De Persona Patris et Filii

Praeside D. ANTONIO WALAEO
Responsente ANTONIO SCRIVERIO

Thesis i Quum antecedenti disputatione de Sacrosancto Trinitatis mysterio generatim actum fuerit, ordo a nobis antea propositus postulat, ut de persona* Patris et Filii sigillatim agamus.

ii Quando primam in Sacrosancta Trinitate personam Patrem nominamus, non referimus id ad creaturas, quae ex nihilo a Deo productae sunt; nec ad fideles, qui filii Dei adoptivi sunt, quorum respectu in Scripturis Deus etiam Pater nonnunquam vocatur; sed referimus ad Filium qui ab aeterno ab eo est genitus, et vocem* Patris ὑποστατικῶς seu personaliter usurpamus.

iii Personam Patris vere personam esse, et a nulla persona originem habere, apud omnes Christianos in confesso est. Quum ergo a se ipso esse, et αὐτοφυής καὶ αὐτογέννητος a nonnullis orthodoxis dicitur, id negative, non affirmative* est intelligendum; quia nempe a nullo est, sed a se ipso et per se ipsum ab omni aeternitate subsistit.
Concerning the Person of the Father and of the Son

President: Antonius Walaeus
Respondent: Antonius Scriverius

As we treated the mystery of the holy Trinity in the preceding disputation, the previously established order requires that we deal now with the person* of the Father and the Son, separately.

When we call the first person in the most holy Trinity "Father," we do not refer to created beings, which have been produced by God out of nothing. Nor do we use it as referring to believers whom God has adopted as his children, and whose God the Scriptures sometimes indeed do call "Father." But we use it in relation to the Son who was begotten by Him from eternity, and we employ the term* "Father" in a hypostatical3 or personal way.

It is generally acknowledged by all Christians that the person of the Father truly is a person, and that his origin comes from no other person. Therefore when it is stated that He comes from himself, and He is called "self-grown and self-generated" by some orthodox teachers, it must be taken in a negative sense, and not as a positive affirmation.* For without a doubt He comes from no-one, but He is in subsistence from himself and through himself from all eternity.

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1 Born ca. 1593, Antonius Scriverius matriculated on 26 July 1616 in theology. He defended this disputation on 26 September 1620 and dedicated his defense to Polyander, Hommius and to D. Castellanus, pastor of the Leiden Walloon church. He was ordained in Hilversum in 1622; he died in 1667. See Du Rieu, *Album studiosorum*, 126, and Van Lieburg, *Repertorium*, 125.

2 This sentence reveals that the key terms of the doctrine of the Trinity do not focus on what is true in the natural world, and they are not related to God's work of creation. The classic doctrine of the Trinity moves on the level of what is essential for God, as ontologically distinct from created reality.

3 On the meaning and use of "hypostatic," see note at *SPT* 7.7.

4 The distinction between a 'negative' and a 'positive' or 'affirmative' sense in which a term can be used belongs to standard scholastic language. A term can be fully, positively affirmed; for example, an 'autodidact' has literally taught himself. Or a term can be used not to affirm a positive quality but to deny that the opposite is the case. The latter applies to the terms *a se ipso*, *autophuês*, and *autogenētōs*: they do not indicate that the Father originates or grows or is generated from himself (which would bring a duality of cause and effect in God), but merely in a negative sense that there is no source or cause of his existence at all.