

CHAPTER VII

THE FIRST ARGUMENT AGAINST THE DISTINCTION OF PERSONS
IN THE SAME ESSENCE IS REFUTED

The first argument is that of Valentinus Gentilis. He who does not generate, nor is generated, nor proceeds, is not the true God. But one God in essence does not generate, nor is generated, nor proceeds. Therefore, the one God in essence is not the true God. But Father, Son and Holy Spirit are, according to you, the true God. Therefore they are not one God in essence. The proposition of the first syllogism is proved in this way: There is no God besides the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit. But the Father generates, the Son is generated, and the Holy Spirit proceeds. Therefore one who does not generate, nor is generated, nor proceeds, is not the true God. The assumption of the same first syllogism is proved in this way: God in essence is nothing other than the essence itself common to the three; but the Scholastics teach that the essence does not generate, nor is it generated, nor does it proceed.

To this argument John Wigandus in his book against the new Arians was not able to respond, except by denying that the essence does not generate and is not generated, in spite of what the Scholastics say. Then he offers the following argument, which he thinks is a demonstration. The Son of God, according to the Scriptures, was generated; and the Son of God is a certain living essence, not a fiction according to the Scriptures. Therefore the essence according to the Scriptures is generated, and therefore also generates. By the proposal of this argument he seems to have refuted the Scholastics with one blow.

Wigandus does not really solve the argument, but he falls into a serious error. For, if the essence generates and is generated, then there are two essences, for it cannot be understood that one and the same thing is produced from itself. And lest he say that this is not according to the Scriptures, let him think that we prove from the Scriptures that the Father and the Son are really distinct in no other way than that one is produced from the other.

Rightly, therefore, did Lateran Council IV define in chapter 2 that the essence does not generate nor is generated. And the argument of Wigandus does not conclude anything, rather it suffers from the fallacy of an accident. For, although the Son includes the essence, still he is distinguished logically from it by reason of the relation, which he says beside the essence; and inasmuch as he is distinguished from it, it is suitable for him to be generated, which is not suitable for the essence. Just as the Father includes the same essence, but is distinguished from it logically because of the relation of paternity, which he has beside the essence, so the Father is said to generate, but the essence is not said to do that. There would be a similar fallacy if someone should say: Man is a species; Peter is a man; therefore Peter is a species. Or, Peter is an individual; and Peter is a man; therefore man is an individual.

Regarding the principal argument, the proposition can be distinguished. For, when it is said—the one who does not generate, nor is generated, nor proceeds, is not the true God, if the word “God” is taken for a divine person in general, the proposition is true.

For, one who does not generate, nor is generated, nor proceeds, is not a divine person; but if the essence itself is understood in the assumption by one God in the essence, the assumption is also true. But from that one can only conclude that the essence is not a divine person formally, but it cannot be concluded that the essence is not the true God.

However, if one God is accepted in the assumption, as the words indicate, that is, for persons in general, then the assumption is false. For, it is true to say, one God in essence generates, is generated, and proceeds. For that one God is the Father who generates, it is the Son who is generated, and it is the Holy Spirit who proceeds. But if the word "God" in the proposition is taken for the Deity, as it can be taken, because in God the person is not distinguished from the nature, then the proposition is false, as is clear, and the proof does not conclude. For the essence is not God, besides the three persons; however it does not generate, nor is it generated, nor does it proceed, because it is distinguished logically from the persons, to whom it really belongs to generate, to be generated and to proceed.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SECOND ARGUMENT IS REFUTED

Here is the second argument of the Transylvanians in book 1, chapter 5. If three persons are one in essence, there will be a quaternary in God, not a Trinity; for, Essence, Father, Son and Holy Spirit are four names, and they are not synonyms. Therefore they signify four things. Likewise, Father, Son and Holy Spirit are three; but the Essence is not one of these, for the Essence is not the Father, because it does not generate, nor is it the Son, because it is not generated, nor is it the Spirit, because it does not proceed; therefore it is some fourth thing.

Moreover, the essence is the fount of the persons, for the relations flow from it, and therefore the persons, which are constituted by the relations. But a fount and the stream from it are distinguished really; therefore the essence is distinguished really from the three persons; therefore with them it makes a number of four.

Moreover, the Papists in the Creed, after the words, *I believe in one God*, place a comma, lest they be forced to say, *I believe in one God the Father*; therefore they distinguish God from the Father; but further on they also distinguish the Father from the Son, and the Son from the Holy Spirit; therefore there are four.

Moreover, the Papists say that there are three persons in one God, and that the one God manifests himself in three persons: but who is that God? Certainly it is not the Father, nor the Son, nor the Spirit, for none of these manifested himself in three persons, and the three persons do not reside in any of these three; therefore there is a fourth God.

I respond that no quaternary is located in God; rather, I say that there is an anathema on those who worship a quaternary in place of the Trinity. And the argument proposed to us does not prove anything. Now we respond to the first reason: those names are not synonyms, and they do not signify four things, but only one, if it is said about one absolute thing; or only three, if it refers to relative things; Augustine seems to refer to this in book 1 chapter 5 *On Christian Doctrine*, when he says: *The things which are to be enjoyed are the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, a single Trinity, a certain supreme thing common to all who enjoy it*. But more clearly Anselm teaches in his book on the Incarnation of the Word that the three persons are three things, and one thing: the three things are relative, and the one is absolute. And it is not unusual that several names, which are not synonymous, signify one thing, but in a different way.

You will say: if those names signify one absolute thing, and three relative; therefore they signify four things. I respond that here there is no consequence, for that absolute thing is not distinguished really, but only logically from those three relatives; therefore in God there is a unity of essence, and there is a Trinity of persons, but there is no quaternary.

