal life. This knowledge will correspond to our natural inefficacious and conditional desire of seeing the essence of the first cause and the intimate conciliation of the divine attributes; it corresponds also to our supernatural and efficacious desire which proceeds from infused hope and especially from infused charity, which is the true friendship between God and the just man. Any

friendship presupposes a union of the friends and strives for a more intimate union between them.

To say, therefore, that the revelation of the mystery of the Trinity is without real value for us is to look at the matter from a naturalistic viewpoint. We recall here the words of Aristotle: "Man should be attracted to divine and immortal things as much as he is able, and however little he may see of these things, that little is to be loved and desired more than all knowledge he has of inferior substances."[31]

Christ our Lord pointed out the importance of the mystery of the Trinity when He said: "But I have called you friends; because all things whatsoever I have heard of My Father, I have made known to you, "[32] and "Father, I will that where I am, they also whom Thou hast given Me may be with Me; that they may see My glory which Thou hast given Me, because Thou hast loved Me before the creation of the world."[33] These words refer primarily to the eternal generation of the Word.

Indeed the act and the fruit of charity is that rejoicing in God because God is infinitely perfect in Himself.[34] This joy, however, is greatly increased by the knowledge of God's inner life and His infinite fecundity. This is what St. Paul meant, writing to the Colossians: "That their hearts may be comforted, being instructed in charity, and unto all riches of fullness of understanding, unto the knowledge of the mystery of God the Father and of Christ Jesus: in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."[35]

When theologians abandon the contemplation of divine things, they say that the revelation of the mystery of the Trinity is of no intrinsic value for us, that it is useful only to prevent contradictions in the enunciation of other mysteries. And because of this trend theology gradually became anti-contemplative. Men began to write books of theology devoid of contemplation and piety, just as if they were to write books of piety devoid of doctrine. The Fathers of the Church and the great doctors, on the contrary, looked on the mystery of the Trinity as having the greatest importance for us. The tract on the Trinity, of course, was not purely practical like the tracts on penance and matrimony, but it afforded the greatest help in attaining the higher stages of contemplation and union with God.

Amid his tribulations, St. Hilary, writing of the Trinity, said: "The

persecution of men is a small thing because the persecutors cannot touch the divine persons nor diminish their joy." A friend rejoices in the joy of his friend, and the just man rejoices in the beatitude of God.

All the great doctors who wrote about the Trinity, from St. Athanasius to St. Thomas, were true contemplatives, deeply concerned not only with purely practical human affairs but also with divine things, with the divine life itself, the knowledge and love of which is the beginning of eternal life. By the revelation of the Trinity we are given the supernatural knowledge of God, as distinct from natural knowledge; and immediately the distinction of the two orders of knowledge becomes clearer. This was the great argument against Baius, who denied the essential distinction between nature and grace, as if grace were something owing to nature.[36] This distinction between the two orders stood out so clearly in the revelation of the dogma of the Trinity that some rationalists taught that the tract on the one God contained all that could be said about God. Consequently the Protestant liberals, who are rationalists in a sense, no longer mention the Trinity, speaking exclusively of the unity of God, and therefore came to be known as Unitarians.

Finally, the revelation of the mystery of the Trinity not only serves to obviate contradictions in the teaching of the other mysteries, but also throws a positive light from above on all the other supernatural mysteries, on the redemptive Incarnation, the sending of the Holy Ghost, and the life of grace. All this will be clear to us in heaven, but even now we can see that the visible and invisible missions of the divine persons presuppose the internal processions, because no one is sent by himself, but the Son is sent by the Father, and the Holy Spirit is sent by the Father and the Son. Again, our adoptive sonship is the image and participation in the sonship of the eternal Son, since the only-begotten Son is "the first-born among many brethren."[37] Adoption is attributed to the Father as to its author, to the Son as to the model, and to the Holy Ghost as to Him who imprints the character. So also the friendship between the saints and the just is an image participating in the friendship of the divine persons, according to our Lord's words, "that they may be one, as We also are." The life of grace is, as it were, a reflected light, manifesting God's inner life and the divine processions.

Thus St. Thomas taught: "The knowledge of the divine persons was

necessary for us,... especially that we might think correctly about the salvation of the human race, which is accomplished by the incarnate Son and the gift of the Holy Spirit."[38] He says it was necessary for correct positive thinking, not only to avoid contradiction negatively. The reason is that a truth which excludes equivocation and absurdity in any teaching is a higher truth, such as those eminent principles of being and reasoning and ontology itself in the philosophical sphere. This will stand out most clearly after we have attained the light of glory; when we see the Trinity clearly, the other supernatural mysteries will be lucidly evident.

We see, therefore, that the revelation of the mystery of the Trinity has not only an extrinsic value, but an intrinsic worth in illuminating our minds, for it makes manifest to us the principal and supreme object of our faith, which according to the arrangement of the Apostles' Creed is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost and those things attributed to them in the order of salvation.

Lastly, we should point out that the just here on earth, until that time when they reach the height of perfection which is called the transforming union, described by St. Theresa in the seventh mansion, enjoy the contemplation of the mystery of the Trinity amid the darkness of faith, which is really the highest exercise of the theological virtues and of the gift of understanding and wisdom.

Looking at the matter from this exalted viewpoint, those opinions which hold that the mystery of the Trinity is of no intrinsic value appear not as the dicta of wise men but rather as the fruit of spiritual stupidity and ignorance in the scriptural sense of the word. St. Paul said: "Although we speak wisdom among the perfect; yet not the wisdom of the world,... but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery,... that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him."[39]

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2. THE TEACHING OF THE CHURCH ON THE TRINITY

The Catholic doctrine on the Trinity is expressed in the various creeds and definitions, such as the Apostles' Creed, the Athanasian Creed, the Nicene Creed, and many others of later date, and in Denzinger.[40] Finally, the Catholic belief in the Trinity was summed up by the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) in that famous chapter, "Firmiter": "Firmly we believe and simply we confess that one alone is true God, the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit, three persons, but one essence, one substance, and one nature entirely simple. The Father is from no one, the Son from the Father alone, and the Holy Ghost equally from both... consubstantial, co-equal, co-omnipotent, and co-eternal... . We confess and believe with Peter Lombard that it is one supreme being, incomprehensible and ineffable; this supreme being is truly the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, three persons together and each one singly; and therefore in God there is only a Trinity, not a quaternity, because each of the three persons is that thing, that substance, that essence, that divine nature."[41]

Again, "No real distinction exists between the essence and the persons, but a real distinction exists between the persons among themselves."[42]

Again, the three persons are one principle of operation without, because the divine operation without proceeds from the divine omnipotence, which is common to the three divine persons.[43]

This definition of the Fourth Lateran Council was amplified by the Council of Florence (1439) in the dogmatic decree of the union of the Greeks: "We define that the Holy Spirit is eternally from the Father and the Son and that He has His essence and His subsisting being simultaneously from the Father and the Son, and that He proceeds eternally from both as from one principle and by one spiration."[44] Other definitions about each person in particular may be found here.

The mystery of the Trinity may be more briefly stated as the mystery of one God in three divine persons. But in opposition to the pseudo-synod of Pistoia it should be said that it is not one God divided into three persons but one God in three distinct persons, since there is no real distinction in the Godhead Himself, as the Eleventh Council of Toledo declared: "The Godhead is not reduced to single persons

and is not increased into three persons."[45]

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THE TRADITIONAL SYMBOL OF THE TRINITY

The equilateral triangle is commonly proposed as a symbol expressive of this mystery, and the symbol expresses more than is sometimes thought. It very tangibly expresses an outline of the mystery with respect to the distinction between the persons and those things that flow from it.

(a) The three angles are really distinct from each other although they are not really distinct from the area of the triangle, which is numerically the same for all three angles. Thus the three divine persons are really distinct from each other but not from the divine essence, which is numerically the same in all three persons. Further, the three angles are really distinguished from each other by opposite relations but not from the area to which they are in no

way opposed; so also it is with the three divine persons.

(b) The three angles are equal and, as it were, consubstantial because they are constituted by the same surface which is no greater in the three than it is in one. Thus there is one surface in three distinct angles but not distinguished into three angles.

(c) Each angle renders the surface incommunicable in its own way, nevertheless when the first angle is formed it does not cause the surface of the other angles although it communicates its surface to the second angle, and through the

second angle to the third. Thus the first angle, although not really distinct from its surface, communicates that surface without communicating itself. In the Trinity the Father communicates the divine nature but not Himself; likewise the Son with respect to the Holy Ghost.

(d) Lastly, even though the angles are equal, there is among them an order of origin without causality: the first angle once formed becomes the principle of the second, and both of these are the principle of the third. At the same time the second and third are not

caused by the first because their surfaces are not caused, but it is the surface of the first which is communicated to them. This analogy will become clearer when the principal definitions of the Church on the Trinity are reduced to the following propositions, which are often written around an equilateral triangle as below.

The Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Ghost is God, and yet the Father is not the Son, because He does not generate Himself; nor is the Father the Holy Ghost, or the Son the Holy Ghost, because those who spirate are distinguished from that which is spirated as he who generates is distinguished from that which is generated. In the statement of this mystery we see the profound meaning of the word "is" and of the negation "is not." As St. Thomas says:[46] In every affirmative proposition about some reality the word "is" expresses the real identity of the subject and predicate. Here it expresses the real identity of the three divine persons with the divine essence, and the negation "is not" expresses the real distinction of the persons from each other. In this statement of the mystery the apparent contradiction is explained, that contradiction arising if God would be said to be one and three under the same aspects, e. g., nature.

In the Catholic Catechism, written by Cardinal Gasparri, this mystery

is defined as:

(a) "God is one in the unity of nature in three really distinct persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, who constitute the Holy Trinity."[47] Thus the Father is the Godhead but He is not the Trinity.

(b) How are the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost distinguished from one another?

Answer. By the opposite relations of the persons, inasmuch as the Father generates the Son, and the Holy Ghost proceeds from both. (The Father does not generate Himself.)

(c) How are the three divine persons one God?

A. Because they are consubstantial, that is, they have one and the same divine nature and therefore the same attributes or perfections and operations "ad extra." (The operations "ad extra" proceed from omnipotence, which is common to the three persons.)

(d) Is not power usually attributed to the Father, wisdom to the Son, and goodness to the Holy Ghost in the Scriptures?

A. Although all the attributes

of divinity are common to the three divine persons, the Scriptures usually attribute power to the Father because He is the font of origin, wisdom to the Son because He is the word of the Father, and goodness and holiness to the Holy Ghost because He is the love of the other two.[48]

We will spend no more time in the simple statement of this mystery; the explanation of the terms nature, person, and so on will be found in St. Thomas' articles.

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3. TRINITARIAN ERRORS

We are here not concerned with atheists and pantheists, who deny God the Creator Himself, nor with the rationalists, who simply reject every supernatural mystery. The errors about the Trinity can be easily divided into those which attempt to safeguard the unity of the divine nature by denying either the real distinction between the persons (Monarchians and Sabellians) or the consubstantiality of the persons (Subordinationists, Arians, Macedonians). Opposed to these are the Tritheists who say there are three natures in God in order to safeguard the Trinity of persons.[49]

We see how divine providence permits errors and heresies that the truth made stand out more clearly, just as it permits sin for a greater good. With regard to the Trinity, God permitted errors to appear which are opposed to one another as early as the first three centuries. During that time all the principal aspects of this supreme mystery were speculatively considered and this supreme dogma stood forth in the clearest light. In the East particularly the chief speculative heresies, those of the metaphysical order, preceded the Pelagian heresy, which is of the moral order and originated in the West.

The Trinitarian errors can be so classified as to support the axiom that erroneous systems often are true in what they affirm and false in what they deny because the reality with which they deal is higher and broader than the heresies themselves.

Denial

Trinity
of
persons

With respect to their real distinction— Monarchians & Modalists

With respect to their consubstantiality —Arians and Macedonians

Unity of nature— The Tritheism of Roscelline (11th cent.) and of Abbot Joachim (12th Cent.)

It would be difficult to imagine any other errors, unless we include the errors of modern rationalists, such as Kant.

These errors can also be presented in a way to show the opposition existing between them. Between Unitarianism (Monarchists, Modalists, and Arians) and Tritheism, the Catholic dogma of the Trinity appears as the highest point of truth, like the apex of a pyramid rising from errors opposed to one another. The errors thus opposed to one another appear false in what they deny, e. g., the denial of the Trinity or of the divine unity, and true in what they affirm, because the divine reality is infinitely broader than the limited concepts of the human mind. As we shall see, the medieval conflict between nominalism and realism had considerable influence on these theological questions.

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ERRORS DENYING THE REAL DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE PERSONS

In the second century the Monarchians, believing in only one divine principle, declared that Christ was only man endowed with some divine power (Paul of Samosata) or that Christ was the Father who became incarnate and suffered (Patripassians). Chief among the Patripassians were Noetus, who was opposed in the East by Hippolytus, and Praxeas, whom Tertullian refuted in the West. Noetus and Praxeas argued that the Father and the Son were not really distinct but merely different names for the same person.

In the third century Sabellius proposed his Modalism, so called because in God he did not admit distinct persons but only accidental modes. Later the Modalists taught that in God there was but one person, who manifested Himself in three modes: as the lawgiver in the Old Testament (the Father), as the Redeemer in the New Testament (the Son), and finally as the sanctifier or Holy Spirit. The Sabellians and Modalists were opposed by Tertullian, St. Dionysius of Alexandria, St. Zephyrinus, and Callistus.[50]

In the seventh century Modalism was revived by the Mohammedans. Mohammed admitted the existence of only God the Creator, Allah, who alone was to be adored, excluding the Trinity of persons. The Islamic formula of prayer, "There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is His prophet, " was in Mohammed's mind a negation of the Trinity and contained within it the total apostasy from the Christian faith, denying at the same time the dogmas of the incarnation and redemption by Christ, who was no more than one of the prophets. Those who now write about the mysticism of Islam, should note this essential difference between Islam and Christianity.

In the Middle Ages, Modalism was again revived by the Waldensians and the Socinians, and later by the Unitarians, who constitute the liberal wing of Protestantism. It appears again in the theology of Kant, where God the Father is called the lawgiver, the Son the ruler, and the Holy Spirit the judge. Modern theosophists also are Unitarians, teaching that there is one eternal, infinite being, which manifests itself in three ways: as the first "logos" or the root of being, the second "logos" or the primitive duality, and the third "logos" or the universal intelligence.[51] Others say in God there is

intelligence, without real distinction from the object and the union of these two, and that these three may be called, in the Hegelian sense, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. All these errors are revivals of the Modalism of the third century.

ERRORS DENYING THE DIVINITY OF THE PERSONS

Most famous of these heresies was that of Arius, a priest of Alexandria, who was addicted to the Gnostic principle that God by reason of His excellence could not immediately produce inferior creatures but required some superior creature to mediate between Him and His creation. Following the leadership of the Ebionites and Gnostics, Arius denied the divinity of the Son, declaring that the Son was only the most perfect of creatures, made out of nothing in time, and thus subordinate to God. Hence the name Subordinationism. According to Arius, God the Father alone is eternal; the Father created the Son, not of His own substance but out of nothing, and then God made use of the Son as an instrument to create the universe and redeem men. According to Arius the Holy Ghost also is a creature, inferior not only to the Father but also to the Son. Hence Arius, at least in the beginning, held that the Son was entirely different from the Father in nature. This error was attacked by Alexander, the bishop of Alexandria, who called a synod attended by almost a hundred bishops, and excommunicated Arius. Best known among the opponents of Arius was St. Athanasius, who valiantly defended the Catholic teaching and the words of St. John, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."[52]

To restore peace to the Church, a general council was called in 325 at Nicaea in Bithynia, which defined against Arius that the Son is consubstantial with the Father, homoousion two patri ("of the same substance with the Father").[53] The Council's formula of faith was: "We believe in one God, the Father almighty maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten born of the Father, that is, out of the substance of the Father[not out of nothing], God of God, light of light, true God of true God, born, not made, of one substance with the Father, which in Greek is called "homoousion", by whom all things were made. And in the Holy Ghost... ." After Arianism was thus condemned by the Church as a heresy, the Arians tried to dissimulate their error and said that the Son was similar in nature to the Father, "homoiousion" or "homoion", but they refused to say that He was consubstantial or "homoousion". Such was the teaching of Basil of Ancyra and Auxentius of Milan, who are called Semi-Arians. Arianism lasted into the sixth century, when it completely

disappeared.[54]

St. Athanasius' defense of the dogma may be briefly summed up as follows: The Word is called God in St. John's prologue, "And the Word was God"; His divinity is often affirmed in the epistles of St. Paul and by Christ Himself when He said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." Further, the Word deifies us, making us gods by participation, and for this it is necessary that the Word be God essentially, consubstantial with the Father, although distinct from Him as His Son. Similarly the Holy Ghost who vivifies us is essentially God, and therefore is mentioned with the Father and the Son in the formula of baptism.[55]

Following the principles that misled Arius, Eunomius concluded that the Holy Ghost was not God but a creature made by the Son of God, inferior to Him and similar to the angels. At about the same time, the Macedonians like the Semi-Arians denied the divinity and consubstantiality of the Holy Ghost. Eunomius was refuted by St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Basil of Caesarea, and St. Ambrose. Macedonianism was condemned by St. Damasus in the fourth Council of Rome (380) and in the following year by the second ecumenical Council of Constantinople.[56] The most important definition of the Council is: "If anyone shall say that the Holy Ghost is not truly and properly of the Father, like the Son, of the divine substance, and true God, let him be anathema." Thus in the fourth century, opposing these heresies, the Church explicitly taught a Trinity of distinct persons, upheld their divinity and consubstantiality, and so preserved the unity of essence together with the distinction of persons. In the earliest centuries, therefore, the Church explicitly condemned that Unitarianism which the liberal Protestants have recently revived.

TRITHEISM

Tritheism as such did not appear until the Middle Ages. In the sixth century, however, John Philoponus, a philosopher of Alexandria, prepared the way for Tritheism when he identified person with nature and taught that there were three natures in God and that there were still three persons in one God. In other words, the three divine persons participate in the divine nature as three men participate in human nature. He was condemned as a heretic in the Second Council of Constantinople (the fifth ecumenical council).[57]

In the eleventh and twelfth centuries the controversy about universals affected questions about the Trinity in various ways. Roscellinus, the celebrated doctor of Nominalism, taught that the divine essence could not be common to three persons and that the three divine persons were three distinct realities or substances, in much the same way that three souls or three angels differ. Nevertheless, he said, the three divine persons form a certain unity inasmuch as they are endowed with one will and the same power.

Roscellinus arrived at this conclusion because of his Nominalism, according to which the universals have not even a fundamental existence in things, that is to say, the universals have no objective reference but are merely words adopted into our speech. Positivists and modern empiricists have returned to this view, refusing to admit any essential difference between intellectual and sensitive knowledge and reducing the idea to a composite image of the phantasm to which a common name has been joined. According to pure Nominalism, therefore, the universals do not exist in things even fundamentally; the only things that exist are the individuals. Thus humanity designates the aggregate of men and not human nature, which is specifically one. If, therefore, according to revelation, there are three divine persons, the Nominalists cannot conceive how they can have the same divine nature, especially a divine nature which is numerically one, nor do they admit one specific nature for all men. St. Anselm attacked the Nominalism of Roscellinus, and in 1092 it was condemned by the Synod of Soissons.[58]

In the eleventh century Gilbert Porretanus, who although he is often called a Nominalist is really a realist, inclined to Tritheism in another

way by teaching that the divine relations are really distinct from the divine essence. Extreme realism believes that the universal exists formally apart from the thing, and consequently Gilbert placed real distinctions where they do not exist, for example, in man between the metaphysical grades of being, substantiality, corporeity, life, animality, rationality, unmindful of the fact that all these things are reduced to one comprehensive concept of man.

Similarly this extreme realism places a certain real distinction, or at least more than a virtual distinction, between the divine attributes, and also between the divine essence and the divine persons. It thus inclines to Tritheism because the "esse in" is multiplied in the divine persons and in the divine relations opposed to one another, while St. Thomas has shown that the "esse in" in the divine persons is not accidental but substantial and therefore is not multiplied.[59]

Gilbert Porretanus was condemned by the Council of Reims in 1148. [60] From his doctrine it would have followed that the divine relations would be accidents in God. St. Thomas' reply[61] is that in God, who is pure act, no accident is found, and the relations thus really distinguished from the divine substance like accidents cannot constitute persons. As we shall see below, the "esse in" of the relations in God is something substantial and therefore not really distinguished from the substance.

Thus Roscellinus and Gilbert Porretanus by different routes reached Tritheism by placing in God real distinctions which are not there. Finally, in the twelfth century Abbot Joachim of Calabria fell into Tritheism in an effort to correct Peter Lombard, whom he had misunderstood. He feared that the teaching of Peter Lombard would lead to a kind of quaternity inasmuch as the divine essence was neither the Father nor the Son nor the Holy Ghost. Trying to avoid this error he fell into another: he taught that between the three divine persons only a moral unity existed, arising from the consent of the will, a unity such as exists between a group of Christians. Consequently the divine nature would not be unique or one numerically, but it would be multiplied. This error of Abbot Joachim was condemned by the Fourth Lateran Council: "We, however, with the approbation of the sacred council, believe and confess with Peter Lombard that the supreme entity is one, incomprehensible and ineffable indeed, which is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, the three persons together and singly each of the three persons.

Therefore in God only a Trinity is found and not a quaternity, since each of the three persons is that entity, namely, the divine essence."[62] In this definition the word "is" in the statement, "The divine essence is the Father, " indicates, as in every affirmative proposition, the real identity of the subject and the predicate. The divine essence is the Father without any real distinction; on the contrary the Father is not the Son and between the two persons is found a real distinction, a distinction which is antecedent to any consideration of the mind and based, as was more clearly expressed by the Council of Florence, on the opposition of relation.[63] In the Council of Florence, called to reconcile the schismatic Greeks to the Church, was formulated the principle which illumines the whole doctrine of the Trinity: "In God all things are one and the same where no opposition of relation exists." This opposition of relation exists between the divine persons themselves but not between the persons and the divine substance. The doctrine of the Church thus appears as the apex of a pyramid rising above the heresies opposed to each other which either deny the Trinity of the divine persons or the numerical unity of the divine nature. According to the judgment of the Church, these heresies are false in what they deny, whereas something of the truth remains in what they affirm. Whatever these false teachings affirm positively, such as the unity of nature and the Trinity of persons, is also affirmed by the Church.

It should be noted that in the nineteenth century, Gunther inclined to Tritheism when he defined personality as the consciousness of oneself. He thought that if God were conscious of Himself by His divine essence only one person would be in God. Accordingly he placed three distinct consciousnesses in God, distinguishing between the subject of the consciousness (the Father), the object of the consciousness (the Son), and the equality of both conscious of itself (the Holy Ghost). He arrived in this way at three intelligences. This error was condemned by Pius IX.[64]

Among the errors about the Trinity we must mention the theory of the Modernists, who declare that the dogma of the Trinity, like other dogmas, is a human invention, achieved by laborious effort and subject to continuous change and evolution.[65]

From this brief enumeration of the errors about the Trinity, we see not only the revealed truth as taught by the Church standing forth more clearly, preserving both the unity of the divine nature and the

Trinity of the divine persons, but by reason of these errors the distinction between nature and person is greatly clarified. As has often been said, the great difficulty in determining this distinction arose from the difference between the Latin and Greek terms. In the Western Church, the Latin word persona (prosopon) at first meant a theatrical mask, worn by actors when impersonating famous individuals; later the term was used for those who held some dignified position (a personage), and finally it designated all men who are of their own right, that is, capable of rights, and thus persons were distinguished from things. More philosophically Boethius in the sixth century defined a person as "an individual substance with a rational nature."[66] Today we define a person as a free and intelligent subject.

In the Eastern Church, however, in the first centuries the terms "ousia" and "hypostasis" were used indiscriminately to designate substance and essence. This was the cause of many controversies and at the same time it was realized that "prosopon", with its etymological meaning of a theatrical mask, did not clearly express the real distinction between the divine persons. The Arians understood the term "hypostasis" to refer to the substance and declared that there were in God three subordinate substances. At length, at St. Athanasius' urging, the word "ousia" was accepted to mean nature and the word "hypostasis" to mean person. From this time the Greek "hypostasis" was equivalent to the Latin "persona", hence the expression hypostatic union to designate the union of two natures in the one person of the incarnate Word; similarly three "hypostases" in one nature were said to be in God. Later, among the Greek Fathers, St. Basil further determined the meaning of these words. He taught that "ousia" designated what was common ("to koinon") to individuals of the same species.[67] Even then the meaning was not clear because the nature assumed by the Word, although it is individual, is not a person. Therefore Leontius of Byzantium, to avoid confusing the individual humanity of Christ with His divine person, defined "hypostasis" as a substance not only individual but also separately existing of itself and truly incommunicable.[68]

St. Thomas perfected the definition of person when he said that a person is an individual substance with a rational nature, that is, incommunicable, existing of itself separately and operating separately of itself, of its own right.[69] Today commonly, as we have

said, a person is defined as a free and intelligent subject, and this definition (analogically, yet properly) applies to the human person, the angelic person, and the divine persons, as will be seen more clearly below.

We find two tendencies among the Catholic doctors and theologians. The Greek Fathers and theologians, when explaining this mystery, generally began with the Trinity of persons as explicitly revealed in the New Testament, rather than with the unity of nature. The Latins, on the other hand, especially after the time of St. Augustine, generally started with the unity of nature, as stated in the tract on the one God, and went on to the Trinity of persons. Thus the two groups began from either extreme of the mystery and proceeded to the other and therefore they were met with opposing difficulties: the Greeks found difficulty in safeguarding the unity of nature, and the Latins had to be careful to safeguard those things which are proper to the persons.

Among the Latin Scholastics we find a notable difference caused by the controversy about universals, since some, like Scotus, placed between the divine essence and the persons a formal distinction, actual on the part of the thing, whereas the Nominalists made the distinction only verbal, such as exists between Tully and Cicero. The Thomists, however, and many other theologians called it a virtual distinction.

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4. SCRIPTURAL TESTIMONY ON THE TRINITY

State of the question. It is better to speak of the testimony of the Scriptures than to say that the existence of the Trinity is proved from the Scriptures, for the Trinity is not proved, nor is it a theological conclusion, but it is believed. To say that it is proved from the Scriptures is to insinuate that faith is the conclusion of this syllogism: Whatever God has revealed is true and is to be believed. But in the Scriptures God had revealed the mystery of the Trinity. Therefore I believe this mystery. The real conclusion of this syllogism, however, is that the Trinity is believable and should be believed. This is a judgment of credibility, but not an act of faith which is simply an essentially supernatural act, above discursive reasoning, and never the result of a syllogism, because it is based immediately on the authority of God the revealer, inasmuch as I believe in God revealing and God revealed by one and the same act. [70]

This statement, that the existence of the Trinity is proved by the Scriptures, can be accepted in the sense that this truth is proved to be of faith by the Scriptures. It was in this sense that many Thomists used the formula.

It is not necessary that every dogma be proved as revealed by the Scriptures, since a dogma may be contained implicitly in the Scriptures and more clearly be found in tradition, which preceded the Scriptures in the preaching of Christ and the early preaching of the apostles, which were not completely recorded in writing.

With regard to the origin of the dogma of the Trinity, the rationalists, the Protestant liberals, and the Modernists say that Christ in no way taught that God was triune, but only that God was the Father of all. They say further that in the beginning the apostles indeed believed in God the Father and in Jesus Christ, the man, the divine legate, and in the spirit, power, and operation of God, but that they did not accept these terms as referring to three distinct persons. About A.D. 80 we find in the Gospel of St. Matthew the formula of baptism, in which the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are enumerated but not as distinct persons. Shortly thereafter certain Christians, influenced by the philosophy of Philo, concluded that Christ was the Logos, that intermediary being between God and men. Others,

because of their addiction to certain Hellenic theories, concluded that Christ was the Son of God in a literal and proper sense, and therefore equal to the Father. After long controversy this theory was defined by the Council of Nicaea. For the rationalists, therefore, the dogma of the Trinity is nothing more than a Judae-Hellenistic theory, slowly elaborated during the first four centuries.

Against this rationalist interpretation, it can be shown from the testimony of the Scriptures that this mystery was adumbrated in the Old Testament and more fully revealed in the New Testament. In a course of dogmatic theology, however, it is better to follow a regressive method by first explaining the texts of the New Testament and then indicating how the mystery was adumbrated in the Old Testament, just as we would regressively follow the course of a stream in order to discover its source. In explaining the doctrine of the New Testament it is more desirable to follow the order in which the revelation was proposed by Christ and the apostles, considering first the texts about the three persons together and then those about each person in particular.[71]

NEW TESTAMENT TESTIMONY ON THE THREE PERSONS

Presupposing a course in exegesis, our explanation of this doctrine of faith ought to point out the theological sources. As great rivers come down from the mountains, so sacred theology descends from the heights of doctrine as expressed in Sacred Scripture and in tradition, and then, in the end, theology should ascend to the heights and dispose us to a contemplation of divine things.[72]

We shall first consider the New Testament testimony on the three divine persons together as found: 1. in the Synoptic Gospels, the first expression of Christian preaching; 2. in the epistles of the apostles, the first of which were written about A.D. 53; 3. in the Gospel of St. John, written about A.D. 80 against those who denied the divinity of Christ. First we shall cite the clear texts and then point out the difficulties arising from the more obscure passages.

The Synoptic Gospels. The first text, sufficiently clear to show the mystery of the Trinity, is found in Luke 1:30-35, where the incarnation of the Word is announced to Mary by the archangel Gabriel, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee. And therefore also the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."

The Trinity of persons is clearly enunciated in this text, for the angel is sent by God the Father, who is often referred to as the Most High, and the Holy Ghost and the Son of the most high God are distinguished from the Father. That which was to be born of the Virgin Mary was not the Father or the Holy Ghost, but the Son of God. The consubstantiality of the persons is also implied in the text especially since the term "Son of God" is not used in the broad sense but in the proper sense, inasmuch as farther on (Luke 1:43) Mary is called the mother of the Lord. Finally, the Holy Ghost, to whom the work of the Incarnation is attributed is not less than the Father and the Son. This is the first manifestation of the Trinity in the New Testament before the Incarnation.

The second text of the Synoptic Gospels is Matt. 3:16 and Luke 9:34 (cf. II Pet. 1:17), before the beginning of Christ's public ministry at the time of His baptism. In Matthew we read: "And Jesus being baptized, forthwith came out of the water: and lo, the heavens were

opened to Him: and He saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon Him. And behold a voice from heaven, saying: This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." These words were spoken by God the Father in this solemn theophany.

More clearly than in the first text we see the distinction of the persons, since the Father speaks from heaven and the Son by this personal appellation is opposed to the person of the Father. The Holy Ghost is distinguished from both the Father and Son, for while the Father speaks from heaven the Holy Ghost in the form of a dove descends upon Christ, who is called the Son of God.

It is sufficiently clear that the Father is not the Son, for no one is ever called the father of himself, and that the Father and the Son are not the Holy Ghost. If the Father, antecedent to all consideration of our minds, is not the Son, then they are really distinct; and if the Father and the Son are not the Holy Ghost, they are really distinct from Him.

In this text, too, there is some manifestation of the divinity of the Son, since He is called "ho huios", with the article, that is, son not in the wide but proper sense, and the Father added, "In whom I am well pleased, " that is, beloved above all others. As Father Ceuppens remarks, "It should be noted that the three Synoptic Gospels use the same expression, "ho agapetos" (beloved), and this term is never used in the New Testament for an adoptive son and seems to have the meaning of "ho monogenes" ("only, or only-begotten").[73]

In this text the Holy Ghost is called the Spirit of God (Matt.) and is therefore not any divine spirit, such as an angel, but a well defined Spirit, to pneuma. And lest there be any further doubt, St. Luke added "to pneuma to agion" (3:22), that divine person who throughout the New Testament is called the Holy Ghost and who together with the Father and the Son constitutes the Holy Trinity.[74]

The third text of the Synoptic Gospels is Matt. 28:19 and Mark 16:13, the formula of baptism, which Christ, before He ascended into heaven, transmitted to the apostles while He was commissioning them to preach the gospel. This is at the end of the whole Gospel, as the first manifestation was at the beginning prior to the Incarnation. In the text from St. Matthew we read: "Going therefore, teach ye all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." The personal distinction is clearer in the Greek,

where the conjunction kai and the article are repeated before the name of each person. This emphatic repetition of the article cannot be explained except by the real distinction between the persons. Moreover the Father is not the Son, since these are personal nouns and not impersonal nouns, like truth, goodness, wisdom, which indicate divine attributes pertaining to the divine nature. Thus Father and Son designate distinct persons, and if this is true then the third term ought also to designate a distinct person.

Lastly, the text implies that the divinity of these three persons, like the baptismal grace bestowed in their name, cannot be conferred except in the name of God, and thus in this formula the same worship of latria is given to the three persons. In the formula, then, the Son and the Holy Ghost are equal to the Father; if they are not God, they would be infinitely below the Father.

The rationalists and liberals, acknowledging the force of this text, have tried to impugn its genuineness because Eusebius gives the words of Christ as, "baptizing them in My name." The objection is futile, however, since all the codices give the received text, and almost all the Fathers before Eusebius, among them St. Irenaeus, Hippolytus, Tertullian, and Origen. Eusebius himself sometimes gives the received text and sometimes the short form.[75]

The Epistles. In the Epistles we find three witnesses to the three persons. The first is II Cor. 13:13 (according to Harnack, A.D. 53): "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the charity of God and the communication of the Holy Ghost be with you all." Here St. Paul attributes to three persons the granting of sanctifying grace; but God alone is the author of grace, of the remission of sin, and of salvation. We refer the reader to Job 14:4: "Who can make him clean that is conceived of unclean seed? Is it not Thou who only art?"; and to Ps. 83:12: "The Lord will give grace and glory"; and Jas. 4:6: "God... giveth grace to the humble." The second testimony is Eph. 4:4 ff. (according to Harnack, A.D. 57-59), where the Apostle is speaking of the mystical body of Christ, "one body and one Spirit,... one Lord (namely, Christ), one faith, one baptism. One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all." The equality of the persons is inferred from the fact that the three together confer grace, of which God alone is the author. This was St. Athanasius' great argument: God alone deifies.

The third testimony is I Pet. 1:1 f.: "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ... according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, unto the sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. Grace unto you and peace be multiplied." As in the other texts, the three persons are presented as the highest source of grace.

The Gospel of St. John (according to Harnack and Zahn, written between 80 and 110) clearly affirms the Trinity of persons and their equality. We quote only the two principal texts referring to the three persons.

The first is John 14:16 and 26, concerning the promise of the Holy Ghost made by Christ at the Last Supper: "And I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete, that He may abide with you forever,... but the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things." Here we see a clear distinction between the Father who sends the Spirit, and the Son who asks the Father to send the Spirit, and the Spirit who is sent by the Father in the name of the Son. Certainly the one who sends is distinct from him who is sent, antecedent to our thinking the sender is not the one who is sent, and thus the Father is not the Son, for the one who generates is not the one who is generated. If we rightly understand the meaning of the verb "is" and the negation "is not, " the real distinction between the persons will be clear, a distinction which is antecedent to our mind's consideration. Although those things which the Scripture speaks of here are intimately united, they are really distinct; the substance of bread is not its quantity, but they are intimately united. So, in this text and in the context the consubstantiality of the three persons emerges, for a little earlier (John 14:9-11) Christ said: "He that seeth Me seeth the Father also... . Do you not believe, that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me?" Again John 10:30: "I and the Father are one"; John 15:26: "the Spirit of truth, who proceedeth from the Father"; John 16:13: "But when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will teach you all truth."

The second text of St. John referring to the three persons together is the famous Johannine comma: "And there are three who give testimony in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost. And these three are one" (I John 5:7). A great controversy has arisen about the genuineness of this text. Those who attack the text argue from the fact that it is not found in any Greek codex of any authority, nor in many Latin codices and versions. From this they conclude

that this "comma" was originally a marginal note which in the course of time was incorporated into the text. Consequently the text would enjoy only the force of tradition. The defenders of the text say that it was always in the Latin version, which is more ancient than the Greek codices, for it is found in many Latin codices and is cited by many of the Fathers, by Tertullian, St. Cyprian, and St. Augustine. The omission of this verse in the Greek codices is explained by the fact that the seventh and eighth verses begin and end in the same way and thus the scribes could easily have omitted the seventh verse. In the Latin version the seventh verse is: "And there are three who give testimony in heaven, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. And these three are one." The eighth verse is: "And there are three that give testimony on earth: the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three are one."

On this matter the Holy Office has issued two declarations.[76] In the first, dated January 13, 1927, we read: "The authenticity of this text of St. John cannot be safely denied or called into doubt." Later, on June 2, 1927, the Holy Office declared: "This decree has been issued to repress the temerity of those private teachers who have attributed to themselves the right of completely rejecting this 'comma' of St. John or at least by their final judgment of calling it into doubt... . It is in no way intended to deter Catholic writers from investigating the matter more fully,... or from adopting an opinion opposed to the genuineness of the text, as long as they profess to be willing to submit to the judgment of the Church, to whom has been committed by Jesus Christ the duty not only of interpreting the Sacred Scriptures but also of guarding them faithfully."

We proceed now to the testimonies in the New Testament about the individual persons of the Trinity.

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SPECIAL TESTIMONIES ABOUT GOD THE FATHER

In the Sacred Scriptures God is called Father in a threefold sense: 1. in the broadest sense by reason of the creation, thus He is called the "father of rain" (Job 38:28); 2. in the broad sense by reason of the adoption of men as His sons, thus He is called our Father in the Lord's Prayer; 3. in the strict and proper sense by reason of the generation of His only-begotten Son. Thus Christ Himself, of whom it was said," his is My beloved Son" (Matt. 3:17), said, not "our Father," but "My Father": "It is My Father that glorifieth Me" (John 8:54); "Come, ye blessed of My Father" (Matt. 25:34); "I must be about My Father's business" (Luke 2:49); "No one can snatch them out of the hand of My Father" (John 10:29); "They have both seen and hated both Me and My Father" (John 15:24); "I ascend to my Father and to your Father" (John 20:17). God is not the Father of Jesus Christ in the same way as He is the Father of His adopted sons, for in the prologue of St. John's Gospel we read: "The only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him" (John 1:18). Frequently St. Paul speaks of God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for instance," hat... you may glorify God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 15:6); and "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (II Cor. 1:3 and Eph. 1:3). Thus the Father is represented as a person and moreover as a divine person; no one has called this into doubt. The Father is called the Lord of heaven and earth and living God, as for instance, "Thou art Christ the Son of the living God." Throughout the seventeenth chapter of St. John's Gospel, Christ invokes the Father as God, and it is clear that the Father is a person distinct from the Son from the fact that he who generates is distinct from him who is begotten. This will appear more clearly when we speak of the Son.

SPECIAL TESTIMONIES ABOUT GOD THE SON

In Sacred Scripture the term son of God is used in a twofold sense: in the broad sense for adoptive sons, and in the proper sense for the only-begotten Son both before and after the Incarnation. References to the Son of God are to be found 1. in the Synoptic Gospels, 2. in the Epistles, 3. in the Gospel of St. John.

In the Synoptic Gospels Christ is described as the incarnate Son of God, not only distinct from the Father but also equal to Him. The principal text is: "All things are delivered to Me by My Father. And no one knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither doth anyone know the Father, but the Son, and he to whom it shall please the Son to reveal Him" (Matt. 11:27). From various codices and from the Fathers it appears that this text is authentic, and its authenticity is admitted by almost all critics, not only Catholics but also the Protestant liberals. In this text is expressed the distinction between the Father and the Son as well as the equality of knowability and knowledge which presuppose an equality of nature and the identity of the divine nature.

