

QUESTION 37

The Person of the Holy Spirit: The Name ‘Love’

Next we have to consider the name ‘Love’ (*amor*). On this topic there are two questions: (1) Is ‘Love’ a proper name of the Holy Spirit? (2) Do the Father and the Son love one another by the Holy Spirit?

Article 1

Is ‘Love’ a proper name of the Holy Spirit?

It seems that Love (*amor*) is not a proper name of the Holy Spirit:

Objection 1: In *De Trinitate* 15 Augustine says, “I do not know why, just as the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are called Wisdom and are all together not three Wisdoms but one Wisdom, it should not also be the case that the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are called Love (*caritas*) and should all together be one Love.” But no name that is predicated of each person and of all of them together in the singular is a proper name of any one person. Therefore, the name ‘Love’ (*amor*) is not a proper name of the Holy Spirit.

Objection 2: The Holy Spirit is a subsistent person. But ‘love’ (*amor*) does not signify a subsistent person; rather, it signifies a certain action that passes from the lover to the beloved. Therefore, ‘Love’ is not a proper name of the Holy Spirit.

Objection 3: Love is the bond between lovers, since according to Dionysius in *De Divinis Nominibus*, chap. 4, it is a certain unitive force. But a bond lies between the things that it connects and is not something that proceeds from them. Therefore, since, as has been shown (q. 36, a. 2), the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, it seems that He is not the Love, i.e., the bond between the Father and the Son.

Objection 4: Every lover is such that some act of love belongs to him. But the Holy Spirit is a lover. Therefore, there is an act of love that belongs to Him. Therefore, if the Holy Spirit is the Love, then there will be a Love that belongs to the Love, and a Spirit from the Spirit—which is absurd.

But contrary to this: In his homily on the feast of Pentecost Gregory says, “The Holy Spirit Himself is Love.”

I respond: In God the name ‘Love’ (*amor*) can be taken both with respect to the essence and with respect to a person.

Insofar as it is taken with respect to a person, it is a proper name of the Holy Spirit in the same way that ‘Word’ is a proper name of the Son. To see this clearly, note that, as has been shown (q. 27, a. 1), there are two processions in God—one in the mode of the intellect, which is the procession of the Word, and the other in the mode of the will, which is the procession of the Love. Since the first procession is better known to us, there are more available proper names to signify each of the aspects that can be considered in it (q. 34, a. 3). But this is not the case with the procession that involves the will. Hence, we use certain circumlocutions to signify the person who proceeds, as well as to signify the relations that stem from this procession. And so, as was explained above (q. 28, a. 4), we designate the relations by the names ‘Procession’ and ‘Spiration’, even though these are, strictly speaking, names of origin rather than names of relations.

And yet we must consider both of the processions in a similar manner. For just as from the fact that someone understands something, a certain intellectual conception of the thing understood—called a ‘word’—comes to exist in the one who understands, so too from the fact that someone loves something, a certain impression, so to speak, of the thing loved comes to exist in the affective part of the lover, so that

the thing loved is said to exist in the one who loves it in the way that the thing understood exists in the one who understands it. The result is that when someone understands himself and loves himself, he exists within himself not only through his real identity with himself, but also in the way that something understood exists within the one who understands it and in the way that something loved exists within the one who loves it.

Now as for the intellect, there are words available to signify the relation of the one who understands to the thing understood, as is clear with the expression ‘to understand’; and there are likewise other words available to signify the process of conceiving something intellectually, viz., ‘to speak’ and ‘word’. Hence, in God ‘to understand’ is predicated only of the essence, since it does not imply a relation to the word that proceeds, whereas (a) ‘word’ is predicated of a person, since it signifies that which proceeds, and (b) ‘to speak’ is predicated as a notion, since it implies a relation between the principle of the word and the word itself.

On the part of the will, by contrast, besides ‘to have affection for’ (*diligere*) and ‘to love’ (*amare*), which imply a relation of the lover to the thing loved, there are no other available words that imply the relation that the very impression of or affection for the thing loved, which arises in the lover because of his love, bears to the principle of this love, or vice versa. And so, because of this shortage of words, we signify these relations by the words ‘love’ (*amor*) and ‘affection’ (*dilectio*)—in a way analogous to that in which we call the Word the Conceived Understanding or the Begotten Wisdom.