To the second argument I say that the Essence is those three, and the three are the essence. But that the essence does not generate, and the Father does generate, is not an argument for a real distinction, but only for a distinction of reason or a logical distinction. For, also man and humanity are one thing, and nevertheless a man generates, but humanity

does not generate.

To the third argument I deny that the essence is the fount of the persons or of the relations; for persons are produced by persons, but relations are not produced, inasmuch as they are relations, but per se they are a consequence of the production of suppositums. On this see St. Thomas, I, q. 40, a. 4 and 1 Sent., dist. 27, q. 1, a. 3. Indeed, Augustine in book 4, chapter 20 on the Trinity speaks in a contrary way when he says that the Father is the principle of the whole divinity. But there he does not want to say that the divinity is produced, but that the Father is the principle of all the divine persons, since he produces the Son by generation, and the Holy Spirit by spiration. He himself, however, is not generated or spirated by any person.

To the fourth argument about the Creed I say that that argument is opposed to the Zwinglian, Benedict Aretius. For, in his history of the punishment of Valentinus Gentilis, in chapters 6 and 11, since he did not know how to respond to the argument of Gentilis, proves that the Father alone is one God, because in the Creed it is said, *I believe in one God the Father*; he asked for the help of one comma, which he said should be inserted between the words "God" and "Father."

Moreover, the Catholic Catechisms do not have that comma, and the ancient Fathers while explaining the Creed, always read it as "one God the Father," as Irenaeus says in book 1, chapter 2, Cyril in Catechism 7, Ruffinus in his explanation of the Creed, and others. However, even if we were to distinguish God from the Father by the insertion of a comma, because of that a quaternary would not be introduced. For, there God would be distinguished from the Father, so that it would be signified by the name of God that not just the Father is included, but also the Son and the Holy Spirit. But just as for the Father to be called in the Creed "one God" is not opposed to the divinity of the Son, a point explained above more than once, especially since in the same Creed the Son is called "our one Lord," and still no one denies that the Father also is our one Lord. For, although the Catechisms, for the most part say, "and in Jesus Christ, his only-begotten Son, our Lord," still Ruffinus in his explanation of the Creed writes that the "one" can be referred both to his Son, and to our Lord. For truly Christ is both the only Son of God, and our only Lord.

To the fifth argument I respond: since we say that God manifested himself in three persons, he wants us to say that God exists in three persons, and that this has been revealed to us by God. So when they ask, who is that God? Is it the Father? Is it the Son? I respond: it is the divinity, whether it is the Trinity, or it is the Father, or the Son, or the Holy Spirit. For in whichever of these ways it is answered, it is answered correctly. Similarly, those who say, if some Catholics speak in such a way that there are three persons in one God, they want to signify nothing else but that the three persons are one Godhead, one essence, one nature, and there should be no controversy about the words, since the matter is certain as Augustine points out very well in book 1, chapter 15 of his retractions.

CHAPTER IX

THE THIRD ARGUMENT IS REFUTED

The third argument. The Father is unbegotten, and the Son is begotten; therefore there is not one God, otherwise the one God will be begotten, and not begotten, which implies a contradiction. Likewise. Generable and ungenerable differ more than just generically, like corruptible and incorruptible; therefore Father and Son differ more than just generically.

Likewise. Begotten and unbegotten are either accidents or substances. If the first, then there are accidents in God; if the second, then Father and Son differ substantially.

I respond to the first reason: if both propositions are affirmative, both are true, and there is no contradiction. For, God is begotten, and God is unbegotten, are not contradictory, because in the first proposition God is taken for the Son, in the second for the Father. But if the second is negative in this sense: God is begotten, and God is not begotten; or like this, God begets, God does not beget, then they are contradictory, but the first proposition is true, the second is false. The reason is because the name of God is taken absolutely for the persons indistinctly; but when it is said: God begets, or God is begotten, by reason of the notional predicate the subject “God” is restricted to one certain person. And so it is true, God begets, because the name of God is restricted to the Father. But when it is negative, the subject is not restricted by the predicate, because then nothing is asserted, but only denied. Therefore, when it is said: God does not beget, or God is not begotten, the meaning is that no divine person begets, no divine person is begotten and both propositions are false.

I respond to the second argument that the generable through motion differs generically from the ungenerable: for such a generable by its nature is corruptible; but the generable without motion or change, does not necessarily differ from the ungenerable. But it can be answered more easily: the generable and the ungenerable only then differ generically, when the nature of that which is generated is produced by generation; but that is not the case when it is only communicated to one from another. Then the Son is said to be generated, not because his nature itself was generated, or produced, but because the Son received it from the Father by generation. Therefore, the Son is not distinguished from the Father by nature, but only with regard to the way of having that nature. Thus, Adam was produced by no man, and Eve was from Adam alone, and Cain from Adam and Eve; however, all three were of the same specific nature. Justin gives this example in his work on the right confession of the Faith, Nazianzen in book 5 on Theology, Damascene in book 1, chapter 9, and Augustine in book 1, chapter 2 against Maximinus.

To the third argument I say that begotten and unbegotten are neither substances nor accidents; for, being unbegotten is the negation of procession, but “begotten” says a relation; as also paternity, and both active and passive spiration, are relations. However, divine relations are substantial reasons, and they are really the substance itself of God; but as they are distinguished logically from the essence, they do not say substance, because relation as relation is not a substance; and they are not accidents, because there is no accident in God. Augustine gives this response in book 5, chapters 3, 4 and 5 on the

Trinity, where he neatly turns the argument back against the Arians: for, when it is said, *I and the Father are one*: he said: Are the Father and the Son said to be one according to substance, or according to accident? If the first, then the Father and the Son are of the same substance; if the second, then there are accidents in God. And he concludes finally with these words: these things are said not according to substance, but according to what is relative, which relative however is not an accident. See also St. Thomas I, q. 28, a. 2, where he teaches that in God there are two predicaments according to the nature of their own genus—substance and relation.