"No one knoweth the Son, but the Father, " and therefore the Son is above natural created knowledge and cannot be known naturally by anyone but God. From this it follows that He is God. To this text we may add all the texts in the Synoptic Gospels, in Christian apologetics, and in the tract on the Incarnation, which demonstrate the divinity of Christ. These texts may be grouped together as follows:

1. Jesus, according to His own testimony, is greater than all creatures, greater than Jonas, Solomon, David, who called Him lord, greater

than Moses and Elias, who appeared beside Him at the Transfiguration, greater than St. John the Baptist, greater than the angels "who ministered to Him" (Mark 1:13), and of whom He said, "The Son of man shall send His angels" as His servants (Matt. 13:41).

2. Jesus speaks as the supreme lawgiver, complementing and perfecting the divine law in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 10:21-48).

3. He vindicates for Himself the prerogative of forgiving sins, which according to the Jews was a divine attribute

(Matt. 9:2).

4. He assumed the right of judging the living and the dead, and of raising the dead to life (Mark 14:62; 8:38; 13:26).

5. He promised to send the Holy Ghost, to whom He is therefore not inferior (Luke 24:49), and He accepted the adoration which the apostles had rejected (Matt. 8:2; 28:9, 17).

6. He is called the Son of the living God by St. Peter (Matt. 16:16).

7. In the parable of the vineyard He is called the Son of the lord of the vineyard (Mark 12:1-12; also in Matthew and Luke). In this parable we are

told that the lord of the vineyard first sent his servants, who were put to death by the workers in the vineyard. "Therefore having yet one son, most dear to him; he also sent him unto them last of all,... and laying hold of him, they killed him." Of the Pharisees who heard this parable, we read: "And they sought to lay hands on Him, but they feared the people. For they knew that He spoke this parable to them." From all these texts of the Synoptic Gospels it is clear that Jesus' utterances about His eminent dignity imply more than a simple

Messiahship
and express a
divine filiation
entirely proper
to Him,
constituting
Him above all
creatures,
equal to God
and God
Himself,
although
distinct from
His Father.

In the epistles of the apostles and in their preaching, the divinity of Christ is still more explicitly expressed.

In the Acts of the Apostles (3:13, 15), St. Peter declared: "The God of our fathers hath glorified His Son Jesus, whom you indeed delivered up... . But the author of life you killed." The author of life is none other than God. Again in the Acts of the Apostles, St. Peter said: "Neither is there salvation in any other. For there is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved," that is, Jesus is the Savior of the world, the author of grace and salvation. Of no prophet and of no angel were similar words spoken. Again, "Him hath God exalted with His right hand, to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins" (Acts 5:31). But only God can be the Savior, forgiving sins. Similarly St. Peter calls Jesus "the Lord of all, appointed by God judge of the living and of the dead" (Acts 10:36, 42).

Since St. Peter uttered these words immediately after Pentecost, the argument of the rationalists that a process of idealization intervened, transforming the original preaching of Christ, has no validity. These words represent the confirmation by the Holy Ghost of those things that Christ, during His public ministry, said about His divine filiation. It should be remembered that the Acts of the Apostles in its entirety is attributed to St. Luke, who was St. Paul's co-worker, and this not only by all Catholic and conservative Protestant critics but also by many rationalists, among them Renan, Reuss, and Harnack, and that

it was most probably written about A.D. 63-64.[77]

In the epistles of St. Paul we find the following references to the divinity of the Son, as distinct from the Father. These texts are important since St. Paul, beginning in the year 53, speaks of the divinity of Christ as a dogma already received in the various churches before there was sufficient time for any process of idealization.

1. St. Paul speaks of the Son of God in the strictest sense: "God sending His own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Rom 8. 3)

"He that spared not even His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all" (Rom. 8:32); "God sent His Son... that He might redeem them who were under the law: that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. 4:4 f.). In the last text the adopted sons are clearly distinguished from God's own Son, and the only-begotten Son is represented as the Savior of the world.

2. St. Paul affirms the pre-existence of the Son of God before the Incarnation: "Giving thanks to God the Father... who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the remission of sins. Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature. For in Him were all things created in heaven, and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominations or principalities or powers: all things were created by Him and in Him. And He is before all, and by Him all things consist" (Col. 1:12-17). These attributes belong to God alone, and at the same time the Son of God is distinguished from the Father. A little farther on we read: "Because in Him, it hath well pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell; and through Him to reconcile all things unto Himself" (w. 19 f.). Here the Son of God is clearly called the Creator and the Savior.

Again, St. Paul says: "For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead corporeally; and you are filled in Him, who is the head of all principality and power" (Col. 2:9 f.). Writing to the Philippians, while exhorting them to humility he casually says these sublime words: "For let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made

in the likeness of men, and in habit found as a man" (Phil. 2:5 ff.). In this text, the expression "in the form of God" (qui in forma Dei esset) signifies the essence and nature of God, and this interpretation is confirmed by the following words, "No be equal with God." We could have no clearer statement of the pre-existing glory of the Son of God before the Incarnation.

Writing to the Romans, St. Paul said: "For I wished myself to be an anathema from Christ, for my brethren,... and of whom is Christ, according to the flesh, who is over all things, God blessed forever. Amen" (Rom. 9:3 ff.). Some controversy exists whether the punctuation mark before the phrase "who is over all things" is a comma or a period, but most critics, even those who are considered liberal, admit the comma, and thus this phrase refers to Christ.

Lastly, we read in the Epistle to the Hebrews: "In these days [God] hath spoken to us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the world. Who being the brightness of His glory, and the figure of His substance, and upholding all things by the word of His power, making purgation of sins, sitteth on the right hand of the majesty on high" (1:2 f.). In this text the Son of God, distinct from the Father, is declared to be the Creator, the Preserver, and the Savior, "upholding all things by the word of His power." In this Epistle also the Son of God is said to be superior to Moses and the angels, the mediator and the high priest for all eternity. Speaking in this manner, St. Paul intended to affirm, not something new, but that which had been held by the different churches before this time. No time had intervened, therefore, to permit any progressive idealization of the primitive preaching.

In the Gospel according to St. John the divinity of Christ and the distinction of the Son from the Father is so clearly enunciated that the rationalists themselves have had to admit it, but they argue that this Gospel, written against those who denied the divinity of Christ, was composed only in the second century. Renan places it about A. D. 125, and Holtzmann between 100 and 123. The later rationalists however have had to acknowledge that it was written toward the end of the first century: B. Weiss placing its composition in the year go; Harnack between 80 and 110. The theory of the intervening process of idealization is excluded by the fact that as early as 54 and 58 St. Paul speaks of the eternal pre-existence of the Son of God.

With regard to the texts of the Fourth Gospel, we present first the

words of our Lord Himself and then the words of St. John the Evangelist in the prologue of his Gospel, thus observing the order of revelation.

The words of our Lord referring to His divinity and His distinction from the Father are the following.

"The Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He... said God was His Father, making Himself equal to God. Then Jesus said to them... the Son cannot do anything of Himself, but what He seeth the Father doing: for what things soever He doth, these the Son also doth in like manner... . For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and giveth life; so the Son also giveth life to whom He will. For neither doth the Father judge any man, but hath given all judgment to the Son. That all men may honor the Son, as they honor the Father... . For as the Father has life in Himself, so He hath given to the Son also to have life in Himself" (5:18-26). This thought will be more clearly presented below In this text the same works "ad extra" of the Father are attributed to the Son, particularly miracles and the sanctification of souls, of which God alone is the author.

"Not that any man hath seen the Father; but He who is of God, He hath seen the Father" (6:46); "You are from beneath, I am from above. You are of this world, I am not of this world" (8:23); "For from God I proceeded, and came" (8:42), that is, I proceeded from eternity and came in time; "Amen, amen, I say to you, before Abraham was made, I am" (8:58), is a clear declaration of the pre-existence of the Son of God; "I and the Father are one" (10:30), whereupon the Jews took up "stones to stone Him."

"As the Father knoweth Me, and I know the Father" (10:15), is an affirmation of the equality of knowledge and nature, already expressed in St. Matthew, "No one knoweth the Son, but the Father" (11:27); "I am the way and the truth and the life" (14:6), that is, I not only possess life and truth, but I am life and truth, and since truth and life are identical, He alone is truth itself who is being itself by His essence, that is, subsisting being. Such is the profound meaning of the verb "is" as distinguished from "have" in the sentence, "I am truth and life," that only He who can say, "I am who am," could utter these words.

"All things whatsoever the Father hath, are Mine. Therefore I said,

that He shall receive of Mine, and show it to you" (16:15). These words clearly state that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son.

"And now glorify Thou Me, O Father, with Thyself, with the glory which I had, before the world was, with Thee,... because Thou hast loved Me before the creation of the world" (17:5, 24).

Lastly, the revelation of this doctrine is enunciated by way of synthesis in the prologue of St. John's Gospel, especially in the first four verses: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him: and without Him was made nothing that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men" (John 1:1-4). These words contain the statement of two fundamental truths: 1. the distinction of the Word from the Father, 2. the consubstantiality of the Word with the Father. From these truths others follow in the prologue.[78]

1. The distinction of the Word from the Father is enunciated in the words, "The Word was with God, " for, as is commonly remarked, no one is said to be with himself. One difficulty, however, arises from the fact that it is not clearly stated that the Word is a person; it might be understood as similar to the word of our mind which is in our intellect and "with" the intellect. This difficulty, however, is removed by what is said later of the Word, especially by the words," and the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, the glory as it were of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (1:14); and "No man hath seen God at any time: the only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him" (1:18).

From these verses it is clear that the Word mentioned in the first verse is the only-begotten Son who became incarnate and before this was in the bosom of the Father, or "with Him," in the words of the first verse. From this we may infer a real distinction between the Father and the only-begotten Son, for apart from any consideration of the mind the Father is not the Son, and he who begets does not beget himself. Father and Son, as has been said, are personal nouns and not impersonal nouns like truth, goodness, and intelligence, which designate the attributes of the divine nature. Therefore, apart from any consideration of the mind, it is true to say that the Father is

not the Son.

On the other hand, as theologians point out, we cannot say that, apart from the consideration of the mind, the essence of God is not His intellect, for His essence is subsisting being itself and subsisting intelligence itself; no real distinction exists in God between His being and His essence, nor between His essence, faculties, and operation. Therefore this proposition is false: God is not His own being, as is also the following: God is not His own intelligence. From revelation, however, we infer that the following is true: God the Father is not the Son, for he who begets does not beget himself. If therefore, apart from any consideration of our mind, the Father is not the Son, He is really distinct from the Son.

2. The consubstantiality of the Word with the Father is expressed in the same first verse, in the words, "he Word was God." According to the generally accepted interpretation, for instance, that of St. Thomas in his commentary on St. John's Gospel, in this phrase the term "Word" ("ho logos") is the subject and "God" is the predicate. This is evident from the context, which refers to the attributes of the Word, and from the Greek article "ho", which precedes the term "Word" ("ho logos").

Moreover, in this sentence the predicate "God" retains its proper meaning, as is evident from the parallel statements, "he Word was with God," and "the Word was God," and from the second verse, "he same was in the beginning with God." Thus, the word "God" is used three times in its proper meaning, designating not God by participation, but God Himself. The sense of the text is, therefore, that the Word is no less God than He with whom He was from the beginning. There is, therefore, a perfect equality between the Word and the Father. Moreover, since the most simple and infinite divine nature cannot be multiplied, and since, as is clear from the Old Testament and from philosophy, there cannot be many gods, it follows that the Word and the Father are consubstantial. This consubstantiality was more explicitly stated later at the Council of Nicaea. The words "in the beginning" at the opening of the prologue mean first of all before the creation of the world, as is clear from the context, and also from eternity, since God is eternal and immutable, since before the creation no change took place.

From these two truths others follow.

1. The Word together with the Father is the Creator. "All things were made by Him: and without Him was made nothing that was made" (v. 3), that is, nothing whatsoever was made without the Word. This follows from the fact that the Word is God.

2. The Word is the author of both the natural and the supernatural life. "In Him was life" (v. 4); thus He is the author of life equally with the Father, since He is God. Jesus expressed this later on in the words, "or as the Father has life in Himself, so He hath given to the Son also to have life in Himself" (5:26), and this life is essential and subsisting life and the cause of participating life, the life He spoke of when He said, "I am the life." Further, the Word is the author of supernatural life, as is clear from the words," and the life was the light of men, "which are explained in verse 9, "that was the true light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world." Later on this is expressed still more clearly, especially in verse 18, "No man hath seen God at any time: the only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him, " and by our Lord's words to Nicodemus," or God so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son; that whosoever believeth in Him, may not perish, but may have life everlasting" (3:16).

In his commentary on the fourth verse of the prologue, "and the life was the light of men," St. Thomas says: "This life may be explained in two ways: first, as an infusion of natural knowledge; secondly, as the communication of grace. It should be especially understood in the second way, because of what follows, namely, 'And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it... . (John) came for a witness, to give testimony of the light, that all men might believe through Him'" (vv. 5, 7), believe, that is, to attain salvation.

3. The Word is the author of our redemption. In verse twelve we read: "But as many as received Him, He gave them power to be made the sons of God, to them that believe in His name," that is, by the Word we are made adopted sons of God, as St. Paul said, "[God] who hath predestined us unto the adoption of children through Jesus Christ unto Himself" (Eph. 1:5), and "that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. 4:5).

The five following truths, then, are announced in the Prologue of St. John's Gospel: the Son of God is 1. distinct from the Father, 2. equal

and consubstantial with the Father, 3. the Creator, 4. the author of both the natural and the supernatural life, 5. the Redeemer and the author of salvation. In this way the divinity of the Word is proclaimed.

Objection. The rationalists and liberals say that this doctrine of the Word apparently stems from Philo, an Alexandrian Jew, born about 20 B. C., who tried to conciliate the monotheism of the Jews with the Neoplatonism in vogue at the time in Alexandria. Relying on the Old Testament, Philo admitted the existence of one personal God, the Provider, but in accord with the Greek philosophers of Alexandria he held that the most high God could not produce this finite world except through some intermediate being, which he called the "logos." As a Jew, Philo tried to reconcile two contradictory teachings, namely, monotheism and free creation with the pantheistic doctrine of necessary emanation. Thus, when he considers the "logos" under the Neoplatonic aspect he speaks of him as an intermediate being, but when he considers the "logos" in the light of the New Testament and Jewish monotheism he speaks of him as a divine attribute.

Reply. The Catholic reply to this difficulty is the following. A great difference exists between the "logos" of Philo and the Logos of St. John. The Logos of St. John is neither a being beneath God nor a divine attribute, but He is properly the Son of God the Father, at the same time God, the Creator, and the Redeemer in the strict sense. Philo's "logos", however, is in no way the Redeemer. St. John's teaching, therefore, is not derived from Philo, but from Christ's preaching, as explained by him, and as understood by the other apostles, as we see in the preaching of St. Peter and in the epistles of St. Paul. St. John could have found an adumbration of this mystery in the Old Testament, especially in the Book of Wisdom, "or she is a vapor of the power of God, and a certain pure emanation of the glory of the almighty God: and therefore no defiled thing cometh into her. For she is the brightness of eternal light, and the unspotted mirror of God's majesty" (7:25 f.).

As to the word "Logos" itself, St. John could have taken it from revelation, but it would not be derogatory to admit, as many do, that he derived it directly from Philo, for when the Evangelist was writing in Ephesus, Apollo was preaching there, and Apollo was widely versed in Alexandrian philosophy. Quite probably also the earliest heretics misused the word "logos" to designate a being midway

between God and the world. St. John may have used the term to correct the current false interpretation, when he said, "The Word [Logos] was God."[79]

We must add here that the Logos of St. John has no connection with the teaching of Plotinus, who in the third century spoke of three subordinate "hypostases", of different rank, in his system of pantheistic emanationism. Plotinus posited: 1. the One-Good, corresponding to Plato's idea of the good; 2. the primal intelligence, or the "logos", proceeding, not by a free creation, but by a necessary emanation from the supreme good, to whom it was inferior. Here the "logos", according to Plotinus, resembled Aristotle's god, who is "noesis noeseos noesis". In his primal intelligence Plotinus tried to discern the duality of the subject and the object known, besides a multitude of ideas for things that were to be produced. Plotinus' third "hypostasis" was the soul of the universe, corresponding to the god of the Stoics, from which, by a pantheistic emanation, the seminal ideas of all things proceeded ("logoi spermatikoi").

The difference between Plotinus' "hypostases" and the Trinity of Christian revelation is evident. These three "hypostases" are distinctly unequal, and in this pantheistic emanation a multitude of beings proceeds from the supreme being not by free creation but by a necessary emanation, or by a necessity of nature. As in all kinds of pantheism, the supernatural order of the life of grace is denied; for here our human nature would be a participation of the divine nature and could not be elevated to a higher order, and human reason would be the seed of eternal life.

Lastly, the doctrine of the Word proclaimed in St. John's Gospel has no resemblance to the Indian trinity, called Trimourti. In this system Brahma is god, the producer of all things; Siva is god the destroyer, the destructive force; and Vichnu was many times born in the flesh for the defense of the good.

The differences are obvious: 1. In the Trinity as revealed by Christ none of the divine persons can be called the destroyer. This idea is an expression of the pessimism and fatalism of the Indians. 2. In the Indian trinity, the three manifestations of God, the producer, the destroyer, and the conserver, are adopted with respect to the things of this world, and they seem rather to be three aspects of the same supreme power; indeed it is often said that there is no distinction in

God except in appearance. 3. The Indian system does not transcend pantheism and fails to preserve the idea of a free creation.

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SPECIAL TESTIMONIES ABOUT THE HOLY GHOST

1. In the Synoptic Gospels the Holy Ghost is less frequently mentioned than the Son of God, because He was not incarnate, and sometimes in Sacred Scripture the expression "Spirit of God" does not clearly designate a special person. Nevertheless, as we pointed out in gathering the testimonies about the three divine persons together in the Synoptic Gospels, the Holy Ghost appears as a divine person, distinct from the others, in the formula of baptism (Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:13). In this formula Father and Son are personal nouns, and therefore the third term should also designate a distinct divine person. This truth appears, although not so clearly, in the words of the archangel Gabriel at the time of the Annunciation, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee" (Luke 1:35), and in the solemn theophany after Christ's baptism when Jesus "saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon Him" (Matt. 3:16; Luke 9:34).

Father Ceuppens distinguishes the texts in which it is clear from the context that reference is made to the third person of the Blessed Trinity from those in which there is rather reference to some divine virtue and not explicitly to the Third Person.[80]

St. John the Baptist, St. Elizabeth, and St. Zachary are said to be filled with the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:15, 41, 67).

Simeon is said to have "received an answer from the Holy Ghost... and came by the Spirit into the temple" (Luke 2:26 f.).

St. John the Baptist announced a higher baptism to be conferred "in the Holy Ghost" (Matt. 3:11), and "Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert" (Matt. 4:1).

Christ said: "Whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but he that shall speak against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him" (Matt. 12:32)."In view of the context," says Father Ceuppens, "we do not think that the Holy Ghost here can be explained as referring to the Third Person of the Trinity.[81]

Announcing to the apostles their imminent persecution, Jesus said:

"It shall be given you in that hour what to speak. For it is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you" (Matt. 10:19 f.). He who speaks is a person and not a divine attribute, and this promise was fulfilled by the sending of the Holy Ghost, the Third Person of the Trinity, on Pentecost (Acts 2:1, 4).

Thus the Synoptic Gospels reveal the Holy Ghost as a distinct, divine person, to whom are attributed divine operations, in particular prophecy (the prophecy of Simeon), and the sanctification of souls (the sanctification of St. John Baptist). All this will become clearer in the Acts of the Apostles and in the epistles of St. Paul.

2. In the Acts of the Apostles the Holy Ghost speaks as the person who sanctifies men, who in the past inspired the prophets and now inspires the apostles, who directs and rules them and constitutes them bishops. Thus we read: "Now there were in the church which was at Antioch, prophets and doctors,... and the Holy Ghost said to them: Separate me Saul and Barnabas, for the work whereunto I have taken them... . So they being sent by the Holy Ghost, went to Seleucia: and from thence they sailed to Cyprus" (Acts 13:1-4); "The Holy Ghost hath placed you bishops, to rule the Church of God" (Acts 20:28); "Have you received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" (Acts 19:2.) St. Paul says: "And now, behold, being bound in the spirit, I go to Jerusalem, not knowing the things which shall befall me there: save that the Holy Ghost in every city witnesseth to me, saying that bands and afflictions wait for me at Jerusalem" (Acts 20:22 f.); and St. Peter said: "Men, brethren, the scripture must needs be fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost spoke before by the mouth of David concerning Judas" (Acts 1:16). In all these instances the Holy Ghost appears as a person. Again, St. Peter said that to lie to the Holy Ghost is to lie to God: "Ananias, why hath Satan tempted thy heart, that thou shouldst lie to the Holy Ghost?... Thou hast not lied to men, but to God" (Acts 5:3 f.).

On this point the entire second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles about the coming of the Holy Ghost can be cited: "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they began to speak with divers tongues according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak" (v. 4). Here, as in the other texts, the Holy Ghost speaks as a divine person for only God sanctifies souls.

Father Ceuppens[82] says that the personal character of the Holy

Ghost cannot be inferred from some of the texts of the Acts of the Apostles in which He is mentioned, for example, 1:5, 8; 2:4, 41; 8:12; 9:7; but that the Holy Ghost appears explicitly as a person in the following: "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they began to speak with divers tongues according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak" (2:4). This was the fulfillment of Christ's promise to send the person of the Holy Ghost. His personal character is clear when He is said to rule the apostles (5:3, 9); also in the text," or it hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us" (15:28); "The Holy Ghost said to them: Separate me Saul and Barnabas" (13:2), and when He prevented St. Paul from going to Bithynia (16:7), when He foretold St. Paul's sufferings (20:22 f.), and when He "placed you bishops to rule the church of God" (20:28).

3. In the epistles of St. Paul many passages show the Holy Ghost to be a distinct person and true God. He appears as a person when such properties and actions are predicated of Him as pertain only to a person and not to a divine attribute. The Holy Ghost is said to have an intellect," or the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (I Cor. 2:10). To Him are also attributed a will and operations, "but all these things one and the same Spirit worketh, dividing to everyone according as He will" (I Cor. 12:11); graces "gratis datae", like prophecy and the word of wisdom, are conferred by Him.

The person mentioned here is also true God for He is said to have all knowledge of divine things," or the Spirit searcheth all things, [comprehends them], yea, the deep things of God" (I Cor. 2:10). Only God can know future free things and reveal them to the prophets. To the Holy Ghost are also attributed the works of regeneration and sanctification and these are proper to God, as in "You are washed, but you are sanctified, but you are justified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Spirit of our God" (I Cor. 6:11).

Lastly, according to St. Paul, the worship of latria is to be given to the Holy Ghost, dwelling in the just soul: "Or know you not, that your members are the temple of the Holy Ghost, who is in you?" (I Cor. 6:19); but temples are built for God. Therefore St. Paul added, "glorify and bear God in your body" (v. 20). Father Ceuppens[83] remarks," some of these texts, taken alone, might be understood as referring to a poetical personification, as was said above about wisdom, but to comprehend the full meaning of these texts we must keep in mind the Trinitarian formulas in St. Paul's writings in which the Holy Ghost is placed on the same level with the Father and the

Son."

4. In St. John's Gospel the Holy Ghost clearly appears as a divine person distinct from the other divine persons as was shown above in treating of the three divine persons together: "And I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete... . But the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost [to pneuma], whom the Father will send in My name, he [ekeinos] will teach you all things" (John 14:16, 26).[84] No one sends himself, and therefore the Holy Ghost, who is sent, is distinct from the Father, who sends Him, and from the Son, who asks the Father to send the Holy Ghost, because the Son was already sent in the Incarnation. Here too (15:26) the Holy Ghost is called the Spirit of truth, that is, the source of truth, and He is said to possess perfect knowledge so as to illuminate the apostles and perfect sanctity for the sanctification of souls: "But when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will teach you all truth" (John 16:13). In all these passages the Holy Ghost is revealed as a divine person.

We may conclude, therefore, that the books of the New Testament explicitly reveal the mystery of one God in three distinct and perfectly equal divine persons. This doctrine is completely at variance with the Stoics' pantheistic concept of the "logos", the world soul; from Neoplatonism, in which the "logos" is a secondary "hypostasis" subordinate to the One-Good; and from Philonism, in which the "logos" is either a creature or a divine attribute, depending on whether Philo was speaking as a Jew or as a Neoplatonist. We see, then, that the doctrine of Christ was not altered by the Greek philosophers, but that it is an explicit manifestation of higher truth, which in an obscure manner was already revealed in the Old Testament, as we shall show immediately.

Objections. It has been pointed out before that the Arians and after them the Socinians adduced certain texts of the New Testament to deny the divinity of the Son and the Holy Ghost, for example, "go to the Father: for the Father is greater than I" (John 14:28). To this we reply that going to the Father was not predicated of Christ according to His divine nature, for in His divine nature He is always in the Father.

I insist. In I Cor. 15:28 we read: "And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then the Son also Himself shall be subject unto Him that put all things under Him."

Reply. Here St. Paul is speaking of the resurrection of Christ, which is attributed to Christ in His human nature.

I insist. In Matt. 24:36 we read: "But of that day and hour no one knoweth, no not the angels of heaven, but the Father alone."

Reply. St. Thomas,[85] St. John Chrysostom, and many other Fathers say that these words are to be understood of Christ as man, for as man Christ is said to be ignorant of the day of judgment; not absolutely, for St. Peter said, "Lord, Thou knowest all things" (John 21:17), but He was ignorant of the time with regard to revealing it to us.[86]

I insist. In I Thess. 5:19 we read: "Extinguish not the spirit."

Reply. The meaning of these words is: Do not place obstacles in the way of the manifestations of the spirit, such as prophecy and the gift of tongues; do not resist grace.

I insist. The spirit of an individual is not a person distinct from that individual; but the Holy Ghost is often called the Spirit of God; therefore He is not a distinct person.

Reply. I distinguish the major: if the word "spirit" is used to denote an individual's essence or part of his essence or his manner of judging, this I concede; otherwise, this I deny.

Thus, for instance, the spirit of an angel designates his whole essence, and spirit of a man designates his manner of judging. Sometimes, however, spirit is used to denote a person distinct from him of whom it is said to be the spirit; for instance, the angels are called the spirits of God (Apoc. 3:1 ff.). No repugnance arises, therefore, when we say that "Spirit of God" means a distinct person, and from the context it is often clear that such is the case; for instance, when it is said that the "Father sends His spirit," and when this Spirit is said to be another Paraclete, distinct also from the Son.

THE MYSTERY OF THE TRINITY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The mystery of the Trinity is obscurely expressed in the Old Testament. We give here certain passages that have a meaning more clearly understood after the revelation of the New Testament.

1. A certain plurality in the one God is indicated, sometimes in the words of God and again in the theophanies.

God's words seem to express a council between several persons in Gen. 1:26,"let us make man to our image and likeness." It might be said that this is the plural of majesty, but this interpretation seems to be excluded by God's words to Adam after the Fall," behold Adam is become as one of us" (Gen. 3:22). The expression "one of us" indicates more than the plural of majesty. We may also cite God's words, provoked by the pride of the builders of the tower of Babel, "come ye, therefore, let us go down, and there confound their tongue" (Gen. 11:7).[87]

The mystery of the Trinity sheds some light on why the seraphim cried to one another: "Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God of hosts, all the earth is full of His glory" (Isa. 6:3). Another triple invocation of God is found in the Book of Numbers in the formulas of benediction (6:24 ff.).

Something similar is found in the theophanies. In the opinion of St. Augustine and St. Ambrose, Jahve appeared to Abraham in the guise of three men to adumbrate the Trinity: "And the Lord appeared to him in the vale of Mambre... and when he had lifted up his eyes, there appeared to him three men standing near him: and as soon as he saw them he ran to meet them from the door of his tent, and adored down to the ground" (Gen. 18:1 f.). The Roman Breviary in explanation says, "We saw three and adored one."[88] This was also the interpretation of St. Augustine and St. Ambrose, but others, among them St. Hilary, understood this passage in a different sense.

In these words of God and in the theophanies, therefore, a certain plurality is implied as existing in the one God, but it is not expressed so explicitly that the Jews could understand it.

2. The person of the Messias is more explicitly revealed in the

Messianic prophecies, 1. as the Son of God, distinct from the Father, 2. as God, 3. when He is called wisdom.[89]

In the psalms we read: "The Lord hath said to me: Thou art My son, this day have I begotten thee" (2:7). This psalm is Messianic in the literal sense, for the power that is promised to the new king is universal domination, extending over the universe, and the concept of any universal dominion is essentially Messianic. Therefore the king who is here proclaimed and who is to assume this dominion is the Messias.

To this Messianic king Jahve said, "Thou art My son, this day have I begotten thee." This sentence may be taken in the literal sense as referring to the only-begotten Son, or in a metaphorical sense as referring to a son by adoption. From the text alone it would be difficult to prove that this statement is to be taken in its literal sense as referring to the divine generation and to the eternal Messias. This passage merely states that the Messias is formally constituted a king, but such election as king gave any Oriental king and especially the king of the Jewish theocracy the title of "son of God" in the metaphorical sense. From the text and from the context as well it is difficult to affirm the divinity of the Messias with any certainty, but we can easily conclude that the Messias would be a universal king and in some very special way the son of God.

In the light of a new inspiration, the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews determined the meaning of this psalm verse (2:7) when he said: "For to which of the angels hath He said at any time, Thou art My son, today have I begotten thee?" that is, the Son of God is above the angels. Thus the Epistle to the Hebrews teaches us in what sense that most special filiation of the Messias is to be understood: not as some metaphorical or adoptive filiation, but as actual filiation. The argument here is theological, based on the New Testament.[90]

In Psalm 109 (V. I, 3), which the Biblical Commission attributes to David, we read: "The Lord said to my Lord: Sit thou at My right hand;... with thee is the principality in the day of thy strength: in the brightness of the saints: from the womb before the day star I begot thee." David is speaking of a colloquy between Jahve and some person whom David calls his Lord. Who is this person?

In order that David could call him his lord (Adonai), this person must

be someone greatly superior to David; he must have dominion over the whole universe; and he must be a priest for all eternity according to the order of Melchisedech. The two last qualities are verified only in the Messias. With regard to the first quality, the superiority over David, we may ask whether this superiority is one of degree only, as when both are human beings and one is higher than the other, or a superiority of nature, as when the Messias is not only a man but God also, the only-begotten Son of God. The point is not clear either from the text or the context. Sometimes the expression, "it thou at my right hand," is used to indicate the divinity of the Messias, but it is also an Oriental figure of speech implying that an individual has been raised to some special dignity, generally to the royal state. From the text and the context alone we can conclude merely that the promised Messias would be greatly superior to David; but what this superiority actually was is not clearly stated. In the second century before Christ the Septuagint version interpreted this superiority over David as one of nature, that is, they understood it as referring to the divinity of the Messias, and later Christ Himself in His disputations with the Pharisees argued His divinity from this text.[91]

In St. Matthew's Gospel we read: "The Lord said to my Lord... . If David then call him Lord, how is he his son? And no man was able to answer him a word" (22:44 ff.). The full meaning of the text appears from Christ's interpretation in the New Testament.[92] As St. Augustine pointed out,[93] in the expression, "Today have I begotten thee" the word "today" signifies the permanent present moment of eternity, where there is no past or future. Thus this eternal generation of the Son is above time. St. Thomas, too, says that the generation is eternal; it is not a new begetting but one that is eternal. "The 'today' designates what is present; and that which is eternal is always."[94]

In Isaias we read: "For a child is born to us, and a son is given to us, and the government is upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, God the Mighty, the Father of the world to come, the Prince of Peace" (9:6). The expression "God the Mighty" (El Gibbor) is found in Isa. 10:21, Deut. 10:17, Jer. 32:18, Neh. 9:32 and always refers to Jahve. It is never used with reference to a creature, even the highest, and therefore Catholic exegetes accept this expression as designating the divine quality of the Child. [95]

In these texts we see illustrated what was later said of Wisdom in the Sapiential Books. In Prov. 8:22-31, Wisdom itself says, "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His ways, before He made anything from the beginning. I was set up from eternity, and of old before the earth was made. The depths were not as yet, and I was already conceived,... before the hills I was brought forth,... I was with Him forming all things: and was delighted every day, playing before Him at all times."

This text is illuminated by Ps. 2:7, "Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee," and Ps. 109:3, "Before the day star I begot Thee, " and it proclaims what St. Paul will say to the Hebrews (1:3) concerning the Son, who is "the brightness of His glory, and the figure of His substance." In this text from Proverbs, we find a certain distinction between the persons in the words, "The Lord possessed Me," for no one properly possesses himself. The pronoun "me" also designates a person, and not a divine attribute, for later we read, "I was with Him forming all things and was delighted, " that is, affected by joy, and only a person would be affected by joy, not a divine attribute. In this text also we find some indication that the principle of distinction between the two persons is the fact that one is begotten by the other, begotten not made: "I was conceived, I was brought forth." We find even some indication of the order of procession, and nothing of inequality: "I was set up from eternity."

Thus this text, considered alongside the analogy of faith, or when it is compared with other earlier and later texts, contains much that does not appear at first sight. Gradually the contemplative mind is able to penetrate its full meaning with the aid of the gift of understanding. For all these texts can be studied in two ways: superficially with whatever aid comes from grammar and history, or more profoundly in the light of faith and the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Thus we search out the meaning of the word of God, understanding it in that supernatural light in which it was originally written under the guidance of the Holy Ghost. In this way it was that the Fathers read these texts. In our churches the stained-glass windows can be looked at in two ways: from the outside, where the figures cannot be discerned; and from within the church, where all the design of the window can be seen in the light intended by the artist.

Here, too, we should read the text of the Book of Ecclesiasticus (chap. 24): "I [Wisdom] came out of the mouth of the Most High, the first-born before all creatures. I made that in the heavens there

should rise light that never faileth... . In me is all grace of the way and of the truth." In this text, the procession is indicated in the words, "I came out of the mouth of the Most High": on the day of the Annunciation the archangel Gabriel called God the Father the Most High and, Jesus the Son of the Most High. The text also declares that Wisdom is begotten not made: "the first-born of all creatures." Finally we find some indication of the order of procession in the words: "there should rise light that never faileth... in which is all grace of the way and of the truth."

It might be raised in objection that verse 14 refers to creation, "From the beginning,... was I created." Father Lebreton replied that this verse is to be explained from the context, in which, a little earlier, it is said that Wisdom "came out of the mouth of the Most High, the firstborn before all creatures." Therefore when we read, "From the beginning,... was I created, " the word "create" is to be understood for the production of a thing, as when it is said that children are procreated.[96]

Lastly, we read in the Book of Wisdom (7:25-30) that Wisdom is "a vapor of the power of God, and a certain pure emanation of the glory of the almighty God: and therefore no defiled thing cometh in to her. For she is the brightness of eternal light, and the unspotted mirror of God's majesty, and the image of His goodness... . She can do all things,... and conveyeth herself into holy souls, she maketh the friends of God and prophets... . Being compared with the light, she is found before it. For after this cometh night, but no evil can overcome wisdom."

In the light of the preceding texts, this passage insinuates very probably the existence of a person distinct from the Father, the same as that person referred to in the psalms: "Thou art My son, this day have I begotten Thee" (2:7), and "The Lord said to my Lord: Sit thou at My right hand" (109:1). Here Wisdom, as "the certain pure emanation of the glory of the almighty God, appears as God from true God and as light from light." Here Wisdom is called "the brightness of eternal light, and the unspotted mirror of God's majesty, and the image of His goodness," that is, His adequate image, not an imperfect representation like the angels and men, who are created to the image of God. Of this perfect and adequate image we read that it "can do all things," because it is God Himself, and that it sanctifies souls, which is an attribute proper to God. It is, therefore, the uncreated light, without spot or blemish.

Many of the Fathers have compared this text with the beginning of the Epistle to the Hebrews: "God, who, at sundry times and in divers manners, spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, last of all, in these days hath spoken to us by His Son,... who being the brightness of His glory [Wisdom was called 'the brightness of eternal light'] and the figure of His substance [Wisdom was called 'the unspotted mirror of God's majesty, and the image of His goodness'], and upholding all things by the word of His power [Wisdom was said to be able 'to do all things'], making purgation of sins, sitteth on the right hand of the majesty on high [Wisdom was said to 'make friends of God and prophets']."

Lebreton, speaking of this chapter 7 of the Book of Wisdom, says: "Wisdom has not all the features of a living personality,... yet in this book we find the most precise presentiment of the Christian dogma. Soon the authentic interpretation of the Epistle to the Hebrews will show in full light that theology of the Word which we have been able to perceive there only obscurely."[97]

In this passage of the Book of Wisdom, the Holy Ghost delineated what was to appear more brilliantly in the prologue to the Fourth Gospel: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." In opposition to all this, Philo's logos was either a creature, when he spoke as a Neoplatonist, or a divine attribute, when he spoke as a Jew.

The Old Testament contains only obscure references to the Holy Ghost. Often, indeed, the Spirit of God is mentioned, and He is represented as the principle of life by which the face of the earth is renewed (Ps. 103:30), and as the distributor of heavenly gifts (Isa. 11:2), the classic text concerning the gifts of the Holy Ghost. But the personal distinction of the Holy Ghost from God the Father can be hardly inferred from these texts of the Old Testament. This is not surprising, since the Old Testament was to announce the coming of the Messias, or of the Son, whereas the New Testament was to bring the Son's announcement of the mission of the Holy Ghost.

We find, however, some indication of this distinction in the Book of Wisdom (9:1 f., 17): "God of my fathers, and Lord of mercy, who hast made all things with Thy word, and by Thy wisdom hast appointed man... . And who shall know Thy thought, except Thou give wisdom,

and send Thy Holy Spirit from above?"

Some light is thrown on this passage by the words of Isaias: "And there shall come forth a rod from the root of Jesse, and a flower shall rise up out of this root. And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him: the spirit of wisdom, and of understanding, the spirit of counsel, and of fortitude, the spirit of knowledge, and of godliness. And he shall be filled with the spirit of the fear of the Lord" (Isa. 11:1 ff.). Joining these two texts from the Old Testament, we see what Christians understand by the words, "And who shall know Thy thought... except Thou send Thy Holy Spirit from above?" On the feast of Pentecost the Church repeats the words of the Psalmist, "Send forth Thy spirit, and they shall be created" (Ps. 103:30). It should not be surprising that the first lineaments of the mystery of the Trinity should be obscure. Some features of the mystery were announced in the beginning, but that which was to be more fully revealed later on could not then be known. In the natural order the whole river is virtually known in the initial spring of a great stream, but from that spring alone the whole course of the river cannot be known. So also the extraordinary talents of a great genius are virtually found in the mind of the child, but they are not explicit in the beginning.

Conclusion. All that was revealed in the Old Testament about the Messias, Wisdom, and the Holy Spirit is the primitive delineation of the mystery of the Holy Trinity. The Jews, however, apparently were not able to understand these things or to unite them into one body of doctrine, as is evident from the rabbinical and apocryphal writings. Thus it often occurs that the father and the mother of a child who later becomes a great thinker are not able to appreciate the acumen of the child, although later when the child has grown to manhood they can discern his unusual gifts in the light of a maturer mind. It is said of St. Thomas that when he was five years old he often asked his teachers, "Who is God?" Most of his teachers were not able to foresee what would become of the child. St. Albert the Great, however, seems to have foreseen the child's future.