So then, insofar as ‘love’ and ‘affection’ imply only the relation of the lover to thing loved, ‘love’ and ‘to have affection for’ are predicated of the divine essence, just as ‘an understanding’ (*intelligentia*) and ‘to understand’ are. However, insofar as we use these words to express the relation that the reality which proceeds in the mode of love bears to its principle and vice versa—so that by ‘Love’ we mean ‘Love as proceeding’ and by ‘to have affection for’ we mean ‘to spirate the Love that proceeds’—‘Love’ is in this sense the name of a person and ‘to have affection for’ or ‘to love’ are names of a notion in the way in which ‘to speak’ and ‘to generate’ are.

Reply to objection 1: Augustine is talking about love (*caritas*) insofar as it is predicated of the essence in God, in the way just explained.

Reply to objection 2: As was explained above (q. 14, a. 2), even though to understand and to will and to love are signified in the manner of *transeunt* actions on objects, they are nonetheless actions that remain with the agent—yet in such a way that they imply a relation to the object within the agent himself. Hence, even in our own case, love is something that remains within the lover, and the interior word (*verbum cordis*) is something that remains within the speaker—yet with a relation to the thing loved or to the thing expressed by the word.

However, since there are no accidents in God, it is true in addition that both the Word and the Love are subsistent. Therefore, when the Holy Spirit is said to be the Love of the Father for the Son or for anything else, what is signified by ‘Love’ is not something that passes into another, but simply the relation of the Love to the thing loved, just as ‘Word’ implies a relation of the word to the thing expressed by the word.

Reply to objection 3: The Holy Spirit is said to be the bond between the Father and the Son insofar as He is the Love. For since the Father loves both Himself and the Son by a single love (and vice versa), what is implied in the Holy Spirit as the Love is the relation that the Father bears to the Son (and vice versa) as a lover to His beloved. But from the very fact that the Father and the Son love one another, it follows that their mutual love, which is the Holy Spirit, must proceed from them both.

Therefore, as far as His origin is concerned, the Holy Spirit is not a medium between the Father and the Son, but rather a third person in the Trinity. But according to the relation just mentioned, He is a bond between the two of them who proceeds from them both.

Reply to objection 4: Even though the Son understands, it nonetheless does not belong to Him to

produce the Word, since to understand belongs to Him insofar as He is the Word that proceeds. So, too, even though the Holy Spirit loves insofar as ‘loves’ is predicated of the divine essence, nonetheless it does not belong to Him to spirate the love, which is to love insofar as ‘to love’ is taken as a notion. For insofar as ‘to love’ is predicated of the essence, the Holy Spirit loves as the Love which proceeds and not as that from which the Love proceeds.

Article 2

Do the Father and the Son love one another by the Holy Spirit?

It seems that the Father and the Son do not love one another by the Holy Spirit:

Objection 1: In *De Trinitate* 7 Augustine proves that it is not the case that the Father is wise by the Begotten Wisdom. But, as was explained above (a. 1), just as the Son is the Begotten Wisdom, so the Holy Spirit is the Love that Proceeds. Therefore the Father and the Son do not love one another by the Love that Proceeds, i.e., by the Holy Spirit.

Objection 2: When one says ‘The Father and the Son love one another by the Holy Spirit’, the word ‘love’ is being taken either for the essence or for a notion. But the proposition cannot be true if ‘love’ is being taken for the essence, since by parity of reasoning the Father could be said to understand by the Son. Nor, again, can it be true if ‘love’ is taken for a notion, since by parity of reasoning one could claim that the Father and the Son spirate by the Holy Spirit or that the Father generates by the Son. Therefore, there is no sense in which the proposition ‘The Father and the Son love one another by the Holy Spirit’ is true.

Objection 3: It is by the same love that the Father loves the Son, Himself, and us. But the Father does not love Himself by the Holy Spirit, since no notional act is reflected back on to the principle of that act. For instance, one cannot claim that the Father generates Himself or that He spirates Himself. Therefore, one likewise cannot claim that He loves Himself by the Holy Spirit, insofar as ‘loves’ is taken for a notion. Likewise, the love by which the Father loves us does not seem to be the Holy Spirit, since this love implies a relation to creatures and so pertains to the divine essence. Therefore, the proposition ‘The Father loves the Son by the Holy Spirit’ is also false.

But contrary to this: In *De Trinitate* 6 Augustine says, “The Holy Spirit is He by whom the Begotten is loved by the one who generates Him, and He by whom the Begotten loves His Begetter.”

I respond: On this question the difficulty arises from the fact that when one says ‘The Father loves the Son by the Holy Spirit’, if the ablative construction ‘by the Holy Spirit’ is taken as standing for some sort of cause, it seems that the Holy Spirit is the principle of loving for the Father and the Son—which is altogether impossible.