But you will say: If it does not pertain to the essence and substance of God to be begotten or unbegotten, why is it that it does not pertain to it? I respond with Augustine in the same place: there can be no accident in God, because every accident involves some composition and mutation. Hence it must be conceded that it is proper, natural and necessary for God simply that he be Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and therefore that one person is unbegotten, another begotten, another proceeding. However these things are natural and proper to God in such a way that they are not properly and formally of his essence. It is just as in created things, it is natural for an animal and necessary to be either rational or irrational, and still neither one is of its essence. However, animal pertains to the essence of both, that is, both man and brute animals. Thus, therefore, the divine essence essentially is included in the relations; for there is nothing in God which is not essentially God; otherwise it would essentially be a creature. However, relation itself is not included essentially in the essence, nor is it an accident in it, as has been said. Rather, this is perceived more clearly in our proposition: for, paternity, filiation, and spiration are relations; but relation according to its formal nature abstracts from substance and accident, for in God relation is substance, while in creatures it is an accident. See St. Thomas I, q. 28, a. 1, and De Pot., q. 8, a. 5, and Francis of Ferrara on CG 4, chap. 14, near the end.

CHAPTER X

THE FOURTH ARGUMENT IS REFUTED

The fourth argument, to beget is the supreme perfection in a living being. But the Father has this perfection, the Son does not have it. Therefore the Son is not equal to the Father, and so the Father and the Son are not of the same nature; what follows from that is that there are not several persons of the same essence in God. And it is confirmed, because what is produced intrinsically affirms its dependence on another, and it comes after that by which it is produced, if not in time, certainly by nature. But the true God is a being from himself independent, and necessary, and it is not later than any other thing. Therefore the Son is not true God, since he was produced, and is dependent on the Father in his being.

I respond that to beget does say a perfection, but it is in no way lacking to the Son. For, in the Son there is all the perfection of active begetting, although the active begetting itself is not in the Son, because it is not a work; for, all the perfection which begetting has, it has from the essence; but the Son also has the whole essence. This will be more easily understood by anyone who observes that just as the formal principle of active generation is the divine essence, and so active begetting is an infinite perfection, so the formal terminus of passive begetting is the divine essence, and so it also is an infinite perfection, in fact it is absolutely the same infinite perfection.

You will say: if the formal terminus of divine begetting is the essence, then the essence is begotten at least *per accidens*. I respond that there is no consequence here. For, in creatures the nature, which is the formal terminus, is begotten *per accidens*, because the nature communicated to the son is not numerically the same one which is in the father, but another new one, which does not exist unless it is produced; therefore it is produced so that it can be communicated. But the divine essence is numerically the same in the Father, and it is communicated to the Son; therefore by generation it is not produced.

In order to prove this I respond: in creatures the son depends on the father, because he receives from him a nature that is numerically different from the nature of the father. But in God there is no dependence of this kind, because the same nature, which of itself is simply independent, is communicated by the Father to the Son, and it is done naturally and necessarily; hence there is only a mutual relation of the Father to the Son, and vice versa, but without any dependence in being.

For a similar reason it must be denied that every product is necessarily posterior; for production *per se* only requires some order between the producer and the product, but not priority, unless it is *per accidens* in creatures, where the new nature is educed from non-being to being. But among the divine persons there cannot be any priority or posteriority, since those persons do not have anything but essence and relation, and the essence is one and the same in all of them; but the relations require that they be by nature together.

CHAPTER XI

THE FIFTH ARGUMENT IS REFUTED

The fifth argument. When the Son was begotten, either he was or he was not. If he was, why was he begotten? If he was not, therefore at one time he was not. Therefore he is not true God; therefore there are not several persons of the same nature.

Likewise. Either the Son always is begotten, or always was begotten, or at times he was being begotten, or at times had been begotten. If he is always being begotten, he will never obtain his terminus and perfection; if he always was begotten, by what means did he arrive at the end without a way? If at times he was being begotten, and at times was begotten, he did not always exist in the same way, but he was changed, all of which is absurd in God. Therefore several persons should not be affirmed in God.

Likewise. The Son preexisted in God either actually, or potentially, or not at all; if actually, then he existed before he was begotten. If potentially, then there is passive potency in God. If not at all, then he was made from nothing.

I respond to the first reason with Basil in book 2 on Eunomius that it must be denied that the Son existed before he was begotten, and it must be conceded that he existed when he was begotten. And it does not follow that he was begotten in vain; for it would happen in vain, indeed it could not happen that it existed before it came to be. But that which is when it becomes, does not become in vain; certainly in created things, moments of time both are when they become, and become when they are. Also it does not follow that the Son did not always exist, if it is denied that he existed before he was begotten; for he has always been begotten, and therefore also he always existed.

To the second argument Calvin responds in book 1, chapter 13, last number, that the Son was begotten once, and now is not being begotten; for he says it is stupid to imagine in God a continuous act of begetting. But Calvin is really opposed to Augustine in letter 174, chapter 4 to Pascentius, who says this: *The Father is always begetting, and the Son is always being born*. And he states an excellent reason for this, because if the Father at times begets, and afterwards ceases; therefore sometime he also begins to beget, and before that he was not begetting; therefore the Son is not eternal. But the same Augustine in question 37 of his 83 Questions, and Gregory in book 1, chapter 1 of his book on Morals say: it is better to say that the Son of God was always begotten, than that he was always being begotten, because he is always perfect and consummated.