Doubt. In the Old Testament what kind of faith was necessary for salvation with regard to God?

Reply. The answer is found in the Epistle to the Hebrews (11:6): "But without faith it is impossible to please God. For he that cometh to God, must believe that He is, and is a rewarder to them that seek

Him." As St. Thomas explained,[98] it was always necessary to believe something above reason, that is, not only the existence of God as the author of nature but also the existence of God as the author of grace and salvation. Faith in the Trinity is implicitly contained in this supernatural belief. Explicit faith in the Trinity was not necessary for salvation in the Old Testament. "Before Christ the mystery of the incarnation of Christ was explicitly believed by the majority, while a minority believed it implicitly and vaguely; the same was true of the mystery of the Trinity."[99] It was in this sense that St. Thomas says in the same place, "Therefore from the beginning it was necessary for salvation to believe explicitly in the Trinity," at least for the leaders, among whom were the prophets. In the same article in the reply to the first objection, St. Thomas says: "It was necessary at all times and for all to believe explicitly these two truths concerning God (that God is and that He is the rewarder). But these two truths were not sufficient at all times for all."

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5. THE BLESSED TRINITY IN TRADITION

The testimony of tradition on the Holy Trinity is extensively treated in the history of dogma. Here we shall discuss only the more important questions relating to the difference between tradition in the ante-Nicene and post-Nicene periods. These questions have at all times been discussed in the Church, and St. Thomas himself wrote of them at length in his "Commentary on the Prologue of the Fourth Gospel", where he speaks of Origen's error about the Word, the Son of God, and in the "Summa", where he says, "The Arians, for whom Origen was the source, taught that the Son was different from the Father by a diversity of substance," and that the Word is said to be divine only metaphorically and not properly.[100]

At the outset it should be noted, as is evident from the New Testament, that from the beginning the Church believed explicitly in the mystery of the Trinity, professing in concrete terms that God the Father sent His only-begotten Son into the world and then the Holy Ghost came to sanctify men. This is the substance of the Apostles' Creed itself. In defining this mystery the Church did not yet make use of such abstract terms as nature, person, and Trinity, but it was already clear that the words "Father" and "Son" were personal nouns. This should be kept in mind lest the earlier sublime simplicity of contemplation, which transcends the later technical terminology, be confused with a later attempt to debase this doctrine by a superficial and spurious simplicity. Some say that at first the faith of the Church was proposed in a popular manner and later more scientifically; it would be better to say that in the beginning the faith was expressed in a concrete manner, which in its sublimity surpassed the abstract technicality of a later age. In the transition from this concrete expression of the faith, particularly in the earliest Creeds, to the abstract expression as formulated against Arianism in the Council of Nicaea in 325, certain difficulties arose which were solved by the Nicene Council itself. Thus in this matter we distinguish two periods: the ante-Nicene and the post-Nicene periods. We see here how slowly man learns to abstract, how he slowly attains to the third stage of abstraction divorced from all matter, how at first his metaphysical notions are confused, and only later become clarified and distinct. Then the danger of the abuse of abstraction arises as in the decline of Scholasticism, when the mind receded too far from the concrete, from the documents of revelation,

and from the vital contemplation of divine things.

ANTE-NICENE TESTIMONIES

In this period the documents which express the faith of the Church can easily be reconciled with the later definitions of the Council of Nicaea, which state the doctrine of the Trinity more explicitly. The writings of many ante-Nicene Fathers, however, with their mingling of faith and philosophical theory, are correct in their statement of the substance of the mystery, but the explanations they offer often contain inexact expressions, some of which seem to incline to Subordinationism, and others seem to favor Sabellianism or Modalism. We see here how the evolution of dogma is the progressive unfolding of the same truth, from the indistinct and concrete concepts to the more defined and distinct concepts.

We should not be surprised to learn that the early Fathers used such inexact expressions since they were confronted with the problem of refuting heresies which were mutually opposed; to show the real distinction between the persons against the Modalists they sometimes made use of expressions tainted with Subordinationism, and when they were intent on safeguarding the unity of God they sometimes weakened the distinction between the persons. Theologians have at all times carefully distinguished between the documents of faith proposed by the Church, in which tradition is found without any admixture of philosophical theory, and the writings of the Fathers which were more or less exact in their use of abstract and philosophical terminology.

The faith of the early Church about the Trinity was expressed chiefly in three ways: 1. in the manner of baptizing, 2. in the various Creeds, 3. in the doxologies.

1. Baptism was conferred by a triple immersion and with the invocation of the three divine persons. The manner of baptizing is given in the Didache (VII, I ff.): "Baptize in this manner: after you have said all these things, baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost with living water. Pour water on the head three times in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." The same instruction is found in Tertullian, writing against Praxeas.[101] Praxeas was a Patripassian, admitting the existence of only one person, the Father, who had become incarnate. In his reply to Praxeas, Tertullian wrote: "We immerse not once but

three times at each of the names and for each of the persons." Further, the sign of the cross expresses three mysteries: the Trinity, the Incarnation, when the hand descends to the breast at the words "and of the Son," and the Redemption by the form of the cross.

2. The faith of the Church in the Trinity is expressed in various creeds. St. Irenaeus tells us that in the second century the catechumens before they were baptized read or recited a certain rule of faith or profession of faith in the Trinity, which declared, "In one God, the almighty Father, who made heaven and earth and sea, and all that are in them; and in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, incarnate for our salvation; and in the Holy Ghost, who by the prophets preached the ordinances of God."[102] This belief was developed in later creeds which can be found in Denzinger.[103]

3. The faith of the primitive Church in the Trinity is also enunciated in the doxologies, which were in use from the earliest times. Many of them are found in the epistles of St. Paul, who in the beginning or at the conclusion invokes and glorifies the three persons of the Trinity. [104]

Later, we read in the Acts of the Martyrdom of St. Polycarp, the disciple of St. John, that at his execution St. Polycarp exclaimed: "Lord God almighty, Father of Thy blessed and beloved Son Jesus Christ, I bless Thee,... I glorify Thee through the heavenly and eternal high priest Jesus Christ, Thy beloved Son, through whom there is to Thee with Him and the Holy Ghost glory now and in future ages. Amen."[105]

As early as the second century the Church used the lesser doxology, "Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost," still recited in the Divine Office at the end of each psalm, and the greater doxology, "Glory to God in the highest," in which the Church's faith in the Trinity is expressed in greater detail. In the greater doxology we have an example of that sublime contemplation which assuredly will dispose us to an intimate union with the Blessed Trinity no less than many scholastic treatises on the Trinity. Often when celebrating Mass the priest recites this doxology in a mechanical manner as something prescribed by the rubrics. It is, however, an instance of profound contemplation of the mystery of the Trinity of great antiquity, for Pope St. Telesphorus (128-39) commanded that the Gloria be recited on the feast of the Nativity of our Lord.[106]

The greater doxology begins with the song of the angels, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will"; then the one God is adored, "We adore Thee, we glorify Thee"; the in we adore, "God the Father almighty," our "Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son; O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father," and finally the Holy Ghost, "together with the Holy Ghost, in the glory of God the Father. Amen."

Many contemplative minds have not found a more beautiful expression of this mystery, and yet it is often recited mechanically as something already well known and worthy of no further consideration or contemplation. The result is a kind of materialization of divine worship. The great antiquity of this greater doxology shows how vivid was the early Christian's faith in the Trinity, even though he spoke rather inexactly when he treated of the mystery in abstract and philosophical language.

In spite of some inexact expressions, the teaching of the ante-Nicene Fathers can easily be reconciled with the later definitions of the Council of Nicaea. At all times they held fast to the doctrine expressed in the earliest creeds concerning one God in three persons. Among the apostolic Fathers, St. Clement of Rome in his two letters to the Corinthians[107] says that the Father is the Creator, the Son is more excellent than the angels and is God Himself, and that the Holy Ghost spoke through the prophets. We find like expressions in the epistles of St. Ignatius Martyr to the Ephesians and to the Magnesians.[108] All the Fathers believed in one God in three persons, and those Fathers who opposed Modalism clearly asserted the real distinction between the persons. Thus St. Hippolytus,[109] wrote: "It is necessary that we confess that the Father is God almighty, and Jesus Christ the Son of God, God made man, and the Holy Ghost, and these are really three."

Tertullian (213-25)[110] asserts the unity of substance no less clearly than the Trinity of persons. He says: "We should guard the sacredness of the economy (i. e., the sacred doctrine) which teaches that there is unity and trinity, three directing, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Three, however, not in status but in degree... of one substance and one power, for it is one God from whom these degrees, these forms and species, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, are derived." It was difficult to find

the proper abstract terms; the words "degree, form, species" are quite inadequate to express abstractly the distinction between the persons.

In asserting the distinction between the persons, the ante-Nicene Fathers generally avoided the language of the Subordinationists. Some, however, like Origen (202-54), leaned somewhat to Subordinationism, saying that the Son was in some manner inferior to the Father, and the Holy Ghost was inferior to the Son.[111] Misled by his philosophy, Origen seems to have come under the influence of Philo, and in his attempt to confute the Modalists he made use of inaccurate expressions and merited the criticism of later writers. [112]

Similarly St. Dionysius of Alexandria, Origen's disciple, fought Modalism with such zeal that some thought he had fallen into Subordinationism, but in his Apologia addressed to the Supreme Pontiff he stated his position more clearly. On other occasions these Fathers taught that the Son was begotten and not made: Origen speaks of the Son as eternal and homoousios, consubstantial with the Father.[113] They did not, however, at all times avoid the use of Neoplatonic expressions which implied a necessary emanation and some subordination, something between eternal generation in equality of nature and free creation out of nothing. Therefore Pope St. Dionysius in 260, condemning the Modalists and Subordinationists, wrote: "Neither is the admirable and divine unity to be divided into three divinities, nor by the language of division is the dignity and supreme greatness of the Lord to be diminished."[114]

POST-NICENE TESTIMONIES

In 325 the Council of Nicaea defended the true tradition against Arius, who taught that the Father alone was truly God, that the Word was the most excellent of creatures, created in time out of nothing, and that the Holy Ghost was also a creature, inferior to the Son. After long discussion it was defined that the Word was consubstantial with the Father, homousion: "We believe in one God the Father almighty, maker of all things, visible and invisible. And in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten Son of the Father, that is, of the substance of the Father, God of God, light of light, true God of true God, begotten, not made, of one substance with the Father, as the Greeks say, homousion, by whom all things were made. And in the Holy Ghost."[115]

After this condemnation the heretics tried to cover up their error by teaching that the Son was not properly homousion or consubstantial with the Father, that is, of the same essence, but that He was similar in nature, or homoiousion. Such was the teaching of the Semi-Arians; the Acacians said the Son was homoion, that is, similar with regard to form and accidents. These teachings were refuted by St. Alexander, the bishop of Alexandria, and by St. Athanasius.[116]

Note on the evolution of dogma or the progressive understanding of dogma.

The definition of the Council of Nicaea on the consubstantiality of the Word is clearly nothing more than an explanation or more explicit statement of the proposition contained in the prologue of St. John's Gospel: "The Word was God." The consubstantiality is not arrived at by an objectively illative process which deduces a new truth from another, as, for example, when we conclude that man is free from the fact that he is rational. To arrive at the knowledge of this consubstantiality an explicative process is sufficient, or at the most a subjectively illative process, by which the mind proceeds to the deduction of a new truth. By the simple explicative process the second statement is shown to be equivalent to an earlier simpler proposition.

The explicative process is most easy: God is one, but the indivisible and infinite divine nature cannot be multiplied. This monotheism is

manifestly based on faith, for we read, "Wear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord" (Deut. 6:4); "See ye that I alone am, and there is no other God beside Me" (Deut. 32:39); "And Jesus answered him:... the Lord thy God is one God" (Mark 12:29); "We know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no God but one" (I Cor. 8:4).

On the supposition of monotheism, we read further, "And the Word was God, " or, the Word, the only-begotten Son of God, is God, like the Father. Therefore the Father and the Son are consubstantial, that is, they are not distinct with regard to essence and substance but only by reason of paternity and filiation, which is the opposition of relation. Again, Jesus said, "I am the truth and the life." This process does not attain to a new truth deduced from that revealed truth, "And the Word was God, " but it explains it on the supposition that monotheism is established. Therefore, in spite of what has been said by recent students, the divine consubstantiality is not a theological conclusion sanctioned by definition.

St. Athanasius, from another approach, proves the consubstantiality by a proper illative process from two revealed premises.[117] St. Athanasius declared: Only God deifies, or makes divine by participation. But the Word of God deifies us. Therefore He is God, and consequently homousios with the Father, from whom He proceeds not by creation but by generation in the identity of nature.

Father Marin Sola teaches: "The consubstantiality defined by the Council of Nicaea was a revealed truth. But where and how was it revealed? It was revealed in other truths, which contained it implicitly and from which it was deduced by reasoning. These other truths are: 1. Jesus Christ is truly the Son of God; 2. in God there is simple unity and there can be no division of substance."[118]

At this point we depart from Sola and Batiffol, holding that consubstantiality is not really a theological conclusion but a truth of faith more explicitly stated.

Having posited the revealed proposition, "The Word was God, " no objectively illative process is required to understand consubstantiality. This consubstantiality does not express a new truth, but the same truth in a more explicit manner, as when we proceed from the nominal definition of man to the real and explicit definition, namely, man is a rational animal. If certain theologians,

like Bellarmine,[119] say that consubstantiality is deduced, it is deduced by the explicative process, or perhaps, as we have said, by an illative process from two premises already revealed. Here we must also keep in mind the transition from concrete knowledge to abstract knowledge. Abstract knowledge is already contained implicitly, and not only virtually, in the concrete knowledge of the same thing, and the transition is made without any objectively illative process.

In this way St. Athanasius argued to prove the divinity of the Holy Ghost against the Arians and the Macedonians: inasmuch as the Holy Ghost sanctifies us, that is, deifies us by a participation in the deity. Furthermore, St. Athanasius said: "The Father begets necessarily and at the same time freely; and He does not create necessarily but freely." In explanation he said that the Father necessarily and freely loves Himself but not as a matter of choice. It follows that in God generation is eternal since God was always the Father, and similarly spiration is eternal, otherwise neither the Son nor the Holy Ghost would be God, because they would not then be eternal. In refuting the Arians, St. Athanasius concluded: "Nothing created can be found in the Trinity, since it is entirely one God."[120]

After the Nicene Council many other councils confirmed this teaching against the Macedonians, who had denied the divinity of the Holy Ghost, particularly the Fourth Council of Rome (380) and the Council of Constantinople, which expressly defined that the Holy Ghost was God. With this we conclude the testimony of tradition, for after the Nicene Council the Church clearly taught the mystery of one God in three distinct persons.

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6. ST. AUGUSTINE AND ST. THOMAS ON THE TRINITY

In his commentaries on the Gospel of St. Matthew and that of St. John and on the epistles of St. Paul, St. Thomas examined all the texts of the New Testament in which the Holy Trinity is mentioned explicitly or implicitly. In his consideration of this subject, he clearly understood how much St. Augustine was able to contribute toward the understanding of these texts. His debt to St. Augustine will become evident from a comparison of the works of St. Augustine with the writings of the Greek Fathers.

1. The method of the Greek Fathers. In their refutation of Sabellius, who had denied the real distinction between the divine persons, and of Arius and Macedonius, who had denied the divinity either of the Son or of the Holy Ghost, the Greek Fathers began with the affirmation of the three persons, as found in Sacred Scripture, and then they tried to show that this Trinity of persons could be reconciled with the unity of nature by reason of the consubstantiality of the persons. This idea of consubstantiality was more and more explicitly stated and then defined in the Council of Nicaea.[121]

Thus the Greek Fathers, especially St. Athanasius, showed that, according to revelation, the Father begets the Son by communicating to Him not only the participation of His nature but His whole nature, and from this it followed that the Son was consubstantial with the Father and true God from true God. This also explained how the incarnate Son of God was able to redeem us from the servitude of sin, because His merits had infinite value.[122] In the same way the Greek Fathers showed that according to Sacred Scripture the Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, was God and therefore was able to sanctify our souls. Indeed these processions were looked upon as donations and communications rather than as operations of the divine intellect and will: the Father, in begetting the Son, gave Him His nature. Similarly, the Father and the Son gave or communicated the divine nature to the Holy Ghost, who proceeded from them. But in this concept, the manner in which the first and second processions took place remained inscrutable. [123] In their explanations of this mystery, the Greek Fathers followed the order of the Apostles' Creed, in which the Father is called the Creator, the Son the Savior, and the Holy Ghost the Sanctifier. The explanations proposed by the Greek Fathers

contained, it must be said, many obscurities.

2. The difficulties of the Greek Fathers. Why are there two processions and only two? How does the first differ from the second, and why is the first procession called generation? In other words, why is the Son of God only-begotten, and why does the Holy Ghost, although not begotten, receive the whole divine nature?

One other doubt arises: Why, in the Apostles' Creed, is the Father alone called the Creator, whereas in the prologue of St. John's Gospel and in the epistles of St. Paul all things are said to have been made by the Word? The creative omnipotence is an attribute of the divine nature and therefore it is something common to the divine nature and pertains to the three divine persons. The Greek Fathers did not explain in what sense the Father alone is called the Creator in the Creed.

To solve this difficulty, St. Augustine and his successors adopted the theory of appropriation, which is found only implicitly in the Greek Fathers. The Latins explained that the Father is called the Creator, not because He alone created, but by appropriation, that is, by a similitude of propriety, for "the creative power contains the idea of principle and therefore has a resemblance with the heavenly Father, who is the principle in the divinity."[124] In the same way wisdom has a resemblance with the Son inasmuch as He is the Word.

3. St. Augustine's solution of these difficulties. To arrive at a solution of these problems, St. Augustine labored long in the writing of his great work, De Trinitate, in fifteen books; the first seven books explain the biblical texts referring to the Trinity, and the other eight treat of the mystery speculatively, proposing analogies taken from the human soul, inasmuch as the word of the mind proceeds from it by intellection as well as love, which is the inclination or weight of the soul drawing it to the good as loved. St. Augustine laid great emphasis on the fact that according to the Fourth Gospel the Son proceeds from the Father as the Word; "And the Word was with God and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him... ."

The Son, who is called only-begotten (v. 18), proceeds therefore from the Father as the Word, not as the Word produced and delivered

exteriorly, but as the Word of the divine mind, for it is said, "The Word was with God, and the Word was God." The Word, then, is God, not the supreme creature, and "all things were made by Him." In the Epistle to the Hebrews, we read, "Who being the brightness of His glory, and the figure of His substance[of God the Father], and upholding all things by the word of His power."

St. Augustine explains the intimate manner of the generation of the eternal and only-begotten Son, while the Greek Fathers said that the manner of His begetting was inscrutable. Explaining the prologue of St. John's Gospel, St. Augustine showed that the Father from eternity begets His Son by an intellectual act just as our mind conceives the mental word: in the soul we find the mind, knowledge, and love; in the soul, which is the image of the Trinity, there are memory, intelligence (the act of intellection), and the will. This helps us to understand the fecundity of the divine nature.[125]

But while our word is only an accident of our minds, remaining very imperfect and limited, and multiple to express the diverse nature of things, the divine Word is something substantial, most perfect, unique, perfectly expressing the divine nature and all that it contains. It is therefore truly "light of light, God of God, true God of true God." Thus, by the analogy of our intellectual word, by its similarity and dissimilarity, the intimate manner of the first procession is explained. The manner of the second procession, which appears as the procession of love, is also explained. From our souls, which according to the Scriptures are created in the likeness of God, proceeds not only the word but also love. The human mind not only conceives the true-good but also loves it. If therefore the only-begotten Son proceeds from the Father as the mental Word, the Holy Ghost is to be considered as proceeding from them as love.

Thus it is that there are in God two processions and only two, and the manner of each is explained. St. Augustine, however, did not understand why the first procession is called generation. St. Thomas explains: "The Word proceeds by intellectual action, which is a vital operation, conjoined to the principle, and after the manner of a likeness, because the intellectual concept is an image of the thing understood."[126] The concept of our minds, however, does not deserve the name of generation, because in us the concept is only an accident of our minds, whereas in God the Word is substantial inasmuch as intellection in God is subsisting being. Thus the Father,

in producing the Word, begets a Son like to Himself, and does not produce an accidental mental word.

St. Thomas further perfected the doctrine of St. Augustine by showing why the procession of love should not be called generation: "the will is in act, not because some likeness of the thing willed is in the will, but because the will has a certain inclination toward the thing willed."[127] In St. Augustine's words, "My love is my weight."

In the doctrine proposed by St. Augustine we also find an explanation of why the Holy Ghost proceeds not from the Father alone, but also from the Son, because in our souls love proceeds not only from the soul itself but from the knowledge of the true-good, since nothing is loved unless it is also known.

From this it appears that in his thinking about the Trinity, St. Augustine did not begin with the three persons as did the Greek Fathers but rather with the unity of the divine nature, which was already demonstrated by reason, just as he began with the soul itself in his demonstration of its faculties and superior operations.

In these two approaches opposing difficulties arise: in the Greek approach it is difficult to safeguard the unity of nature, while in the Augustinian approach, starting with the unity of nature, it is difficult to safeguard the distinction between the persons and those things which are proper or appropriated to the persons. It is, after all, a transcendent and indemonstrable mystery. But by these two approaches, the first of which is the more concrete and the second is more abstract, the mystery is contemplated under two aspects. And finally, the abstract principles serve to advance a better understanding of what is known beforehand in a concrete manner.

St. Augustine and his followers easily explained what the Greek Fathers were not able to show: why the Father alone is not the Creator, but also the Son and the Holy Ghost, because the creative power is a property of the divine nature, common to the three persons. Gradually was unfolded the meaning of the traditional principle: the three persons are one principle in the operations "ad extra". This principle was formulated in the condemnations by Pope Damasus in 380, and later councils defined it more accurately.[128] Great progress was thus made in the elucidation of this dogma.

When, in the Apostles' Creed, only the Father is called the Creator, the predication is not proper and exclusive; it is rather by a kind of appropriation, inasmuch as the creative power contains the notion of principle "ad extra" just as the Father is the principle "ad intra." In the same way, wisdom has a resemblance with the Word, and our sanctification has a resemblance to the Holy Ghost, since it proceeds from God's love for us, and thus the Holy Ghost is called the Spirit of love or personal love.

Therefore, while consubstantiality was the terminus toward which the Greek Fathers tended, beginning with the three persons, whose names are found in Scripture, St. Augustine, on the other hand, began with the unity of the divine nature to arrive at the three persons, just as he began with the unity of the soul to determine its superior operations and the various manifestations of its life.

In the Augustinian doctrine, gradually that principle which illumines the whole treatise on the Trinity and was formulated by the Council of Florence in 1441, came to light, "In God all things are one and the same unless there is opposition of relation, " that is, where there is no relative opposition between the persons, all things are one and the same because the divine nature is numerically one with all its attributes.[129]

4. The difficulties of the Augustinian teaching solved by St. Thomas. Two difficulties remained in the Augustinian doctrine. The first arose from the fact that the generation of the Word takes place after the manner of intellection; but the three divine persons have intellect; therefore the three divine persons ought to beget, and then there would be a fourth person, and so on to infinity. This difficulty is solved by the distinction between intellection and the expression of the notional idea inasmuch as the three persons all have intelligence but only the Father expresses the intellection. He alone expresses because the Word is adequate and the most perfect expression of the divine nature and no other Word need be enunciated. Just as in a classroom while the teacher is teaching, both he and the pupils understand, but the teacher alone enunciates. Similarly a difficult question may be proposed to a number of persons; then one discovers and expresses the correct solution, while all the others immediately understand it. This distinction between intellection and enunciation is offered by St. Thomas.[130]

The second difficulty is similar: the second procession takes place after the manner of love; but the three persons love; therefore the three persons ought to spirate another person, and so on to infinity.

The solution of this difficulty depends on the distinction between essential love, which is common to the three persons, and notional love, which is active spiration and corresponds to the enunciation of the Word. It is called notional because it denotes the third person. Thus the three persons all love, but only the first two spirate. We have then three kinds of love in God: essential, notional, and personal. Personal love is the Holy Ghost Himself, who is the terminus of active spiration just as the Word is the terminus of generation and enunciation.[131] According to a rather remote analogy: a saintly preacher loves God and inspires his audience with this love, and the hearers also love God but they do not inspire others with this love. These two distinctions are not explicitly found in St. Augustine, but after his time great progress was made in elucidating the traditional doctrine of the Trinity.

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7. THE PREFERENCE OF ST. AUGUSTINE'S DOCTRINE OVER THAT OF THE GREEK FATHERS.

The Augustinian teaching prevailed for three reasons.

1. Because by beginning with the unity of the divine nature, St. Augustine began methodically with what was better known to us. The divine nature was already demonstrated by reason, and from this he proceeded to the supernatural mystery of the Trinity. When the Greek Fathers were writing, the treatise on the one God had not yet been set up as the way to an understanding of the Trinity.

2. Because the Augustinian approach solved those difficulties remaining in the Greek concept, explaining the number and character of the processions after the manner of intellection and love. It also explained the "Filioque", inasmuch as love presupposes intellection; and finally it explained the distinction between the natural order, of which God as one and the Creator is the efficient principle, and the supernatural order, whose supreme mystery is the divine processions within God.

3. Because whatever difficulties still remained were attributable not to deficiencies of method but to the sublimity of the mystery. Moreover, the Augustinian concept offered whatever was positive in the Greek concept, perfecting it, and thus itself was more perfect. The Greek Fathers began with the concrete; the Latin Fathers and theologians arrived at a more abstract consideration and at the knowledge of principles which cast light both on the whole treatise and on those things known concretely in the beginning.

6. The theory of Richard of St. Victor.[132]

This theory is dominated by the Victorine voluntarism, according to which the good is prior and more important than being, and the will and love are more important than the intellect. According to this concept, God would better be defined as the supreme Good rather than as subsisting Being. To which St. Thomas replied that that which first comes to the attention of our intellect is being, and that the notion of good presupposes the more universal and simpler concept of being; good is nothing more than the plenitude of being, desired because it is perfective.[133] We should not be surprised to

see these two tendencies among philosophers and theologians, the primacy of being and intellect, and the primacy of good and love, nor is it surprising that two theories should have been proposed by Latin theologians about the Trinity. We will briefly consider here Richard's theory because it was adopted in some form by Alexander of Hales and St. Bonaventure, and is quoted by St. Thomas.[134] Indeed, St. Thomas, developed his own doctrine by correcting the theory of Richard of St. Victor, which should therefore be explained first.

Richard, like the Greeks, first considered in God the person and then the nature. He demonstrated the existence of a personal God, possessing all perfections, especially the supreme perfection, which for Richard was the love of benevolence and friendship, or charity.

Charity, however, declared Richard, is not the love of oneself, but the love of friendship, the love of another person, according to the classical passage from St. Gregory the Great: "Charity cannot exist unless there are two persons, for no one can properly be said to have charity toward himself."[135] Hence Richard concluded: "It is fitting that love should tend toward another in order that it be charity. Where there is not a plurality of persons, charity cannot be said to be present."[136] In God, according to Richard, love (good diffusive of itself) begets a second beloved person, without whom the love of friendship cannot come into being. The most perfect love of friendship gives to the other not only something belonging to the lover but the whole nature of the lover. The love of the lover gives whatever it can.

Finally, Richard in order to prove that the most perfect charity, such as is found in God, is most pure without any love of concupiscence, concluded that it not only tolerates but most freely desires a third person, equally beloved by the other persons. When envy appears sometimes in human friendship, it is a sign that the love is not pure. Hence there are in God three persons, who love one another equally without any selfish love or self-interest, and the three loves are identified with subsisting love itself, which is the definition of God Himself.

Objection. But the love of the Holy Ghost is not freely given as is the love of the Father and the Son.

Reply. Richard's reply was that, by reason of His supreme

benevolence, the Holy Ghost wishes rather to receive than to give in order that what is more glorious might be attributed to the other two persons.

Such is the brief outline of this theory by which Richard wished to demonstrate the mystery of the Trinity from the fact that God is the most perfect personal love.

Criticism.[137] St. Thomas replied that the theory does not demonstrate that God is infinitely fecund ad intra, for the love of the most perfect person does not require the association of another person for his happiness. Further, what becomes of the Word of God in Richard's theory? It seems to disappear, since the first procession is by love and not by intellection.[138] For Richard, as for the Greeks, the Word was something spoken to another person rather than a mental concept of a person. In Richard's mind the Father speaks, the Son is the utterance, and the Holy Ghost hears. Thus the intimate life of God is an intimate conversation, and the same is intellection in the three persons. Briefly, Richard does not understand by the Word or by His production a formal mode of divine generation, for he explains divine generation not by the analogy of intellection but of love.

Hence another objection arises: Richard omits the concept of intellection, but nothing can be loved unless it is known beforehand. As we see from his writings, Richard responded to this objection on the basis of his metaphysical and psychological principles.

1. Metaphysically speaking, according to Richard, the good is superior to being and diffusive of itself by love, as Plato and the Neoplatonists taught. According to the Neoplatonists, the first "hypostasis" is the one-good, which by its own diffusiveness and by love generates the second "hypostasis", intelligence, whose object is being, something inferior to the supreme Good.

2. Psychologically speaking, Richard contended that the highest vital activity is not immobile intellection, which is quiescent in itself, but love, especially the love of friendship, which is diffusive of itself. For Richard knowledge was subordinate to love, as a previous condition for a higher perfection. This opinion is continued in Scotism, which is a form of voluntarism. For St. Thomas, on the other hand, the dignity of love is derived from the dignity of knowledge by which

love is directed, and the heavenly beatitude is constituted formally by the vision of God. This vision of God is necessarily followed, as by its complement, by the love of God above all things.

Another objection against Richard's theory arises from the difficulty of safeguarding the unity of the divine nature.[139] It is the same difficulty as beset the Greeks; like the Greeks, Richard began with the notion of divine person rather than with the notion of the divine nature. Therefore in his mind the divine nature was rather the act of love, rather a dynamic unity than a static entity. For Richard the same love was identical in the three divine persons, although some special property of this love is found in each person. The matter is left in mystery. The main criticism of Richard's theory is that he seems to lose sight of the teaching of St. John's Gospel, that the Son of God proceeds as the Word, that is, after the manner of intellection.

Alexander of Hales made some improvements on Richard's theory. [140] Alexander was more intent on the metaphysical aspect of the problem; he considered the principle that good is diffusive of itself, rather than the psychological aspect, that the love of charity requires several persons. Thus Alexander and St. Bonaventure, who followed him, looked on the divine processions as the fecundity of the infinite living being, relying on the axiom that good is diffusive of itself, and the higher the nature the more intimate and complete will be this diffusion. But the highest kind of diffusion is the communication of ideas and of love, as when God makes creatures in His own likeness and loves them, and also the communication of His entire divine nature. Whereas we, the adopted sons of God, have received only the participation of the divine nature, the only-begotten Son has received the entire divine nature without any division or multiplication; and this is the supreme diffusion and fecundity of the supreme Good.

As we shall see, this concept was retained by St. Thomas, but a part of Alexander's theory was discarded by him. Alexander had taught, [141] "In God to beget after the manner of intellection is hardly the same as to understand." After lengthy examination, under the title, "Thether begetting is the same as intellection in God, " St. Thomas assigns supporting reasons: "God lives the noblest kind of life, which is intellection"; "Intellection is nothing else than generating a species within oneself." These arguments had already been presented by St. Augustine and St. Anselm, and St. Thomas

perfected them.

Yet Alexander concluded: "Begetting in God is not the same as intellection."[142] For this he gives two reasons: 1. "No one begets himself, and yet he understands himself; the Son of God understands but does not beget. Therefore in God begetting is not the same as intellection." St. Thomas replied that begetting is the same as intellectual enunciation. 2. Begetting implies the duality of the begetter and the begotten, but such is not the case in intellection, since anyone can understand himself without this duality. A study of this theory reminds us of Leibnitz's dictum: "In general, systems are correct in what they affirm and false in what they deny." Why? Because reality is more solid than the systems; especially is this true of the supreme reality.

Richard's theory was also accepted by Peter Bles,[143] by William of Auxerre,[144] and partly by St. Bonaventure,[145] but it was refuted by St. Thomas.[146]

St. Bonaventure's theory is mixed because it proceeds from two sources, from Peter Lombard, who gave St. Augustine's doctrine on the Word, and from Richard of St. Victor through Alexander of Hales. Hence we find a difference between St. Bonaventure and St. Thomas. [147] The principal difference seems to be this: for St. Thomas, God is pure act, in the sense of pure actuality; for St. Bonaventure, God is pure activity or the supreme activity. For St. Bonaventure, therefore, the supreme unity is active, rather dynamic than static, and goodness especially is essentially diffusive of itself. Therefore the supreme active unity is not only absolute but it also implies a certain relation to something else by reason of the notion of diffusion or fecundity of a living being.

According to this principle, St. Bonaventure, like Alexander, conceived the first procession as "the fecundity of the divine nature," and the second procession as "the fecundity of the will."[148] St. Bonaventure looked on the Second Person rather as the Son of God than as the Word of God, and he considered the Word, or Logos, mentioned by St. John in his prologue, as a comparison to help us understand who the Son of God is.[149] With Alexander, St. Bonaventure conceded that there must be begetting in God since every nature is communicable and every living being begets specifically like itself. Such fecundity is a noble quality or

perfection which must be attributed to God. St. Bonaventure pointed out that there is a notable difference between divine and human generation. In divine generation alone, the communicated nature remains numerically the same with the first nature because it is infinite and cannot be divided. In human generation, man begets in order to preserve the species after the death of the begetter; thus man begets both because of his fecundity and his need.

God the Father almighty begets only because of His fecundity. St. Bonaventure's theory joins the classic theory of St. Augustine with Richard's theory as modified by Alexander of Hales. It is a dynamic concept in which the concept of the good is dominant; the theory is greatly influenced by Dionysius' principle: good is diffusive of itself. This principle, it should be noted, serves to illustrate the fitness of creation, but not that of the Incarnation or of the Holy Eucharist. In all these mysteries God diffuses His goodness.

The question arises whether St. Thomas retained the principle that good is diffusive of itself. In making use of this principle St. Thomas distinguished between the end and the agent. "Good," he said, "is said to be diffusive of itself in the sense that the end is said to move or elicit."[150]

Every agent acts on account of an end, and therefore the good is first of all diffusive of itself as an end, and then effectively it is diffusive through the mediation of the agent. "It pertains to the idea of the good," says St. Thomas,[151] "that it communicate itself to others; and it pertains to the idea of the supreme good that it communicate itself in the highest way to the creature." This takes place ad extra in the Incarnation. Again, under the question: "Whether God wills other things besides Himself, " St. Thomas taught: "The natural thing... has a natural inclination to diffuse its own good to others as much as is possible. Hence we see that every agent, so far as it is in act and perfect, makes something like itself... . Much more it belongs to the divine will to communicate its own good to others by means of a likeness as far as is possible."[152] In the following article, against the Neoplatonists, he says that the divine will most freely wills other things besides itself, "Since nothing accrues to the divine goodness from creatures." St. Thomas also points out the fitness of the Holy Eucharist, which is the sacrament of love.[153]

Thus we see that St. Thomas retains the principle of Dionysius so often quoted by Alexander of Hales and St. Bonaventure, although sometimes he proposes it differently in the questions on the Trinity, where the good is not properly speaking the final cause, nor the efficient cause, but the principle. In the "Contra Gentes" in the famous eleventh chapter, he offers this principle to explain the divine generation of the Word: "By how much a nature is higher, by that much what emanates from it is more intimate." Thus, from fire is generated, from the plant another plant, and a vital operation is the more vital the more it is immanent, as, for example, sensation, and intellection is still higher since from it proceeds the word. "That which proceeds ad extra is properly diverse from that from which it proceeds; but that which proceeds ad intra by the process of intellection is not properly diverse, for the more perfectly it proceeds the more it will be one with that from which it proceeds. Thus the Word of God proceeding from the Father, proceeds from Him without any numerical diversity of nature."[154] Even if there had been no creation, the principle, good is diffusive of itself, would be verified in God, and so the revelation of the mystery of the Trinity confirms the dogma of a free creation, in no way necessary.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the Thomists in explaining the teaching of St. Thomas frequently make use of that principle so often invoked by St. Bonaventure, that the good is essentially diffusive of itself; although on this point there is some difference between the two doctors. In his treatise on the Trinity, Scheeben also makes use of this principle.

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THE DIVISION OF ST. THOMAS' TREATISE ON THE TRINITY

IN the prologue (question 27), St. Thomas lays down the order for the whole treatise and the fitness of his distribution of the matter is immediately apparent. He explains: "Since the divine persons are distinguished by the relations of origin (inasmuch as the Son is denominated by His origin from the Father, and the Holy Ghost by His origin from the Spirators), we shall follow the order indicated by the matter itself when we first consider origin or procession, secondly the relations of origin, and thirdly the divine persons."

The treatise, therefore, is divided as follows:

1. Concerning the divine processions (Question 27).

2. Concerning the divine relations (Question 28).

3. Concerning the divine persons (Questions 29 to 43).

Of persons absolutely:

In common: the idea of person, the plurality of persons, the similarities and dissimilarities of the persons, and their knowability by us.

Individually: the persons of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

Of the persons comparatively: with regard to their essence, their properties and relations, their notional acts (generation and active spiration); the comparison of the persons with one another with regard to their similarity and equality and their respective missions.

St. Thomas, we see, proceeds according to the genetic method, from that which is better known to that which is less known. For in the Scriptures we read of processions, indicated by the name of the Son, proceeding from the Father, and of the Holy Ghost, proceeding from the spirators, but we do not find the word "person," only the personal nouns, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. In this way St. Thomas gradually shows that the relations are founded in the processions (for example, filiation is based on passive generation), and that the persons are constituted by subsisting relations. Beginning with what is explicitly revealed, the processions, he finds something that is implicitly revealed and gradually progresses from the indistinct knowledge of subsisting relations and related persons to a defined and distinct idea. These are, as we shall see, explicative processes, or at least subjectively illative, and not objectively illative processes, except in those instances where a new truth is deduced. In general in these first questions the same truth, which is formally revealed, is extensively explained and unfolded.[155]

In the division of this treatise it should be noted that the first two parts are discussed in Questions 27 and 28: the third part, treating of the divine persons, is treated in Questions 29 to 43.

This third part is subdivided into two parts:

1. The persons considered absolutely: a) in common; b) individually.

2. The persons considered comparatively: a) with regard to their essence; b) their properties; c) their notional acts (active generation and active spiration); d) their equality, similarity, and missions.

At first sight it will appear that in Questions 39, 40, 41, St. Thomas seems to begin the treatise anew, treating of the persons in common with regard to their essence, properties, and notional acts; he seems to be repeating what was already said in Questions 27, 28, and 29, about the processions, the relations of origin, and the persons in common.

He is not, however, repeating himself; for what he said earlier in an analytical exposition he explains later in a synthetical exposition, comparing one truth with another and penetrating more profoundly into the matter of the treatise. Many of St. Thomas' commentators, because of the similarity of the matter treated, explain in their commentary on Question 27 the doctrine offered by St. Thomas in Question 39. They follow this procedure for the sake of clarity and brevity, but the more profound and preferable presentation, we think,

is that given by St. Thomas.

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CHAPTER I: QUESTION 27 THE PROCESSION OF THE DIVINE PERSONS

INTRODUCTION

This question contains five articles: 1. whether there is a procession in God; 2. whether any procession in God can be called generation, and what is the intellectual manner of this generation; 3. whether besides generation another procession is found in God; 4. whether this other procession can be called generation (the answer will be in the negative); 5. whether there are more than two processions in God.