For this reason some have claimed that the proposition ‘The Father and the Son love one another by the Holy Spirit’ is false. And they further claim that this proposition was retracted by Augustine when he retracted the similar proposition ‘The Father is wise by the Begotten Wisdom’.

By contrast, there are those who claim that the proposition is improper and that ‘The Father loves the Son by the Holy Spirit’ should be expounded as ‘The Father loves the Son by the love which belongs to the essence and which is appropriated to the Holy Spirit’.

On the other hand, some have claimed that the ablative construction ‘by the Holy Spirit’ is to be taken as standing for a sign [rather than a cause], so that the sense of the proposition is ‘The Holy Spirit is the sign that the Father loves the Son insofar as He proceeds from them as the Love’.

Still others have claimed that the ablative construction is to be taken as standing for a formal cause,

since the Holy Spirit is the Love by which the Father and the Son formally love one another.

Finally, some have claimed that the ablative construction is to be taken as standing for a formal effect, and they are the ones who have come closer to the truth. To see this clearly, note that since things are commonly named from their forms, e.g., a white thing from its whiteness, and a man from his human-ness, everything from which something is named has to that extent the status of a form. For instance, if I say ‘He is clothed by a garment’, the ablative construction ‘by a garment’ is taken to stand for a formal cause, even though it is not a form. Now something can be named on the basis of what proceeds from it—not just in the way that an agent is named by its action, but also in the way that an agent is named by the very terminus of the action, which is the effect, when that effect is itself included in our understanding of the action. For instance, we say that a fire produces warmth by heating, even though heating is not itself the heat which is the form of the fire, but is instead the action that proceeds from the fire. Again, we say that a tree flowers by flowers, even though the flowers are not the form of the tree, but are instead certain effects that proceed from it.

Accordingly, we should respond that ‘to love’ is taken in two ways in the case of God, viz., (a) with respect to the essence and (b) for a notion.

Insofar as ‘to love’ is taken with respect to the essence, the Father and the Son love one another not by the Holy Spirit, but by their essence. This is why Augustine says in *De Trinitate* 15, “Who would dare to claim that the Father loves neither Himself nor the Son nor the Holy Spirit except through the Holy Spirit?” And the first set of opinions proceeds on this understanding.

However, insofar as ‘to love’ is taken for a notion, to love is in this sense nothing other to spirate the Love, just as to speak is to produce a word, and just as to flower is to produce flowers. So in the sense in which a tree is said to flower by flowers, the Father is said to speak Himself and creatures by the Word (or by the Son), and the Father and the Son are said to love one another and us by the Holy Spirit, i.e., by the Love that Proceeds.

Reply to objection 1: In God, ‘to be wise’ or ‘to be intelligent’ is taken only with respect to the essence, and so it cannot be said that the Father is wise or intelligent by the Son. However, ‘to love’ is taken not only with respect to the essence, but also for a notion. Accordingly, in the sense explained above, we can say that the Father and the Son love one another by the Holy Spirit.

Reply to objection 2: When a determinate effect is implied in our understanding of a given action, the principle of that action can be named both from the action and from the effect. For instance, we can say that the tree flowers by a flowering and that it flowers by flowers. However, when a determinate effect is not included in [our understanding of] the action, then the principle of the action cannot be named from an effect. For instance, we do not say that the tree produces a flower by a flower; instead, we say that it produces a flower by the production of a flower.

Therefore, since the expressions ‘spirate’ and ‘generate’ imply only a notional action, we cannot say that the Father spirates by the Holy Spirit or that He generates by the Son. However, we can say that the Father speaks by the Word (as by a person who proceeds), and that the Father speaks by a speaking (as by a notional act). For ‘to speak’ implies a determinate person who proceeds, since to speak is just to produce the Word. Similarly, ‘to love’, insofar as it is taken for a notion, is just to produce the Love. And so one can say that the Father loves the Son by the Holy Spirit as by a person who proceeds, and that the Father loves the Son by the loving itself as by a notional act.

Reply to objection 3: The Father loves not only the Son but also Himself and us by the Holy Spirit. For insofar as the expression ‘to love’ is taken for a notion, it not only implies the production of a divine person but also implies a person produced in the mode of love, where love has a relation to the thing loved. Hence, just as the Father speaks Himself and every creature by the Word which He begets, insofar as the begotten Word adequately represents the Father and every creature, so too the Father loves Himself and every creature by the Holy Spirit, insofar as the Holy Spirit proceeds as the Love of the first

goodness according to which the Father loves Himself and every creature. And so it is also clear that a relation to creatures is implied—secondarily, as it were—both in the Word and in the Love that proceeds, insofar as the divine truth and goodness constitute the principle for understanding and loving every creature.