Therefore to this argument I say: in divine generation there is whatever perfection there is in the process and in the term of generation, having removed all imperfection. In the process, which is expressed by the word "he is being born" is found the perfection of the act of being born, and the imperfection of the lack of the terminus; in the terminus, which is expressed by the phrase "he was born" is found the perfection of thing produced, but the perfection of the act of being born is lacking. Therefore, in God there is always nativity, but perfect; for the Son of God is always being born, but perfectly. And this is always to be born.

To the third argument I respond that something can be said to be in potency in

two ways. In one way in the active potency of the agent, and this properly belongs to suppositums that are produced; in a second way in the passive potency of matter, and this pertains to a form. For the suppositum is not educed from the potency of matter, but from the form. Now therefore if you consider the suppositum itself of the Son, it preexisted in the active potency of the Father, and this places no imperfection in the Father. For, passive potency says imperfection, but active potency says perfection. If you look at the form of the Son, that is, his essence, which Paul in Phil. 2:6 calls the form of God, it preexisted actually in the Father, not in potency, because it is common to both.

To the argument, when it is said: if he preexisted actually, then he existed before he became, I respond that that form was not made, but it was communicated; and it is not absurd, in fact it is necessary, that what was to be communicated preexisted. However, all of these things which reflect a certain priority are to be understood according to our way of understanding. For, in what concerns this matter, there is no priority, for the Father always was begetting actually, and he is begetting the Son.

CHAPTER XII

THE SIXTH ARGUMENT IS REFUTED

The sixth argument. A person in God is either finite or infinite. If it is infinite, then there is only one; if it is finite, then there must be infinite persons to respond to the infinity of the essence.

Moreover: the multiplication of suppositums is either necessary for the preservation of the species, or so that one suppositum may be perfected by another. But God, since he is eternal, does not need preservation, nor perfection, since he is already most perfect.

Finally, person as person either says perfection, or it does not. If it says perfection, then one perfection is in one person, which is not in another; and since it is not an accident, it will be a substantial perfection in one, and not in the other. But if person as person does not say perfection, then the human person will be more perfect than the divine, for it is certain that the human does say perfection. I respond that the divine person as such is infinite, and therefore it does say the greatest perfection. But to the argument I respond that it cannot be concluded from it that therefore there is only one person. But only this can be concluded: therefore there is one perfection of all the persons. For, there is one and the same infinite perfection in all the persons, but not in the same way: for, in the Father that perfection is paternity, in the Son it is filiation, etc.

To the second argument I say that suppositums are multiplied in God not to preserve the species, or for one to be perfected by another, but because that is what is required by an intelligent being, which has two ways of producing something within itself, namely, knowledge and love. This is also the reason why there are only three persons, and not more, or fewer; for one must be producing, not produced; another is produced by knowledge; another is produced by love.

To the third argument I say that all the persons have the same perfection, but in a different way.

Perhaps you may ask: whether that way, that is, whether that relation says a perfection. I respond that a relation taken in general does not say a perfection, since it abstracts from real being, and is a being of reason. However, a real relation does say perfection, and a divine relation says infinite perfection. But this divine relation does not say one perfection, and another one something else, but they all say the same perfection, which is the divine essence.

CHAPTER XIII

THE SEVENTH ARGUMENT IS REFUTED

The seventh argument. The divine intellect and will are the same, and similarly intellection and willing. Therefore also the Word and Love, that is, the Son and the Holy Spirit; for, from one only one thing proceeds.

Moreover, thinking in God, and intellection are the same thing, and similarly loving and love; therefore the Father and the Son are not distinguished from each other, nor from the Holy Spirit.

Finally, the Son either understands, or he does not. If he understands, he produces a notion or a word; if he does not understand, then the Word is not God, for he who understands nothing cannot be God. The same can be said about the Holy Spirit. For, if he loves, he produces love; then either himself, or another; if he does not love, he is not God; for God cannot lack the act of willing.

I respond to the first reason that a lesser distinction is required in principles than in their objects, as is clear from the fact that God has created so many different kinds of things, our mind produces so many concepts, one trunk of a tree produces so many branches. Accordingly, it happens that a logical distinction between the intellect and the will is sufficient for the purpose that they have really different objects.

To the second reason I say from that it is only proved that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are one in essence. For, in God thinking, or rather speaking, and the word are the same thing, with the exception of the producer and the product; and loving and love are the same thing, with the exception of the relation of the one producing love, and of the love produced.

To the third reason I say that the Son understands, and nevertheless he does not produce a notion, and the Holy Spirit loves, and nevertheless he does not produce love. For it should be observed that to understand and to produce a notion, as also to love and to produce love, are the same thing in reality, but they are distinguished logically. For, to understand and to love indicate an order and an object, that is, to the thing that is understood and loved; to produce a notion and love, indicates an order to the thing that is produced, that is, to the notion itself and the love; thus also the notion and the word are the same, but they are distinguished logically. For, a notion says order to an object, but a word to the one speaking. Therefore, the Father is understanding with both orders; and so he is also producing; the Son is understanding, but with the first order and not with the second, because he has the opposite order. Hence he is not speaking or producing a word.

In a similar way, the Father is the notion, but not the word; the Son is the notion and the word, because he has the order of a product, which the Father does not have. Hence St. Augustine in book 15, chapter 14 on the Trinity said: *The Father and the Son know each other, but the former by begetting, and the latter by being begotten.* Likewise, the Holy Spirit understands, and is the notion itself, but without the relations of producing or being produced. Hence he is not speaking, nor is he the word. I say the same thing about love; for, the Father and the Son love with the relation of producing love; the Holy Spirit loves, but with the relation of a produced love.