In general these five articles are simple explanations of the dogma by a conceptual analysis of the terms of the revealed propositions before any new truths are deduced, that is, before any theological conclusions are drawn. Some students have tried to see in these treatises an illative process where there is only an explicative process which is merely the progressive understanding of one and the same revealed truth.

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FIRST ARTICLE: WHETHER THERE IS ANY PROCESSION IN GOD

State of the question. The question is proposed in the form of three difficulties. 1. It appears that there are no processions in God because a procession implies motion without; but in God there is no motion, since He is the prime immovable mover and pure act. 2. He who proceeds differs from Him from whom He proceeds, but in God there can be no such difference. 3. To proceed from another is to depend upon another, but this is repugnant to the idea of a first principle. If the Son depends upon the Father, He is not God. Such are the principal difficulties.[156]

Reply. In God the processions are not by local motion, nor by transitive action, but by the intellectual emanation of an intelligible word from Him who enunciates. At the end of the body of the article, St. Thomas says, "And thus Catholic faith holds that there is a procession in God." From this last line it is evident that we are concerned here with an explanation of faith and not with a deduction of a theological conclusion.

Proof. It is clear from the Scriptures that it is of faith that there are processions in God. In his argument St. Thomas quotes the words of our Lord," or from God I proceeded" (John 8:42). In the "Contra Gentes" St. Thomas quotes other texts: Jesus said, "The Spirit of truth, who proceedeth from the Father" (John 15:26). Besides this, in the Scriptures the Son of God is called "His own Son, " that is, of God the Father (Rom. 8:32), and "the only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father" (John 1:18). It is the Son who is truly "His own" who proceeds from the Father and not the son who is only adopted. Again we read, "The Father loveth the Son: and He hath given all things into His hands" (John 3:35), and the only-begotten Son of the Father is called "the Word, " by whom "all things were made,... and without Him was made nothing that was made" (John 1:3; Heb. 1:1). From this it is clear that the Son proceeds from the Father from all eternity.

This truth is explicitly contained in the creeds. In the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed we read: "Begotten of the Father, God of God, light of light, true God of true God"; and of the Holy Ghost: "who proceeds from the Father." In the Athanasian Creed: "The Son

is from the Father alone, not made, not created, but begotten; the Holy Ghost is from the Father and the Son, not made, not created, not begotten, but proceeding."

Procession ("ekporeusis, probole") is the origin of one from another, as light proceeds from the sun and a son from his father.

St. Athanasius[157] and St. Augustine[158] explained that the imperfections inherent in human generation are not found in the divine processions. In the divine processions, for example, there is no diversity of nature (the nature remains numerically the same) but only a diversity of persons according to the opposition of relation.

In the body of the article, St. Thomas intended only to explain this truth of faith by a conceptual analysis of the word "procession, " discarding at the same time any false interpretations. His process, therefore, is not illative but explicative. This is clear from the first words of the paragraph, in which he explains the idea of procession, as used by the Scriptures, and from the following article, in which St. Thomas explains the idea of generation.

The body of the article has three parts.

1. Against Arius, it is shown that in God there is no procession of effect from cause, otherwise it would follow, against the Scriptures, that neither the Son nor the Holy Ghost would be God. The Scriptures declare of the

Son," his is the true God, " (I John 5:20), and the same is said of the Holy Ghost in I Cor. 6:19.

2. Against Sabellius, it is shown that in God procession is not understood as though there were different effects flowing from one and the same person of the Father: as though the Father were called the Son as incarnate and the Holy Ghost in the sanctification of souls. This would be contrary to the Scriptures which make it clear that the Son is not the Father, for example, "The Son cannot do anything of

Himself" (John 5:19). Furthermore, no one begets himself.

3. St. Thomas explains the root of these two errors: these heretics erred because they understood procession as being "ad extra". He then explains that in God procession is ad intra. As often occurs in the body of the article, the major is given after the minor. If the major were given before the minor, this explicative process would be somewhat as follows:

Since God is above all things, those things which are predicated of God are to be understood in their resemblance to intellectual and not corporeal substances. But in corporeal substances procession is in the manner of action "ad extra", whereas in intellectual substances it is after the manner of action ad intra, as the concept of a thing or the

mental word proceeds from the intellect. Therefore the procession predicated of God is procession ad intra, like that of the intelligible word in him who enunciates. "And in this manner Catholic faith understands procession in God" as opposed to Arius and Sabellius.

This process therefore only explains the true idea of procession in God as it is found in the Scriptures, excluding any false interpretations and giving the analogy of the word which is indicated in the prologue of St. John's Gospel and explained at great length by St. Augustine.[159]

We should note that many commentators, such as Billuart, prove from Question 33, article 4 ad 4, that there are processions in God from the fact that it is of faith that there are several really distinct persons in God. Such was also the method of the Greek Fathers.

The article should be read.

1. The doctrine is confirmed by the divine fecundity which, since it IS a perfection without imperfection, cannot be denied to God. ("Shall not I that make others to bring forth children, Myself bring forth, saith the Lord? Shall I, that give generation to others, be barren, saith the Lord thy God?" Isa. 66:9.)

2. The reply is also confirmed by the solution of the objections.

Reply to first objection. Procession would imply motion in God if it were after the manner of transitive action, but not if it is immanent action, which is in the predicament of quality and not of action.

Reply to second objection. Similarly there would be numerical diversity if the procession were "ad extra", as when by human generation the son proceeds from the father with consequent multiplication of human nature. But such is not the case with procession "ad intra". As St. Thomas explains: "That which proceeds "ad intra" by an intelligible process need not be diverse; indeed the more perfect the procession the more that which proceeds will be one with that from which it proceeds. It is clear that the more profoundly a thing is understood the more intimate the intellectual concept will be to him who understands and so much greater will also be the union of both. For the intellect inasmuch as it understands in act will be united with what it understands.

Therefore, since the divine intellection is the acme of perfection, as we said above in Question 14, a. 2, it follows necessarily that the divine Word is perfectly united with Him from whom He proceeds, without any diversity, " that is, without any numerical diversity so that there is only a distinction of persons.[160]

This teaching is developed in the second chapter of the fourth book of the "Contra Gentes", in which St. Thomas illustrates this principle: The higher any particular nature is the more anything that emanates from it will be intimate with it. Thus St. Thomas preserves under another form Dionysius' principle, so frequently enunciated by Alexander of Hales and St. Bonaventure: "Good is essentially diffusive of itself, and the higher the nature is the more fully and intimately it will be so." Good, however, is primarily predicated of a final cause; but the Father is not properly the end or the efficient cause of the Son. Therefore St. Thomas' formula is more acceptable because it rises above both final and efficient causality, although the formula about the diffusion of good could be understood as referring to things above the order of causality.[161] This principle, however, is arrived at inductively.

Thus fire is generated from fire, a plant by another plant, an animal from another animal in the manner of action "ad extra" and the numerical multiplication of nature. But in the higher spheres, life is more and more immanent, for sensation remains in the subject, intellection in the one who understands, as does also the mental word. Human intellection, however, has its beginning from without, that is, from sensible things. In a still higher sphere, "The intellection of the angels does not proceed from something exterior, but knows itself through itself. But the life of the angels does not attain to the ultimate perfection for, whereas the angelic intellection is entirely intrinsic to the subject, the intellectual concept or intention is not identical with the subject's substance because intellection and being are not the same." In order to know himself, the angel requires an accidental mental word because the angel's substance is intelligible of itself in act although it is not actually understood of itself in act. And further, the substance of the angel as it is understood in act and represented in the accidental word is not the angel's substance according to its physical being but only according to the angel's intentional or representative being. The mental word of Michael is not Michael himself because it is an accident and not his substance.

On the other hand, as we read in this chapter of the "Contra Gentes", "Since in God being and intellection are the same," He does not require an accidental word to know Himself. But if from the divine superabundance there is a Word, as we learn from revelation alone, then "the being of the Word, interiorly conceived, is the same as the divine intellection," God's being itself, not only according to His intellectual being but according to His physical being. Thus the divine Word is not only God as understood, but "true God," as we learn from the Creed: "true God of true God." Contrariwise the accidental word by which Michael the archangel knows himself is indeed Michael according to his intellectual being but not the actual Michael according to his physical being, because it is an accident and not a substance[162]

Intellectual generation, therefore, when it is most perfect produces not only an accidental mental word but also a substantial word, and it is therefore true generation, because it communicates the entire nature of the generator, as we shall see in article 2.

Our mental word can be called the offspring of our minds only metaphorically. Such is the solution of the second objection: in God He who proceeds is not different in nature from Him from whom He proceeds, but has a nature numerically the same.

Reply to third objection. The third objection was that to proceed from another was repugnant to God as the first principle. In reply we distinguish "proceed" as above, namely, to proceed as something extraneous and diverse, I concede; to proceed as something within and without numerical diversity of nature, I deny. Thus the Son of God is God of God, light of light; He is in some manner like the word in the mind of the artificer with relation to some external artifact.

First doubt. Is it not at least virtually revealed and theologically certain that in God procession is after the manner of an intelligible concept uttered by an enunciator, and that the procession is intellectual?

We are not asking whether the Son of God is rightly called the Word of God, for we know from the Prologue of St. John's Gospel, written under divine and infallible inspiration, that it is of faith that the Son of God is the Word, and that the Word is consubstantial with the Father, as was explicitly defined by the Nicene Council. But we are

asking whether these words of the Prologue formally reveal, or at least virtually reveal, the formal manner of the first procession, that is, by intellectual enunciation.

Durandus did not admit this but contended that the Son proceeded from the Father's nature as pre-understood, antecedent to any consideration of intellect and will.

The reply is in the affirmative. It is at least virtually revealed and theologically certain that the Word, or the Son, proceeds from the Father by intellectual generation, from the intellect of the Father. Indeed many recent theologians hold that this proposition is proximately definable.[163] D'Ales gives this proposition as proximately of faith: "The Son proceeds from the Father according to intellectual generation," and he gives the following proposition as common doctrine: "The Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son according to mutual love." And this seems to be true.

Proof. In the Scriptures, He who is called the Word is also called the Son. But this is not a question of a word enunciated exteriorly but of an immanent word, as is clear from the context. An immanent word, however, is conceived by the intellect, it is the concept expressed by the intellect, as the Fathers taught.[164]

This doctrine is confirmed by the fact that in the Scriptures the Son of God is called not only the Word, but Wisdom, the image of the Father, and the splendor of His glory and the figure of His substance.[165]

In the reply it was stated that this doctrine is theologically certain because it is at least virtually revealed, but it is more probable that it is implied in a formal revelation, for the required process is explicative rather than discursive when we have a clear understanding of the idea of a mental word. This will become clearer below.

Second doubt. In the body of the article, does St. Thomas intend to say that a word is produced in every intellection?

The reply is in the negative, for manifestly St. Thomas holds that the Son and the Holy Ghost understand and still do not produce a word. The three divine persons understand by the same numerically one

essential intellect, but only the Father enunciates, just as in a classroom both the teacher and the pupils understand but only the teacher enunciates. Moreover, St. Thomas holds that in heaven the blessed, seeing God immediately, do not express an accidental word, which would be intelligible by participation and would not be able to represent God as He is in Himself since He is essentially subsisting intelligence itself.[166] St. Thomas did not intend to exclude these instances when in the body of the article he states: "Whenever anyone understands, by the very fact that he understands he produces something within himself, which is the concept of the thing which is understood." But such is the case in every created intelligence of the natural order, as when a man or an angel understands himself and other things besides himself. We still have sufficient analogy here to conceive what the divine Word is as mentioned in the prologue of St. John's Gospel. It is still true to say, therefore, that whoever understands, by the fact that he is an intellectual nature, produces a word in some intellectual act. The analogy offered by St. Thomas is based on the fact that it is a property of an intellectual nature to produce a word. Further, it is a perfection that can be purged of imperfections and can be attributed to God as the highest intelligence.

Objection. In the created intellect a word is required to know an object which is not understood of itself in act. But God is subsisting intelligence itself and therefore He is not only intelligible of Himself in act, but actually understood in act. Therefore no word is required in God.

Reply. I distinguish the major: that an accidental word because of a natural indigence is so required, I concede; that a substantial word is required, I deny. I concede the minor and distinguish the conclusion: therefore in God an accidental word because of a natural indigence is not required, I concede; that a substantial Word because of the divine fecundity is not required, I deny.

I insist. Now the analogy between an accidental word produced because of a natural indigence and the substantial word produced from divine fecundity or superabundance is destroyed.

Reply. . Although the comparison is not univocal, the analogy remains for in creatures the accidental word is not required only because of a natural indigence (inasmuch as the thinking subject is

not of itself understood in actu secundo) but because it pertains to the fecundity and perfection of the created intellect to speak vitally and interiorly by expressing a concept. Thus the philosopher rejoices when after a long and difficult search he finally gives birth to the word that solves his difficulty; now he can die for he has found the truth.

I insist. But why do not the Son and the Holy Ghost produce a word by their intellection?

Reply. This is part of the mystery and cannot be explained entirely. But we can say and should say, as do the Thomists, one intellection will have one word when that word is adequate. But in God intellection is infinite, and also the same for the three divine persons. Therefore in God there is one, infinite, and adequate word and no other word need be produced. The three persons understand but only the Father enunciates because He enunciates adequately, or because the Word already enunciated is perfect and without any imperfection. Nothing more need be enunciated in God nor would anything more be needed in the case of men if the teacher would be able adequately to say all that pertained to the matter under discussion. At first sight this distinction between intellection and enunciation may seem too subtle, but it is not without some foundation. Many men, even after years of laborious study, cannot express interiorly and exteriorly the solution of some difficult problem; but when some great genius discovers the solution and gives birth to the word or notion interiorly and expresses it exteriorly others are able often to understand without difficulty. They may not be able to enunciate the solution but they are able to understand without much difficulty. Indeed, if some great mind were to discover the perfect and adequate solution of a question, he would express it in a definitive statement that would need no further emendation or amplification, whereas we are continually obliged to perfect our imperfect and inadequate statements of solutions.

Finally, it is often remarked that loquacious people use innumerable words without reason, whereas wise people, especially in their later years, use few words, words that are effective and almost adequate, like the confident and clear statements of the saints and great doctors, which others are generally able to understand although they would never have been able to discover them. In this way we can understand analogically and without too much subtlety that in the Trinity the three persons understand, but the Father alone

enunciates because the Word is adequate. We, on the other hand, make use of many inadequate words.

Objection. In his reply to the second objection, St. Thomas says: "The divine Word is perfectly one with Him from whom He proceeds and without any diversity"; and in the "Contra Gentes"[167] he says: "The being of the Word is the intellect of God itself." But then the Word would not proceed as a distinct person. Therefore the analogy is not valid.

Reply. I deny the minor and the consequent. St. Thomas denies numerical diversity of nature between the Father and the Word, but the diversity of persons as revealed still remains. This diversity is only relative and inasmuch as it is real arises from the procession, for procession, inasmuch as it is real, requires extremes that are really distinct, at least with regard to their mode of being. Such is the reasoning of many Thomists, among them Billuart. Thus the word in our minds is diverse from our intellect both knowing and known, not indeed according to intelligible and intentional being but according to real and entitative being, for the word in us is an accident of our intellects.

I insist. If the Word is a distinct person as a person, if not as a nature, He still depends on the Father. But God cannot depend on another; this is an obvious imperfection. Therefore the Word is not a divine person or God.

Reply. I distinguish the major: He would depend on the Father if He proceeded as from a cause and freely, I concede; if He proceeds from the Father solely as from a principle because of the necessary and infinite fecundity of the divine nature, I deny. Thus, the Father in His intellection is not able not to produce the Word. We have here a communication of nature without efficient causality; this communication is the transmission of something pre-existent without losing it. In the equilateral triangle the first angle constructed does not cause but communicates its own surface area to the other two equal angles, and these two angles are not less perfect than the first. Indeed, the geometrical figure can be inverted so that one of the two angles at the base is placed on top.

I insist. But the necessary and intimate dependence still remains.

Reply. I deny the consequent, because for true dependence it is required that only one of the two in question depend upon the other. But the Father cannot be more without the Son than the Son is without the Father, and yet the Father is not said to depend on the Son. Thus in the equilateral triangle all the angles are equal, and one angle cannot exist without the other.

On the other hand, a human son depends on his father, as from a cause; and the man who is a father is able to be without the son, because he is able not to be a father, since he freely begets. But God the Father is not able to be without being the Father and He is not able to be without the Son.

Wherefore, in order that anything depend on another it is not enough that it cannot be without the other. God the Father is not able to be without the Son and yet He does not depend on the Son, nor is omnipotence able to exist without the possibility of creatures and still it does not depend on this possibility. It follows therefore that, although the Son cannot be without the Father, He does not depend on the Father, since the Father is not the cause but only the principle of origin. It is repugnant to God to derive from another as from a cause, this I concede; that it is repugnant to derive as from a principle of origin, this I ask you to disprove. The possibility of the mystery, therefore, is not disproved or proved; it is merely presented as plausible.

I insist. But the Son receives from the Father, therefore He is passive and in some need.

Reply. I distinguish the consequent: if at any time the Son lacked or could lack anything He has, I concede; otherwise, I deny. Whereas a creature is able not to be, the Son of God is not able not to be, nor is He able to lack the divine perfections.

I insist. Each of the divine persons is the first principle; therefore each excludes the principle of origin.

Reply. I distinguish the antecedent: each of the divine persons is the first principle "ad extra", I concede; ad intra, I deny. Thus the Father alone is not from a principle of origin. As St. Thomas says, "To oppose the things that are said against faith, either by showing that it is false or by showing that it is not necessary," it is sufficient to

show that the impossibility of the mystery is not definitively proved, for example, the dependence of the Word of God with respect to the Father is not definitively proved. At least these objections are not cogent and therefore they do not destroy faith. The impossibility of the procession of the Word, who is "true God of true God," cannot be proved.

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SECOND ARTICLE: WHETHER ANY PROCESSION IN GOD CAN BE CALLED GENERATION

State of the question. As the first article was a conceptual analysis of the idea of procession, without any illative process, so this second article is a conceptual analysis of the idea of divine generation as found in the Scriptures. We have here a beautiful example of the transition from a confused concept to a distinct concept. This transition takes place by eliminating the false interpretations, from which arise the three difficulties, formulated in the beginning of this article: 1. generation is a change from non-being to being and therefore a divine person cannot be generated; 2. in God procession is after the manner of intellection, but in us such intellectual procession is not called generation; 3. the being of anything begotten is accepted and received and therefore is not divine.

Reply. This is of faith: the procession of the Word in God is called generation, and the Word that proceeds is called the Son.

We prove that it is of faith from Ps. 2:7: "The Lord hath said to Me: Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee." Today, as St. Augustine says, is the ever-present now of eternity, which is above time, above past and future. This text of the Old Testament is illustrated by the New Testament, especially by the prologue of St. John's Gospel. Further proof comes from Ps. 109:1-3: "The Lord said to my Lord:... from the womb before the day star I begot thee, " although this text is less clear in the Hebrew than the preceding text; from Isa. 53:8, in the prophecy of Christ's passion: "who shall declare His generation?"; from Acts 8:33 and John 1:18: "No man hath seen God at any time, the only-begotten Son..., He hath declared Him"; from John 1:14: "and we saw His glory, the glory as it were of the only-begotten of the Father"; from John 3:18: "But he that doth not believe, is already judged: because he believeth not in the name of the only-begotten Son of God"; and from John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, as to give His only-begotten Son."

Similarly the creeds and councils defined that the Son of God was not created (against Arius), not made, but begotten from the nature or substance of the Father, and is therefore called the natural Son and not the adopted son of the Father.[168]

In the body of the article St. Thomas makes a conceptual analysis of the notion of generation, purifying it of every imperfection so that it can be applied to God not only by a metaphorical analogy but also by an analogy of proper proportionality. Thus the idea of generation, found in revelation, passes from a confused state to one more distinct. We do not arrive at a new truth, but the same truth is explained in this manner.

Generation is the origin of one living being from a conjoined living principle in the likeness of nature, as when a man begets a man. But the procession of the Word is the origin of a living being from a conjoined living being, yet without transition from potency to act or to new being. Therefore the procession of the Word is properly generation and not only metaphorically so.

Explanation of the major. The generation of everything that can be generated in the natural order is a change from non-being to being, as when non-living fire is generated from fire. But that generation which is proper to living beings is the origin of a living being from a conjoined living being, that is, from the father and not from the grandfather, through the active communication of the nature of the generator in the likeness of at least the specific nature. The angels therefore cannot properly be called the sons of God because they did not receive the divine nature from God.

Explanation of the minor. The procession of the Word after the manner of intellection is the origin of a living being from a conjoined living being and in the likeness of nature because the concept in the intellect is the likeness of the thing understood. Indeed, in God, since God the Father understands and enunciates Himself, a nature numerically the same is communicated, because in God being and intellection are the same. Thus the Word is not only God as understood according to intentional being but true God according to physical and entitative being, as will be explained more fully in the solution of the second objection.

The theory of the Latins, then, based on the fact that the Son of God is called the Word in St. John's Gospel, explains how the eternal generation of the only-begotten Son is without any imperfection and without transition from potency to act or from non-being to being. This is the correct interpretation of our Lord's words: "For as the Father has life in Himself, so He hath given to the Son also to have life in Himself" (John 5:26), and "I and the Father are one" (10:30).

We refer the reader to the article.

This article, therefore, does not deduce a theological conclusion, but explains this truth of faith, that the Son is generated by the Father because He proceeds from the Father intellectually as the Word. And in this generation we see the infinite fecundity of the divine nature, so often mentioned by Alexander of Hales and St. Bonaventure.

The reply is confirmed by the solution of the objections.

1. The first difficulty was: Generation implies the transition from potency to act. But such transition cannot be in God who is pure act. Therefore there is no generation in God.

Reply. I distinguish the major: generation implies the transition from potency to act in the created mode of generation, I concede; in the formal mode of generation, I deny, because formally it is required only that generation be the origin of a living being from a conjoined living being in the likeness of nature. I concede the minor. I distinguish the conclusion: therefore there is no generation in God according to the created mode, I concede; according to its formal mode, I deny. The analogy is one of proportionality, not only metaphorical, but it is an analogy that reason by itself could not have discovered. God has revealed it to us.

2. The second difficulty was: Procession in God is after the manner of intellection. But in us such intellectual procession is not generation; we speak only metaphorically of the parturition of a word in ourselves.

Reply. I concede the major and the minor, but I deny the parity. The disparity arises from the fact that in God alone and not in us to understand is substantial intellection itself. In God alone understanding and the mental concept are something substantial and not accidental, as in us. In us the word proceeds as an accident in which is represented the substance of that which is understood. In God, on the other hand, the Word proceeds as the subsistence of the same nature and therefore He is properly said to be begotten and the Son. The divine Word, therefore, is not only God as understood, or God in a representative or intentional manner, but true God from true God. This matter is explained at greater length in the "Contra Gentes."[169]

John of St. Thomas explains that our intellect forming within itself a concept of itself or a representation of itself assimilates this term to itself, at least imperfectly. An imperfect intellect, human or angelic, assimilates its word imperfectly, only intentionally, and in a representative or intelligible manner. The perfect intellect, however assimilates its Word most perfectly, not only intentionally, but really in nature and in a nature that is numerically one, so that the divine Word is not accidental but substantial, at the same time living and understanding, because in God being and understanding and being understood are the same. Revelation affirms that this substantial Word is the person of the Son of God. This is true generation, which primarily deserves the name generation; other kinds of generation are generation by participation and secondarily, although they are prior in our knowledge. Therefore St. Paul said," or this cause I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom all paternity in heaven and earth is named" (Eph. 3:14 f.).[170]

Our word is called a concept, not something generated. Conception is the initial formation of a living being; generation is its perfect production, including the evolution of the embryo. Our intellection goes as far as the intellectual conception of the word but not as far as the intellectual generation. Thus we speak of our faculty of conceiving, but not of generating intellectually. So also it is with the angels. In God alone, in His intimate life, known only by revelation, conception is at the same time intellectual generation, properly so called.

CONCEPTION AND GENERATION ACCORDING TO ST. THOMAS[171]

In every (animal) conception, according to St. Thomas, "The matter of what is conceived is prepared by the generative power of the mother; the formative force, however, is in the seed of the father."[172] Then follows the development of the embryo, terminating in the generation of the animal. Conception, therefore, is the beginning of animal generation.

The word "conception" was then transferred to signify intellectual conception because our intellect as a passive potency is fecundated by the object or by the impressed species derived from the object, and then our intelligence, fecundated and informed, conceives its mental word to express to itself some extramental thing or the mind itself. And indeed it is a great accomplishment to profoundly conceive something, like a book that we are about to write or the order observed in the Summa theologica. But this intellectual conception in us does not go as far as intellectual generation, because our word is only an accident in our minds and not a living substance like the understanding mind itself. On the contrary, in God, whose intellect is subsisting intellection itself and subsisting being itself and subsisting life itself, the Word, mentioned in revelation, cannot be an accidental word but is the substantial Word, living and understanding. Therefore in God conception, which is the initial step in generation, attains to the perfect generation of the Word, who is true God from true God, not only God as conceived but really God of true God.

John of St. Thomas says, and in this he agrees with Ferrariensis, "The procession of the word, standing precisely in the line of intellection and by the force of its formality,... purified of every imperfection... becomes substantial and generative."[173] This follows not only materially because of the divine subject but also formally because of the procession of the word when it is purged of every imperfection. This helps explain the joy of a great thinker who has found the answer to some great problem and gives birth to a word; in its highest sense this parturition of the word would be generation, not corporeal but spiritual. The reason given by St. Thomas is that, "Since the divine intelligence is of the highest perfection, it is necessary that the divine Word be perfectly one with

Him from whom it proceeds without any diversity of nature."[174] In the highest state of perfection the procession of the word is substantial and generative whereas in us it is accidental. The word in us, called rather a concept than something generated, is not a living and intelligent person but only an accident; in God the Word is substantial, living, and intelligent, and, as we shall see, a person relative to the Father. We cannot converse with our word or have communion with it- man remains alone with his ideas. But the Father has communion and lives in society with the Son.

First corollary. We see how the notions of generation and intellectual procession mutually illuminate each other. It is more certain that there is in God a procession after the manner of generation than that there is in God a procession which is properly intellectual. The first is manifestly of faith; the second is at least theologically certain. But without an intellectual procession it would be very difficult to conceive of generation in God and to show that this generation is actual and not simply metaphorical. For this reason St. Thomas speaks in his first article of intellectual procession and in his second article of generation, although the latter is more certain. This is one reason among others on account of which the Latin concept of the Trinity, sometimes called the psychological theory of St. Augustine based on revelation, prevailed over other concepts.

Second corollary. Since this divine generation of the Word is eternal (above the continuous time of men and the discrete time of the angels), it follows that in the ever-present now of eternity the Father always begets and the Son is always born, or as St. Augustine says, the divine generation takes place without any newness of being.[175]

Third corollary. A great joy rises from this eternal generation. Vestiges of this joy are found in the mother when a child is born to her, and in a great scholar when after long labor he perfects his work of making some truth manifest.

Fourth corollary. In God to be begotten, like the begetting, implies no imperfection, nor is it less perfect to be begotten than to beget, nor does it produce less joy, for it is impossible to beget without someone being begotten, and being begotten eternally and necessarily is not a transition from potency to act.[176] But we do not say that paternity or the begetting is a simple perfection properly so called, for although it does not imply any imperfection it is not

simply better to have paternity than not to have it. If this were so, some simple perfection properly so called would be denied to the Son, and the Son would not be God.[177] The essence and dignity of the Father and the Son are the same; in the Father we have the relation of the giver, in the Son the relation of the receiver. Here is the mystery, but we see that the divine relations by reason of their concepts do not add any relative perfection that would be virtually distinct from the absolute perfection of the divine essence. Such is the thought of most Thomists, as we shall see below.

We are still confronted with the difficulty proposed in the third objection: "The being of anyone who is begotten is accepted and received, " and therefore it is not divine, for the divine being is self-subsisting and not received.

In his reply to the third objection, St. Thomas says that the being of anyone who is begotten is accepted indeed but not received always in some subject. Thus the entire substance of created things is accepted by God but it is not received in some receptive subject. So also the being of the Word is accepted but not received; it is self-subsisting being itself.

In the perfection of the divine being itself there is contained both the intelligibly proceeding Word and the principle of the Word as well as the other things which pertain to its perfection. From these words of St. Thomas it appears, in the opinion of many Thomists, that the relations in God do not by reason of their concepts add any new relative perfection that is virtually distinct from the absolute divine perfection.

On the other hand, in several places St. Thomas says that the being of any created being is not only accepted from God but also received in the created essence, or more correctly in the created suppositum. "It should be said," says St. Thomas, "that at the same time that God gives being He produces that which receives the being; and thus fittingly He does not act in dependence on some pre-existing being."[178]

This text and many others are quoted against Suarez and his followers to show that for St. Thomas a real distinction exists between the created essence and the created being. For the created being is not only accepted from God, as Suarez admits, but it is also

received and therefore limited by the essence in which it is received. The divine being, however, is not received, no more in the Son and the Holy Ghost than in the Father.

Another objection. By reason of the procession the Word proceeds as understood and not as understanding, for it proceeds as the term of the paternal intellection. Therefore because of the procession the Word does not proceed as like to the Father, and therefore this procession is not generation.

Reply. I distinguish the antecedent: the Word by reason of the procession proceeds as understood and not as understanding notionally or as enunciating, I concede; not as understanding essentially, I deny. Likeness of nature is not dependent on the notional qualities or notional acts like active generation and active spiration, but on essentials. Analogically in men, although the son does not proceed as generating but as generated, the son nevertheless proceeds like the father in nature. So it is proportionally in God.

Doubt. How does the enunciation of the Father differ from the essential intellection which is common to the three persons, as in the statement, "The three persons understand but the Father alone enunciates"?

Reply. The enunciation of the Father differs only by reason from the essential intellection and it is not actually different from the relation of paternity, which in turn is not really distinct from the divine essence.[179] St. Thomas offers a profound explanation: "The origin of motion inasmuch as it begins with another... is called action. If we remove the motion, the action implies no more than the order of origin according to which the action proceeds from some cause or principle to that which is from the principle. Since in God there is no motion, the personal action which produces a person is nothing else than the relation of a principle to the person who is from the principle. These relations are the actual divine relations or notions."[180] No difference exists between them except in the manner of speaking inasmuch as we speak of divine things in the manner of sensible things.

Certain difficulties have been proposed by Durandus and Scotus concerning St. Thomas' first and second articles; but rather than

adding anything to the matter they tend to obscure it. We shall not delay in considering them here but content ourselves with a few words about these difficulties at the end of this question. They are all solved by St. Thomas later when he comes to speak of the comparison of the persons with the essence, relations, and notional acts.

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THIRD ARTICLE: WHETHER THERE IS IN GOD ANOTHER PROCESSION BESIDES THE GENERATION OF THE WORD

State of the question. According to revelation expressed in the Scriptures and divine tradition there is a third divine person, who is often called the Holy Ghost, as in the formula of baptism, and sometimes the Paraclete from the words para and kaleo, parakletos that is, advocate, intercessor, and consoler. As we see, this is not a simple divine operation, like essential love, but a person to whom are attributed divine operations and divine perfection according to our Lord's words: "And I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete" (John 14:16), and "The Spirit of truth, who proceedeth from the Father, He shall give testimony of Me" (John 15:26).

In this article St. Thomas makes a conceptual analysis of this second procession. In stating the question he proposes three difficulties: 1. If a second procession is found in God, why not a third and so to infinity? 2. In every nature we find only one mode of communicating that nature, namely, generation. 3. The procession of love cannot be distinguished from the intellectual procession even in God because in God the will is not different from the intellect.

Reply. The reply is nevertheless that it is of faith that "besides the procession of the Word there is another procession in God," and we add that this is the procession of love, although this does not appear to be of faith but the common opinion.

1. This first part is proved from the Scriptures: "I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete" (John 14:16); and "But when the Paraclete cometh, whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceedeth from the Father, He shall give testimony of Me" (John 15:26).

2. The second procession is explained theologically.

In God procession takes place according to immanent and not transient action. But in an intellectual nature immanent action is twofold: intellection and volition, or love. Therefore, in God, an intellectual agent, it is proper that besides the intellectual procession there be another procession, which is the procession of love.

First doubt. Did St. Thomas intend to demonstrate the existence of the second procession strictly from the first? Even if the second procession were not revealed and if the existence of the Holy Ghost were not revealed, could the second procession be certainly known by a theological process.

Reply. This does not seem to have been St. Thomas' intention, although he uses the words, "In evidence of this." According to his custom, whenever he was treating of essentially supernatural mysteries, St. Thomas wished to show that the mystery is not opposed to reason. He then offers reasons of propriety, which while they are profound, especially to those who contemplate the mystery, are not demonstrative, for this progressive contemplation does not lead to the evidence of demonstration but to the higher evidence of the beatific vision. Such reasons of propriety belong to a sphere that is above demonstrability. If we were to offer these reasons as demonstrative, we would minimize rather than appreciate their force. His argumentation, therefore, does not strictly prove that there is a second procession or that there is the existence of a third person, unless this were revealed.

We may ask, on the supposition that the existence of the third person and of the second procession are revealed, can we strictly prove that this second procession is the procession of love, because it is at least theologically certain that the first procession is after the manner of intellection? The argument could be supported with some difficulty because it is less certain that love has an immanent term than that intellection or enunciation has as its term the expressed word.

The immanent term of love is exceedingly mysterious, for love tends toward the good which is in things outside the mind, whereas the intellect tends to the truth, which is formally in the mind in the likeness of the extramental thing.

In an article entitled "A propos de la procession d'amour en Dieu", [181] which agrees with Father Chevalier,[182] Penido proposes this correction of St. Thomas' text in "De veritate": "The operation of the will terminates with things in which there is good and evil, but the operation of the intellect terminates in the mind, in which there are truth and falsehood, as we read in "VI Metaph.", chap. 8; and therefore the will does not have anything proceeding from itself that

is in it, except after the manner of operation; but the intellect has something in itself that proceeds from it not only after the manner of operation but also after the manner of a thing accomplished. Therefore 'the word' signifies a thing that proceeds but 'love' signifies an operation that proceeds."[183] In many editions the word "except" is omitted and the passage appears unintelligible. In the "Contra Gentes",[184] St. Thomas says: "That which is loved is in the will of the lover (not in the likeness of its species), but as the term of motion in the proportionate moving principle." That which is loved exists in the will of the lover as something that inclines and in a way interiorly impels the lover toward the thing itself that is loved.

It should be said, therefore, that the argument proposed in this article is at least an argument of propriety, explaining the nature of the second procession as the procession of love. This argument is very profound and sublime; it shows that the psychological theory of the Trinity proposed by St. Augustine is in accord with revelation. When we speak of the Word, however, revelation itself indicates the analogy in the prologue of St. John, "In the beginning was the Word...." But with regard to the second procession we do not find in Scripture a similar indication; the Holy Ghost is not called love even by the Greek Fathers. He is indeed called sweetness and benignity, and the word "spirit" has an allusion to the will. At the present time it is the common opinion that the Holy Ghost proceeds as personal love.[185]

Second doubt. What is the relation of the Holy Ghost to this second procession?

Reply. The Holy Ghost is the terminus of the procession of love as the Word is the terminus of the intellectual procession. Therefore St. Thomas, in the body of the article, says: "In the second procession that which is loved is in the lover, as in the conception of the Word the thing enunciated or understood is in him who understands."

The terminus of love has no special name. Cajetan offers the following explanation. "What is loved is not in the lover except as the affection of the lover for that which is loved." We have a certain difference here between intellection and love, for a likeness of that which is loved is not produced in the lover like the likeness of the thing understood which is produced in him who understands. In the lover, however, there is a certain impulse and propensity of the will

toward that which is loved, and this impulse is in the lover as the unnamed terminus of love. St. Augustine said, "My love is my weight." In this sense the second procession is to be understood as the procession of love.[186]

Solution of the objections. The first objection is: Therefore we must admit a third procession and so to infinity.

Reply. In the divine processions it is not necessary to go on to infinity, for that procession in intellectual natures which is within is terminated by the procession of the will. Here the psychological theory is in accord with revelation and corroborates it. This theory assigns a reason why there are no more and no less than two processions, and thus offers a reason of propriety, not a demonstration, because we are dealing with an essentially supernatural mystery. That this is not a strict demonstration will appear in the second objection.

Second objection. In every nature we find only one mode of communicating that nature, namely, by generation. Therefore in the divine nature there should be but one mode of communicating the divine nature, that is, by intellection and not by the will.

Reply. We deny the parity between the nature of corruptible things and the divine nature. The disparity arises from the fact that whatever is in God is God, and this is not true of other natures. Therefore the divine nature is communicated by any procession that is not "ad extra". Hence the divine nature is communicated even in the procession of love, because whatever is in God is God and not a part of God.

In his reply, based on faith, St. Thomas shows that the objection has no force, but he did not intend to prove the second procession from the first so that the second procession would be certain even if it had not been revealed.

I insist. The entire nature is adequately communicated by the first procession, and therefore it is no longer communicable. As there is only one Word, so there should be but one procession.

Reply. I distinguish the antecedent: that the entire nature is totally communicated in the first procession, that is, in every way that it is

communicable, I deny or I ask you to prove it: that it is communicated entire but not totally, that is, in every communicable manner, I concede. For according to revelation we know that not only the Son but the Holy Ghost also proceeds from the Father. According to St. Augustine's theory it appears that the divine nature is communicable and fecund in two ways: by the intellect and by love. Indeed, Richard of St. Victor emphasized this second way to such an extent that he seemed to neglect the first mode by intellection. Neither should be neglected.

I insist. Whatever is infinite is unique and excludes all else. But the first procession is infinite. Therefore it excludes a second procession.

Reply. I distinguish the major: whatever is infinite is unique in its own order and excludes others of the same order, I concede; that it excludes things of another order, I deny. Thus the mercy of God is infinite and excludes another infinite mercy, but it does not exclude infinite justice. The same is true of the processions.

Third objection. In God intellect and will are not distinct. Therefore neither is the procession of love distinct from the intellectual procession.

Reply. I distinguish the antecedent: that the intellect and the will in God are not really distinct, I concede; that they are not distinct by reason and virtually, I deny; and I distinguish the consequent in the same way. The two processions are not really distinct except with regard to the mutually opposed relations. Thus active spiration is not really distinct from the active generation by the Father, nor from the passive generation of the Son, but it is distinct from the passive spiration of the Holy Ghost.

Moreover, as St. Thomas notes in the same place, "While in God the will and intellect are not different, nevertheless because of the nature of the intellect and will the processions according to the action of each follow a certain order." For nothing is loved unless known beforehand, and therefore there is no procession of love unless there is a process of intellection. Here again we see the propriety of the psychological theory, and an indication that an image of the Trinity is to be found in the soul.

Third doubt. Whether the two divine processions differ in species and number?

Reply. There is a quasi-difference in species, that is, they differ not only in number, otherwise both processions would be generation or spiration. They do not, however, differ in the proper sense in species because in God genus and species do not exist in the strict sense. Speaking analogically with reference to creatures, we can say that the processions differ in a certain sense according to species, not by reason of a diversity of natures but by reason of the personal properties, which are diverse in the one nature. This is not true of creatures. It does not follow from this that the three persons differ in species, for their nature is one not only in species but also in number.

FOURTH ARTICLE: WHETHER IN GOD THE PROCESSION OF LOVE IS GENERATION

The reply is in the negative.

1. Because of faith. The Athanasian Creed tells us: "The Holy Ghost is of the Father and of the Son, not made, not created, not begotten, but proceeding."

