

QUESTION 9

Christ's Knowledge in General

Next we have to consider Christ's knowledge. On this topic we first have to consider what sorts of knowledge Christ had (question 9), and, second, we have to consider each of these sorts of His knowledge (questions 10-12).

On the first topic there are four questions: (1) Did Christ have any sort of knowledge besides the knowledge He had as God (*aliquam scientiam praeter divinam*)? (2) Did He have the knowledge had by the blessed in heaven (*beati*), i.e., by the comprehenders [of God's essence] (*comprehensores*)? (3) Did He have infixed, i.e., infused, knowledge (*scientiam inditam vel infusam*)? (4) Did He have any acquired knowledge?

Article 1

Was there in Christ any knowledge besides the knowledge He had as God?

It seems that in Christ there was not any knowledge besides the knowledge He had as God (*in Christo non fuerit aliqua scientia praeter divinam*):

Objection 1: Knowledge is necessary in order that through it one might have cognition of some things. But Christ had cognition of everything through the knowledge He had as God (*per scientiam divinam*). Therefore, it would have been superfluous for there to be any other sort of knowledge in Him.

Objection 2: A lesser light is obscured by a greater light. But every sort of created knowledge is related to God's uncreated knowledge as a lesser light to a greater light. Therefore, in Christ there did not shine forth any knowledge other than the knowledge He had as God (*non refulsit alia scientia quam divinam*).

Objection 3: As is clear from what was said above (q. 2, a. 2), the union of the human nature to the divine nature was effected in a person. But some posit in Christ a sort of knowledge of the union by which Christ knew the things involved in the mystery of the Incarnation more fully than anyone else. Therefore, since the union in a person contains two natures, it seems that in Christ there are not two sorts of knowledge, but only one sort of knowledge that pertains to the two natures.

But contrary to this: In *De Incarnatione* Ambrose says, "God assumed the perfection of human nature in the flesh; He took on a man's understanding (*sensum hominis*), but not the flesh's swollen understanding (*sensum carnis inflatum*)." But a man's understanding involves created knowledge. Therefore, there existed in Him another sort of knowledge besides the knowledge He had as God.

I respond: As is clear from what has been said above (q. 5), the Son of God assumed a complete human nature, i.e., not just a body but a soul as well, and not just a soul that is sentient but one that is also rational. And so He had to have created knowledge, and this for three reasons:

First, *for the sake of His soul's perfection*. For the soul, considered in its own right, is in potentiality to having cognition of intelligible things, since, as *De Anima* 3 says, "it is like a tablet that has nothing written on it" and yet is such that it can be written on because of the passive intellect (*propter intellectum possibile*), "in which [the soul] can become all things." But what exists in potentiality is imperfect unless it is actualized (*nisi reducatur in actum*). Now it was fitting for the Son of God to assume a perfect human nature and not an imperfect one, since it was by its mediation that the whole human race was to be brought back to what is perfect. And so Christ's soul had to be perfected by a knowledge that would properly be its perfection. So there had to exist in Christ some knowledge besides God's knowledge. Otherwise, Christ's soul would have been less perfect than all the souls of other men.

Second, because, given that, as *De Caelo et Mundo* 2 says, "Each entity exists for the sake of its own operation," it would be pointless for Christ to have an intellectual soul if He were not going to

understand anything by means of it (*si non intelligeret secundum illam*). But this involves created knowledge.

Third, because some created knowledge belongs to the nature of the human soul, viz., that knowledge through which we have natural cognition of first principles; for here we are taking ‘knowledge’ (*scientia*) broadly for any cognition that belongs to the human intellect. But as was explained above (q. 5), Christ is lacking in nothing natural, since he took up a complete human nature.

And this is why the Sixth Synod condemned the position of those who deny that there are two sorts of knowledge, or two sorts of wisdom, in Christ.

Reply to objection 1: The cognition of all things that Christ had through His knowledge as God was by means of an uncreated operation, which is God’s essence itself; for as is proved in *Metaphysics* 12, God’s act of understanding is His substance (*Dei intelligere est sua substantia*). Hence, this act could not have belonged to Christ’s human soul, since it is of a different nature. Therefore, if in the soul of Christ there had not been any other sort of knowledge distinct from God’s knowledge, then that soul would not have had cognition of anything at all. And so it would have been assumed in vain, since “each* entity exists for the sake of its own operation.”

Reply to objection 2: If one takes two lights of the same order, then the lesser is obscured by the greater, in the way that sun’s light obscures the light of a candle, both of which are being taken to belong to the order of things that *illuminate*.