CHAPTER XIV

THE EIGHTH ARGUMENT IS REFUTED

The eighth argument. In God there is nothing but essence and relation; but neither of these begets or is begotten. Therefore nothing in God begets, and nothing is begotten. Therefore in God there are not several persons.

Likewise. A true Son must be produced similar to the one who begot him; but the Word is not similar to the one who begot it, but to the object, as was pointed out. Therefore the Word of God is not the true Son of God, and so he is not of the same essence with God.

Likewise. The Holy Spirit is produced either similar to God the Father in essence, or dissimilar; but he is not similar, because he would be the Son, and then the Word would not be the only-begotten Son. Therefore he is dissimilar; therefore he is not true God; and therefore the three persons are not the one true God.

I respond to the first argument that neither the essence nor the relation taken separately beget, or are begotten, but it is constituted by both. Therefore what is constituted out of essence and paternity begets, and what is constituted out of essence and filiation is begotten, just as also in creatures the essence does not beget, nor the subsistence, but the person himself is the principle that begets, while the essence is the principle by which it begets, and the subsistence is the principle without which there is no begetting.

To the first proof, which was of this nature: the Word is not similar to the thinker, but it is to the thing understood; therefore the Son is not from the thinker. I respond that God, by understanding himself, produces a word, and therefore the thing understood, to which the word is similar, is God himself who produced the word.

But you will say: The word is not similar to God as understanding, but as understood. But God does not beget as understood, but as understanding. Therefore the Word is not similar to the begetter, and therefore it is not Son. Moreover, the Son is similar to the Father either in essence, or in property; he is not similar in essence, because in essence he is the same; not in property, because in that he is dissimilar; therefore in no way is he similar.

I respond that the Father must produce the Son similar to himself in essence, not similar in the relation of a producer, because he does not produce his own father, but his own Son. And therefore the Word must not be similar to the Father, as the Father is speaking, but as the Father has such a nature, which is expressed by his speaking.

But to the other point that was added: the Son is the same as the Father in essence, and therefore he is not similar. I respond that he is the same and he is similar; for, inasmuch as both have the same essence, they are the same in essence. However, inasmuch as they are two distinct persons, they also agree in that essence. Hence, since the Arians want the Son to be ὁμοιούσιον to the Father, and not ὁμοούσιον, the Fathers responded that he can indeed be said to be ὁμοιούσιον, but it must not be denied that he is ὁμοούσιον. On this see Hilary in his book on the Synods, near the end.

On the third argument which was on the Holy Spirit, I respond that the Holy Spirit is

produced similar in essence to the Father and the Son; but he is not a Son, but the reason for this is not so certain. If Scripture indeed teaches this, it is silent about the reason, not in this matter only, but also in many other things, so that it may always keep us occupied and have humble disciples. See Athanasius in his letter to Serapion, Gregory Nazianzen in book 5 on Theology, Basil in book 3 on Eunomius, Damascene in book 1, chapter 10, Augustine in book 5, chapter 27 on the Trinity, and in book 3, chapter 14 against Maximinus, and Tractate 99 on John, where they teach that this matter is something higher than what can be perfectly understood by us. Although Augustine thought of two reasons, which can however satisfy the mind of someone inquiring into this matter. For he says in book 5, chapter 14 of his book on the Trinity that the Holy Spirit is not a Son, because he does not proceed as being born, but as being given. Then he adds in book 15, chapter 16 that he also cannot be said to be a Son, because he proceeds from two, who cannot be said to be two Fathers, nor one the father and the other the mother.

St. Thomas seems to have explained this problem more clearly in I, q. 27, a. 4 and in *De Pot.*, q. 10, a. 2 ad arg. 22. For, he says that the Word of God is the Son of God, because, since he proceeds by an act of the intellect, he proceeds as a certain similitude or image of the one producing him, and he is that in virtue of the procession itself. And this matter is not truly understood, unless an idea is produced, or a Word, which is a similitude of the thing itself which is understood. But St. Thomas teaches that the Holy Spirit is not a Son of God, because although he is similar to the Father and the Son, he does not proceed as similar in virtue of his production, since he proceeds through an act of love; but love is not from its nature a similitude of the thing loved, but a certain impulse towards the thing loved.

CHAPTER XV

THE NINTH ARGUMENT IS REFUTED

The ninth argument. Subsistence is either of the intrinsic nature of the essence, or it is not. If it is, then the essence is incommunicable, or if it is communicated, the subsistence is also communicated. And then the persons either have besides the subsistence, which they receive with the essence, another one of their own, or they do not. If they do have it, then there will be four subsistences, and therefore four persons. If they do not have it, then there will be only one subsistence. But if subsistence is not of the nature of the essence, then the essence is not infinite simply, since it does not contain all perfection; and also the divine persons will be composed of essence and subsistence, which is most absurd.

I respond that here a most difficult question is being raised, and concerning it the Fathers seem to be in disagreement. For, St. Augustine in book 7, chapter 4 on the Trinity says that it is one thing in God to be Father, and something else to be God. But in the same place he teaches that "to subsist" is said in reference to oneself, not to another, and therefore it is absolute and common to the three. Finally, he adds that it is one thing in God to subsist, as it is one thing to know, and just as there are not three wisdoms in God, so there are not three subsistences. And in chapter 6 he says, it is one thing to be a person, but something else to be God; although it is something else to be God, and to be Father. There St. Augustine seems to distinguish subsistence from relation, and to assert that there is one subsistence, but many relations.