2. Further explanation is found in the psychological theory, which on this point is sufficiently in accord with the teaching of faith. The Greek Fathers and St. Augustine declared that they were not able to discover a reason why the second procession was not generation like the first procession.

St. Thomas offers the following reason.

Generation, in its formal concept, takes place after the manner of assimilation of the begotten to the begetter, who produces something like himself in nature. But such assimilation is found in procession from the intellect, when the Father knows Himself and enunciates, but it is not found in the procession of the will. Therefore the procession of love cannot be called generation.

The major is evident. The minor is proved from the fact that the intellect assimilates a thing to itself when the truth is in the intellect by the likeness of the thing known. But the will by its nature is not an assimilative faculty or power; it is inclining and tends to a thing because the thing is good; it tends to the good as it is in things and not as it is represented in the mind. Thus the will does not produce by its own power a terminus like to itself or to the object; it produces an inclination and a tendency to the thing that is loved.

3. The procession which is not generation remains without a special name; it may be called spiration because it is the procession of the Spirit.

FIFTH ARTICLE: WHETHER THERE ARE MORE THAN TWO PROCESSIONS IN GOD

The reply is in the negative and it is of faith.

1. This is known from the Scriptures and from the definitions of the Church, according to which there are only three persons, one that does not proceed and two others that proceed, and hence there are but two processions.

2. This truth is also explained by the psychological theory, which more and more appears as a concept based on revelation; because in every intellectual nature there are only two immanent actions, intellect and will.

The divine nature as good is diffusive of itself and it is diffusive in a twofold manner: through the intellectual procession and through the procession of love, "Inasmuch as God understands and loves His essence, truth, and goodness." Thus St. Thomas, even in this treatise, preserves the principle frequently quoted by St. Bonaventure: good is essentially diffusive of itself, and the higher the nature the more intimately and abundantly is it diffusive of itself. But within God this diffusion is not through final or efficient causality but above the order of causality. Yet there is a completely intimate and superabundant diffusion in the communication of the entire and infinite divine nature through generation and spiration.

Doubts about this whole question.

First doubt. What is the "principium quod" of each procession, considered actively, that is, what is the principle that generates and the principle that spirates?

Reply. It is the Father that generates, and the Father and the Son that spirate. "The divine nature does not beget, is not begotten, and does not proceed; but it is the Father who begets, the Son who is begotten, and the Holy Ghost who proceeds."[187] With regard to the second procession, it has been defined: "The Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son."[188] If the divine nature generated, the generation would be in the three persons and the three persons would generate, and so the Holy Ghost would generate a fourth

person and so to infinity. Again, if the divine nature were begotten, the three persons would be begotten; if the divine nature proceeded, the three persons would proceed.

Second doubt. What is the principle through which ("principium quo") each procession takes place actively considered?

Reply. According to revelation each procession terminates with one person who proceeds not from the divine nature taken in itself, but the Son proceeds from the divine nature as it is of the Father (because it is the Father who generates), and the Holy Ghost proceeds from the divine nature as it is of the Father and the Son, since these two spirate.

Therefore we say that the "principium quo" (the principle through which) of each procession actively considered is the intellect and the will in the divine nature as modified by the relations of paternity and active spiration. It is important to add "as modified" because essential intellection and essential love are common to the three persons and thus are not processions. Such is the common teaching of the Thomists. The psychological theory, although it wishes to pluck out the persons from the processions, to a certain extent must suppose the persons and relations in order fully to define the processions. This is part of the obscurity of this theory, and we should not be surprised at it because these notions of procession, relation, and person mutually illustrate each other just as in ontology the notions of being, unity, truth, goodness, and beauty throw light on one another.[189]

From these passages from St. Thomas we see that the "principium quo" of the divine processions implies something absolute and something relative: it is absolute in recto as form, and relative in obliquo as mode. Thus we say that the proximate "principium quo" of the processions is the intellect and the love in the divine nature, but as modified by the relations of paternity and active spiration. The three persons know, but only the Father enunciates by generating or generates by enunciating; the three persons love, but only the Father and the Son spirate. This is sufficiently clear in spite of the obscurity of the mystery.

Third doubt. Is the power of generating in God a perfection?

Reply. The difficulty arises from the fact that this perfection would be lacking in the Son and the Holy Ghost, belonging only to the Father, and thus the three persons would not be equally perfect.

The reply is based on the fact that the power of generating directly

(in recto) signifies the divine nature, but indirectly (in obliquo) the divine relation, as will be more clearly explained below.[190] This is to say that the power of generating pertains to the divine nature as it is in the Father. Wherefore the power of generating in God is a perfection with respect to that which it signifies directly, namely, the absolute, which is the divine nature; but it is not a perfection with respect to that which it signifies indirectly (in obliquo), namely, the relation of paternity, which according to its relative being ("esse ad") abstracts from perfection and imperfection, because it does not involve imperfection nor is it a new perfection superadded to the infinite perfection of the divine nature. Something similar is taught concerning the free act of creation, which is virtually distinct from the necessary act of love, since the act of creation does not involve an imperfection nor does it add a new perfection. Thus God was not improved by the fact that He freely willed to create the universe.

Fourth doubt. Whether the divine processions, actively considered, are true and proper actions or only emanations, like the faculties that emanate from the essence of the soul.

Reply. In their reply the Thomists oppose Suarez. They say that the processions are true actions, but actions that are merely immanent because they are the act of the intellect ad intra, namely, enunciation, and the act of the will, namely, active spiration. This immanent action can be purified of every imperfection, as is indeed the creative act, an immanent action which is virtually transient and transitive.

But we do not say that God the Father as begetting is truly and properly acting, but only truly and properly understanding and enunciating; so also the Father and the Son in active spiration are not properly acting, because in common usage the expression "acting" is taken to mean an efficient cause and not a principle alone. The Father is not the cause of the Son, and the Son is not an effect. Indeed although the Father is the principle of the Word, the Son is not said to be principled, because, as St. Thomas points out,

[191] to be principled or derive from a principle implies an imperfection that cannot be attributed to the Son.

The Word is not principled, but He is a principle from a principle. Therefore there is no other distinction between the Father and the Son except the distinction of origin; no distinction exists with regard to nature, dignity, omnipotence, and the like: "All things whatsoever the Father hath, are Mine" (John 16:15). For this reason it is better to speak of quasi-active generation and quasi-active spiration, and especially of quasi-passive generation and quasi-passive spiration, for passivity, properly speaking, corresponds to transitive action. Generation and spiration, however, are simply immanent actions above the order of causality; through them the divine nature is not caused but communicated.

Fifth doubt. How does the divine Word differ from our word?

Reply. It differs in many ways.[192] 1. The Word of God is something substantial, living, and intelligent; it is, moreover, a person, but our word is only an accident of our minds. God alone is subsisting intellect. 2. The divine Word exists, not like ours because of a need, but from the infinite abundance and fecundity. 3. The divine Word is co-eternal with the Father, it is immutable, and is begotten perpetually, all of which is not verified in our word. 4. The divine Word is unique because it is adequate; our word is inadequate and therefore multiple, indeed it is more multiple in the inferior created intellects.

Nevertheless an analogy remains between the two words, because both are termini of the enunciating intellect or enunciation, and both are images or representations of the thing that is known; both are conceived by the mind, but only in God does this conception deserve the name of generation in its proper sense; both are simply spiritual, intrinsically independent of matter and the corruption of material things. But, according to the declaration of the Fourth Lateran Council, "The similarity between the Creator and the creature is never so great that the dissimilarity is not always greater."[193] These declarations might serve as a definition of analogy, for, as we have often shown with St. Thomas,[194] things are analogous when they have the same name, but what is signified by the name is the same "secundum quid" and proportionately but simply different in these analogous things.

RECAPITULATION

In this question 27 we have seen that in God there are processions ad intra, why there are two and only two processions, and why the first procession alone is called generation.

In the first article, in the light of revelation, we saw that in God there is a procession after the manner of intelligible emanation of an intelligible Word from one who enunciates. It is a procession ad intra, not "ad extra"; it is not a procession like a being of the mind, but a real procession.

In the same article we saw that the Word has the same nature as the Father from whom He proceeds. The perfection and propriety of this procession "ad intra" became manifest in the light of the following principle: "that which proceeds "ad intra" by an intellectual process should not be diverse in nature from him from whom it proceeds; indeed the more perfectly it proceeds the more it will be one with that from which it proceeds, like the intellectual concept with the intellect. Thus the Word understood and enunciated by the Father is one with Him in nature; nor is the Word an accidental word—it is substantial, just as the divine intellect is not an accident, since it is subsisting intellect itself.

As St. Thomas says in the "Contra Gentes", "The higher any nature is, the more intimate with it will be that which proceeds from it."[195] Thus the Angelic Doctor safeguards the principle that good is essentially diffusive of itself, and the higher the nature the more intimately and fully will it be diffusive of itself. In God there is, then, a diffusion "ad intra" transcending the order of efficient and final causality.

In the second article we saw that the procession of the Word is rightly called generation because it is the origin of a living being from a conjoined living being in the likeness of its nature. The concept of the intellect is a likeness of the thing understood; so also the Word is the likeness of the Father knowing Himself, existing in the same nature, since in God intellect and being are the same. That knowledge which is had by means of an expressed likeness of the thing known is essentially assimilative.

In the third article, in addition to the procession of the Word, we learned of the procession of love, inasmuch as the love of the good follows the conception of the good.

In the fourth article it was explained why the procession of love is not generation; because it is through the will, which by its own power is not assimilative and does not assimilate a thing to itself, but inclines toward the thing that is willed, like a weight, in the words of St. Augustine, "My love, my weight."

As a complement to this teaching on the processions, we shall explain below that the three persons understand (by essential intellection), but that the Father alone enunciates and enunciates adequately; as when three persons are confronted by a difficult problem, one discovers an adequate solution and all three equally understand what is enunciated by one of the three.[196] In the same way we shall explain proportionally that, although the three persons love (with essential love), only the Father and the Son spirate the Holy Ghost, who is the terminus of this active spiration.[197]

In this present question, St. Thomas did not intend as yet to solve these various doubts because their solution will be much more patent later on.[198] The holy doctor proceeds without haste, passing gradually from the confused concept to a more distinct concept of the same thing. His commentators, however, are obliged at times to examine these doubts earlier because they are sometimes proposed as objections against the articles under questions 27 and 28.

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CHAPTER II: QUESTION 28 THE DIVINE RELATIONS

INTRODUCTION

Prologue. "Next in order we consider the divine relations." St. Thomas says "next in order" because according to faith these relations are the relations of origin or procession, inasmuch as the Son proceeds from the Father, and the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son. Therefore the processions are the foundation of really distinct relations which, as we shall see in the following question, formally constitute the persons. Hence we are now speaking implicitly of the persons although they are not yet explicitly mentioned.[199]

This question on the divine relations is of the greatest importance because, as we shall see below,[200] the persons are constituted by subsisting relations opposed to one another, which are in God not only virtually but also formally. Since these relations are in God, they cannot involve any imperfection so that, for example, filiation will not involve any dependence. This concept of relation is the philosophical idea developed by Aristotle and it is applied to the divine persons, who are called by relative terms in the Scriptures: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. In this fundamental question, therefore, we are still concerned rather with an explanation of the principles of faith than with the deduction of theological conclusions. We are to explain why the Father is so called relative to the Son, why the Son is so called relative to the Father, and the Holy Ghost relative to the Father and the Son. Consequently we consider here the real distinction of the divine persons as revealed and as founded on the opposition of relations. In these articles we shall study the basis of that principle which throws light on the entire treatise of the Trinity and by which the principal objections are answered: "In God all things are one and the same when there is no opposition of relation."[201]

Division of the question. In this question we ask four things:

I. Are there real relations in God?

II. What are these relations? Are they the divine essence itself. or something extrinsically attached to the essence?

III. Can there be in God several relations really distinct from one another?

IV. How many relations are there?

PHILOSOPHICAL NOTES ON THE IDEA OF RELATION AND ITS DIVISION

These notes are briefly recalled by St. Thomas in the body of the first article, and it is suggested that the reader consult the first part of the body of the article.

The category of relation is distinguished by Aristotle from the categories of substance, quantity, quality, transitive action, passion, etc. Thus a man is called relatively a father of another and a son of another. Aristotle calls relation "to prosti", or the "ad aliquid", or the "to something"; it is also called the reference (to something else), the order (to something else) or the habitude.

Many Nominalists declare that there are no real relations in creatures; that all the relations are relations of reason. On the other hand, moderate realism sees real relations in creatures, for apart from anyone's thinking about it a man is really the father of the son he begets. So also two white things are really alike apart from any consideration of the mind. Paternity and likeness, however, are merely relations; therefore there are real relations in things. St. Thomas explains that the good of the universe, which is something real, consists mainly in relation, namely, in the order of things to themselves and to God, and if this order is removed, all things will be in confusion as when an army is without any coordination and subordination of the soldiers.[202]

Relation is twofold: real and of reason. Real relation is the order in things themselves. Thus, for example, an effect is related to the cause on which it depends, a part to the whole, potency to act, and an act to its object. A relation of reason is the order cogitated by the mind, as the order of the predicate to the subject, and of species to genus. From various texts of Aristotle and St. Thomas[203] we present the following synopsis of the division of relation.

Real
relation,

transcendental or essential, such as essence to existence and matter to form, and the relation of faculties, habits, and acts to the specific object.

predicamental or accidental,

according to quantity, as equal, unequal, twofold, threefold

according to quality, as like and unlike

according to action, as paternity

according to

passion,
as
filiation

Relation of reason between things not really distinct as predicate to the subject in a judgment as the relation of real identity of one thing with itself between things really distinct as the knowable to knowledge as God to the creature.

Real relations are divided into transcendental and predicamental. A transcendental relation is the order included in the essence of a thing as, for example, the soul's transcendental order to the body, that of matter to form, essence to being, accident to the subject, science to its object, etc. All these things have these relations by their very essence, and the transcendental relation perdures even when the term disappears. Thus a separated soul continues to be individuated by its relation to the body which is to rise again. It is called transcendental because it transcends the special predicament of relation and is found also in other categories, for example, in substance and quality; indeed there is scarcely anything that is not ordered to something else by its nature.

Predicamental relation, which is also called relation according to being (secundum esse), is defined by Aristotle as a real accident whose whole being is to be ordered to something else.[204] This relation is not included in the essence of the thing, but it comes to the essence as an accident. It is pure order or reference to a term, as, for example, paternity, filiation, the equality of two quantities, likeness.

The real existence of these relations is certain, for, antecedent to any consideration of the mind and apart from anyone's thinking, two white things are really alike and this man is really the father of another. On the contrary, the relation of the predicate to the subject in a sentence is a relation of reason, which does not exist until after the consideration of the mind and as the result of the mind's activity.

The predicamental relation requires a real basis in the subject and a real terminus really distinct from this basis in the subject; this relation does not perdure after the terminus disappears, and in this it differs from the transcendental relation. The basis of the

predicamental relation is the reason for the reference or ordering. Thus, in the relation of paternity the man who begets a son is the subject, the son is the terminus, to whom the father has a reference, and generation is the basis of the relation, since the reason why the father is referred to the son is the fact that he begot him.[205]

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WHETHER THE PREDICAMENTAL RELATION IS REALLY DISTINCT FROM ITS BASIS OR FOUNDATION

For example, whether the likeness of two white things is really distinct from their whiteness, and paternity from generation.

Many Thomists, among them Capreolus, Cajetan, Ferrariensis, John of St. Thomas, and Goudin, admit at least a modal real distinction between the relation and its foundation or basis; Suarez denies the distinction and thus aligns himself with the Nominalists. The Thomists prove their stand in the following way. The predicamental relation is an accident whose whole being is to be referred to something else. But the entity of the foundation is not pure order to another but something absolute, as, for example, quantity, quality, and action. Therefore the entity of the foundation of the relation is really distinct from the predicamental relation. For this reason, Aristotle conceived of quantity, quality, action, and relation as distinct predicaments.

Confirmation. The predicamental relation disappears with its terminus whereas the entity of the foundation of the relation survives. When one of two similar things, for instance, is destroyed, the relation to the other also disappears. Moreover, even after the generation of the son, he remains the son of his father.

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WHETHER EXISTENCE BELONGS TO A PREDICAMENTAL RELATION FORMALLY ACCORDING TO ITS BEING IN THE SUBJECT OR ITS BEING WITH REFERENCE TO ITS TERMINUS

The relation's being in the subject ("esse in") is not the foundation of the relation but it is the relation itself in the general nature of an accident and not under the special aspect of a relation. The reply of the Thomists is that existence does not belong formally to a predicamental relation according to its being with reference to its terminus ("esse ad") because according to this being with reference to another ("esse ad") the relation abstracts from existence and could be a relation of reason. Existence, however, belongs to a predicamental relation according to its being in a subject, that is, its "inesse"," or its inherence in the subject. Since, however, as we shall see below, in God the "esse in" cannot be an accident, but must be the divine substance, it follows, according to St. Thomas, that there is one being in the Trinity for the different divine relations. Suarez, on the contrary, thought that a relation had its own proper existence and therefore he taught that there were three relative existences in God. Similarly he taught that there were two beings in Christ because he denied the real distinction between the created essence and being. For St. Thomas there was but one being for the three divine persons and one being in Christ.

This distinction between the "esse in" of a relation and its "esse ad" is clearly explained by St. Thomas: "The relation itself, which is nothing else than the reference of one creature to another, has one kind of being inasmuch as it is an accident and another being inasmuch as it is a relation or order to another. Inasmuch as it is an accident it has its being in a subject, but not as it is a relation or an order, for as a relation it has being exclusively with reference to another, a something passing over to another and in some way assisting the thing to which it is related."[206] Thus the "esse in", which is something the relation has in common with all accidents, gives title to reality to the relation's "esse ad".[207]

From various examples, especially in the supernatural order, we shall see that this concept of relation is of great importance. In Christ the hypostatic union is the real relation of the dependence of the humanity of Christ on the person of the divine Word. "The

hypostatic union is that relation which is found between the divine and human natures... . This union is not really in God but is only a relation of reason; but it really is in the human nature, which is a kind of creature. Therefore it is proper to say that it (the hypostatic union) is something created."[208]

Similarly, in the Blessed Virgin Mary the divine maternity is a real relation to the person of the incarnate Word, and because of its terminus this real relation belongs to the hypostatic order and transcends the order of grace. Hence it is commonly held that the Blessed Virgin Mary was predestined to the divine maternity before she was predestined to the fullness of glory and grace. It should be noted, however, that the person of the Word does not acquire a real relation to the Blessed Virgin but only a relation of reason because the relation of God to creatures is only a relation of reason. So also St. Joseph's great dignity of foster-father of the incarnate Word is a relation. Finally, our adoptive sonship is a relation to God the author of grace; it is a participation in the likeness of the eternal filiation of the only-begotten Son.

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FIRST ARTICLE: WHETHER THERE ARE REAL RELATIONS IN GOD

State of the question. It seems that there are no real relations in God and that there are only relations of reason like the relation of identity between a thing and itself, because the terms are not really distinct. Moreover, if a real relation were found in God, it would be the relation of a principle to the principled. But the relation of God to creatures as their principle is not a real relation but one of reason, whereas the relation of creatures to God is real. Neither does that relation which is founded on the intellectual procession of the Word seem to be real since it does not precede the operation of the intellect but follows it.

Reply. Nevertheless the reply is in the affirmative and is defined as of faith. This is evident from the condemnation of Sabellius. According to the Sabellian heresy, God is not really the Father and the Son, but only according to our way of thinking. Against this heresy the Church has declared that God is really the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost in such a way that the Father is not the Son but is really distinct from Him.[209] The Father is so called only because of His paternity, which is a relation; the Son is so called because of filiation, which is also a relation, as is also spiration. Therefore in God we find the real relations of paternity, filiation, spiration, and, as we shall see below, of active and passive spiration.

The major of this argument from authority is the affirmation of the dogma against Sabellius. The minor is an analysis of the words, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. As found in the Scriptures these nouns are relative: the Father is so called with relation to the Son, and the Son with relation to the Father, and in this way these two persons are really distinguished by the opposition of relation.

This idea of relation was gradually developed by the Fathers; their teaching became more and more explicit on the point that the divine persons are distinguished among themselves by relations alone. [210] St. Gregory Nazianzen said, "Father is not the name of the essence or of an action but it indicates the relation which the Father has to the Son, or that which the Son has to the Father."[211] Among the Greeks, St. Gregory of Nyssa and St. John Damascene, and among the Latins, St. Augustine, St. Fulgentius, Boetius, St. Isidore,

and St. Anselm, employ similar language.[212]

In his work on the Trinity,[213] St. Augustine had already evolved a theory of relations, as Tixeront points out,[214] explaining that the divine persons are relations which are not something absolute like the divine essence and which are not accidents. St. Augustine wrote: "These things are not said according to the substance, because each one does not refer to Himself, but these things are said mutually and to each other; they are not said according to accidents, because that which is said to be the Father and what is said to be the Son is something eternal and incommunicable. These things are said not as of substances but as something relative, but the relative thing is nevertheless not an accident, because it is not changeable.[215] Thus the Father is so called with regard to the Son, the Son with regard to the Father, and the Holy Ghost with regard to the Father and the Son.

This doctrine of the divine relations was clearly defined by the Eleventh Council of Toledo in 675: "By the relative names of the persons, the Father is referred to the Son, the Son to the Father, and the Holy Ghost is referred to the other two persons, and when the three persons are spoken of in a relative sense, we nevertheless believe in one nature and one substance... . For that which is the Father is not referred to Himself but to the Son; and that which is the Son is not referred to Himself but to the Father...; with reference to themselves each person is said to be God." 18 In the Council of Florence particularly the famous dogmatic principle, "In God all things are one where there is no opposition of relation," was proclaimed.[216] At this council, John, the theologian for the Latins, declared: "According to both Greek and Latin doctors, it is relation alone that multiplies the persons in the divine production, and it is called the relation of origin, which has two characteristics: that from which another is and that which is from another."[217] At this same council, the learned Cardinal Bessarion, archbishop of Nicaea, declared: "No one is ignorant of the fact that the personal names of the Trinity are relative."[218]

St. Thomas treated this question in several of his works.[219] From a study of these various works it is clear how his understanding of the matter became more sublime and more simple as he approached the pure intuition of truth. Later, however, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the thinking of many theologians, among them Durandus

and others, became excessively complicated so as to impede the contemplation of divine things.

This and the following articles can be reduced to this simple truth: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are God; but the Father is not the Son, the Son is not the Father, and the Holy Ghost is neither the Father nor the Son. In this article St. Thomas proves from the processions that there are real relations in God. His argument may be reduced to the following.

When anything proceeds from a principle of the same nature it is necessary that both, namely, that which proceeds and that from which it proceeds, should concur in the same order and have real references to each other. But the processions in God take place in the identity of nature (preceding question). Therefore it is necessary that according to the divine processions we accept real relations, namely, of the Father to the Son, of the Son to the Father... . On the other hand, when anything proceeds from God ad extra, such as a creature, that which proceeds is not in the same order as God Himself, the two are not mutually ordered to each other, and the creature alone depends on God, but God does not depend on the creature nor is He ordered to the creature. Hence only the creature has a real relation to God; and God in no way has a real relation to the creature.

Reply to first objection. These real relations, however, do not inhere in God as an accident inheres in a subject. This will be explained in the following article, where it will be shown that in God the "being in" ("esse in") of the relations is substantial and not accidental.

Reply to second objection. Boetius merges the relations in God with the relation of identity (a relation of reason alone) inasmuch as the divine relations do not diversify the divine substance; but Boetius continued to accept as true that the Father is not the Son and that they are opposed by the opposition of real relation.[220]

Reply to third objection. God the Creator does not have a real relation to creatures because the Creator and creatures are not in the same order and are not ordered to each other. Creatures indeed are ordered to God upon whom they depend, but God is not ordered to creatures. It is in the nature of the creature to depend on God, but it is not in God's nature to produce creatures, since He produced them

most freely. On the other hand, the Father and the Son are of the same order and are ordered to each other, just as in men active and passive generation are in the same order and thus are the basis for real mutual relations.

Reply to fourth objection. The relation of filiation in God follows the operation of the divine intellect, but not as a logical entity such as the distinction between the subject and predicate; it follows as something real, namely, as the expressed word, which as the terminus of mental enunciation is something real in the mind.

First doubt. Is the "esse ad" of a relation always real? The reply is in the negative. The reason is that many relations are of reason only and each of these relations has its "esse ad"; consequently the "esse ad" as such is not necessarily a real being or a being of the mind but may be either, depending on whether the foundation of the relation and its "esse in" are real or beings of the mind only.

Second doubt. Are the relations in God real not only according to their "esse in" but also according to their "esse ad"? The reply is in the affirmative. The reason is that when the "esse in" is real the "esse ad" is also real. Thus in man the relation of paternity to the son is a real accident, existing in the father antecedent to the consideration of our minds. If in God the "esse ad" were not real, the real distinction between the persons, which is founded on the opposition of real relation, would be destroyed. It is the reference to (respectus ad) alone that causes the relative opposition.[221] The reason why the "esse ad" is real is because the relation really exists in some subject in accord with the real foundation of the relation independently of the consideration of our mind. The "esse in" is the title to reality of the "esse ad". In the "De potentia", St. Thomas gives the following explanation. "The relation itself, which is nothing more than the order of one creature to another, is one thing inasmuch as it is an accident and something else inasmuch as it is a relation or an order. Inasmuch as it is an accident it has its being in a subject, but not inasmuch as it is a relation or an order, for as a relation it is order to another, as if passing over to another and in some way assisting the related thing."[222]

SECOND ARTICLE: WHETHER A RELATION IN GOD IS THE SAME AS HIS ESSENCE

State of the question. After asking the question whether a thing is we ask the question what it is. The difficulty arises from the fact that the relative element, the "to another," is not understood as something substantial, for then the essence of God would not be something substantial but relative.

The reply, however, is affirmative and of faith, namely, the relations in God are actually the same as His essence, although they are distinguished by reason from the essence. This truth was defined in the Council of Reims against Gilbert Porretanus: "When we speak of the three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, we say that they are one God and one substance. Conversely, we confess that the divine substance is three persons."[223] "We believe that there are no relations in God that are not God."[224]

In these propositions, as in every affirmative proposition, the verb "is" affirms the real identity of the subject and the predicate, as, for example, the Father is God and the paternity is the deity, because God is His own deity and the Father is His own paternity.[225] The same teaching was defined by the Fourth Lateran Council,[226] and the following proposition of Eckard was condemned, "In God there can be no distinction and none can be conceived."[227]

The most common opinion of theologians is that the divine relations are distinguished from the divine essence only by reason with a foundation in reality, that is, only virtually. To this the Thomists generally add that the distinction is a minor virtual distinction after the manner of that which is implicit and explicit inasmuch as our concept of the divine essence implicitly contains the relations. Before considering St. Thomas' argument, we will briefly explain the meaning of these terms.

A virtual distinction, or a distinction of reason with a foundation in reality, may be minor or major. A major virtual distinction is after the manner of that which excludes and that which is excluded. Such a distinction exists between the genus and the differences extrinsic to it which the genus contains, not implicitly, but only virtually. Thus animality may be without rationality, and with regard to rationality it

has a foundation in actuality as something potential and perfectible.

A minor virtual distinction, however, is after the manner of those things that are implicit and explicit. Thus subsisting being itself, according to our concept, implicitly contains the divine attributes, but it does not have a foundation in actuality for these attributes as something potential, or as something imperfect and perfectible by the divine attributes, because subsisting being, according to our concept, is pure act. For when we speak of subsisting being we do not yet speak explicitly of mercy and justice. It must be noted, however, that this minor virtual distinction is more than the verbal distinction between Tullius and Cicero. We cannot equivalently use the names, divine essence, divine mercy, or divine justice in the same way that we equivalently use the names Tullius and Cicero. We cannot say, for instance, that God punishes by His mercy and pardons by His justice.

Lastly, it may be recalled that Scotus held that the distinction between the divine essence, the attributes and the relations was formal actual from the nature of things, because the distinction, in his view, is not real since it is not between one thing and another but between two formalities of the same thing.

To this the Thomists reply that this formal actual distinction based on the nature of the thing either antecedes the consideration of our minds and then, however small it is, it is real; or it does not antecede the consideration of our minds, and then it is a distinction of reason with a foundation in the thing or a virtual distinction. There is no middle point in the distinction between what antecedes and what does not antecede the consideration of our minds.

After these preliminaries we shall consider how St. Thomas proved the commonly accepted doctrine that the real relations in God are not really distinct from the divine essence but are distinguished from it only by reason.

St. Thomas explained this proposition by two arguments: by the indirect argument (sed contra) and the direct argument.

The indirect argument. Everything that is not the divine essence is a creature. But the relations really belong to God. If therefore they are not the divine essence, they are creatures; and the worship of latria

cannot be offered to the divine relations.

The direct argument. Whatever in created things has an accidental being in another ("esse in"), when transferred to God has a substantial being in another ("esse in"), because no accidents are found in God. But in created things a relation is really distinguished from its subject solely because it has an accidental being in another ("esse in") from which it derives the reality of its "esse ad" or reference to another. Therefore in God a relation is not really distinct from its subject inasmuch as its "esse in", or being in another, is substantial from which is derived the reality of its reference to another, its "esse ad". The major is evident from the fact that in God, who is pure act, there can be no accident perfecting something potential and perfectible.[228] The minor is explained by the fact that in creatures a relation places nothing real in the subject except so far as it places in the subject that which is common to all accidents, namely, the "esse in", which is an accidental being really distinct from substance. According to its own peculiar structure, a relation is not properly in a subject, as are quantity and quality, but it is a reference to something else.

If therefore, for example, the relation of paternity is transferred to God where the "esse in" will be substantial, the relation will not be really distinct from the divine essence; it will be distinguished only by reason since it expresses a reference to something else, namely, of the Father to the Son. Therefore neither by the divine relations nor by the divine attributes is the divine essence something potential and perfectible because of a foundation in its nature. Hence the divine essence, as it is conceived by us, implicitly contains the divine relations, from which it is distinguished by a minor virtual distinction. By this latter term the Thomists have epitomized this present article.

It must be carefully noted that what is the peculiar feature of a relation, namely, the "esse ad", does not properly inhere in the subject as does the peculiar feature of the accident of quality. If the "esse ad" properly inhered in the subject, there could be no relative opposition between the real relations without there being at the same time opposition in the very essence of God, which is impossible. This entire article is reduced to this simple thought: the Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Ghost is God, and the paternity is the deity because God is His own deity and the Father is His own paternity. In all these statements the verb "is" expresses the

real identity of the subject and the predicate.

The difference between St. Thomas and Suarez.[229] The principle that "in God all things are one and the same except where there is opposition of relation" is not understood in the same way by St. Thomas and by Suarez since they do not understand relation in the same way. For St. Thomas being (esse) does not formally belong to accidental or predicamental relation (paternity, for instance) according to its "esse ad", because the "esse ad" prescinds from existence; it is found also in a relation of reason (in the relation of God to creatures, for example). Being, however, belongs formally to an accidental relation according to its "esse in", namely, as it is an accident inhering (at least aptitudinally) in a real subject. If the "esse in" is real, then the "esse ad" is real, but it takes its title to reality not from itself but from the "esse in."[230]

But in God the "esse in" cannot be an accident, since God is pure act and no accident is found in Him. Therefore in God the "esse in" of the divine relations is identified with the one existence of the divine substance; it is identified with subsisting being itself.[231] From this it follows that in the Trinity the divine relations have the same "esse in" since they exist by the one existence of the divine essence itself.[232] "Since a divine person is the same as the divine nature, in the divine persons the being of the person is not different from the being of the divine nature. Therefore the three divine persons have but one being." Similarly in Christ there is one being for the two natures because Christ is one person, and this presupposes a real distinction between created essence and being.

Suarez, on the contrary, did not admit this real distinction and held that there were two existences in Christ and three relative existences in the Trinity. For Suarez the relations have their own proper existence even according to their "esse ad". He found it difficult to solve the objection arising from the axiom that two things that are the same as a third are also the same as each other. But the divine persons are the same as a third, namely, the divine essence. Therefore they are the same as each other.

Suarez did not know how to solve this objection except by denying the major with respect to God.[233] He was aware of St. Thomas' reply that those things which are the same as a third are the same as each other unless there is present the opposition of relation. But

because he had a different concept of relation he held that this convenient answer did not solve the difficulty since nothing like this is found in creatures. Therefore he concluded that this axiom taken in its most universal extension, prescinding from created and uncreated being, is false for, while it is true in certain cases, that is, in creatures, it cannot be inferred for the entire extension of being.

This is the same as saying that this axiom does not apply to God. But this axiom is directly derived from the principle of contradiction or identity, which patently must be applicable to God analogically because it is the law of being as being, the most universal law therefore, apart from which there is nothing but absurdity, which would be unthinkable.

The principal difference between Suarez and St. Thomas is that for Suarez the "esse ad" of a relation is real by reason of itself, just as he held that the created essence is actual by reason of itself and is therefore not really distinct from its existence. Suarez did not conceive being other than that which is, not as that by which a thing is. He did not admit a real distinction between essence, either of a created substance or accident, and being. This is the foundation of the difference. Whether he wished it or not, Suarez multiplied the absolute in God, and therefore the objection based on the principle of identity remained unanswerable.[234]

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SOLUTION OF THE OBJECTIONS

1. What did St. Augustine mean when he contended that the "ad aliquid" of the relation was not intended to refer to the substance?

Reply. St. Augustine's meaning was that the "ad aliquid" is not predicated of God as something absolute but as something relative, but he did not say that the divine relations are really distinct from the substance. In several places he declared that in God the relations are not accidents.[235] St. Thomas points out that in God there are only two predicaments, substance and relations, and the "esse in" of the relations is substantial. We are dealing here not with a transcendental relation but with a predicamental relation (paternity, filiation, etc.), whose "esse in" or "being in" in God, however, is substantial.

2. The term, "inor virtual distinction," is the happiest expression for the relations as they are in God, because the Deity as conceived by our minds actually and implicitly contains the relations.

3. In reply to the third objection, St. Thomas shows that it does not follow from the preceding that the divine essence is something relative.[236]

First doubt. Whether the Deity, not as conceived by us but as it is in itself and is seen by the blessed, contains the relations explicitly or only implicitly.

Reply. The Deity contains the relations explicitly because the virtual distinction is a distinction of reason subsequent to the consideration of our minds, and this distinction is not found in the divine essence so as to be seen by God and the blessed. Similarly the divine nature as imperfectly conceived by us contains the divine attributes implicitly, since we gradually deduce the attributes from the divine essence; but as it is in itself, the Deity explicitly contains the attributes. The blessed in heaven have no need of deduction to know the divine attributes; they see them intuitively as they are formally and eminently in God, not only as virtually eminently, as is the case with the mixed perfections.

In rejecting Scotus' formal actual distinction between the Deity and

the relations, Cajetan explains: "There is in God actually, or in the order of reality, only one being, which is not purely absolute or purely relational, neither mixed nor composite, or resulting from either of these, but most eminently and formally possessing that which is relational and that which is absolute. So in the formal order, or the order of formal reasons, in Himself, not in our mode of speaking, there is in God only one formal reason or essence. This is neither purely absolute nor purely relational, neither purely communicable nor purely incommunicable, but most eminently and formally containing both that which is absolutely perfect and that which the relational Trinity demands. We are in error, however, whenever we proceed from the absolute and relational to God because we imagine that the distinction between the absolute and the relational is prior to the divine nature. The complete opposite is true, for the divine essence is prior to all being and all of its differences; it is above being, above one, etc."[237]

And yet the Deity as an essence is really communicated to the Son and the Holy Ghost without any communication of paternity or filiation, just as in the triangle the first angle constructed communicates its whole surface to the other angles without communicating itself. The danger of agnosticism does not arise in this statement; such danger would be present, however, if we said that the divine relations and attributes were in God virtually and eminently, like mixed perfections, and not eminently formally. This doctrine may be reduced to this simple thought: the Father is God, and in this proposition the verb "is" expresses the real identity of the subject and predicate.[238]

Second doubt. Can we safeguard the idea of God as the most pure, most simple, and infinite act if we admit the formal-actual distinction?

Reply. The Thomists reply in the negative.[239] In this hypothesis the divine essence is conceived as having a foundation in itself that is in potency to the relations, that is actuable by the relations, as by something extraneous, like the genus of animality which is actuable by an extraneous specific difference. But it is repugnant to the most pure act that it be conceived as having a basis in itself for further realization; this would be repugnant to the simplicity and infinity of God. In this way the Thomists have adhered to Cajetan's explanation; other equivalent expressions may be found in Billuart's

exposition of this article.

Third doubt. Is the concept of the divine essence more extensive than the concept of paternity or of any other relation taken separately?

The reply is in the affirmative, because the Deity as conceived by us implicitly contains the idea of filiation, but the idea of filiation is not even implicitly contained in the concept of paternity, except correlatively since it is opposed to paternity.

Fourth doubt. Does Deity belong to our explicit concept of the person of the Father?

The reply is in the affirmative, for while paternity is only implicitly contained in our concept of the Deity, Deity is explicitly contained in the paternity because Deity is more extensive than paternity, including also filiation. Similarly, in created beings, being is explicit in the concept of substance, while substance is not explicitly in the concept of being because being is more extensive than substance.

Scotus' objection. If Deity is conceived by us as containing paternity in act, it follows that in begetting the Son the Father communicates paternity to Him. Then the Son would be the Father. Or if paternity is not communicated to the Son, then the Deity is not communicated to Him. Further, Scotus argued that if being implicitly contains substance and accidents, then whenever anything is predicated both substance and accidents are predicated.

Reply. I distinguish the antecedent: if the Deity is conceived by us as explicitly containing paternity, I concede; as implicitly containing paternity, I sub-distinguish: both implicitly and copulatively, I concede; implicitly and disjunctively, I deny. For the Deity is disjunctively either in the Father, or in the Son, or in the Holy Ghost. A virtual distinction is enough to safeguard the truth of the propositions about the communicability of the nature without the communication of paternity, just as it suffices to say that God punishes by His justice but not by His mercy. In the same way the concept of being contains substance and accidents implicitly, not copulatively but disjunctively, and therefore it does not follow that substance is accident.

Many difficulties are solved in this manner, namely, how it is the Father who begets and not the essence with which the Father is really identified; how each divine person is really God and still not the other persons, which are really implicitly included in the Deity.

I insist. But if the Deity, as it is in itself and is clearly seen by the blessed, explicitly contains the paternity, it follows that the Father in begetting the Son communicates paternity to Him, and thus the Son is the Father or He is not God.

Reply. This would be true if in the eminent being of the Deity the absolute and the relative, the communicable and the incommunicable, would be identified to such an extent as to be destroyed, this I concede; otherwise, I deny. Indeed, the absolute communicable and the incommunicable relative are found in God in a formally pre-eminent manner, just as mercy and justice in God are identified without being destroyed, since they are in God not only virtually (like the seven colors in white light) but also formally and eminently. Here is the mystery of the divine pre-eminence. We therefore rightly conceive the divine essence as being communicated to the Son together with all the absolute essential things which it contains and which are communicable, without any communication of the relative (paternity) because of the opposition to the terminus to which the essence is communicated. Thus in the triangle the first angle communicates its entire surface to the second and third angles but not itself.

In a word, the Father communicates the divine essence to the Son with regard to everything except where the opposition of relation intervenes, because a relative cannot be communicated to its correlative opposite. This statement is in accord with Cajetan's explanation: "In God (as He is in Himself) there is but one formal reason, neither purely absolute, nor purely relative, nor purely communicable, nor purely incommunicable, but eminently and formally containing both whatever is of absolute perfection and whatever the relational Trinity demands."[240] Cajetan declared also: "It remains that (God) is both communicable and incommunicable."[241]

Fifth doubt. What is the foundation of the relations of paternity and filiation?