On the other hand, if the greater light is taken to be in order of things that *illuminate* and the lesser light is taken to be in the order of things that *are illuminated*, then the lesser is not obscured by the greater but instead grows greater itself, in the way that the air’s light grows greater because of the light of the sun. And it is in this way that in the soul of Christ the light of knowledge is not obscured, but instead grows brighter because of the knowledge which he has as God and which, as John 1:9 says, “enlightens every man who comes into this world.”

Reply to objection 3: On the part of the things that are united, knowledge is posited in Christ both as regards His divine nature and as regards His human nature, so that, as was explained above (q. 3, a. 6), through the union, insofar as the *hypostasis* of God is the same as the *hypostasis* of the man, what belongs to God is attributed to the man and what belongs to the man is attributed to God. However, no knowledge can be posited in Christ on the part of the union itself. For that union has to do with personal *esse*, whereas knowledge does not belong to the person except by reason of some nature.

Article 2

Did Christ have the knowledge had by the blessed in heaven, i.e., the comprehenders [of God’s essence]?

It seems that Christ did not have the knowledge had by the blessed in heaven, i.e., the comprehenders [of God’s essence] (*in Christo non fuerit scientia beatorum vel comprehensorum*):

Objection 1: The knowledge had by the blessed in heaven is through participation in the divine light—this according to Psalm 35:10 (“In your light we will see light”). But Christ did not have the divine light as one who participates, but instead He had the divine nature itself abiding within him—this according to Colossians 2:9 (“Within Him all the fullness of the divinity dwelt corporeally”). Therefore, the knowledge had by the blessed in heaven did not exist in Him.

Objection 2: The knowledge had by the blessed in heaven makes them blessed—this according to John 17:3 (“This is eternal life, that they might know you, the true God, and the one whom You have sent, Jesus Christ”). But the man in question was blessed by the fact that He was united to God in His person—this according to Psalm 64:5 (“Blessed is He whom You have chosen and taken to Yourself”).

Therefore, it is unnecessary to posit in Him the knowledge had by the blessed in heaven.

Objection 3: Two sorts of knowledge belong to a man, one in accord with his nature (*secundum suam naturam*) and other beyond his nature (*supra suam naturam*). Now the knowledge had by the blessed in heaven, which consists in the vision of God, is not in accord with a man's nature but is beyond his nature. But in Christ there was another sort of supernatural knowledge, much stronger and deeper, viz., the knowledge He has as God (*scilicet scientia divina*). Therefore, it was unnecessary for Christ to have the knowledge that belongs to the blessed in heaven.

But contrary to this: The knowledge had by the blessed in heaven consists in the vision or cognition of God. But [Christ] had full cognition of God, even insofar as He was a man—this according to John 8:55 (“I know Him and I keep His word”). Therefore, the knowledge had by the blessed in heaven existed in Christ.

I respond: What is in potentiality is led to actuality by what is actual; for instance, that through which other things become hot must itself be hot. Now a man is in potentiality with respect to the knowledge had by the blessed in heaven, which consists in the vision of God, and he is ordered toward that knowledge as his end. For a rational creature is capable of that knowledge had by the blessed in heaven insofar as he is made to the image of God. But men are led to this end of beatitude by Christ's human nature (*per Christi humanitatem*)—this according to Hebrews 2:10 (“For it was fitting that He, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering”). And so it was necessary for that cognition consisting in the vision of God to belong in a most excellent way to the man Christ, since a cause always has to be more powerful than what it causes.

Reply to objection 1: The divine nature is united to the human nature of Christ in a person and not in a nature or essence; to the contrary, the distinction of the natures remains along with the oneness of the person. And so Christ's soul, which is a part of His human nature, is perfected by the divine nature through a participated light for the beatific knowledge by which God is seen through His essence.

Reply to objection 2: By the union itself the man in question is blessed with an uncreated beatitude, since He is God because of the union. But beyond this uncreated beatitude, in Christ's human nature there had to be a created beatitude through which His soul would be established in the ultimate end of His human nature.

Reply to objection 3: The beatific vision or knowledge is in a sense beyond the nature of the rational soul, viz., insofar as the soul cannot by its own power attain to it. However, in another sense it is consonant with the soul's nature, viz., insofar as it is capable of it by its nature (*per naturam suam est capax eius*), since, as was explained above, it was made to the image of God. By contrast, *uncreated* knowledge is in every way beyond the nature of the human soul.

Article 3

Is there any other sort of infused knowledge in Christ besides beatific knowledge?