Likewise Anselm in chapter 43 of his Monologue says that the divine persons through their own wisdom, essence and life subsist, know and live, and Boethius in his book on the two natures said: *That subsists that does not need another in order to exist; therefore what the Greeks call οὐσίαν*, we call subsistence. Richard has something similar in book 4, chapters 8 and 19 in his work on the Trinity. And St. Thomas himself in De Pot., q. 9, a. 5, ad 13 says that the relations have from the essence that they subsist, and on the other hand that they do not have their essence from the relations; elsewhere he often repeats the same thing often, and in I Sent, dist. 26, q. 1, a. 1 ad 4 he says clearly that there is one subsistence just as there is one essence.

The same thing can also be demonstrated by reason. For, to subsist is proper to a substance, not to a relation; therefore an essence does not have this from a relation, but from itself. And moreover, if it had it from a relation, it could not be explained how a true generation is in God, because relation follows generation, since it is founded on generation. But a subsistent suppositum precedes generation, since it could do nothing unless it were a suppositum. Therefore, how could the Father beget, if he did not have subsistent being except through a relation, and if he did not have the relation except after generation?

But on the other hand, John Damascene in book 1, chapter 6 in his work on the Orthodox Faith, on this point has this to say: *ὁ τοῦ Θεοῦ λόγος τῷ μὲν ὑφεστάναι καθ' ἑαυτὸν, διήρτυται πρὸς ἕκείνον παρ' οὐ ὑπόστασιν ἐκεῖ*, that is, the Word of God, because

it subsists *per se*, is distinguished from that which has subsistence, where in a sufficiently clear way he posits several subsistences. Likewise in the Sixth General Council, in session 11, it ordered the letter of Sophronius to be read and it accepted it later in session 13. In that letter it is repeated twice that the Trinity is numerable in its personal subsistences.

Moreover, in the Athanasian Creed, and among all the Greeks, it is said that there is one hypostasis of the Father, and another one of the Son; but certainly several hypostases could not be affirmed, unless there were several subsistences. Just as we cannot say there are several Gods, because there are not several godheads; for, concrete substantive things are not multiplied, unless the forms are multiplied. Likewise. If there are not three subsistences, how are the three persons really distinguished? For, a real distinction cannot take place, where there are not distinct acts of existence or subsistences. But it is certain that the divine persons are not distinguished in their acts of existence. Likewise. If there are not several subsistences, how will it be established that the Incarnation took place in the hypostasis of the Son alone? Finally. If in God with only one subsistence there are several persons because of the multiplication alone of the opposed relations, why are there not also in Christ many persons because of the multiplication of the opposed natures, that is, of the creating nature and of the created nature? You can add to this that St. Thomas in I, q. 40, a. 3 says that the relations bring with themselves the persons, they do not presuppose them, and if the relations are mentally abstracted from the essence, the hypostases do not remain.

Therefore, in order to settle this difficult question, it seems to us that this should be said, namely, that the divine subsistence is partly one, partly many; partly absolute, partly relative; partly common to the three, partly proper of each one; finally, partly of the nature of the essence, partly not of the nature of the essence. In order to make this easier to understand, a few preliminary notes will be given.

The first note is from St. Thomas in *De Pot.*, q. 8, a. 3 ad 7 that subsistence has two functions: one that it constitute the suppositum, and it makes it subsist in itself, that is, it does not depend on another; the second is that it distinguishes it from other suppositums, and these two functions are to be distinguished from each other. For, one can be before the other, as is clear in Adam who, when he was alone, had being in himself, but he was not distinguished from others. Likewise, it distinguishes something that it does not constitute, which is evident in the active spiration in God.

Note secondly that it is one thing to speak about subsistence with respect to essence, but something else with respect to persons. For, if we speak about an essence, it is not constituted by a relation, nor does it receive its subsistence from it, but it has in itself intrinsically subsistence; so that if we mentally separate relations from the essence, it will remain existing in itself, and distinct from all other essences, although it will not have in itself distinct persons.

Note thirdly: it is certain that the persons have distinction from the relation, and therefore subsistence regarding the second function; for, the divine persons must be distinguished by a minimal distinction, as St. Cyril in book 1 on the Trinity and St. Thomas in I, q. 40, a. 2 ad 3 teach: but a minimal distinction is through a relation; the Fathers and the Councils *passim* teach this same thing, when they say that relation alone

produces distinction and number in God.

But from whence the divine persons have subsistence regarding the first function, the Fathers did not express themselves very clearly; however, with St. Thomas we say that the persons have their whole subsistence from relation, but not in the same way. For, relation includes essence, and adds to it a reference, because it is something to another; and inasmuch as it includes essence, it constitutes and gives to the person that it exist in itself; inasmuch as it says a reference, it distinguishes. But that this is the opinion of St. Thomas, anyone who has carefully studied his works will not deny, since he teaches everywhere that relation constitutes and distinguishes the persons. It constitutes it in order to be identified with the essence, but it distinguishes since it is a relation. See the following: De Pot., q. 8, a. 3 ad 7, q. 9, a. 5 ad 13, and q. 10, a. 5 ad 12. Contra Gentiles book 1, chapter 21 and 22, book 4, chapters 10, 14 and 49; and S.Th. I, q. 3, a. 3 and q. 29, a. 4 and q. 40, a. 2 and 4; I Sent., dist. 26, q. 1, a. 1 ad 4. But it may help to quote a few words of St. Thomas. Therefore, he says in De Pot., q. 8, a. 3 ad 7: *If the relations constitute the hypostases, still they do this inasmuch as they are the divine essence.* And in the same place ad 9: *The personal properties are not the principle of the subsistence of the divine essence; for the divine essence subsists of itself; but on the contrary, the personal properties have their subsistence from the essence.*

You will say: if relation does not constitute as relation, but as essence, therefore the essence itself constitutes it, not the relation. I respond: that is not so, since the same thing must be the principle constituting, and distinguishing, although it does not make both of them for the same reason; but it is certain that relation is a distinctive principle; therefore relation must also constitute, but it does it in such a way that it includes the essence.