Reply. In created beings the foundation is active and passive generation; this is also true proportionately of God. It should be noted that the "esse in" of the relation is not the foundation of the relation because the "esse in" is something common to all accidents, expressing at the same time the existence of the accident, for the being of the accident is the "esse in" at last aptitudinally.

The foundation of paternity as a relation is active generation, and the foundation of the relation of filiation is passive generation, that is, the actual procession. Similarly, spiration is the foundation of the relations between the Holy Ghost and the Father and the Son, who spirate in one active spiration.

Sixth doubt. Whether the divine relations (or persons) have their own proper relative existences, or whether they exist by the one absolute existence of the essence.

Reply. In opposition to Scotus and Suarez, the Thomists and many other theologians reply in the negative. This reply is based on many texts of St. Thomas; for example, "Since the divine person is the same as the divine nature, the being of the person is not different from the being of the nature. Therefore the three divine persons have but one being; they would have a triple being if in them the being of the nature were other than the being of the persons."[242]

In these texts St. Thomas is clearly speaking of the being of existence and not the being of the essence, particularly in the passage where he inquires whether there is one being in Christ although there are two natures, and answers in the affirmative.[243]

In explaining this answer to Scotus and Suarez we may say that the existence of the relation is nothing more than its "esse in." But, as we have said, the "esse in" of the relations in God is substantial, the same as the being of the divine nature. Therefore the divine relations do not have their own existences. Just as in God there is not a triple intelligence nor a triple will, so all the more there is no triple being, for in God all things are one and the same except where there is the opposition of relation.

This teaching is confirmed by the Athanasian Creed, which declares, "not three uncreated,... but one uncreated." If there were three uncreated existences besides the absolute existence common to the

three persons, there would be three uncreated beings, not only adjectively but substantively, because the form and the subject would be multiplied. We would then have three entities having three uncreated existences. Scotus and Suarez, therefore, are in some danger of tritheism. Fundamentally this is why Suarez was unable to solve the objection arising from the principle of identity: those things which are equal to a third are equal to each other. By multiplying being in God, Suarez multiplied the absolute in God and placed in jeopardy the principle that in God all things are one and the same except where there is the opposition of relation.

Further confirmation is had from the fact that in God essence and being are the same. But the essence is common to the three persons. Therefore being is also common to all three. Being is communicated together with the nature because it is completely identified with the nature. The divine nature is subsisting being itself according to the Scriptures, "am who am."[244] If the same intelligence and will are communicated, all the more the same existence is communicated.

Further, relative existences would be superfluous, for that which is already in existence does not need further existence; by the first existence a being is beyond nothingness and beyond its causes (if it has a cause). To say that what is already beyond nothingness and its causes is once again placed beyond causes and nothingness is to imply a contradiction. It would also imply a contradiction to have two ultimate realities of the same order, for neither would be the ultimate. Existence, however, is the ultimate reality of a thing. When the Fathers said that to be God was different from being the Father, they understood this being God with respect to Himself and the being the Father with respect to some one else. It does not follow from this that there are several existences in God.

Objection. Existence is nothing more than being in act. But the relations are really in act as distinct from the essence. Therefore they have their own existences.

Reply. The Thomists deny the major, for existence is not the thing itself but the actuality of the thing by which it is placed beyond nothingness and its causes. In God, however, essence and being are the same, and since the essence is common to the three persons the divine existence is also common to them. The relations, therefore,

are truly in act, but they are so by the absolute existence of the essence.

Objection. All production terminates with existence.

Reply. I distinguish the major: the production of a contingent being terminates in the production of a new existence, I concede; but communication terminates in an existence that is not new but in an existence that is communicated to the person who proceeds. So in some way the uncreated being of the Word is communicated to the assumed humanity since there is only one existence in Christ; so also the being of the separated soul is communicated to the body in the resurrection because there is only one substantial existence in man. Scotus and Suarez, however, deny the real distinction between created essence and being and therefore they multiply substantial being in man, assigning one to the body and one to the soul. They also declare that there are two beings in Christ and three relative existences in the Trinity.

I insist. Each thing that is distinct from others has its own existence. But the divine persons are distinct from one another. Therefore they have their own existences.

Reply. Each thing has its own existence, either proper or common, I concede; that the existence is always proper, I deny. Thus the humanity of Christ does not have its own proper existence, and in us the body does not have its proper existence distinct from the existence of the soul. Our bodies exist by the existence of the soul, which is spiritual. It is not repugnant, therefore, that in God the relations, whose "esse in" is substantial, exist by the existence of the divine nature itself.

I insist. Therefore in God the Father refers to Himself and not to another and not to the Son.

Reply. I distinguish the antecedent: the Father refers to Himself with regard to His "esse in", I concede; with regard to His "esse ad", I deny.

Final objection. Besides the absolute subsistence in God there are three relative subsistences or personalities; therefore there should be besides the absolute existence three relative existences.

Reply. I deny the consequence. The difference arises from the fact that the absolute subsistence confers only the perseity of independence but not the perseity of incommunicability; the three relative subsistences are not superfluous since they are required for incommunicability. On the other hand, the absolute existence, communicated with the nature, places the persons beyond nothingness, so that relative existences are superfluous, as was said above.

Seventh doubt. Whether the divine relations by reason of their "esse ad" add some relative perfection to the absolute perfection of the divine essence virtually distinct from it.

State of the question. It is most certain that the divine relations (which are, as we shall see below, the divine persons) are most perfect since they are identified with the divine essence, which is infinite subsisting perfection itself. Thus the divine relations are necessarily loved by God and must be accorded the adoration of latria on our part. The question is whether the relations by reason of their "esse ad" add some relative perfection, virtually distinct from the absolute perfection of the divine essence, which they include.

The reply is in the negative. This reply is at least the more probable one and is held by such Thomists as Capreolus, Cajetan, Ferrariensis, the Salmanticences, Gonet, and Billuart. But some Thomists (John of St. Thomas, Contenson, and Bancel) hold the contrary opinion.

1. Proof from authority. In his work on the Trinity, St. Augustine says: "The Father is good, the Son is good, the Holy Ghost is good; but there are not three good, only one is good. If goodness and perfection are actually multiplied in the three divine persons, they could be said to be three good and three perfect persons not only adjectively but also substantively because what these words signify both materially and formally would be multiplied inasmuch as there would be three relative perfections really distinct from one another. [245]

St. Thomas declared: "Paternity is a dignity of the Father as is the essence of the Father, for it is an absolute dignity and pertains to the essence. Just as, therefore, the same essence which in the Father is paternity and in the Son is filiation, so the same dignity which in the

Father is paternity is filiation in the Son."[246] So analogically in the triangle, the one surface which is the surface of the first angle is the surface of the second and third angles; no relative surfaces are found besides the absolute and common surface.

Billuart and others rightly point out that in these words St. Thomas not only openly asserts our conclusion but proves it, since the dignity or perfection of the Father is absolute and pertains to the essence.

2. Proof from theology. A thing is not good or perfect except inasmuch as it exists or implies an order to being. But the divine relations indeed exist according to their "esse in", but according to their "esse ad" they are not anything but only in reference to something.[247] Therefore by reason of their "esse ad" the relations do not add a relative perfection virtually distinct from the absolute, infinite perfection of the essence. In other words, the existence, and the perfection too, of the predicamental relation, with which we are now dealing, has reference to the subject and not to the terminus, and therefore the "esse ad" does not imply an order to existence, but prescinds from existence. For this reason it is possible to have certain relations which are not real and are of the mind only, namely, those whose "esse in" is not real.[248]

Here it is that the divine relations differ from the divine attributes, which by their nature look to the essence and have an order, not to something else, but to themselves. Thus the attributes are called absolute or absolutely simple perfections, which it is better to have than not to have. So the divine will is an absolute perfection, virtually distinct from the perfection of God's being and from subsisting intellect itself, although all these are identified without being destroyed in the eminence of the Deity, in whom they are found not only virtually and eminently but formally and eminently.

Corollary. The divine relations, taken formally according to their "esse ad", are not absolutely simple perfections properly so called because, although they do not involve imperfection, it is not better to have them than not to have them; their "esse ad" is a pure reference, prescinding from perfection and imperfection. So also in God the free act of creation (I am not speaking here of freedom but of the free act) is not an absolutely simple perfection, since God is not more perfect because He created the universe.[249] God was not improved

because from eternity He willed to create the world; to create the world is indeed something befitting, but not to have created is nevertheless not unbefitting.

On this point there is agreement, but Cajetan offered a formula that was not acceptable to other Thomists: "For God to will other beings is a voluntary and entirely free perfection whose opposite would not be an imperfection."[250] He expresses it better when he says: "To communicate oneself implies perfection not in him who communicates but in those to whom the communication is made."[251]

In the formula, rejected by other Thomists, as we have noted elsewhere,[252] Cajetan seems to confuse a modal proposition referring to the saying with the modal proposition referring to the thing. It is correct to say that it is befitting that God created, in the sense that it is not unbefitting not to have created; but it is incorrect to say that the free volition to create is a new free perfection in God (virtually distinct from His essential perfection), even though the opposite is not an imperfection. Otherwise God would be more perfect because He willed to create the universe, as Leibnitz wrongly concluded. These observations should throw some light on this present question, namely, that the divine relations with regard to their "esse ad" do not add a new perfection.

Confirmation from the following incongruities.

1. Otherwise it would follow that the Father lacked one perfection, namely, filiation, and also passive spiration. None of the divine persons would therefore be perfect, none would have every perfection, and none would be God. For God must have all absolutely simple perfections, those perfections which it is better to have than not to have.

2. It would follow that all three persons would be more perfect, at least extensively, than any one person, and against this St. Augustine declared: "The Father is as great by Himself as are the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost together."[253]

3. The Father and the Son would be more perfect than the Holy Ghost because besides their proper perfection they would have the perfection of active spiration, whereas the Holy Ghost would have

but one perfection, passive spiration.

Objection. The Father does not have filiation formally but eminently because of the divine essence. Hence filiation is properly an absolutely simple perfection.

Reply. In that case the Father would not have any absolutely simple perfection formally, and that would be improper.

I insist. The Father has filiation compensatively and terminatively, if not constitutively.

Reply. In that case the Father would not be infinitely perfect; and the Holy Ghost would be less perfect because He would have only one relative perfection and not two. Hence He would not even be compensatively perfect.

Another objection. A relative perfection implies a subject that is perfectible in order to something else, as we see in the case of potencies or faculties and habits. Hence it is wrong to say that a relation with regard to its "esse ad" prescinds from perfection. For the perfection of our intellect arises from its relation to being. Such was Contenson's argument.

Reply. Contenson, as Billuart pointed out, here confuses the transcendental relation of a faculty to its specific object with the predicamental relation, namely, paternity or filiation, which are pure references to a pure terminus and therefore do not consider the subject by reason of itself but by reason of the terminus.

Final difficulty. The created personality implies a perfection really and modally distinct from the perfection of the nature. Therefore for an equal or stronger reason the divine personalities, which are constituted by subsisting relations, imply a perfection distinct from the nature.

Reply. In agreement with many others I distinguish the antecedent. The created personality is a perfection with regard to the perseity of independence, I concede; with regard to the perseity of incommunicability, I deny, because it is not a perfection not to be able to communicate to another. The divine personalities confer incommunicability but not the perseity of independence, which is

common to all three persons.[254]

This should suffice in explanation of St. Thomas' second article, in which he teaches that the real relations in God are not distinguished really from the essence, but are only virtually distinct. This truth can be succinctly stated as, "The Father is God." In this statement, as in every affirmative proposition, the verb "is" expresses the actual identity of the subject and the predicate. In other words: the Deity as known by us contains the divine relations implicitly; the Deity as it is in itself contains them explicitly, or formally and eminently without the formal-actual distinction proposed by Scotus. This teaching implies no leaning to agnosticism; such danger would arise if we said that the real relations were in God not formally and eminently but only virtually and eminently like mixed perfections, as when we say that God is angry.

Indeed the divine relations are in God like the divine attributes, to a greater degree than colors are contained in white because the seven colors are contained in white only virtually and not formally. White is not blue; but the Deity is true, it is good, it is also the paternity, although the Deity is communicated by the Father to the Son without a communication of paternity.

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THIRD ARTICLE: WHETHER THE RELATIONS IN GOD ARE REALLY DISTINGUISHED FROM ONE ANOTHER

State of the question. This question seems to have been solved if we correctly understand the propositions, "The Father is not the Son," "The Holy Ghost is not the Father nor the Son," for in these negative propositions the verb "is not" denies the identity of the subject and the predicate, and therefore there is a real distinction, one that precedes the consideration of our mind. The question, however, requires further examination because it is not sufficiently clear how the persons are constituted by the relations and because, as we have said in the preceding article, the real relations in God are not really distinct from the essence.

From this arise certain difficulties, which are proposed at the beginning of this third article.

1. Those things equal to a third are equal to each other; but the divine relations are equal to a third, namely, the essence; therefore they are equal to each other. This is the classic objection of the rationalists against the mystery of the Trinity, which is sometimes examined by Thomists in the introduction to this treatise.

2. Paternity and filiation are, of course, distinguished mentally from the essence, as are goodness and omnipotence. Therefore, like goodness and omnipotence, paternity and filiation are not really distinguished from each other.

3. In God there is no real distinction except by reason of origin. But one relation does not appear to originate from another. Therefore the relations are not really distinct.

Reply. The reply is nevertheless in the affirmative, namely, in God a real distinction exists between the relations opposed to each other.

This teaching pertains to faith, since faith teaches that there is a real and true Trinity in which the Father is not the Son, and the Holy Ghost is not the Father or the Son. The Council of Florence declared: "In God all things are one except where there is opposition of relation."[255] At the same council, John, the Latins' theologian, declared: "According to both Latin and Greek doctors it is relation

alone that multiplies persons in the divine productions; this relation is called relation of origin, in which only two are concerned: the one from whom another is and the one who is from another."[256] Also at this Council, Cardinal Bessarion, the most learned theologian of the Greeks, averred, "No one is ignorant of the fact that the personal names of the Trinity are relative."[257]

In his argument St. Thomas quoted Boetius. Other Fathers who might be quoted are St. Anselm,[258] St. Augustine,[259] St. Gregory Nazianzen, St. Gregory of Nyssa, and St. John Damascene, who said: "The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are distinct and yet they are one."[260]

In the body of the article St. Thomas explains this doctrine of faith by an analysis of the concept of relative opposition as follows.

The nature of a real relation consists in the reference of one thing to another, according to which something is relatively opposed to another and the two are therefore really distinct.

But in God we have real relations opposed to one another, namely, paternity, filiation, and spiration. Below it will be explained that active spiration, which is opposed to passive spiration, is not opposed to paternity and filiation. Therefore in God there is real distinction according to these real relations opposed to one another.

The major explains something that is already admitted confusedly by the common sense of man and by natural reason, namely, that relative things, inasmuch as the Father and the Son are opposed to each other, are really distinct, since no one begets himself. This analysis of the ideas of relation, opposition, and distinction is found in Aristotle's Postpredicamenta, where he distinguishes the various kinds of opposition.

Opposition properly so called is a definite and determined repugnance; opposition improperly so called is between disparate things, as between different species of things. Thus opposition properly so called requires a determined extreme, to which something is repugnant, as heat to cold, blindness to vision. Proper opposition, therefore, calls for two conditions: the distinction between the extremes and some determined repugnance between these extremes.

Opposition may be of four kinds: relative, contrary, privative, and contradictory. Following Goudin in his work on logic, we may present the division of opposition as follows.

OPPOSITION

between being and non-being

by pure negation: contradictory opposition, e.g., man and no man, knowledge and nescience

by privation in a suitable subject: privative opposition, e.g. sight and blindness, knowledge and ignorance

**between
being
and
being**

*expelling
each other
from a
subject:
contrary
opposition,
e.g., virtue
and vice,
truth and
error*

*based on
mutual
reference:
relative
opposition,
e.g.,
between
father and
son*

Thus, as is commonly taught, relative opposition is the weakest of all; in this kind of opposition one extreme does not destroy the other, rather one requires the other. Hence it can be attributed to God because it does not imply any privation of being but only distinction with a reference, as St. Thomas pointed out.[261] Thus the Father and the Son are really distinct by relative opposition. Relative opposition may be defined as the repugnance between two things arising from the fact that they refer to each other.

On the other hand, contradictory opposition is the strongest of all because one extreme completely destroys the other; not even the subject survives as in privative opposition, nor the genus as in contrary opposition, in which, for example, virtue and vice oppose each other in the same genus of habit. Thus contradictory

opposition is the cause of the others and is to a certain extent mingled with them. In a sense we may say that the Father is not the Son, and virtue is not vice.

It is clear that in these four kinds of opposition, the word "opposition" is used not univocally but analogically, and the analogy is not only metaphorical but proper. The primal analogy contains the greatest opposition, that is, contradictory opposition. Hence it is not surprising that contradictory opposition participates in the other kinds of opposition.[262]

Reply to the first and second difficulties. "Those things which are equal to a third are equal to each other," I distinguish: if they are equal to the third actually and mentally and there is no mutual opposition, I concede; if they are equal to a third actually and not mentally and there exists relative opposition, I deny.

But the divine relations are equal to a third, the divine essence, this I distinguish: they are equal actually but not mentally, and some of the relations are mutually opposed, although they are not opposed to the third, this I concede. Otherwise, I deny.

To put it analogically, according to St. Thomas, transitive action, taken at least terminatively, and passion are really the same as movement, but they are really distinct from each other because of the opposition of relation, since action is the movement as coming from the agent and passion is the movement as received in the recipient.

So also in an equilateral triangle the three equal angles are actually the same as a third, namely, the surface of the triangle, but they are really distinguished from each other because of relative opposition.

First doubt. Are action and passion really and modally distinct from movement?

Reply. According to the common opinion of Thomists they are. Aristotle, however, did not consider precisely this question, and St. Thomas makes reference to his words, which, although they are somewhat vague, throw some light on the present problem, as does the reference to the triangle. Even though the illustration of the triangle may be deficient, the principle enunciated by St. Thomas is

nevertheless true. We should remember that it is not necessary for the theologian to show that this objection is evidently false; it is enough if he shows that the objection is not necessary and has no cogency. Thus the revealed mystery remains intact.

Second doubt. Is the principle," hose things equal to a third are equal..." to be understood as a formal predication?

Reply. In order to understand this principle we must distinguish between formal predication and material predication. Thus it is only materially true to say that the divine mercy and the divine justice are the same, because they are not really distinct, and by reason of their subject or matter they are in a sense the same, just as when we say that the humanity of Peter is his individuality. We have here a material predication because the humanity and the individuality are not actually distinct, and by reason of the matter and the subject they are the same. But in these instances we are not uttering a formal predication in which the predicate belongs to the subject according to its formal nature. For example, it does not belong to the divine mercy to punish; the divine mercy pardons, condones, and it is the divine justice that punishes, although these two perfections are really the same, that is, materially the same but not formally.

The laws of the syllogism, however, are not verified except in formal predications, since the process of reasoning does not deal with things in themselves but through the mediation of our concepts. Therefore if we wish to conclude the identity of two things by our reasoning, we must consider these two things from the same formal aspect. Otherwise we do not obey the first law of the syllogism: the term must be threefold: middle, major, and minor. According to this law the middle term must be perfectly distributed, that is, taken in the same sense in the major and the minor. Hence, for example, the following argument is not valid because the major is only a material predication: in God mercy is the same as justice; but justice is the principle of punishment; therefore God inflicts punishment through His mercy. The argument is false because in God mercy and justice are not the same formally although they are the same materially. Again, in the Trinity it is conceded that the Father and the Son are actually the same as the divine essence, but they are not the same formally. Moreover the Father and the Son are relatively opposed to each other, but they are not opposed to the essence. It is clear, therefore, that the following syllogism is not valid: This God is the Father, but this God is the Son, therefore the Son is the Father. Nor

is the following true: This divine essence is the paternity, but this divine essence is the filiation, therefore filiation is paternity. In these syllogisms we have merely material predications, and the form of the syllogism is not observed.

Objection. The force of this reply is invalidated when, against Scotus, we say that in God there is not only one being but one formal eminent reason, namely, the Deity, and thus in God every predication is not only material but formal.

Reply. It is true that in God there is but one formal reason as far as God Himself is concerned, but not with regard to us.[263] In other words, the objection would be valid if the Deity identified with itself the attributes and relations without preserving their formal reasons; but the objection has no force if these formal reasons are still found to be in the eminence of the Deity. In God, of course, the relations are not only virtually and eminently, as the seven colors are in white, but formally and eminently; for whereas blue is not white, God is true, good, paternity, and filiation. Formal predication, therefore, must be carefully distinguished from material predication.[264]

In God the formal reasons or aspects of the attributes and relations are identified without being destroyed; they are perfectly preserved in spite of their real identity with the essence. Indeed, they do not exist in the purest state except in this identification. Thus subsisting being itself must be not only intelligible in act but actually understood in act, and it is therefore identified with subsisting understanding. The proper reason or nature of a relation is to be opposed to its correlative and to be distinguished from it.

This is possible because of the eminence of the Deity. Analogically, the body of Christ is present to many consecrated hosts, but these hosts are not present to each other. At first sight this seems to contradict the principle that those things which are united to a third are united to each other, or those things that are present to a third are present to each other. Thus two bodies cannot be present in the same space without being present to each other.

But this is not true if there is a third member which, remaining the same, is in many distant places as if not being in that place. Thus the same body of Christ is present in the manner of substance in many distant hosts. So in the natural order the head and the foot are

present to the same soul and yet they are not parts present to each other and close to each other.

Second objection. A real distinction is not founded on that which prescinds from reality. But the "esse ad" of a relation prescinds from reality. Therefore it does not provide a basis for the real distinction of relations or of the persons.

Reply. I distinguish the major: a real distinction is not founded on that which prescinds from reality and is not real, I concede; on that which is real, I deny. I contradistinguish the minor in the same sense and I deny the consequence and the consequent. The "esse ad" is said to prescind from reality inasmuch as it may be either in a real relation or a relation of reason; but this "esse ad" in a real relation is real, not formally because of itself but because of the real "esse in", which is common to all accidents. Thus in created beings the "esse ad" of the relation of paternity is something real and not something of the mind; both the father and the son therefore are necessarily distinct, since no one begets himself. The real relations in God are really distinct more as relations than as real, because as relations they are opposed to each other and as real they have the same "esse in" since their "esse in" is not accidental but substantial. Hence in God there are four real relations, as we shall see below, but not four relative realities as if there were four actions, for example. We shall also see below that of these four real relations active spiration is not really distinguished from paternity and filiation because it is not opposed to them.

Third doubt. Why is not the "esse ad" of a real relation real because of itself, as Suarez taught?

Reply. Because, as St. Thomas says,[265] a real relation formally as a relation is not something but to something, and therefore there can be relations that are not real, whose "esse in" is not real. On the other hand there is no such thing as quantity or quality mentally. Suarez, however, held that the "esse ad" of a relation is real because of itself, just as he held that the created essence is actual because of itself and is therefore not really distinct from its existence. Suarez thought of being (ens) only as that which is and not as that by which a thing is, whereas for St. Thomas the essence is that by which a thing is in a certain species. Hence Suarez concluded that the relations of reason (mental relations) are not true relations.[266]

From this he went so far as to infer that the divine relations have their own relative existence and perfection, virtually distinct from the infinite perfection of the essence. In this way Suarez to some extent inclined to Scotus' teaching on the formal distinction. It will be seen therefore that the Father is lacking some perfection, namely, filiation and passive spiration. Now it becomes very difficult to safeguard the unity and absolute simplicity of the divine nature, just as when the Greeks in their treatise on the Trinity began with the three persons rather than with a study of the divine nature.

Thus Suarez was not able to reply to the principal objections against the mystery of the Trinity as the Thomists were.[267] How was Suarez to solve the objection: "Those things equal to a third are equal to each other"? At a loss in answering this objection, Suarez declared that the principle of identity (or contradiction), if taken in complete abstraction and analogy of being, prescinding from created and uncreated being, from both finite and infinite, is false. According to Suarez this principle is true inductively only in created beings, and the truth of the principle arises only within the limits of created being. It is a law of finite being, not an analogical law of being itself in common. Henceforth the theologian could not argue about the divine perfections because his argument is based on the principle of identity or contradiction. This is pure agnosticism. According to our teaching, to say that the principle of identity or contradiction is not verified analogically in the mystery of the Trinity is to say that this mystery is absurd, not above reason but opposed to reason. This much we can say: that most eminent mode according to which this principle is verified in the Trinity cannot be positively known by us here on earth; it can be known only negatively and relatively.

Another difference arises between St. Thomas and Suarez from the fact that for St. Thomas the three persons have only one being since, as it is commonly expressed, the being of an accident is being in another.[268] But in God the "esse in" of the relations is substantial and is therefore identified with the divine essence, which is therefore unique. For Suarez, on the contrary, who proceeded from other principles of being, the essence, the being, and the relations are three relative existences in God.[269]

The doctrine of St. Thomas, as Del Prado shows, "Perfectly preserves the supreme simplicity of the divine being because in God there is but one being; the real relations, on the one hand, do not

make a composition with the essence, and on the other hand they really distinguish the persons. From this it follows that in the three divine persons there is one divinity, equal glory, co-eternal majesty, and the same absolute perfection. No perfection is found in one person that does not exist in the other." Del Prado continues: "Those who like Suarez deny the real composition of being and essence in creatures are forced to place three beings in God, and they must place in one person a perfection that is not in another, nor can they solve the difficulty arising from the principle of identity."[270] The difference between St. Thomas and Suarez has its roots in their basic philosophy and in their positions about the real distinction between essence and being in creatures. Suarez, as we have said, whether he wishes to or not, multiplies something absolute in God, namely, being, and therefore the objection based on the principle of identity remains unsolved.[271]

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FOURTH ARTICLE: WHETHER THERE ARE IN GOD ONLY FOUR REAL RELATIONS

State of the question. Besides paternity, filiation, active and passive spiration, why do we not admit the real relations of equality and similitude? Scotus admitted these other relations. It appears, however, that there are only three real relations just as there are only three divine persons, for the persons are constituted by subsisting relations.

Reply. St. Thomas replied that there are four real relations in God, and this is the common opinion of theologians in opposition to Scotus and the Scotists.

The proof in the body of the article is the following.

Real relations are founded either on quantity, which is not found in God, or on action and passion, and in God there are only two actions ad intra, intellection and love, from which the two processions derive. [272] But each procession is the basis for two relations, one of which is that of the proceeding from the principle and the other the principle itself. Therefore there are in God only four real relations: paternity, filiation, and the two relations founded on the procession of love, called active spiration and the passive procession or spiration, which is rather quasi-passive.

St. Thomas says below: "Although there are four relations in God, one of these, active spiration, is not separate or distinct from the persons of the Father and the Son because it is not opposed to them."[273]

There are therefore not four persons but only three. The reason is always the same: in God all things are one and the same except where there is opposition of relation. But there are only three relations opposed to each other, since active spiration is not opposed to paternity and filiation. Moreover, because of the identity of the principle, active spiration is numerically one and the same in the Father and the Son.[274] We must always return to this principle as to the center of the circle from which all the radii proceed. The repetition of this principle in these articles is not a mere routine repetition but it is frequent recourse to the source of that light which

illuminates this entire treatise.

It should be noted that the relations of equality and similitude are not real relations; they are only mental relations. St. Thomas explains this below and the reason he gives is valid against Scotus, who held the opposite opinion.[275] Equality is predicated after the manner of quantity, and similitude after the manner of quality. But in God there is no quantity of the mass but only of virtue, which like quality is reduced to the divine essence and with which it is numerically one and the same. One thing cannot have a real reference or relation to itself. Nor is there in God a real relation of equality because of the relations, since one relation is not referred by another relation, otherwise there would be an infinite process.

Objection. The divine persons are truly and really equal; therefore the equality between them is a real relation.

Reply. I deny the consequence and the consequent. For a real relation it is not required that the equality be taken formally; equality taken fundamentally suffices, such as the unity of an infinite magnitude, which by reason of the divine essence is numerically one. Thus God is really the lord of all creatures without any real relation to them; we have here only the creative action upon which creatures really depend. In God therefore there are only four relations, and these are relations of origin based on the two processions.

RECAPITULATION OF QUESTION TWENTY-EIGHT

In the first article it was shown that consequent on the two processions there are real relations in God; consequent on the eternal generation are the relations of paternity and filiation, and consequent on the other procession are the relations of active and passive spiration.

In the second article we saw that the relations in God are not really distinct from the essence since the "esse in" of the relations, though it is accidental in creatures, is substantial in God because no accident is found in God.

In the third article we saw that the relations in God are really distinguished from each other because they are mutually opposed. The principle was formulated that in God all things are one and the same unless there is opposition of relation. In the first place the objection, that those things equal to a third are equal to each other, was solved. In the reply the major was distinguished by conceding the proposition when the two things are not more opposed to each other than to the third and denying it if there is such opposition. Thus several relations were found mutually opposed but not opposed to the essence.

In the fourth article the four relations were determined; one of them, active spiration, was not opposed to paternity or filiation. Thus there are three relations in mutual opposition.

As Del Prado points out: "The difference between Suarez and St. Thomas in their explanation of the mystery of the Trinity arises from a difference in their view of primary philosophy. The root is to be found in the fact that Suarez, in the Disputationes metaphysicae 1. does not admit, but rejects as absurd, the real composition of being and essence in creatures; 2. consequently in real created relations he does not distinguish between the "esse ad", which is the essence or the nature of the relation, and the esse or being which is the actuality of the essence; 3. consequently the three real relations in God, according to Suarez, cannot be defended except as three beings, which he and his followers call relative beings but which are in fact absolute because in God being is the very nature or essence of God and belongs to the absolute predicaments; 4. and

consequently these three beings imply three perfections which, like the three beings of the three relations, are in one person in such a way as not to be in another. We have, therefore, three beings and three perfections opposed to each other, and from this follow the difficulties already mentioned and many others."[276]

On the other hand, all these difficulties are removed if with St. Thomas we admit that the being of an accident (distinct from the essence) is its inesse, and that the "esse in" of the divine relations is not accidental but substantial and therefore one in the different relations and persons.

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CHAPTER III: QUESTION 29 THE DIVINE PERSONS

INTRODUCTION

IN the beginning we treat of the persons in common, then of the individual persons, and finally of the persons in comparison with the essence and each other. This is the content of the treatise.

Concerning the three persons in common there are four questions:

1. The meaning of the word "person."

2. The plurality of persons.

3. Their differences and similarities.

4. How they can be known by us.

The first question has four divisions: 1. the definition of person; 2. the comparison of person with essence and subsistence; here person is identified with the Greek "hypostasis"; 3. whether the word "person" is used with reference to God; 4. whether in God person signifies relation. The reply will be in the affirmative: person signifies a subsisting relation opposed and incommunicable to others. In the appendix we shall see what is to be said about the absolute subsistence common to the three persons.

In this question it will be made clear that the general idea of person is to be applied to God analogically, not metaphorically but properly, without any distinction or multiplication in the divine nature itself. A great deal of effort was required to make this point clear. In the third century the Latins, like Tertullian, spontaneously declared that there are three persons in God and one substance because the names Father and Son and Holy Ghost are personal. This statement, however, was the source of much difficulty for the Greeks, who used the words ousia and "hypostasis" promiscuously to designate essence, substance, and nature. On other occasions the term prosopon a translation of the Latin persona, designated the mask or theatrical costume which actors donned to impersonate famous personages, and this term was not considered definite enough to express the real distinction between the divine persons. At the time of Origen and St. Dionysius of Alexandria, however, the term "hypostasis" designated a divine person and ousia the divine nature. St. Athanasius also used these terms in this manner.

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FIRST ARTICLE: THE DEFINITION OF PERSON

State of the question. In this article inquiry is made for the definition of person, and the definition given by Boetius and commonly accepted is defended. St. Thomas, following the Aristotelian method, goes from the nominal definition to the real definition by a division of the genus of substance and by an inductive comparison of the thing to be defined with similar and dissimilar things. These are the principal rules to be followed in the search for a real definition as proposed in the Posterior Analytics.[277]

In the beginning St. Thomas mentions three difficulties against the Boethian definition, "I person is an individual substance with a rational nature."

1. No individual is defined; for example, Socrates is not defined because a definition expresses an essence that is common to many individuals. The reply will be: If this individual is not definable, individuality can be defined, and individuality pertains to a person.

2. It appears that the adjective "individual" is superfluous because the term "substance" stands for first substance which, for Aristotle, is the individual substance.

3. The third and fourth difficulties are of minor importance. The fifth difficulty is that a separated soul is an individual substance with a rational nature and is not a person.

The reply of St. Thomas affirms that Boetius' definition is acceptable for these reasons:

1. Because of Boetius' authority and because the definition has been accepted generally by theologians.

2. The acceptability of the definition can be rationally explained. St. Thomas assumes that the nominal definition of "person," although it is etymologically derived from impersonation or representation of another's features or gestures, nevertheless designates some individual rational being distinct from others, for example, Socrates, Plato, anyone who is able to say, "I am," or "I act," is called a person. So also all peoples in their grammar commonly distinguish between

the first, second, and third person: I, you, he. The ancient jurists added that a person is distinguished from things inasmuch as the person is of his own right, and at one time they taught that in the legal sphere a slave was not a person because he was not of his own right. At the inception of this philosophical inquiry it is sufficient to have a general idea of person: an individual rational being, a singular rational being distinct from others; in French un particulier, in Italian, un tale. Briefly a person is a free and intelligent subject. The nominal definition, which tells what the term signifies, contains intimations of the real definition, which tells what the thing really is.

The real definition is not demonstrated; it is itself the foundation of the demonstration of the properties of the thing defined. The real definition is methodically sought out by a division of the genus and by inductive comparison. In going from the nominal to the real definition of a person, therefore, we must consider the supreme genus of the thing to be defined and this genus must be correctly divided. The article should be read carefully.

The genus of the thing to be defined is substance. On this point St. Thomas notes at the beginning of the body of the article that in the genus of substance the individual is a special instance. Substance itself is individuated by itself whereas accidents are individuated by the subject in which they are. Hence individual substances have some special name; they are called hypostases or first substances or supposita, that is, the first subject of attribution of those things belonging to these substances. For example, this tree is a suppositum as is this dog. Aristotle calls individuals first substances (as Peter, Socrates); second substances are the genera and species, as man, animal, living being. Therefore this distinction is a division into individual and universal substances. Aristotle said that second substances are predicated of first substances as of subjects not because they inhere like accidents but because they express the nature of this particular subject.[278]

Aristotle said that individuals subsist per se and that genera and species do not subsist except in individuals. The suppositum is that which exists separately and acts per se. First substance therefore is the same as the suppositum or the subject of attribution of nature, existence, and accidents, for example, this tree and this dog. Thus the person that we are to define is compared with things dissimilar to it, namely, with accidents, and with genus and species.

In the second part of the body of the article, St. Thomas compares person with things similar to it, that is, with other supposita. "The particular and the individual in rational substances is found to have a special and more perfect mode because it has dominion over its acts and acts per se independently. Therefore the individual substance with a rational nature bears a special name, person. A person is defined, then, as an individual substance with a rational nature.

"This real definition expresses that reality which is vaguely contained in the nominal definition, namely, a rational being, individual and distinct from others, such as Socrates, Plato, I, you, and he."

Confirmation. The validity of this definition is confirmed as we solve the objections.

1. This individual or this person, Socrates, is indeed not defined, but the individuality and the person abstractly considered are defined.

2. In Boetius' definition the adjective "individual" is not superfluous since it signifies that we are dealing with first substance, with the individual or suppositum; in other words, with the real subject which cannot be attributed to another subject.

3. The term "individual" is used to designate that mode of existence which belongs to particular substances, which alone are able to subsist separately per se. Hence "individual" means as much as incommunicable to another suppositum; the person of Peter cannot be predicated of another subject or attributed to another subject.

4. In this definition nature signifies essence.

5. A separated soul is not called a person because it is a part of a human species, whereas "person" signifies the complete whole existing separately, for example, Peter and not his soul, which is attributed to him. Having set up the definition of person, we must now examine the nature of personality.

THE NATURE OF PERSONALITY

Methodically we go from the nominal definition of personality to its real definition. Here again we observe the laws for establishing a definition laid down by Aristotle and St. Thomas.[279] We begin with the nominal definition not only of person but of personality itself. According to the common sense of men, personality is that by which some subject is a person, just as existence is that by which some subject exists. This may appear to be somewhat ingenuous, yet we have an intimation here that personality, whatever certain writers may say, is not formally constituted by existence.[280] Philosophically the transition to the real definition is made by comparative induction, by comparing this personality which we wish to define with similar and dissimilar things and by correctly dividing the genus of substance to which personality belongs.

Various opinions of Scholastics, who are divided into those who admit or do not admit the real distinction between what a thing is and its being, and between the created essence and being

Denying this distinction, Scotus said that personality is something negative, namely, the negation of the hypostatic union in an individual nature such as Socrates or Peter.[281] Suarez, likewise rejecting this real distinction between created essence and being, said that personality is a substantial mode presupposing the existence of an individual nature and rendering it incommunicable. [282]

Among those who with St. Thomas admit the real distinction we find three opinions.

Cajetan and many other Thomists say that personality is that by which an individual nature becomes immediately capable of existing separately per se. Others with Capreolus say somewhat less explicitly that personality is the individual nature under the aspect of its being.[283] Lastly, Cardinal Billot reduces personality to the being that actuates an individual nature.[284]

Many moderns abandon the ontological approach to this question and consider it from the psychological and moral viewpoint. They

declare that personality is constituted either by the consciousness of oneself or by liberty. Consciousness and liberty, however, are only manifestations of the personality; the subject that is conscious of itself must first be constituted as a subject capable of saying. So also the free subject is indeed morally of its own right by liberty, but it also must first be ontologically constituted as I, you, or he.

The true idea of personality. We are looking for the real ontological definition of personality within the genus of substance, because a person is an intelligent and free substance or subject. We proceed progressively by dividing the genus of substance by affirmation and negation and by comparing the personality which we want to define with similar and dissimilar things.

1. Personality, or that by which anything is a person, is not something negative; it is positive just as the person of which it is the formal constituent. If the dependence of an accident is something positive, a fortiori the independence of the subject or the person is positive, that is, that by reason of which the person exists separately per se. Moreover, since the personalities of Socrates and Peter belong to the natural order, they cannot be defined by a denial of the hypostatic union, which is something essentially supernatural and unique. If this were true, it would follow that the personality could not be known naturally.

2. Personality, as something positive, must be something substantial and not accidental because the person is a substance. Hence personality in the proper sense cannot be constituted by consciousness or liberty. Thus personality is compared with dissimilar things and with accidents; we now compare it with similar and related things in the genus of substance.

3. Personality is something substantial but it is not the nature of substance itself, nor this particular nature, but it is this individual human nature, since nature even as individuated is attributed to the person as an essential part. St. Thomas says: "The suppositum signifies the whole which has nature as a formal part that perfects it."[285] We do not say, "Peter is his own nature," because the whole is not the part; it is greater than the part and contains other things besides.

Nor is personality the nature itself under the aspect of being, since

the individual nature, Peter for example, is not that which exists but that by which it is a man. That which exists is Peter himself, the person of Peter. We are now asking for that by which something is what it is. Personality therefore is not the individual nature under the aspect of being; otherwise, since there are two natures in Christ, Christ would have two persons and two personalities.