It seems that there is no other sort of infused knowledge in Christ besides beatific knowledge (*in Christo non sit alia scientia indita, praeter scientiam beatum*):

Objection 1: Every other sort of created knowledge is related to beatific knowledge as the imperfect to the perfect. But when perfect cognition is present, imperfect cognition is excluded, in the way that, as is clear from 1 Corinthians 13:10-12, a clear view of the face [of God] excludes the obscure view that belongs to faith. Therefore, since, as has been explained, Christ has beatific knowledge, it seems that no other sort of infused knowledge could have existed in Him.

Objection 2: A less perfect mode of cognition disposes one toward a more perfect mode, in the way that opinion (*opinio*), which involves a dialectical syllogism, disposes one toward scientific

knowledge (*scientia*), which involves a demonstrative syllogism. But once the perfection is attained, the disposition is no longer needed, in the way that once the terminus is attained, the movement is no longer necessary. Therefore, since every other sort of created cognition is related to beatific cognition as the imperfect to the perfect, and as a disposition to its terminus, it seems that since Christ had beatific cognition, it was not necessary for Him to have any other sort of [created] cognition.

Objection 3: Just as corporeal matter is in potentiality to a sensible form, so the passive intellect is in potentiality to an intelligible form. But corporeal matter cannot simultaneously receive two sensible forms, one of which is more perfect and the other less perfect. Therefore, neither can the soul simultaneously receive two sorts of knowledge, one of which is more perfect and the other less perfect. And so we reach the same conclusion as before.

But contrary to this: Colossians 2:3 says, “In Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”

I respond: As has been explained (a. 1), it was fitting for the human nature assumed by the Word of God not to be incomplete or imperfect (*imperfecta non esset*). But anything that is in potentiality is imperfect unless it is actualized (*nisi reducatur in actum*). Now the human passive intellect (*intellectus possibilis humanus*) is in potentiality to all intelligible things, and it is actualized through intelligible species, which, as is clear from what is said in *De Anima* 3, are certain forms that complete or perfect it (*sunt formae quaedam completivae ipsius*). And so one must posit infused knowledge in Christ, insofar as intelligible species with respect to all the things that the passive intellect is in potentiality to are impressed on the soul of Christ through the Word of God, to which that soul is united in a person—in the same way that, as is clear from Augustine in *Super Genesim ad Litteram*, intelligible species were, through the Word of God, impressed on the angelic mind at the beginning of the creation of things (cf. *ST* 1, q. 55, aa. 1-3).

And so, according to the selfsame Augustine, just as two sorts of cognition are posited in the angels, viz., (a) *morning* cognition, through which they have cognition of things in the Word, and (b) *evening* cognition, through which they have cognition of things in their own proper natures through the species infused into [the angelic mind] (cf. *ST* 1, q. 58, aa. 6-7), so, too, besides the uncreated knowledge had by God, there is in Christ, as regards his soul, (a) *beatific* knowledge, by which He has cognition of the Word and of things in the Word, and (b) *infixed or infused* knowledge, through which He has cognition of things in their own proper natures through intelligible species that are proportioned to the human mind.

Reply to objection 1: The imperfect vision of faith includes in its definition its being opposed to manifest vision, because, as was established in the Second Part (*ST* 2-2, q. 1, a. 4), it is part of the nature of faith that it has to do with things that are not seen. By contrast, the cognition that is infused through species does not involve any opposition to beatific cognition. And so the line of reasoning is not the same in the two cases.

Reply to objection 2: A disposition is related to its perfection in two ways: (a) as a *path* that leads to the perfection; and (b) as an *effect* that proceeds from the perfection. For instance matter is disposed by heat to receiving the form of fire, but once the fire arrives, the heat does not cease but instead remains as a sort of effect of such a form. And, similarly, an opinion, having been caused by a dialectical syllogism, is a path to scientific knowledge (*via ad scientiam*), but once the scientific knowledge has been acquired, the cognition that came by means of a dialectical syllogism can remain as something which follows upon the scientific knowledge that comes through the cause. For he who has cognition of the cause is thereby more capable of having cognition of the probable signs from which the dialectical syllogism proceeds. And, similarly, in the case of Christ, the infused knowledge remains along with the beatific knowledge, not in the sense of being a path to beatitude, but in the sense of being confirmed by beatitude.

Reply to objection 3: As is clear from what was said in the First Part (*ST* 1, q. 12, aa. 2 and 9), beatific cognition is not effected either (a) by a species that is a similitude of the divine essence, or (b) by

a species of those things that are known in the divine essence. Instead, beatific cognition is of the divine essence itself, without mediation, through the divine essence itself being united to the mind of the one who is beatified in the way that an intelligible thing is united to the one who understands it. And the divine essence is a form exceeds a proportion to any creature. Hence, nothing prevents it from being the case that along with this super-exceeding form, there simultaneously exist in the rational mind intelligible species that are proportioned to its nature.