Note fourthly that the subsistence does two things with regard to the first function, that is, when it constitutes the person. For, it both gives being per se and it confers incommunicability, although a divine relation does not give being simply per se, because the divine essence, since it has infinite perfection, includes essentially not only existence, but also to exist per se. However, it does give incommunicability, and it constitutes the suppositum. For the divine essence, although it subsists per se, still it is communicable because of its infinity; and therefore it is not a suppositum, but through relation it is so terminated, and that essential subsistence is quasi modified, so that constituted from essence and relation it is completely incommunicable. Wherefore the relation, although it does not constitute as relation, but as essence, inasmuch as "to constitute" says to give simply being per se, as we said above briefly with St. Thomas, nevertheless it does constitute as relation, inasmuch as "to constitute" means to give being per se in an incommunicable way. Therefore in God, as he is one common and absolute subsistence, as is gathered from Augustine, Anselm, Richard and St. Thomas, so there are also three true, proper and relative subsistences, as is concluded from Athanasius, Sophronius, Damascene and the same St. Thomas. However, there are not four subsistences, but one and three, because the three relative subsistences are really the same with the absolute subsistence. Therefore, because of this explanation the arguments for both sides should cease.

With regard to the first argument: therefore the essence is incommunicable, I respond

by denying the consequence. For, the essence is not so communicated that what was existing in itself begins to be in another; for, it is always in itself, and never in another, since it is absolutely simple, and it belongs to its very nature to subsist. But what is in itself in one way, may be in itself also in another way. Therefore the essence of the Father is in itself, but with a relation of producing, and the essence of the Son is in itself, but with a relation of having been produced, etc.

Concerning this: *the persons either have their own subsistence, besides that of the essence, or they do not.* I respond that the individual persons have only individual subsistences, but that they are partly of the nature of the essence, and partly they are not, as was said above.

Concerning this for the second part: *therefore the essence will not be simply infinite.* I respond by denying the consequence. For, the essence contains intrinsically whatever perfection the subsistence has; for, as we said above, the relations do not say any other perfection but that which is the essence itself.

Concerning this: *therefore the person will be composed.* I respond by denying the consequence. For, the subsistence of the Father, inasmuch as it is distinguished from the essence, is a pure reference to another, and therefore it does not have reference to the essence itself, but only to the terminus.

Concerning the argument, which usually seems to be insoluble: the constitution of the suppositum precedes generation and generation precedes the relation; therefore, the suppositum is not constituted by the relation. I respond that the constitution of the suppositum does precede the generation, but the distinction of the suppositum follows after the generation, and because of that we say that the relation as such, which follows the generation, distinguishes the suppositum, it does not constitute it. But we say that the relation as it is identified with the essence, and precedes generation, according to our way of understanding constitutes the suppositum.

You will say: the relation also as identified with the essence, if it is a relation, requires some foundation, otherwise there will be no reason why it is paternity rather than some other species of relation. But no foundation of paternity can be conceived besides generation. Therefore in no way can paternity precede generation, and constitute the suppositum. I respond: relations that are accidents always require a foundation, namely, so that there is a reason why such a relation inheres in such a subject; but relations that are the essence itself of the subject require no foundation. For, just as no one asks why man is a rational animal, because that is his essence, so it should not be asked why the first divine person is subsisting paternity, because this is his essence. However, we do assign a foundation, namely, generation, why this first person is formally Father, and is distinguished from the Son.

But, you will say, St. Thomas in I, q. 40, a. 3 says, if the relations are mentally abstracted, the hypostases do not remain in God; therefore, subsistence in no way pertains to the nature of essence. I respond that St. Thomas wants to say that distinct hypostases do not remain, for he adds immediately that the word “hypostasis” signifies something distinct.

CHAPTER XVI

THE TENTH ARGUMENT IS REFUTED

The tenth argument. Relation as it is distinguished from essence distinguishes the persons; but relation as it is distinguished from essence is not in the thing, but only in the mind; for, relation in the essence does not add something, but only a reason, otherwise there would be in God something really distinct from the essence. Therefore, the persons are not distinguished in reality, but only logically or mentally.

Moreover, the total reality which is in the Father is also either in the Son or it is not. If it is, then the Father and the Son are not really distinguished. If it is not, then there is something in the Father that is not in the Son; and since it is something, there will be some goodness in the Father, which is not in the Son.

I respond that the reference which relation adds to the essence distinguishes the persons, but that reference is not just in the mind, but also in the reality, and as it is in reality to distinguish, for the persons are distinguished really, even if every operation of the intellect ceases. Therefore I respond to the proposition that the persons are not distinguished by the relations, inasmuch as the relations are distinguished from the essence in any way whatsoever, but inasmuch as they are real relations, or as they are really identified with the essence, and they are distinguished from it only logically.

To prove this I say that the whole absolute reality, which is in the Father, is also in the Son and in the Holy Spirit, but not the whole relative reality; for there truly are three real entities, but relative, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Concerning the proof, when it is said that being, the true and the good are convertible, etc., I respond that those three entities are also three true things, and three good things, if these names are understood adjectivally, that is, they are three things having truth, and goodness, but there are not in them three truths, or goodnesses, but one. And the reason is, because a relation does not say a perfection inasmuch as it is to another, but inasmuch as it is something to another. But in God that "something" of relation is identified with the essence, and therefore a relation in God does not say a perfection other than the essence itself, which is one.