4. Nor is personality Peter's existence because existence is attributed to Peter as a constituted person after the manner of a contingent predicate. Indeed existence is a contingent predicate of every person that has been created or can be created, for no human or angelic person is its own being. Therefore, as St. Thomas says, "In every creature there is a difference between that which is and its being."[286] He also says: "Being follows nature not as something that possesses being but as that by which a thing is; but it follows the person as something that has being."[287] If, therefore, being follows the person constituted as a person, it does not formally constitute the person.

If being formally constituted the created person, the real distinction between the created person and being would be destroyed, and it would no longer be true to say that Peter is not his own being. In other words, that which is not its own being is really distinct from its being, distinct apart from the consideration of our minds. But the person of Peter, as well as his personality which formally constitutes his person, is not Peter's being. Therefore Peter's person and his personality are really distinguished from his being. We shall see this all most clearly in heaven when we see God, who alone is His own being and who alone can say, "I am who am."

5. Personality, therefore, is something positive and substantial, determining an individual nature of substance so that it will be immediately capable of existing separately per se. More briefly, it is that by which a rational subject is what it is. Existence, however, is a contingent predicate of the subject and its ultimate actuality and therefore existence presupposes the personality, which cannot be, as Suarez would have it, a substantial mode following on existence. Personality is, as it were, the terminal point where two lines meet, the line of essence and the line of existence. Properly it is that by which an intelligent subject is what it is. This ontological personality is the foundation of the psychological and moral personality or of the consciousness of self and dominion of self.

This real definition explicitly enunciates what is vaguely contained in the accepted nominal definition: personality is that by which the intelligent subject is a person just as existence is that by which a subject exists. Therefore personality differs from the essence and from the existence which it brings together.

In order to show that the quid rei is confusedly contained in the quid nominis and that the real definition of personality should preserve what is vaguely contained in the nominal definition, Cajetan says: "The word 'person' and similarly the demonstrative personal pronouns like 'I,' 'you,' and 'he,' all formally signify the substance and not a negation or an accident or something extraneous. If we all admit this, why, when scrutinizing the quid rei, that is, when going from the nominal to the real definition, do we depart from the common admission?"[288] Why do we depart from the common sense of mankind, from natural reason, and forget the nominal definition of the person?

It is not surprising, then, that this opinion is accepted by a great many theologians, by Ferrariensis, John of St. Thomas, the Salmanticenses, Goudin, Gonet, Billuart, Zigliara, Del Prado, Sanseverino, Cardinal Mercier, Cardinal Lorenzelli, Cardinal Lepicier, Hugon, Gredt, Szabo, Maritain, and many others.[289]

Certain texts of Capreolus are quoted to show that the person is the nature under the aspect of being.[290] These texts, however, are not really opposed to Cajetan's stand because for Capreolus personality is properly that by which the individual rational nature becomes immediately capable of existence and it is clear that what exists is not the nature of Peter but his person, that is, Peter himself. In other words, personality is that by which the intelligent and free subject is constituted as a subject possessing its own nature, faculties, existence, operations, consciousness, and the actual free dominion over itself.

Finally this theory, accepted by many theologians, is based not only on the texts of St. Thomas cited above but on many others, such as, "The form designated by the word 'person' is not the essence or the nature but the personality."[291] For St. Thomas, therefore, personality is a kind of form or formality or modality of the substantial order. "The name person is imposed by the form of personality which gives the reason for the subsistence of such a

nature."[292] Accordingly personality is that by which the rational subject has the right to being separately per se. Thus personality is a substantial mode, antecedent to being, not subsequent to being, because being is the ultimate actuality of a thing or of the subject.

Moreover, St. Thomas taught: "(In Christ) if the human nature had not been assumed by the divine person, the human nature would have had its own personality, and to that extent the divine person is said to have consumed the human nature, although this is not the proper expression, because the divine person by its union impeded the human nature from having its own personality."[293] Thus, according to St. Thomas, personality is distinguished from the individual nature and also from existence because "being follows the person as something that possesses being," and therefore being does not constitute the person.[294] Lastly he says, "The three (divine) persons have but one being," and therefore "the personality is not the same as the being since there are in God three personalities and one being";[295] and "being is not by reason of the suppositum," for a created suppositum is its own being.[296]

We conclude that a person is a free and intelligent subject and that it is predicated analogically of men and angels, and of the divine persons, and that personality is that by which this subject is what it is, namely, that which determines an individual nature to be immediately capable of existing separately per se.[297]

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COROLLARIES

1. Personality excludes a threefold communicability. 1. It formally excludes the communicability of nature to another suppositum because the nature already exists in a suppositum. 2. By presupposition and materially it excludes the communicability of the universal to the individual because the person is an individual itself and has an individuated nature. This incommunicability properly pertains to the individuation of nature which takes place in us and in corporeal beings by matter determined by quantity inasmuch as a specific form as received in this matter is no longer communicable. [298] 3. Personality excludes the communicability of the part to the whole because the person is a complete substance.[299] Thus a separated soul is not a person but a principal part of a person. Thus we do not say, "Peter is now in heaven," but "the soul of Peter." On the other hand we say, "After the Ascension, Jesus is in heaven; and after the Assumption, the Blessed Virgin is in heaven and not only her soul." The humanity of Christ is not a person for, while it is individuated and singular, it is not a suppositum or a subject, but it pertains to the suppositum of the incarnate Word.

2. In this way we explain that there is but one person in Christ, that is, one intelligent and free subject, although He has two intellects and two wills. So also we see how in God there are three persons and one nature and one being. We say this because there are three free and intelligent subjects although they have the same nature, the same essential intellect, the same liberty, and the same essential love. Contradiction is avoided by the fact that the three divine persons are relative and that they are opposed to each other, as we shall see below.

3. Personality is quite different from that individuation whose principle is matter determined by quantity. Individuation properly excludes the communicability of the universal to the inferior and it takes place through something lower than the universal, that is, by the matter in which the form is received so that the received form is no longer subject to participation.[300]

On the other hand, personality properly and formally excludes the communicability of nature to another subject or suppositum because the nature is terminated and possessed by one subject existing

separately per se, for example, by Peter, and now Peter's human nature cannot be attributed to Paul. St. Thomas says: "Person signifies that which is most perfect in all nature, namely, something subsistent (existing separately per se) in rational nature," whereas our individuation derives from something lower than ourselves, namely, matter.[301]

In Christ, although individuation as in us is derived from matter, the personality is uncreated and differs infinitely from matter. The term "individual" designates that which is inferior in man, that which is subordinate to the species, to society, and to the country; person designates that which is superior in man, that by reason of which man is ordered directly to God Himself above society. Thus society, to which the individual is subordinate, is itself ordered to the full perfection of the human person, as against statism, which denies the higher rights of the human person. We thus arrive not only at a concept which is definite and distinct but at a vital concept of the person immediately subject to God loved above all things. Such is the definition of person. For a simple understanding of the dogma it is sufficient to say that the person is a free and intelligent subject and is predicated analogically of man, the angels, and the three divine persons, for each of these is a free and intelligent subject. [302]

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SECOND ARTICLE: WHETHER PERSON IS THE SAME AS HYPOSTASIS, SUBSISTENCE, AND ESSENCE

State of the question. In this article we establish the equivalence of the Latin term persona with the Greek term "hypostasis". St. Thomas, as is clear from his replies to the second and third difficulties, realized the difficulties arising on this point between the Greeks and Latins. The Greeks refused to accept the term "person" because for them it signified the mask which actors in the theater wore to represent famous personages; and since an actor successively wore masks to impersonate different heroes, they sensed the danger of Sabellianism, according to which the divine persons are merely different aspects of God acting ad extra.

On the other hand, the Latins rejected the term "hypostasis" because it often designated substance and thus implied the danger of Arianism, which taught that there were in God three substances, some of which were subordinate substances.

These difficulties were eliminated by St. Basil's clear distinction between the meaning of the terms ousia and "hypostasis". Ousia, he said, signifies the substance which is numerically common to the three persons; "hypostasis" signifies that which is individual and real so that there is a real distinction between the persons. Then the Greek formula of three hypostases was accepted as equivalent to the Latin of three persons. Nevertheless the Greek formula could not be expressed in the Latin translation because the terms "subsistence" and "suppositum" were not yet in use.

These terms, the correlative abstract and concrete forms, did not exist in the fourth century; St. Hilary and St. Augustine did not know them. The term "subsistence" was invented by Rufinus about 400. [303] Rufinus derived the term "subsistence" from subsistere just as "substance" came from substare. This was logical enough because the Latins had said that the divine persons subsist. The word "hypostasis" was finally accepted by the Latins, and the union of the two natures in Christ was even called the hypostatic union.[304]

Boethius, writing at the beginning of the sixth century, did not appreciate Rufinus, happy discovery and taught that if the Church would permit it, absolutely speaking we could say that there were

three substances in God. In this present article, St. Thomas strove to place a favorable interpretation on Boethius' words, and out of this came the complexity of this article. Thus in explaining Boethius' words, in his reply to the second difficulty, he says: "We say that in God there are three persons and subsistences as the Greeks say there are three hypostases. But since the term 'substance' which in its proper significance corresponds to '"hypostasis"' is used equivocally by us, sometimes meaning essence and sometimes "hypostasis", the Latins in order to avoid any error preferred to translate '"hypostasis"' by the term 'subsistence', rather than the term 'substance.'" This was happily done by Rufinus.

But Boethius, misunderstanding the matter, distinguished differently between subsistere and substare when he said that substare referred to accidents and therefore only individuals were substances with respect to their accidents, whereas only genus and species, which do not have accidents, could be said to subsist. Here was Boethius, principal error: he inverted Rufinus, formulas and said that in God there were three substances and one subsistence (or substantial nature).

Rufinus, however, had said that in God there were three subsistences and one substance. Thus Boethius gave a false meaning to the word "subsistence" invented by Rufinus. Rusticus, a deacon of the Roman Church, restated the true meaning of the word. From that time "hypostasis" has been translated by "subsistence" and later by "suppositum" for the concrete form. Indeed the concrete correlative of subsistentia is not subsistere but suppositum just as the concrete correlative of "personality" is "person."

The complexity of this present article can be attributed to these fluctuating translations and especially to Boethius, unfortunate interference. The first two difficulties proposed at the beginning of the article are therefore not objections, because after explanations are made they conclude as does the article itself. The two arguments in the sed contra are objections taken from Boethius, who misunderstood the meaning of "hypostasis"."

Reply. In spite of these objections the conclusion of the article is clear: in the genus of rational substances the term "person" signifies what these three terms, "hypostasis", substance, things in nature (res naturae) signify in the whole genus of substances, namely, the suppositum or the first subject of attribution. We recall that

substance is said to be twofold: second substance, or ousia, and first substance, which has four names: suppositum, subsistence, "hypostasis", and thing in nature.

The first name, "uppositum," signifies the logical relation of the subject of attribution to the predicate; the three others signify the thing itself and not the logical relation. Thus "subsistence," taken concretely, signifies the first substance as existing separately per se; "thing in nature" signifies first substance as it is placed under some common nature; and "hypostasis" as it is placed under accidents. It should be noted that "hypostasis" in the concrete is the same as first substance, and subsistence is now understood in the abstract and corresponds to personality and not to person.

The following should be kept clearly in mind: The concrete correlative of subsistence is the suppositum as personality corresponds to person. Certain authors, attempting to identify subsistence with the existence of substance, say that the concrete correlative of subsistence is to subsist (subsistere), just as to exist is the correlative to existence. This is erroneous because the suppositum, of which subsisting and existing are predicated as contingent predicates, ought to have in itself that by which it is a suppositum, and this is subsistence, or if it is a rational being, personality. Clearly the concrete correlative of personality is not "to subsist" but the person. Actually, the abstract correlative of "to subsist" is the existence of the substance, just as the existence of the accident corresponds to inhering itself.[305]

Briefly this article may be reduced to this: In the genus of rational substances person designates the same as "hypostasis" or suppositum in the whole genus of substances, namely, that which exists separately per se.

St. Thomas' replies to the second, fourth, and fifth difficulties are favorable interpretations of certain texts of Boethius, who wrote rather inaccurately on this question.

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THIRD ARTICLE: WHETHER THE TERM PERSON CAN BE APPLIED TO GOD

The reply is in the affirmative as pertaining to faith as is clear from the Athanasian Creed: "For there is one person of the Father, another of the Son, another of the Holy Ghost."[306]

The body of the article gives the theological argument, which may be presented as follows. Every perfection is to be attributed to God. But "person" signifies what is most perfect in all of nature, namely, a free and intelligent subject, or a subsisting being with a rational nature. Therefore it is proper to speak of God as a person, and this in the most excellent manner. God is subsisting being itself with an intellectual nature and, therefore, whatever pertains to the person belongs to Him formally and eminently. For this reason theistic philosophers speak of a personal God in opposition to the pantheists, who say that God is immanent in the universe in which He operates not freely but necessarily.

In his reply, St. Thomas states that God is the highest and most intelligent being per se. To the second difficulty he replies that the term "person" in its formal being most properly belongs to God since the dignity of the divine nature exceeds every dignity. His third reply shows he understood the difficulty that arose between the Greeks and the Latins. In his reply to the fourth objection, he says: "Individual being cannot belong to God so far as matter is the principle of individuation but only so far as individual being denotes incommunicability." This was also noted by Richard of St. Victor. Thus the person of the Father is incommunicable to the Son; thus also it is explained that the humanity of Christ, which is individuated by matter, is not a person because it is communicated to the suppositum of the divine Word, in which it exists.

From this, however, a problem arises. If the person denotes incommunicability in the divine nature, how can the Father communicate His nature to the Son? This problem will be solved in the following articles.

FOURTH ARTICLE: WHETHER IN GOD THE TERM PERSON SIGNIFIES RELATION

State of the question. In this question this article is of major importance. In the foregoing article we saw that in God, who is the most simple being, there can be no plurality except that of real relations mutually opposed. According to revelation, however, there are several persons in God. We must show, therefore, that a divine person can be constituted by a real divine relation. All the difficulties mentioned at the beginning of the article are reduced to this: person signifies something absolute and not relative. This becomes evident from the following considerations. 1. Person is predicated with reference to itself and not to another; 2. in God person is not really distinguished from the essence; 3. person is defined as an individual substance with a rational nature; 4. in men and angels person signifies something absolute and, if it signifies relation in God, it would be used equivocally of God and of men and angels.

Reply. The divine person signifies relation as subsisting. Boethius says," very name referring to persons signifies a relation." Thus Father signifies the relation to the Son, Son signifies the relation to the Father, and Holy Ghost signifies the relation to the Spirators. "By the relative names of the persons the Father is referred to the Son, the Son to the Father, and the Holy Ghost to both, for while we speak of the three persons relatively we believe in only one nature or substance... . For that which is the Father is not with reference to Himself but to the Son,... but, on the other hand, when we say God, this is said without reference to another."[307] "In the relation of the persons we discern number... . In this number alone do the persons indicate that they are referred to each other."[308] "In God all things are one and the same except where there is opposition of relation."[309]

In the body of the article St. Thomas presents three opinions and then offers the most acceptable opinion.

1. The opinion of the Master of the Sentences: even in God the term "person" in the singular may be taken to mean something absolute, but in the plural it is taken to mean something relative, contrary to the teaching of the heretics, especially the Arians, who said that the three persons are subordinate substances. St. Thomas replied that if

the term "person" even in God in the singular signifies something absolute, we are not sufficiently removed from the error of the Arians. By affirming the plurality of persons we might be multiplying something absolute.

2. The term "person" in God signifies essence directly and relation indirectly, because, as it is said, the person is said to be one per se. This, however, is false etymology. This opinion is corrected by the following.

3. The term "person" in God signifies relation directly and essence indirectly. This opinion, St. Thomas remarks, approaches more closely to the truth.

Then St. Thomas offers proof for his own opinion: the divine person signifies relation as subsisting.

Person in general signifies an individual (or distinct) substance with an intellectual nature, or a "hypostasis" distinct from others. But in God there are no real distinctions except according to the relations of origin, which are subsisting.[310] Therefore in God person signifies a distinct relation as subsisting.

This is to say, in general there are two things in the person: the distinction by incommunicability (I, you, he) and subsistence in the intellectual nature. But these two things are not found in God except in the real relations mutually opposed and thus really distinct, whose "esse in" is substantial and entirely the same as subsisting being itself.

More briefly we may say that person in any nature means a subsisting being distinct from others. But in God there is no distinction except according to the real relations, which are subsisting. Therefore in God person signifies relation not as relation but as subsisting. In this way we preserve the analogy of person in God, namely, a subsisting being distinct from others. In another place St. Thomas says: "The signified relation is included indirectly in the meaning of divine person, which is nothing else than a subsisting being in the divine essence distinct by relation,"[311] or a subsistence distinct by relation in the divine nature.

Difficulty. The person renders a nature incommunicable to another

suppositum. But the subsisting relation of paternity does not render the divine nature incommunicable. Therefore this subsisting relation of paternity does not constitute a person.

Reply. I distinguish the major: an absolute person renders a finite nature incommunicable, I concede; a relative person renders a divine nature incommunicable, this I subdistinguish: as of itself, I concede; in other respects, I deny. Thus the divine nature as terminated by paternity is incommunicable and in God there is only one Father and the Father alone enunciates. In an equilateral triangle the first angle constructed renders the surface incommunicable as of itself only, but this surface is communicated to the other opposite angles.

This reply will appear less clear than the objection because the objection arises from our inferior mode of knowledge, whereas the reply is taken from the height of the ineffable mystery and therefore requires profound meditation and mature thought. It is not necessary for theology to show that all the objections made against the mysteries are evidently false; it is sufficient to show that they are not necessary and cogent, in the words of St. Thomas.[312]

At the end of the body of the article several corollaries are presented.

First corollary. As the Deity is God, so the divine paternity is God the Father.[313] In God there is nothing except the Deity for there are no individuating notes from matter, no accidents, nor a being distinct from essence. Hence God and Deity are the same and the Father and the paternity are the same. On the other hand, Socrates is not his humanity, which is only an essential part; the whole is not the part, but it is greater than its part.

It is not perfectly true to say that Michael is his own Michaelity because, although the Michaelity is individuated of itself and not by matter, yet there are in Michael accidents and being besides his essence.

Second corollary. In God person signifies relation directly as subsisting and essence indirectly.

Third corollary. Inasmuch as the divine essence is subsisting per se, it is signified directly by the term person, and relation as relation, not

as subsisting, is signified indirectly.

Reply to the first objection. The term "person" even in God refers to Himself inasmuch as it signifies relation, not as relation, but as subsisting; for example, the Father as subsisting refers to Himself although as a relation He refers to the Son.

Reply to the third objection. In our understanding of an individual substance, that is, a distinct and incommunicable substance, we understand a relation in God, as was said in the body of the article.

Reply to the fourth objection. In God the analogy of person is preserved, for it is something subsisting and distinct from others (a free and intelligent subject) which is proportionally predicated of the divine persons, angelic and human persons. But the three divine persons understand by the same essential intellection and they love by the same essential love.

First doubt. Are the divine persons constituted only by the subsisting relations opposed to each other or also by everything that belongs to them?

Against Praepositivus and Gregory of Rimini, the Thomists reply that the divine persons are constituted as persons by the fact that they are distinguished from each other. But they are distinguished from each other by nothing except the opposite subsisting relations, otherwise they would differ by essence and in essence. It has been defined, however, that they are the same in essence. Hence the Council of the Lateran declared: "The Most Holy Trinity is individual according to the common essence and separate according to the personal properties."[314] The Council of Florence says: "The divine persons differ by their properties."[315]

Confirmation. What is common to the three persons cannot constitute a special person distinct from the others. But all things that are absolute in God are common to the three persons.

Second doubt. Are the divine persons constituted by the active and passive origins, as St. Bonaventure thought, or according to the opinion attributed to him?

The reply is in the negative, for by its essential concept person

denotes a fixed and permanent being since it is the ultimate terminus of nature, rendering it incommunicable and subsisting. But origin is essentially conceived as becoming; active origin is conceived as the influx and emanation from a principle, and passive origin is conceived as the path or tendency to a terminus. Active origin presupposes the person from which it issues, and passive generation is conceived as something supposed prior to the constitution of the person of the Son, according to our manner of thought.[316]

Third doubt. Is the person of the Father constituted by innascibility, as Vasquez thought?

The reply is in the negative, because innascibility taken formally is merely the negation of a principle and thus cannot constitute the person of the Father, which, since it is real, must be constituted by something real and positive. If, however, innascibility is taken fundamentally, the basis implied is either something absolute, and then it cannot constitute a particular person, or it is something relative, and then it can be nothing else than the relation of paternity. Vasquez had proposed this opinion to solve the following difficulty.

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THE SPECIAL DIFFICULTY IN THE LATIN'S CONCEPT

In this present article we can examine a particular difficulty arising from the concept of the Latin theologians. The problem is as follows: The relation which follows upon active generation cannot constitute the person who begets. But the relation of paternity follows upon active generation, for it is founded on it. Therefore this relation of paternity cannot constitute the person of the begetting Father. The person must first exist before it begets, because operation follows being.

This objection is somewhat clearer than the reply because the difficulty arises from our imperfect manner of thinking, whereas the reply must come from the heights of this ineffable mystery.

In examining this difficulty, St. Thomas says: "The special property of the Father, His paternity, can be considered in two ways. First, as it is a relation and as such according to our understanding it presupposes the notional act of generation because the relation as such is founded on the act. Secondly, as it constitutes the person, and as such it is understood as prior to the notional act just as a person in act is understood as prior to the action."[317]

This is to say that the relation, of paternity for example, as a relation actually referring to its terminus does indeed presuppose active generation and is founded on it, just as the relation of filiation is founded on passive generation. But the active generation itself presupposes the begetting person and its personal property, that is, paternity, as it constitutes the person of the Father. There is here no contradiction because this relation of paternity is not considered under the same aspect, but first as a relation actively looking toward the terminus and founded on active generation, and secondly as the proximate principle (principium quo) of active generation or as constituting the begetting person.

As in the equilateral triangle the first angle constructed, while it is alone, is itself a geometric figure, that is, an angle, but it does not yet refer to the other two angles not yet constructed.

In explaining St. Thomas' teaching, Thomists have offered two replies to this objection. Some Thomists reply by distinguishing the

major: the relation of paternity, considered as referring to something, follows generation; but considered as in something, it precedes generation. But the difficulty remains since the "esse in" is something common to the divine relations and the three persons and therefore it cannot constitute a particular person as distinct from the others and as incommunicable. The "esse in" does not confer incommunicability; only the "esse ad" does this.

Other Thomists (Cajetan, John of St. Thomas, and Billuart) reply as follows to this important difficulty. Even with regard to the "esse ad" the relation of paternity as that by which the divine essence is modified in actu signato precedes the active generation, although it follows it with regard to the "esse ad" in the actual exercise (in actu exercito), that is, in the actual exercise of that respect after the manner of the actual tendency and attainment of the terminus. Hence these Thomists say that the relation of paternity, as that by which the divine essence is modified in actu signato, constitutes the person of the Father; and the relation of paternity as that which in the exercise of the act (in actu exercito) is founded on active generation supposes the person of the Father as already constituted. Thus the doctrine of St. Thomas is maintained: the persons are constituted by the relations as subsisting and not as relations. And thus the notional act of active generation has its origin in the person of the Father as subsisting and in the relation itself as really incommunicable.

I insist. Relative things are the same in nature and in knowledge. But the Father, as has been said, is understood before generation. Therefore the Son also is understood before generation, which is absurd.

Reply. I distinguish the major: relative things are the same in nature and knowledge in actu exercito, I concede; in actu signato, I deny. I contradistinguish the minor: the Father is understood before generation in actu signato as a subsisting person, I concede; in actu exercito with regard to the Son, this I deny.

In other words, the ad as such denotes the respect to another either by the opposition of the terminus or by the attainment of the terminus. In the relation of opposition itself we may consider either the opposition between two persons or the exercised relation of one to another; for example, I refer to you, but I am distinct from you. So the Father refers to the Son, but the Father is not the Son.

I insist. The first thing in the "esse ad" is to refer in act to the terminus rather than being a relative incommunicable entity. Therefore the difficulty remains.

Reply. I deny the antecedent. Just as the first thing is for whiteness to be constituted in itself as that by which something is made white before the wall is whitened (ut quod), for the form precedes its formal effect not by the priority of time but of causality.

I insist. The opposition in a relation arises from the reference, since it is the opposition of one relative thing to the correlative. Therefore the reference in act is prior to the opposition to the terminus. And the difficulty remains.

Reply. I distinguish the antecedent: the exercised opposition in the relation arises from the exercised reference (in actu exercito), I concede; the entitative opposition arises from the reference in actu exercito, this I deny. The entitative opposition arises in the actu signato. Similarly, whiteness in actu signato is opposed to blackness in actu signato, and whiteness as actually existing in a wall actively opposes blackness existing in another wall. In a word, the form precedes its formal effect not in time but by nature.

The following analogies illustrate this point. Sanctifying grace is thought of first as it is in itself before we think of it as driving out sin and making the soul pleasing to God. The rational soul is thought of first in itself as a nature before we think of it as conferring a specific being and life on the body. Similarly a relation first affects the subject as that by which (ut quo) and later it refers exercite to the terminus, for first a thing must be constituted in itself before it tends toward something else. We cannot conceive of it as attaining its terminus before it is in itself.

In human generation, in that indivisible instant in which the rational soul is created and united to the body, the ultimate disposition of the body in preparation for the soul precedes the creation of the soul in the genus of material or dispositive causality; but it follows the creation of the soul (as a property of the soul) in the genus of formal, efficient, and final causality. For it is the rational soul itself which in this instant of time gives to the body not the penultimate but the ultimate disposition to itself; and this disposition is then a property

of the soul. When this property of the soul in its body is destroyed by death, the soul is separated from the body. Here there is no contradiction because the ultimate disposition precedes and follows the form but not in the same genus of causality. Thus the causes are causes of one another but in different classes and thus there is no vicious circle.

In the same way the phantasm precedes the idea in the line of material causes, but the phantasm completely assumed to express sensibly an idea does not exist prior to the idea. When a man succeeds in discovering a new idea, in the same moment he often discovers the appropriate phantasm for the sensible expression of that idea.

So also the motion of sensibility precedes and follows volition under a twofold aspect. Again, at the end of a period of deliberation the final practical judgment precedes the free choice, which it influenced, but at the same time it is the free choice which made the practical judgment final by accepting it.

In the contract of marriage the consent of the man is expressed in a word, but that word has no effect unless it is accepted by the woman. After the woman accepts, the marriage is definitively ratified, but not before. Here the consent of the man precedes as consent and, although it is pronounced relatively to the woman, it does not actively affect the consent of the woman unless later the woman consents and expresses that consent. These analogies are to some extent explicative of the matter.

We return to St. Thomas, teaching. The divine person is constituted by the relation as subsisting and not as a relation. Thus the generation of the Son terminates in the person of the Son but not as that which is the object of the relation. For, as the philosophers say, movement or generation does not terminate per se and directly in a relation. In God, therefore, generation terminates in the person of the Son as subsisting, or in the relation of filiation as it is subsisting being, but not as a relation. Such was St. Thomas, distinction which without too much complication was able to solve this difficulty as much as it could be solved by men.

Fourth doubt. Whether in God, prior to the consideration of relations and persons, there is some absolute subsistence besides the three

relative subsistencies.

Theologians are not agreed. The Thomists commonly reply in the affirmative; many other theologians reply in the negative. Durandus taught that an absolute subsistence was sufficient without relative subsistences; but this is rejected by most theologians.

The common opinion of Thomists is that God, considered in Himself, prior to the persons and relations, is subsisting, that He is therefore not only the Deity but also God, subsisting being itself, and for that reason He is understood as having intellect, will, and the power to create ad extra. But God is not said to be subsisting with regard to Himself by a relative subsistence. Therefore He subsists by an absolute subsistence.

Confirmation. Subsistence implies the highest perfection, namely, the most perfect manner of being. But God, prior to our consideration of the persons, possesses every perfection because He is pure act, existing because of Himself. Therefore He derives no perfection from the relations, because if paternity would be a new perfection that perfection would be lacking in the Son and thus the Son would not be God.

Confirmation. Antecedently to the consideration of the persons, God possesses being or the existence of that which is. But such existence presupposes subsistence or that by which something is what it is. In other words, prior to the consideration of the persons God is that which is, indeed He is subsisting being itself. This seems to be the opinion of St. Thomas: "The divine nature exists having in itself subsistence apart from any consideration of the distinction of the persons."[318] On other occasions St. Thomas said, "In God there are many subsisting beings if we consider the relations, but only one subsisting being if we consider the essence."[319] This opinion seems to follow upon the concept of the Latins, who begin, not with the three persons, but with the divine nature.

First objection. If we place an absolute subsistence in God we have a quaternity.

Reply. This I deny because this absolute subsistence confers the perseity of independence from any other sustaining being but not the perseity of incommunicability. Thus there are not four persons. It

is certain that, considered in Himself, God is singular, since He is not a universal. In Him, God and the Deity are one. From revelation it is certain that in itself the divine nature is communicable by the Father to the Son and to the Holy Ghost.

Second objection. According to the councils and the Fathers subsistence is the same as "hypostasis". But no theologian admits the existence of an absolute "hypostasis".

Reply. The councils and the Fathers did not deal with this scholastic question and, when they spoke of the divine persons, they did indeed say that subsistence is the same as the "hypostasis" but they did not intend to exclude the absolute subsistence of which we are now speaking.

Third objection. In order that the divine nature subsist independently and at the same time be incommunicable the personalities or relative subsistences are sufficient. For if in God there were one personality, this would be able to confer both kinds of perseity, of independence and incommunicability. Why cannot this perseity be conferred by three persons?

Reply. If in God there were one personality, this would be an absolute perfection and thus it would confer both the perseity of independence and incommunicability. This one personality would really be that absolute subsistence of which we are speaking and in addition it would confer incommunicability. But such is not the case because it has been revealed that in God there are three persons. Besides it would be incongruous that this most perfect manner of existence in God would depend on the relations which do not add any new perfection.

I insist. In rational creatures personality confers both the perseity of independence and incommunicability. Therefore it should all the more do so in God.

Reply. In rational creatures personality is an absolute subsistence, not relative as in God. In God perfections are derived only from the essence; incommunicability comes only from the relations.

Final objection. That which derives its existence from another does not exist in itself. But the divine nature, prior to the relations or

persons, seeks its existence in them. Therefore it does not exist in itself.

Reply. I distinguish the major: that which seeks its existence in another because of its own indigence, I concede; that which seeks its existence in another because of its infinite fecundity, I deny. I contradistinguish the minor: the divine nature does not seek existence in the relations or persons because of any indigence, so that it can exist by itself. It is already able to exist by itself because it is subsisting being itself, but because of its infinite fecundity it seeks to exist in the persons as the precise terms of its existence and not as sustainers of its own being.

I insist. The divine nature cannot exist without the relations; therefore it is complemented by them because of its own indigence in existence.

Reply. I distinguish the antecedent: the divine nature cannot exist without the relations because it is supremely fecund, I concede; because it is deficient, I deny. It is itself subsisting being. In the same way omnipotence cannot exist without the possibility of creatures, not because of its own indigence but because of its fecundity. So also the Father enunciates the Word not because of any need but because of His fecundity.

Final doubt. Why is not the absolute subsistence, modified by the relations, sufficient without relative subsistences, as Durandus taught?

Reply. 1. Because the councils and the Fathers have often stated that each divine person has its proper subsistence. St. Thomas declared: "As we say that in God there are three persons and three subsistences, so the Greeks say there are three hypostases."[320]

2. According to the Catholic faith there are three persons in God. But a person is formally constituted by subsistence, which confers incommunicability. Therefore in God there are three relative subsistences.

3. Otherwise no basis would exist for incommunicability nor would the principle of active generation and active spiration be established.

Confirmation. If there were only one subsistence, modified by the three relations, we could not truly say that there are three persons in God, just as we could not say that there are three gods because there is one nature modified by the three relations. We would have to confess one person alone just as we confess one God. In order to multiply a substantive noun such as person we must also multiply the form, which is the personality. We return then to St. Thomas, statement that the divine persons are constituted by relative subsistences, as they are subsisting and opposed to each other. Thus we have three relative subsistences.

The Father is then the principle quod of active generation; the Son with the Father is the principle quod of active spiration. God, antecedent to any consideration of the persons, is the principle quod of the essential actions, which are common to the three persons, such as essential intellection and essential love as distinct from notional love (active spiration) and personal love (the Holy Spirit).

Confirmation. The humanity of Christ is united to the Word in His personal subsistence, which supplies the place of the created subsistence; otherwise the three divine persons would be incarnate.

From the foregoing we may be able better to solve a difficulty that often comes to mind. Personality renders a nature incommunicable to another suppositum; but paternity does not render the divine nature incommunicable to the Son, on the contrary it communicates it to the Son; therefore paternity cannot constitute the person of the Father, and, therefore, there cannot be three persons in God.

Reply. I distinguish the major: personality renders a nature incommunicable as personified, I concede; personality renders a nature incommunicable in itself, I subdistinguish: in created beings, where personality is absolute, I concede; in God, where personality is relative, I deny. Thus the person of the Father renders the divine nature incommunicable as personified (there is but one Father in God), but it does not render the divine nature incommunicable in itself. Indeed the Father, inasmuch as He implies the relation to the Son, communicates to the Son the divine nature and thus manifests the infinite fecundity of the divine nature.

We have sufficiently examined the questions about the processions of the divine persons (question 27), the divine relations (question

28), and the divine persons considered absolutely and in common (question 29). We now turn to the plurality of the persons, and after this lengthy explanation of the fundamental ideas we may now proceed more rapidly. We shall now study the corollaries that can be inferred from the foregoing and the correct terminology to be used in speaking of these truths. But we will not neglect to gather the precious gems of knowledge which can be found in the following articles.

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RECAPITULATION OF QUESTION TWENTY-NINE

Article 1. A person is a free and intelligent subject or an individual substance with a rational nature.

Article 2. Person is the same as the "hypostasis" of an intellectual nature.

Article 3. Since person signifies that which is most perfect in all nature, namely, a subsistence with a rational or intellectual nature, it is proper that this term be used with reference to God analogically and in the most excellent manner. Thus in Sacred Scripture the Father and the Son, as is clear, are personal nouns and so also is the Holy Ghost, who is mentioned with them.

Article 4. The divine persons, distinct from one another, are constituted by the three divine subsisting relations opposed to one another, namely, paternity, filiation, and passive spiration.

The reason for this is that "there is no distinction in God except by the relations of origin opposed to one another." Since these relations are not accidents but subsisting, we find in them two requisites for a person: subsistence and incommunicability, or distinction. Thus the three divine persons are three intelligent and free subjects, although they understand by the same essential intellection, love themselves necessarily by the same essential love, and freely love creatures by the same free act of love.

Therefore the paternity in God is personality, although it is relative, as are also filiation and passive spiration. The divine paternity on its part renders the divine nature incommunicable, although the divine nature is still communicable to the other two persons, just as the top angle of the triangle on its part renders its surface incommunicable, although this surface can still be communicated to the other two angles. And as God is His own deity, so the Father is His own paternity, the Son is His own filiation, and the Holy Ghost is His own (quasi-) passive spiration.

CHAPTER IV: QUESTION 30 THE PLURALITY OF THE DIVINE PERSONS

INTRODUCTION

Articles one and two inquire whether there are several persons in God, and articles three and four inquire in what this plurality consists.

Article 1. In God there are several persons because there are several real subsisting relations opposed to one another. In the reply to the fourth difficulty, St. Thomas notes that each divine person is not a part nor is the divine reality the whole, because the Father is as great as the entire Trinity, as will become clear below,[321] when St. Thomas explains: "All the relations are one according to essence and being, and all the relations are not greater than one alone; nor are all the persons greater than one alone since the entire (infinite) perfection of the divine nature is in each of the persons."[322]

Article 2. In God there are not more than three persons. This truth is revealed in the form of baptism and stated in the creeds. The theological explanation is that the divine persons are constituted by mutually opposed subsisting relations. But these three relations are three in number. One of the four relations, active spiration, is opposed neither to paternity nor to filiation. This active spiration, therefore, belongs to the Father and to the Son. Passive spiration, however, cannot be attributed to the Father and to the Son for then the procession of love would precede the procession of intellection. The reader is referred to the reply to the first difficulty in the text. It should be noted that the fact that no opposition exists between active spiration and filiation is an implicit affirmation of the Filioque. [323]

Article 3. Whether anything is added to God by the numeral terms.

State of the question. Is there any positive significance when we say that God is wise, or any negative significance when we say that God is incorporeal? This is Cajetan's interpretation of the sense of this title.

Reply. The numeral terms do not add anything positive to God since they express not a quantitative but a transcendental plurality, which is not properly speaking a number. The transcendental multitude refers to the many of which it is predicated in the same way that transcendental unity refers to transcendental being. Transcendental unity merely predicates the indivisibility of being without adding any accident. We say not only that the scholastic school of thought is one among many theological schools but that it is also perfectly one and united. So also the Summa Theologica is not only one among many works written by St. Thomas but it is a work that is perfectly one because of the intimate connection between its parts. We refer the reader to the text.

Thus, as was explained elsewhere,[324] transcendental unity differs from the unity which is the principle of number, which is a kind of quantity. St. Thomas in concluding the body of the article says: "When we say that the divine persons are many, this signifies these persons and the indivisibility of each of them since it is of the nature of a multitude that it consist of unities." In his reply to the third difficulty, he says: "Multitude does not do away with unity; it removes division from each of those entities which constitute the multitude."[325]

This may be better understood when we see it verified in several instances. The numerical multitude of individuals does not do away with the unity of the species; the transcendental multitude of species does not do away with the unity of genus; the transcendental multitude of genus does not do away with the analogical unity of being, nor does the multitude of accidents in a suppositum destroy its unity. Similarly the transcendental plurality of persons in God does not destroy the unity of God. But if it were a numerical plurality in God, the divine nature would be multiplied in the three individuals, and there would be three gods.

The unity of God is a unity pure and simple, whereas the specific unity of many men is only a qualified unity, that is, a unity according to the specific likeness of these men, who together are a pure and simple multitude. Wherefore the plurality of the divine persons in the bosom of the simple unity of the divine nature is best compared analogically with the plurality of accidents, such as, for example, the plurality of faculties in one suppositum that is simply one rather than with the plurality of individuals in the same species.

Corollary. Thus there is in God a simple unity and a qualified plurality. The unity is the unity of the divine nature; the transcendental plurality is the plurality of the opposing relations. In a nature numerically one and the same this plurality arises from the opposition of relations of origin. Therefore it cannot be said that there are three gods, but we must say there is one God. Again, as we shall see in the following article, we cannot say that God is threefold, but we say He is triune in order to safeguard the simple unity which is at the same time substantial together with the plurality that arises from the opposing relations. Thus we say that God is one in three persons.

Article 4. Whether the term "person" is common to the three divine persons. It seems that it is not, since nothing is common to the three persons except the divine essence.

Reply. The term "person" is a common noun according to reason because that which is a person is common to the three persons, namely, the subsisting relation opposed to other relations. It is not, however, common to the three persons by a community of the actual thing as is the divine essence, which is one whereas there are three persons. If something were common to the persons actually, there would be but one person as there is one nature.

Even when applied to men, the term "person" is common by a community of reason, not indeed as are genus and species but as an undetermined individual, as some man, that is something subsisting of itself and distinct from others. Analogically this notion is common to the three divine persons since each divine person subsists in the divine nature distinct from the others. The term "person, " therefore, is common to the three divine persons by a community of reason but not actually, as St. Thomas explains in the reply to the third difficulty. It is common but not as genus is a common term, because the three divine persons have one being and are subsisting being itself, which is above all genus.

