

St. Thomas Aquinas

The Summa Theologica

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Translated by

Fathers of the English Dominican Province

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OF THE NAME OF THE HOLY GHOST, AS GIFT (TWO ARTICLES)

There now follows the consideration of the Gift; concerning which there are two points of inquiry:

[\(1\)](#) Whether "Gift" can be a personal name?

[\(2\)](#) Whether it is the proper name of the Holy Ghost?

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Whether "Gift" is a personal name?

Objection 1: It would seem that "Gift" is not a personal name. For every personal name imports a distinction in God. But the name of "Gift" does not import a distinction in God; for Augustine says (De Trin. xv, 19): that "the Holy Ghost is so given as God's Gift, that He also gives Himself as God." Therefore "Gift" is not a personal name.

Objection 2: Further, no personal name belongs to the divine essence. But the divine essence is the Gift which the Father gives to the Son, as Hilary says (De Trin. ix). Therefore "Gift" is not a personal name.

Objection 3: Further, according to Damascene (De Fide Orth. iv, 19) there is no subjection nor service in the divine persons. But gift implies a subjection both as regards him to whom it is given, and as regards him by whom it is given. Therefore "Gift" is not a personal name.

God in time. But personal names are said of God from eternity; as "Father," and "Son."

Therefore "Gift" is not a personal name.

On the contrary, Augustine says (De Trin. xv, 19): "As the body of flesh is nothing but flesh; so the gift of the Holy Ghost is nothing but the Holy Ghost." But the Holy Ghost is a personal name; so also therefore is "Gift."

I answer that, The word "gift" imports an aptitude for being given. And what is given has an aptitude or relation both to the giver and to that to which it is given. For it would not be given by anyone, unless it was his to give; and it is given to someone to be his. Now a divine person is said to belong to another, either by origin, as the Son belongs to the Father; or as possessed by another. But we are said to possess what we can freely use or enjoy as we please: and in this way a divine person cannot be possessed, except by a rational creature united to God. Other creatures can be moved by a divine person, not, however, in such a way as to be able to enjoy the divine person, and to use the effect thereof. The rational creature does sometimes attain thereto; as when it is made partaker of the divine Word and of the Love proceeding, so as freely to know God truly and to love God rightly. Hence the rational creature alone can possess the divine person. Nevertheless in order that it may possess Him in this manner, its own power avails nothing: hence this must be given it from above; for that is said to be given to us which we have from another source. Thus a divine person can "be given," and can be a "gift."

Reply to Objection 1: The name "Gift" imports a personal distinction, in so far as gift imports something belonging to another through its origin. Nevertheless, the Holy Ghost gives Himself, inasmuch as He is His own, and can use or rather enjoy Himself; as also a free man belongs to himself. And as Augustine says (In Joan. Tract. xxix): "What is more yours than yourself?" Or we might say, and more fittingly, that a gift must belong in a way to the giver. But the phrase, "this is this one's," can be understood in several senses. In one way it means identity, as Augustine says (In Joan. Tract. xxix); and in that sense "gift" is the same as "the giver," but not the same as the one to whom it is given. The Holy Ghost gives Himself in that sense. In another sense, a thing is another's as a possession, or as a slave; and in that sense gift is essentially distinct from the giver; and the gift of God so taken is a created thing. In a third sense "this is this one's" through its origin only; and in this sense the Son is the Father's; and the Holy Ghost belongs to both. Therefore, so far as gift in this way signifies the possession of the giver, it is personally distinguished from the giver, and is a personal name.

Reply to Objection 2: The divine essence is the Father's gift in the first sense, as being the Father's by way of identity.

Reply to Objection 3: Gift as a personal name in God does not imply subjection, but only origin, as regards the giver; but as regards the one to whom it is given, it implies a free use, or enjoyment, as above explained.

Reply to Objection 4: Gift is not so called from being actually given, but from its aptitude to be given. Hence the divine person is called Gift from eternity, although He is given in time. Nor does it follow that it is an essential name because it imports relation to the creature; but that it includes something essential in its meaning; as the essence is included in the idea of person, as stated above ([Question \[34\]](#), [Article \[3\]](#)).

Whether "Gift" is the proper name of the Holy Ghost?

Objection 1: It would seem that Gift is not the proper name of the Holy Ghost. For the name Gift comes from being given. But, as Is. 9:16 says: "A Son is give to us." Therefore to be Gift belongs to the Son, as well as to the Holy Ghost.

Objection 2: Further, every proper name of a person signifies a property. But this word Gift does not signify a property of the Holy Ghost. Therefore Gift is not a proper name of the Holy Ghost.

Objection 3: Further, the Holy Ghost can be called the spirit of a man, whereas He cannot be called the gift of any man, but "God's Gift" only. Therefore Gift is not the proper name of the Holy Ghost.

On the contrary, Augustine says (De Trin. iv, 20): "As 'to be born' is, for the Son, to be from the Father, so, for the Holy Ghost, 'to be the Gift of God' is to proceed from Father and Son." But the Holy Ghost receives His proper name from the fact that He proceeds from Father and Son. Therefore Gift is the proper name of the Holy Ghost.

I answer that, Gift, taken personally in God, is the proper name of the Holy Ghost.

In proof of this we must know that a gift is properly an unreturnable giving, as Aristotle says (Topic. iv, 4)---i.e. a thing which is not given with the intention of a return---and it thus contains the idea of a gratuitous donation. Now, the reason of donation being gratuitous is love; since therefore do we give something to anyone gratuitously forasmuch as we wish him well. So what we first give him is the love whereby we wish him well. Hence it is manifest that love has the nature of a first gift, through which all free gifts are given. So since the Holy Ghost proceeds as love, as stated above ([Question \[27\]](#), [Article \[4\]](#); [Question \[37\]](#), [Article \[1\]](#)), He proceeds as the first gift. Hence Augustine says (De Trin. xv, 24): "By the gift, which is the Holy Ghost, many particular gifts are portioned out to the members of Christ."

Reply to Objection 1: As the Son is properly called the Image because He proceeds by way of a word, whose nature it is to be the similitude of its principle, although the Holy Ghost also is like to the Father; so also, because the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father as love, He is properly called Gift, although the Son, too, is given. For that the Son is given is from the Father's love, according to the words, "God so loved the world, as to give His only begotten Son" ([Jn. 3:16](#)).

Reply to Objection 2: The name Gift involves the idea of belonging to the Giver through its origin; and thus it imports the property of the origin of the Holy Ghost---that is, His procession.

Reply to Objection 3: Before a gift is given, it belongs only to the giver; but when it is given, it is his to whom it is given. Therefore, because "Gift" does not import the actual giving, it cannot be called a gift of man, but the Gift of God giving. When, however, it has been given, then it is the spirit of man, or a gift bestowed on man.