And hence there is this: when we say that in God there are three entities, or three things, or three subsistences, or three persons, we always add or understand that they are relative, and we never multiply or number absolute things, because it is of the nature of relation alone that it confers a true distinction without a multiplication of perfections, because by reason of itself the "to" has opposition, and therefore distinction; however, by reason of the "to" it does not say any perfection; but inasmuch as it does say perfection, it is identified with the essence. On this see Anselm in chapter 3 of his book on the Incarnation, where he says that the Father and the Son can be said to be two things, provided that by "things" relations and not substances are understood. And the Council of Toledo XI in canon 1, where we read that in relations number is perceived, but in the substance of the divinity what is numbered is not to be found. For, where a true number is admitted, there necessarily several entities are to be admitted.

CHAPTER XVII

THE ELEVENTH ARGUMENT IS REFUTED

The eleventh argument. Acts of the intellect and of the will are immanent, and therefore sterile, as the Philosopher teaches in 9 *Metaph. tex. i6*, and therefore they do not produce anything. But if the Son and the Holy Spirit are not produced by the intellect and will, in no way are they produced; for it cannot easily be explained by what other means they are produced, and why only two persons are produced, and why one usually is called the Word and the other Love.

I respond that immanent acts, and therefore acts of intellect and will, which we can call intellection and love, do not produce anything that remains after the action; however, they do produce something intimate to the action itself, and which can be called by the name of the action itself. But the word “action” is taken in two ways, in one way for the bare action alone, which pertains properly to the predicament of action; and it is taken in another way for the action joined together with some quality, which is its quasi terminus. For example, we call heating something an action; however, it is not a simple action of the predicament of action, but it includes some heat that is acquired.

Thus therefore intellection and loving are not just bare actions, but they include also something by way of a quality, which is a quasi terminus of the action. Otherwise, if intellection were a bare action, how would the knower through intellection become similar to the thing known? Is not the similitude founded on the form or the quality? Therefore, the Philosopher does not say that through immanent actions absolutely nothing is produced, but nothing is produced that remains after the action, just as by transient actions something is produced that is really distinct from the action, and it remains after the action.

Therefore, by intellection the Word is produced, and by willing Love, which in us are accidents, but in God are substance, since in God “to understand” is his very being, but it is not that in us. Therefore the holy Fathers passim affirm that God the Father has begotten his Word from eternity, because he was knowing from all eternity; they would not have said this, unless they believed that the Word of God is produced by an act of the intellect. On this see Athanasius in sermons 1, 2 and 3 against Arius, Basil in book 4 on Eunomius, Nazianzen in book 3 on Theology, Cyril in book 1, chapter 5 of his Theses and book 12, chapter 7, Ambrose in book 4, chapter 4 on Faith, and Augustine in book 6, chapter 1 and book 7, chapter 1 on the Trinity.

Also, often the Fathers clearly teach that God the Word was produced by intellection, like Basil in his homily on the beginning of John, Cyril in book 1, chapter 5 on John, Theodoretus in book 2 for the Greeks, and Damascene in book 1, chapter 6. Finally, Augustine in all of book 9 on the Trinity calls the Son wisdom, and the Holy Spirit love; also, the Council of Toledo XI in chapter 1 calls the Holy Spirit charity.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE TWELFTH ARGUMENT IS REFUTED

The twelfth argument. This mystery destroys three naturally known principles. The first one is this: Everything either is, or it is not; for paternity is the same thing really with the essence, and the essence is the same thing really with filiation. Therefore paternity is the same thing really with filiation, however it is not the same thing with filiation, if it is really distinguished from it. The second principle is: Two things equal to a third, are equal to each other; for, paternity and filiation are the same thing with the essence, and nevertheless they are not the same thing between themselves. The third principle is an expository syllogism: for when it is said: this essence is the Father, this essence is the Son, therefore the Father is the Son—and that seems to be a valid conclusion. However, it is a false conclusion, if the Faith is true.

I respond to the first statement by denying the first consequence, because the essence has itself by way of a common terminus, because, although it is singular, still it is truly in several suppositums. Therefore in predications it performs the function of a universal word, as St. Thomas pointed out in I, q. 39, a. 4 ad 1. Therefore just as this syllogism is not valid: Man is the same thing really with an animal; an animal is the same thing really with a horse; therefore man is the same thing really with a horse; in the same way this is also not valid: Paternity is the same thing really with the essence; and the essence is the same thing really with filiation; therefore paternity is the same thing really with filiation.

To the second principle I say that that principle is not true universally, except when the two things are equal to a third thing adequately, as in mathematics, where, if two lines are equal to a third, universally they will be equal to each other, because there is found complete adequateness.

However, if you say: man and horse are the same thing really with an animal; therefore they are the same between themselves—that is not valid, because man and animal are not the same really adequately; thus also the essence and paternity are not the same adequately, because the essence extends itself to more things. Nor is it true that that principle is the foundation of the whole human discourse, if no limitations are added, otherwise there would be so many figures in vain, and the modes of the syllogisms, whereby it is explained how two extremes are to be joined with the middle term, so that it can be concluded that they are also joined together. You can add to this that although that axiom is universally true in finite things, because of that it is not necessarily true in finite things, and because of that it is not necessarily true in divine things; for, if the rational soul, because it is spiritual, naturally is in the many really distinct parts of a body, then this syllogism is not valid: Hands and feet are the same in place with the soul; therefore they are the same in place between themselves. How much greater is the fact that God, who is infinite Spirit, can be at the same time in several suppositums.

Concerning the third principle: I deny that it is an expository syllogism. For, “this

essence” has itself by way of a common terminus, as has been said. Therefore, just as this is not valid: Some man is Peter; some man is Paul; therefore Paul is Peter; so this is not valid: This essence is the Father; this essence is the Son; therefore the Son is the Father. And until now we have been considering in a general way the distinction of the Trinity. Now in particular we will examine the distinction of the Father from the Son, which was the fourth part of the proposed debate.