Article 4

Did Christ have any acquired experiential knowledge?

It seems that Christ did not have any acquired experiential knowledge (*in Christo non fuerit aliqua scientia experimentalis*):

Objection 1: Whatever belonged to Christ was such that He had it in the most excellent way. But Christ did not have acquired knowledge in the most excellent way, since He did not pursue the study of letters by which knowledge is acquired in the most perfect way. For John 7:15 says, “The Jews marveled, saying, ‘How is it that this man has learning, when he has never studied?’” Therefore, it seems that Christ did not have any acquired knowledge.

Objection 2: Nothing can be added to what is full. But as has been explained (a. 3), the potentiality of Christ’s soul was fulfilled through divinely infused intelligible species. Therefore, no acquired species could have been added to His soul.

Objection 3: In an individual who already has the habit of knowledge, no new habit is acquired through what he receives from his senses, since if a new habit were acquired, two forms of the same species would exist simultaneously in the same thing; instead, the habit that existed in him beforehand is strengthened and increased. Therefore, since Christ already had the habit of infused knowledge, it does not seem that He acquired any other sort of knowledge from what He perceived through His senses.

But contrary to this: Hebrews 5:8 says, “Although He was the Son of God, He learned obedience from those things which He suffered”—that is, according to a Gloss, “from those things which He experienced.” Therefore, Christ had some experiential knowledge, i.e., acquired knowledge.

I respond: As is clear from what was said above (q. 4, a. 2 and q. 5), nothing of what God planted in our nature was lacking to the human nature assumed by the Word of God. But it is clear that God planted in human nature not only the passive intellect but also the active intellect. Hence, one must claim that in the soul of Christ there was not only a passive intellect but also an active intellect.

Now if in other cases, as the Philosopher claims in *De Caelo et Mundo* 1, “God and nature do nothing in vain,” then all the less was anything in vain in the soul of Christ. But it is pointless for a thing not to have its proper operation, since as *De Caelo et Mundo* 2 says, “Each entity exists for the sake of its own operation.” And the proper operation of the active intellect is to make intelligible species actual by abstracting them from phantasms; hence, *De Anima* 3 says that the active intellect is “that by which [the intellect] makes everything.”

So, then, it is necessary to say that Christ had some intelligible species received through the action of the active intellect on His passive intellect, and this is what it is for Him to have acquired knowledge, which some call experiential knowledge (*scientiam experimentalem*). And so even though I once wrote otherwise in different place (*Sentences* 3, dist. 14, a. 3 and dist. 18, a. 3), one must reply that there is acquired knowledge in Christ.

This is, properly speaking, knowledge in the human mode, not only on the part of the receiving subject, but also on the part of the agent cause. For this sort of knowledge is posited in Christ because of the light of the active intellect, which is connatural to human nature. By contrast, infused knowledge is attributed to the human soul because of an infused light from above, which is a mode of cognition that is

proportionate to angelic nature. On the other hand, as was explained in the First Part (*ST* 1, q. 12, a. 4), beatific knowledge, by which God's essence itself is seen, is proper and connatural only to God.

Reply to objection 1: Given that there are two modes of acquiring [experiential] knowledge, by discovering and by being taught, the mode that takes place through discovery is the principal mode, whereas the mode that takes place through being taught is secondary. Hence, *Ethics* 1 says, "He indeed is the best who understands everything on his own, whereas he is good who follows the one who speaks aright." And so it was more fitting for Christ to have knowledge acquired through discovery than through being taught—especially because He is given by God to everyone as our teacher—this according to Joel 2:23 ("Rejoice in the Lord your God, for He has given you a teacher of justice").

Reply to objection 2: The human mind has two relations:

One is to things that are *higher*, and in this respect Christ's soul was full because of His infused knowledge.

Its second relation is to things that are *lower*, i.e., to phantasms, which are capable of moving the human mind through the power of the active intellect. Now it was necessary for Christ's soul to be filled with knowledge in this respect as well—not that the first sort of fullness was not in its own right sufficient for His human mind, but that it was also necessary for that mind to be perfected in its relation to its phantasms.

Reply to objection 3: An *acquired* habit has a different character from an *infused* habit. For the habit of knowledge is *acquired* through the human mind's relation to phantasms, and so another habit of the same nature cannot be re-acquired. However, a habit of *infused* knowledge has a different nature, since it descends from above on the soul and is not proportioned to the phantasms. And so the two habits do not have the same nature (*non est eadem ratio de utroque habitu*).