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CHAPTER V: QUESTION 31 OF THE UNITY AND PLURALITY OF THE TRINITY

INTRODUCTION

We are here concerned with the manner of speaking about the Trinity in the following four articles. 1. The name Trinity itself. 2. Whether we can say, the Father is other than the Son. 3. Whether we can say that God is alone or solitary. 4. Whether we can say that one person is alone, as for instance, "Thou alone art most high." In the treatise on the Trinity this question corresponds to the thirteenth question in the treatise on the One God, on the names of God.[326]

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FIRST ARTICLE: WHETHER THERE IS A TRINITY IN GOD

The difficulty arises from the fact that everything that is triune is threefold, whereas God is not threefold since He possesses the greatest unity. Nevertheless the reply is in the affirmative as an article of faith. In the Athanasian Creed we read, "The Unity is to be worshiped in Trinity and the Trinity in Unity."[327]

Theology offers the following explanation. In God there is a transcendental plurality of persons. The term "Trinity" according to revelation limits this plurality to the three persons. Therefore the term Trinity can rightly be used.

Reply to the first objection. Etymologically the term "Trinity" seems to signify the unity of three, but in a special way it signifies the transcendental number of persons of one essence. Thus we cannot say that the Father is the Trinity. The term "Trinity" signifies at the same time the number of persons and the unity of the essence.

Reply to the second objection. St. John declared, "And these three are one" (I John 5:7). Hence we have the name "Trinity."

Reply to the third objection. Nevertheless in God there is no triplicity because triplicity denotes a proportion of inequality as do duplicity and quadruplicity. Thus we cannot say that God is threefold. That which is threefold has in a sense been tripled, as, for instance, a triple crown signifies the union of three crowns.

If God were said to be threefold, the three persons together would be more than one alone, and one person would not have infinite perfection. But we can say that the persons are threefold and the processions are twofold, because by adding person and procession we exclude sufficiently the multiplicity of nature.

Reply to the fourth objection. Unity in Trinity signifies that there is one nature in three persons, and Trinity in unity signifies three persons in one nature.

Reply to the fifth objection. We cannot say that the Trinity is threefold for this would mean that there were three supposita of the Trinity, whereas there are only three supposita of the Deity.

First corollary. From the foregoing the Thomists, especially Gonet, conclude that those things that belong to the persons by reason of the essence alone are predicated only singly. Those things, however, that belong to the persons by reason of the persons alone are predicated only in the plural. Those things that belong to the persons by reason of the essence and the relations are predicated both in the singular and in the plural.

The reason for this rule is that in God all things are one and the same except where there is the opposition of relation; only the relations are multiplied in God, the essence is not. This was defined by the Council of Toledo: "Number is discovered in the relation of the persons; but we find nothing that is numbered in the substance of the divinity. Thus number is indicated only in this, that they are mutually related; and they lack number in this, that they are in themselves."[328]

From this rule it follows that it is correct to say that there are three persons or three hypostases in God but not three individuals because the nature is multiplied in individuals. In its formal signification person denotes personality; in its material signification it denotes nature. On the other hand, the individual in its formal signification denotes nature; in its material signification it denotes personality.

Thus we do not say that there are three individuals or three gods, because in the three persons God is numerically one. According to the Fourth Lateran Council, we may say that there are three divine beings, three co-eternal and omnipotent beings if these terms are used adjectively because the multiplication of the suppositum is sufficient for the multiplication of the adjective term without a multiplication of the form. Thus "three divine beings" signifies three that possess the Deity.

It is wrong, however, to say three divine beings if this expression is taken substantively. It is in this sense that the Athanasian Creed declares, "And yet they are not three eternals, but one Eternal," for the plural substantive requires the multiplication of both the form and the suppositum. We can say, "In God there is one thing (res)" which is the essence, and several relative realities inasmuch as the divine relations are something real and not fictitious. We can then

predicate reality of God both in the singular and plural number according to the aforesaid rule because reality belongs to the persons both by reason of the essence and the relations.

Second corollary. As Cajetan declared: "In God according to actuality or in the real order there is one being, neither purely absolute nor purely relational, not mixed or composed or resulting from these two, but eminently and formally possessing both that which is relational (with several relational beings) and that which is absolute."[329] This is generally admitted even by the Scotists.

Third corollary. In opposition to the Scotist formal-actual distinction on the part of the thing, Cajetan also declared: "Even in the formal order or the order of formal reasons in themselves, not in our manner of speaking, there is in God one formal reason, neither purely absolute nor purely relational, neither purely communicable nor purely incommunicable, but eminently and formally containing both whatever is of absolute perfection and whatever the relational Trinity demands." In God there is no distinction antecedent to our consideration except between the divine relations that are opposed to each other. Still the divine nature is actually communicated to the Son without a communication of paternity. So also with regard to the Holy Ghost the divine nature is communicated without a communication of paternity, filiation, or active spiration, as in the triangle the entire surface of the first angle is communicated to the second and third angles without a communication of the first angle. Paternity cannot be communicated to the Son, because it is opposed to filiation, as spiration is also opposed to procession.

Fourth corollary. The unity of God is more clearly manifested after the revelation of the Trinity than before, because it now appears as that simple unity which exists notwithstanding the real distinction of the persons and which contains in itself eminently and formally whatever is absolute and relational. These are the lights and shadows in our view of the Trinity.

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SECOND ARTICLE: WHETHER THE SON IS OTHER THAN THE FATHER

The difficulty arises from Christ's words, "I and the Father are one." The reply nevertheless is that the Son is other than the Father but not another being. This is an article of faith according to the Fourth Lateran Council: "That being (the divine nature) does not beget, nor is it begotten, nor does it proceed, but it is the Father who begets, the Son who is begotten, and the Holy Ghost who proceeds, because the distinctions are in the persons and the unity is in the nature. Although the Father is another, the Son another, and the Holy Ghost another, each is not another being but that which is the Father is the Son and the Holy Ghost, entirely the same, "[330] that is, they are one according to nature and are consubstantial.

This statement of the Council was taken from the writings of St. Gregory Nazianzen.[331] St. Fulgentius, quoted by St. Thomas in his argument sed contra, used the same language. In this way the words of our Lord are safeguarded: "I and the Father are one." The Son and the Father are one; the Son is not another being, although He is other than the Father because He was begotten by the Father.

In the body of the article St. Thomas explains this point by comparing the masculine pronoun, which signifies a person, with the neuter pronoun, which signifies the nature. The reader is referred to the reply to the fourth difficulty, "The neuter gender is unformed, and so conveniently signifies the common essence, whereas the masculine gender signifies a determined person." In the body of the article St. Thomas determines the vocabulary to be used in order to avoid the dangers of Arianism and Sabellianism. To avoid any confusion with Arianism, in speaking of the divine persons we do not use the terms diversity and difference but distinction, because diversity implies a distinction in genus and difference implies a distinction in species. Thus we do not say, the nature is divided into three persons, the person of the Father is separated from the person of the Son, a disparity exists between the persons, nor that the Son is alien to the Father, because the Son is perfectly similar and united to the Father but distinct from Him.

To avoid Sabellianism, we do not say that God is unique, but one in three persons, nor do we say that God is singular or that He is

solitary.

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THIRD ARTICLE: WHETHER WE CAN SAY THAT GOD IS ALONE

Reply. 1. We cannot say that God is alone if the word alone is taken categorematically or absolutely, inasmuch as the meaning of the word is attributed absolutely to the subject, in this case solitude or aloneness. This would be tantamount to saying that God is solitary and without any consort and would deny the society of the divine persons.

2. But if the word alone is taken syncategorematically, denoting only the order of the predicate to the subject, it would be correct to say that God alone is eternal, God alone is His own being, or to God alone belong honor and praise.

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FOURTH ARTICLE: WHETHER WE CAN SAY THAT GOD THE FATHER IS ALONE

Reply. We cannot say that the Father is alone categorematically because the Father is not solitary; but syncategorematically we can say, for instance, that in God the Father alone enunciates or begets.

When the Church proclaims, "Thou only, O Jesus Christ, art most high," she does not wish to say that the Son alone is most high but that the Son alone is most high with the Holy Ghost in the glory of the Father.[332] When Jesus said that no one knows the Son except the Father, He did not wish to say that the Son and Holy Ghost do not know the Son, because the persons are not excluded unless there is relative opposition, as when we say, the Father alone begets.

In this brief examination of the correct mode of speaking about the Trinity, we see how amazing it is that human language with all its limitations and inadequacies is able to develop such precision in enunciating a mystery that is in itself ineffable.

CHAPTER VI: QUESTION 32 THE KNOWABILITY OF THE DIVINE PERSONS

INTRODUCTION

At this point St. Thomas discusses the knowability of the divine persons because he considers their knowability a property of the divine persons that has a reference to us, just as in the treatise on the one God he treats of the knowability of God in the twelfth question. This question contains four articles: 1. Whether the divine persons can be known by natural reason; 2. Whether certain notions are to be attributed to the divine persons; 3. The number of these notions; 4. Whether we can entertain different opinions about the divine persons.

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FIRST ARTICLE: WHETHER THE UNITY OF DIVINE PERSONS CAN BE KNOWN BY NATURAL REASON

St. Thomas takes up this problem after the first five questions. Recent theologians generally treat of it in the beginning of the treatise to support the validity of their investigations into the divine processions. The order adopted by St. Thomas is excellent in itself, although from our standpoint it is useful to consider the indemonstrability of this mystery at least briefly in the beginning. We will here consider the problem at some length.

State of the question. The question is well put by St. Thomas in the three difficulties proposed at the beginning of the article. 1. Many Platonic and Neoplatonic philosophers admitted a certain kind of Trinity with three hypostases, namely, the One, the Logos, and the world soul. 2. Richard of St. Victor tried to demonstrate the Trinity from the infinity of the divine goodness, which communicates itself infinitely in the procession of the three divine persons and from the fact that there can be no joyous possession of any good without some consort or association in that enjoyment. In a similar way, St. Augustine proceeded to show the Trinity of persons from the procession of the word and of love in our human minds. 3. If the mystery of the Trinity had no relation to our reason, its revelation would seem to be superfluous.

We might add that Abelard tried to demonstrate the Trinity.[333] St. Anselm frequently attempted to construct demonstrations to prove the Trinity and sometimes indulged in what were at least wordy extravagances. In recent times Guenther also wished to demonstrate this mystery,[334] as did Rosmini, who brought down on himself the Church's condemnation.[335] More recently Schell, in opposition to the rationalists and Unitarians, who said this mystery was openly opposed to reason, tried to prove the Trinity from the nexus between aseity and immanent processions.[336]

The reply, however, is in the negative: the Trinity of the divine persons cannot be known by natural reason, that is, it cannot be understood or demonstrated. This statement does not depress but rather pleases the theologian.

The proof is from 1. Scripture; 2. the authority of the Fathers; 3. the

definitions and declarations of the Church;[337] 4. theological reasoning.

1. The authority of the Scriptures. From our Lord's words, "No one knoweth the Son, but the Father: neither doth anyone know the Father, but the Son, and he to whom it shall please the Son to reveal Him" (Matt. 11:27), it is clear that the Trinity of the divine persons is above created natural knowledge, even that of the angels. This is confirmed by our Lord's words to St. Peter, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona, because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but My Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 16:17). The second text, it is true, refers directly to the mystery of the Incarnation, but if the incarnation of the Son of God is above natural reason, the mystery of the Trinity is all the more above human reason. Hence Pope Hormisdas in writing to the Emperor Justin said: "No visible or invisible nature is able to investigate the secret of the Trinity."[338]

2. The authority of the Fathers. In his argument sed contra St. Thomas quotes St. Hilary and St. Ambrose. He also adduces the authority of St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Fulgentius, and St. Jerome. [339] He quotes St. Gregory of Nyssa's words, "No words can express the ineffable depth of this mystery."[340]

3. The authority of the Vatican Council: "The mysteries hidden in God are proposed for our belief and if they had not been divinely revealed they could not be known... . These divine mysteries by their very nature exceed the created intellect and even when they are handed down by revelation and received by faith remain covered with the veil of faith and wrapped up in obscurity for us as long as we are journeying in this life toward the Lord, for we walk not through the species of things but by faith."[341] The same Council declared: "If anyone shall say that the divine revelation does not contain true and proper mysteries, but that all the dogmas of faith can be understood and demonstrated from natural principles by the efforts of reason, let him be anathema."[342]

The Church did not in these words define that the mystery of the Trinity is a mystery properly so called, but it is commonly believed in the Church that the Trinity is supreme among all mysteries, since it is the mystery of God's intimate life, and if this mystery is not essentially supernatural, the other mysteries, of the incarnation of the Son of God, our redemption, the sending of the Holy Ghost,

would not be essentially supernatural mysteries. Then these mysteries would not be indemonstrable except for their contingency, since the physical world was not created from eternity but in time, and they would not be indemonstrable by reason of their essential supernatural nature. However, the Council declared: "The divine mysteries are above the created intellect by their very nature to such a degree that even when they are handed down by revelation and received by faith" they cannot be demonstrated. This truth was affirmed against the semirationalists Guenther and Frohschammer.

Several declarations were made by the Church against Guenther. [343] The following propositions by Rosmini were condemned by the Church: "After the mystery of the Trinity had been revealed, its existence can be proved by purely speculative arguments, although these arguments are negative and indirect, and these arguments can reduce this truth to the realm of philosophy so that it becomes a scientific proposition like others in philosophy. If this proposition were denied, the theosophic doctrine of pure reason would not only be incomplete but it would be destroyed because of consequent absurdities."[344] Rosmini's teaching that there are "three supreme forms of being, namely, subjectivity, objectivity, and holiness and, when these forms are transferred to absolute being, they cannot be conceived as anything else than living and subsisting persons," was also condemned.[345]

Guenther taught something like this when he defined personality as the consciousness of oneself. "Consciousness," he said, "presupposes the duality of the subject and the object and the knowledge of their identity. The subject is the Father, the object is the Son or the Word, and their substantial identity is the Holy Ghost." Further he declared, "If in God there were but one person, God would not be conscious of Himself."[346] This last statement is obviously false since God is subsisting intellect itself. Moreover, according to Guenther's theory, there should be not only three who are conscious of themselves but also three consciousnesses in order that there be three personalities, and then in God there would be three intellects. This would be tritheism, and something essential in God would be multiplied.[347]

Because of these different authoritative statements it is clear that the Holy Trinity cannot be known naturally, even after its existence is known by revelation. It is also clear that the real possibility of this

mystery cannot be positively demonstrated even after revelation. If once the possibility could be proved, the actual existence would also be proved because in necessary things existence follows possibility, and the Trinity is not contingent as are the Incarnation and the Redemption.

4. The theological proof. In God only that can be known naturally which is necessarily and evidently connected with creatures.

We can know nothing about God naturally except through created effects, as was shown above,[348] and the natural principles which are known from a consideration of created being. But from these created effects, at least those that are natural, we cannot arrive at the knowledge of the Trinity because these effects proceed from the creative power or God's omnipotence, which is common to the entire Trinity and, like the divine intelligence and the divine will, pertains to the unity of the essence and not to the distinction of the persons. Therefore it is impossible to come to the knowledge of the Trinity by natural reason.

The major of this argument is philosophically and theologically certain.[349] The minor is of faith according to the Fourth Lateran Council, which said that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are "co-omnipotent and co-eternal, one principle of all things."[350] By philosophy and theology it can be shown that omnipotence pertains to the divine nature as it is one and not as it is threefold in the persons, since each person does not have its own proper and distinct omnipotence. Thus created effects do not per se proceed from God as triune but only concomitantly inasmuch as the creative power is one and the same in the three persons. The reader is referred to St. Thomas' article, in which he clarifies this truth more than did his predecessors.

Objection. If created effects were known more perfectly, as they are known, for instance, by the angels, perhaps the Trinity could be known from them.

Reply. An effect, no matter how perfectly it is known, will not lead to the knowledge of the cause except under that aspect by which it proceeds from the cause and according to the dependence of the effect on the cause. Thus a painting makes known the painter, but it does not tell whether the painter was large or small, fat or lean.

Created effects, at least natural effects, do not depend on God as triune but only as He is one.

Confirmation. In the body of the article St. Thomas adds two theological arguments. "Anyone who tries to prove the Trinity of persons by natural reason derogates from faith in two ways. 1. He derogates from faith because it is concerned with things that do not appear and are hidden in God... . 2. Such an attempt arouses the derision of non-believers since they are led to believe that we depend on human reasonings and believe because of them." The holy doctor concludes: "We should not try to prove the things that are of faith...; it is enough to make a defense by showing that what faith proclaims is not impossible." He says "make a defense," that is, by solving objections and offering reasons of convenience.

Reply to the first objection. The philosophers did not know a Trinity of persons, but the attributes which were later attributed to the persons. The Neoplatonists spoke of three subordinate hypostases which were not equal and which were quite different from the three equal divine persons. They spoke of 1. the one, which is also the supreme good (the god of Plato); 2. the first intelligence (the god of Aristotle); 3. and the world soul (the god of the Stoics).

Reply to the second objection. Concerning the Trinity, reason can offer non-demonstrative reasons, arguments of convenience. Thus from the infinite goodness of God we are persuaded by an argument of convenience to accept God's fecundity within Himself, but this is no proof. In the same way from the fact that our intellect produces a word we cannot prove that there is a word in God; in us the word is a result of need, in God the word is from superabundance.

Reply to the third objection. Nevertheless the revelation of the Trinity is not without relation to the truths of the natural order, which it confirms. The Trinity confirms the freedom of creation, for if God made all things by His Word, He did not create by a necessity of nature or of knowledge; since He is already fecund within Himself He does not need to create in order to be fecund.[351] The revelation of the Trinity was especially necessary for a correct understanding of the salvation of the human race, which is accomplished by the incarnate Son and by the gift of the Holy Ghost. These two mysteries presuppose the mystery of the Trinity.

First doubt. Whether after the revelation of this mystery it can be clearly demonstrated by reason alone. The reply is in the negative: 1. from the authority of the councils, according to which mysteries in the strict sense cannot be demonstrated even after they are revealed; 2. from theological reason because divine revelation does not indicate that creatures depend and proceed per se from God as triune

Second doubt. Whether the possibility of the mystery of the Trinity at least can be apodictically proved by reason after it has been revealed. The reply is in the negative: 1. because, as has been said, only that can be known naturally in God which necessarily is connected with creatures. But the possibility of the Trinity is no more clearly connected with creatures than its existence, because the creative power is common to the three persons. 2. Moreover, in necessary things existence follows from a real intrinsic possibility as, for instance, if it is true that God can be wise then He is indeed most wise. But the Trinity is not something contingent but necessary. Therefore, if by reason alone we can prove conclusively that the Trinity is intrinsically possible, we would also prove its existence. Such is the reasoning of many Thomists, among them Gonet and Billuart.

Objection. Whatever can be shown to involve no contradiction is proved to be possible. But by reason alone it can be shown that the Trinity involves no contradiction. Therefore it can be proved to be possible, for intrinsic possibility is simple non-repugnance to being.

Reply. I distinguish the major: if it can be shown positively and evidently to involve no contradiction, I concede; if only negatively and probably, I deny.[352] Thus St. Thomas says: "Theology makes use of philosophy to counter those things which are said against the faith by showing either that these things are false or that they are not necessary."[353] This means, Billuart notes, when we solve the objections from reason and the contradictions which oppose the possibility of this mystery, we show that these arguments are at least not necessary or cogent. It suffices that this mystery be not judged to be impossible, but not that it is evidently possible.[354] We have shown that the possibility of this mystery cannot be disproved, nor can it be strictly proved because we have here a mystery in the strict sense, which has no necessary and evident connection with creatures that are naturally knowable. The reason given by St.

Thomas in the body of the article is entirely formal. In order to understand the possibility of this mystery we must be able to see that if God were not triune He would not be God just as we see that if God were not omnipotent He would not be God. This truth is not manifest even in the extraordinary intellectual visions which are granted by means of infused species such as the angels possess; this truth cannot be seen except when the essence of God itself is seen, and God's essence cannot be known as it is in itself by any created species.[355]

I insist. No middle exists between the possible and the impossible. But the rationalists cannot prove that this mystery is impossible. Therefore the theologians can prove that it is possible.

Reply. I deny the consequence. Although no middle exists between the possible and impossible, a middle does exist between the demonstration of possibility and the demonstration of impossibility, for the possibility of the Trinity is plausible although it cannot be proved. So it is with all mysteries that transcend demonstration; they are not contrary to reason, they are above it. Their possibility cannot be positively proved or disproved; it is only plausible. Such is the possibility of the Incarnation, of eternal life, of the beatific vision, of the light of glory, and the possibility of grace, which is the seed of glory.

I insist. In the treatise on the Trinity it is at least shown that the Trinity implies no contradiction. Therefore it is possible.

Reply. I distinguish the antecedent: that we see clearly that the Trinity implies no contradiction, this I deny; that it appears plausible, this I concede. We say, for instance, that in God to be begotten is not less perfect than to beget, that to be spirated is not less perfect than to spirate, but this is not evident. We cannot prove conclusively that passive generation imputes no imperfection in the Son of God; we only indicate it with some probability while it is revealed elsewhere.

I insist. God as one is no less supernatural than as triune. But God as one can be naturally known. Therefore He can be known naturally also as triune.

Reply. I distinguish the major: God as one is no less supernatural in being as He is in Himself, I concede; as a knowable object with

regard to creatures, I deny. I distinguish the minor: God is known in this way by creatures, I concede; otherwise, I deny.

Third doubt. Whether reason by itself alone can find analogies to make known the divine processions. For example, if the Son of God had not been called the Word of God in St. John's Gospel, would St. Augustine have been able to discover the analogy of our mental word with the Word of God?

We reply with St. Thomas.[356]

1. St. Augustine would not have been able, before the revelation of the Trinity, to propose this analogy in such a way that it would have led him to certitude about the existence of the Trinity.

2. But after the Trinity was revealed he would have been able to propose the analogy as probable. Indeed, it is more than probable that the analogy was not discovered by St. Augustine, but that it is to some extent revealed in the prologue of St. John's Gospel.

Explanation. In his reply to the second difficulty, St. Thomas says concerning the arguments of fitness given by St. Augustine and Richard of St. Victor: "Once the Trinity has been established, these arguments show its congruity but not in such a way that they would be able to prove the Trinity of persons... . So, in astronomy, in order to explain the movement of the planets, a system of eccentrics and epicycles is adopted in order to explain the sensible appearances of heavenly movements, but these theories are not sufficient to prove anything, because these appearances could be proved by some other theory."

St. Thomas adds that this is clear in these individual instances.

1. With regard to the divine goodness being diffusive of itself. It is proposed as an argument of fitness that good is essentially diffusive of itself and the higher the good the more intimately and abundantly is it diffusive. Hence it is congruous that God the Father should beget the Son and with Him spirate the Holy Ghost in the unity of nature. But this is only an argument of congruity, for, as the Angelic Doctor says: "It is not necessary, if God is to communicate Himself in His infinite goodness, that some infinite being should proceed from God, but that some being should receive the divine goodness

according to its own mode of being." Thus it was that God created from nothing finite beings because of His infinite goodness. By this argument it cannot be demonstrated that God is infinitely fecund within Himself by that certain diffusion of goodness which exceeds the order of efficient and final causality and takes place by the communication of the divine nature itself to two uncreated persons.

2. Richard of St. Victor declared that there can be no joyous possession of any good without friendship or association, and from this argument of fitness he showed that there should be in God some association between distinct persons. This argument is not demonstrative because the alleged principle applies when perfect goodness is not found in one person and therefore this person requires the good of another person associated with itself in order to enjoy goodness fully. But God is essentially goodness itself and He possesses it fully and thus He differs entirely from a created person who needs the association of friends. If there is any association in God, it exists not because of a need but because of superabundance. Thus this argument is only an argument of congruity and not demonstrative.

3. Nor from the fact that our intellect enunciates a mental word does it follow necessarily that the Word is in God. Intellect is not found in God and in us univocally, and we have seen above that God, who is subsisting intelligence itself, does not need an accidental word for intellection.[357] Hence, if the Word is in God, it is not accidental but substantial; moreover the Word is not because of need but because of superabundance, and this can be known only by revelation.

Hence, according to St. Thomas, reason of itself alone did not discover these congruities, but after revelation it could propose such arguments. This mystery is properly speaking essentially supernatural, transcending the spheres of demonstration and demonstrability. In this essentially supernatural order we cannot penetrate farther than to those things that are formally or virtually revealed; beyond that we are in the realm of probability.

Fourth doubt. Whether, after revelation, these arguments of congruity can explain with some probability the divine processions as they are in themselves, or are they only convenient and useful representations without any foundation in the divine reality.

Reply. Perhaps many would reply by taking the stand that many modern critics take with regard to physical science: that these theories do not intend to explain how things are in reality, that they are only convenient representations useful in classifying known phenomena which are subject to change when other phenomena are discovered, as, for instance, in the case of radioactivity.

Following St. Thomas, we reply that these arguments of congruity with respect to the Trinity are not only convenient representations, but they explain reality with some probability, or rather they explain what is not in God. Such explanations are the more valid the more they are based on revelation. Indeed it appears that the formal mode of the first procession by intellectual diction, if not formally revealed by the fact that the Son of God is called the Word, is at least certain as a virtually revealed theological conclusion. But many of the other conclusions remain only probable.

Fifth doubt. Whether these arguments of congruity about the Trinity are simply superior or inferior to the demonstrations given in the treatise on the one God.

Reply. With regard to us, that is with regard to the mode and certitude of our knowledge, they are inferior; but in themselves they are superior with regard to the dignity of the object, because they are not beneath but above the sphere of demonstrability, and in the essentially supernatural order we cannot ascend higher than those things that are either formally or virtually revealed except in the sphere of probability.

Hence it is that semirationalists, like Guenther and Rosmini, who wish to transform these arguments of congruity into demonstrations really weaken rather than elevate them. This is clear from Rosmini's condemned proposition: "By these arguments the truth of the Trinity is brought within the scope of philosophy."[358]

Against this view St. Thomas remarks: "It is useful for the human mind to exercise itself in arguments of this kind, however weak they may be, as long as there is no presumption of comprehending or understanding, because it is a great satisfaction to behold these sublime matters even if our consideration is slight and weak."[359]

Thus our natural and inefficacious desire of seeing God in His

essence is not a demonstration but it forcefully insinuates the possibility and congruity of eternal life, of the beatific vision, of the light of glory, and of inchoate and consummated grace. This possibility cannot be demonstrated because it is the possibility of something that is essentially supernatural, of a mystery in the strict sense, which transcends reason and demonstrability.[360]

These arguments of congruity are related to evidence and certitude in the same way that a polygon is related to the circumference of a circle. The sides of the polygon can be multiplied to infinity, but the polygon will never be identified with the circumference because it will never be as small as a point. In geometry we say that the polygon will be the circumference at the limit of multiplication, but multiplication is indefinite. Great theologians and the angels, by their natural cognition, can penetrate deeper and deeper into the arguments of congruity about the Trinity and never attain to evidence, because the evidence which-is beyond the limit of this progressive penetration is not the natural evidence of demonstration but the supernatural evidence of the beatific vision. These arguments are like the element of cogitation in faith, if we define the act of faith as, "No believe is to think with assent."[361] Such thinking in this life never reaches evidence; only in heaven, where faith ceases because it cannot exist alongside vision.[362]

Recapitulation of the solution of the principal objections against the Trinity.[363]

According to the rationalists the dogma of the Trinity is a violation of the principles of contradiction and causality.

The first objection often proposed by the rationalists is the following. Those things which are the same as a third are identical. This is a form of the principle of contradiction or identity and is called the principle of comparative identity, on which the validity of the demonstrative syllogism is based. But the three persons are identified with the divine essence (since each one is God). Therefore the three persons cannot be really distinct from one another.

Reply. I distinguish the major: those things which are the same as a third in fact and in reason are identical, I concede; which are the same as a third in fact but not in reason, I deny. I contradistinguish the minor: but the three persons are the same as the divine essence

in fact and in reason, I deny; the three persons are the same in fact but not in reason, I concede. I deny the consequent and the consequence.

I insist. Those things which are the same as a third in fact but not in reason are then identical in fact but not in reason. Thus the persons are distinct from each other only in reason but not in reality.

Reply. I distinguish the major: those things which are the same as a third in fact but not in reason are identical in fact but not in reason if they are no more opposed to each other than to the same third, I concede; otherwise, I deny. They are indeed opposed to each other by relative opposition. Just as the three angles of the triangle, although they have the same triangular surface, with which they are identified, nevertheless are really distinguished from each other because between them there is opposition of relation.

I insist. But it seems to be repugnant that the same thing (the essence) should in reality be identical with relations that are distinct from each other and opposed to each other.

Reply. An evident contradiction would exist if the extremes which are opposed to each other were absolutes, because each of the extremes would in itself imply an absolute reality which would be lacking in its opposite. But the contradiction does not appear when the extremes, as in God, are relative. We have seen that the divine persons are constituted by subsisting relations that are opposed to one another; but these relations have one "esse in" and are opposed only with regard to their real "esse ad".

This reply is based on the application of that principle, admitted by the Greeks and the Latins, which illuminates this entire tract, namely, in God all things are one and the same except where there is opposition of relation.[364] Indeed those things that are the same as a third are identical if they are no more opposed to each other than to the third, I concede; otherwise, I deny. I contradistinguish the minor, as follows: but the three persons are the same as the essence and besides this they are opposed to each other by the opposition of relation, this I concede; otherwise, I deny. Therefore I deny the consequent and the consequence.

As in the natural order, "While transitive action is the same as

motion and the reception of motion (passio), it does not follow that motion and its reception (actio and passio) are the same, " because they are mutually opposed by the opposition of relation, for transitive action, at least terminatively taken, is motion as from the mover, whereas passio (the reception of motion) is motion as in the one moved. In the words of St. Thomas," assio and actio imply opposite references." Similarly, paternity and filiation, although they are in reality the same as the divine essence, "My their proper natures imply opposite references."[365]

A second objection frequently made is the following. The dogma of the Trinity is a violation of the principle of efficient causality, according to which nothing produces its own being. But in this dogma the person who produces, the Father, and the person produced, the Son, have the same divine essence. Otherwise the Son would not be God.

To put it more briefly: Nothing produces its own being. But the Father in begetting the Son would be producing His own being since it is the same as that of the Son. Therefore the Father cannot beget the Son. This objection is made by many rationalists, by the Unitarians and the Socinians.

Reply. I concede the major. I distinguish the minor: if the divine being were caused in the Son, I concede; if it is communicated to the Son, I deny. The conclusion is distinguished in the same way. Thus begetting in God is not a change from non-being to being, but implies the origin of one living being from a living principle conjoined to it. This principle is not a cause.[366] Aristotle pointed out that a principle is more general than a cause.[367] Thus the point is the principle of the line, but not its cause; the aurora is the principle of the day, but not its cause. So in God the principle does not signify priority, but origin, and the Father does not produce His own being; He communicates it only.

The term "communicate" transcends efficient and final causality. Thus in God to beget is not more perfect than to be begotten because in God begetting is not causing. That which is caused does not exist before in act, whereas that which is communicated exists before in act. For example, the first angle of the triangle communicates its surface, already existing in act, to the other two angles.

The third objection (by way of insistence) states that this dogma distorts the notion of person. For personality renders a nature incommunicable to another suppositum. But the nature which is in the person of the Father is communicated to the Son and to the Holy Ghost. Therefore this dogma distorts the very idea of personality.

Reply. I distinguish the major: absolute personality renders the nature incommunicable, I concede; relative personality renders the divine nature incommunicable, I subdistinguish: nature in itself, I deny; nature as personified, I concede. I contradistinguish the minor: the nature which is in the Father is communicated as nature in itself, I concede; as personified, namely, the divine nature in the mode of the Father, I deny. Thus there cannot be two Fathers or two Sons in the Trinity. Similarly in an equilateral triangle the first angle constructed renders the area of the triangle incommunicable inasmuch as it belongs to that first angle; nevertheless this same area remains communicable and is communicated to the other two angles.

I insist. But the person renders incommunicable a nature that is numerically the same even considered in itself. But this would not be true in God. Therefore.

Reply. A person absolutely renders a finite nature incommunicable which, since it is finite, is filled by the one personality. On the other hand, a relative personality, for example, the person of the Father, does not render an infinite nature incommunicable to other persons. The divine nature, being infinite and infinitely fecund, is not adequately filled by one relative personality; or, I say please prove the contrary. Personality in God differs from human personality inasmuch as it is not something absolute but something relative, and it is of the nature of relative things that they have a correlative. The Father cannot be without the Son, to whom He communicates His nature, not by causality but by the principle of origin.[368]

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SECOND ARTICLE: WHETHER THERE ARE NOTIONS IN GOD

In this article St. Thomas explains in opposition to Praepositivus of Cremona that it is necessary to express the relations in the abstract, and that the relations in the abstract are called personal properties or notions. Thus paternity is said to be a notion or the objective reason denoting the person of the Father, and filiation likewise is the notion or the proper reason denoting the person of the Son, and similarly procession is the notion denoting the third person.

The reason for having recourse to the abstract notions of paternity, filiation, etc., is that our intellect apprehends God not as He is in Himself as a most simple being, but in the mirror of sensible things, that is, according to our method of knowing sensible things. The simple forms of sensible things are signified by abstract terms, for example, animality, humanity, whereas the suppositum is signified by concrete terms, such as this animal, and this man.

As St. Thomas says,[369] because of their simplicity we designate divine things by abstract terms, and by concrete terms because of their subsistence. Thus we speak of God and, the Deity, of wisdom and a wise man, of paternity and the Father. But we add that God is His own Deity and the Father is His own paternity. Otherwise we would not be able to reply to the heretics who ask how the three persons are one God and how they are three. For the person of the Father there is a special reason since the person of the Father is actively referred to the two other persons by the two relations of paternity and active spiration. These two relations cannot be reduced to one, otherwise filiation and passive spiration would be identified and thus there would be only two persons. Thus we must admit two notions for the Father, namely, paternity and active spiration, and the latter is common to Him and to the Son.

THIRD ARTICLE: WHETHER THERE ARE FIVE NOTIONS IN GOD

This article justifies the accepted mode of speaking of the Trinity. The reply is in the affirmative: five notions are commonly given, namely, innascibility, paternity, filiation, common (active) spiration, and procession.

Such is the general usage of theologians, but Scotus added a sixth, the infecundity of the Holy Ghost. This notion is not acceptable because it does not pertain to the dignity of the Third Person.

In the body of the article St. Thomas shows why there are no more and no less than five notions. A notion is that which is the proper reason for knowing a divine person. But the divine persons are multiplied according to their origin (both active and passive). Therefore according to origin (active and passive) we derive the notions denoting the persons. Thus we have paternity, filiation, common active spiration, passive spiration, to which we add innascibility, because the person of the Father is known not only by paternity but also by the fact that He is from no one and that He is the principle without a principle. This notion is in conformity with the dignity of the Father, but the infecundity of the Holy Ghost is not an expression befitting the dignity of the Third Person.[370]

First corollary. Of these five notions only four are relations, since innascibility is not a relation but the negation of the relation of origin in the Father.

Second corollary. Only four of the notions are properties since common spiration belonging to two persons is not a property.

Third corollary. Of these five notions only three are personal notions, that is, notions constituting persons, since common spiration and innascibility are not personal. As we shall see below, innascibility does not properly constitute the First Person.[371] We shall also see that there are two notional acts, that is, the processions in their active sense, namely, generation and active spiration.

Objection. Innascibility seems to be pure negation and is therefore not a distinct notion because negation adds nothing to the dignity of

the person.

Reply. Innascibility signifies that the Father is the principle without principle, and this is a great dignity. On the other hand, infecundity does not pertain to the dignity of the Third Person.[372]

FOURTH ARTICLE: WHETHER WE MAY HAVE CONTRARY OPINIONS ABOUT THE NOTIONS

This article was written because the Greeks held other opinions about common spiration when they denied the Filioque.

St. Thomas replies that it is lawful to have other opinions about the divine notions provided that no conclusions are reached contrary to the faith proposed by the Church. With regard to the Filioque, we shall learn the doctrine of the Church when we treat in particular of the Holy Ghost as He proceeds from the Father and the Son. This doctrine was defined as early as 381 in the First Council of Constantinople.[373] This concludes the questions concerning the divine persons in common.

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RECAPITULATION OF QUESTION 32

In the first question on the Trinity St. Thomas began with the unity of the divine nature and the revealed existence of the processions. He showed that the processions were immanent or ad intra and he explained them according to St. Augustine by analogy with the intellectual enunciation of the word and with love. Thus the processions were seen to be after the manner of intellection and of love. This is based on revelation since it is clear from the prologue of St. John's Gospel that the Son of God proceeds as the intellectual word of the Father.

In the second question he showed how these real processions, namely, generation and spiration, are the bases of real relations according to which the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are denominated in Sacred Scripture. These real relations are not really distinguished from the essence, but they are really distinct from one another if relative opposition exists between them. For it is not repugnant that the relations be mutually opposed; they are indeed not opposed to each other in their "esse in" (for in this they are identified with the essence) but according to their "esse ad", which does not properly inhere in the essence. If, on the contrary, that which is proper to a relation inhered in the subject, as the property of quality, the opposition of relation could not exist between the relations unless at the same time there should be opposition in the divine essence itself. We saw also how St. Thomas solved the objection based on the principle that those things which are the same as a third are identical, whereas Suarez held that the principle of identity does not apply to the Trinity.

In question 29 St. Thomas showed that the divine persons are formally constituted by subsisting relations opposed to one another. Thus he safeguards the analogical notion of person as something subsisting and incommunicable. Hence the divine essence is communicable but the paternity is not.

Then St. Thomas treats of plurality in God, the proper manner of expressing this plurality, and the knowability of this mystery.

St. Thomas thus begins with the unity of the divine nature and the two processions as they are revealed and proceeds to the three

divine persons mentioned in revelation. Thus without detracting from the sublimity of this mystery he explains it to some extent by showing that, even after the unity of the divine nature is established, the Trinity of persons is not repugnant. The possibility of the Trinity is not properly and positively demonstrated, but congruent reasons are given to show that the divine nature ought to be fecund, even infinitely, after the manner of intellectual generation and the spiration of love. In this way St. Thomas retained what earlier theologians, like Alexander of Hales and St. Bonaventure, had taught: that the good is diffusive of itself, and that it seems that the higher the good the more intimately it will be diffusive of itself. St. Thomas expressed this idea in his own words: "the higher any nature is, the more intimate with it will be that which proceeds from it."[374]

But, as has been said, with respect to creatures the good is diffusive of itself primarily in the order of final causality and consequently in the order of efficient causality, since everything that acts does so because of some end. The divine processions, however, are above the order of causality, both final and efficient. The Father is not the cause of the Son; He is only the principle. The same is true of the Father and the Son with regard to the Holy Ghost. Hence St. Thomas makes little use of the formula, "Good is diffusive of itself," in this treatise on the Trinity; and in order to express the fecundity of the divine nature he prefers the statement, "My how much higher a nature is so much more intimate will be that which proceeds from that nature," and "By how much greater the understanding so much more intimate will be the intellectual concept with the intellect... . Hence, since the divine intellect is at the apex of perfection, we must say that the divine Word is perfectly one with Him from whom it proceeds without any diversity of nature."[375]

The divine Word is not something accidental; it is substantial because intellection in God is not an accident but something subsisting. The first procession, then, is not the conception of an accidental word but the true generation of the substantial Word. Thus to some degree the mystery is explained notwithstanding its supernatural sublimity. We now turn to the divine persons in particular.