

SECOND PART OF THE SECOND PART, QUESTION 175

Of Rapture (In Six Articles)

We must now consider rapture. Under this head there are six points of inquiry:

- (1) Whether the soul of man is carried away to things divine?
- (2) Whether rapture pertains to the cognitive or to the appetitive power?
- (3) Whether Paul when in rapture saw the essence of God?
- (4) Whether he was withdrawn from his senses?
- (5) Whether, when in that state, his soul was wholly separated from his body?
- (6) What did he know, and what did he not know about this matter?

Whether the soul of man is carried away to things divine?

IIa IIae q. 175 a. 1

Objection 1. It would seem that the soul of man is not carried away to things divine. For some define rapture as “an uplifting by the power of a higher nature, from that which is according to nature to that which is above nature”*. Now it is in accordance with man’s nature that he be uplifted to things divine; for Augustine says at the beginning of his Confessions: “Thou madest us, Lord, for Thyself, and our heart is restless, till it rest in Thee.” Therefore man’s soul is not carried away to things divine.

Objection 2. Further, Dionysius says (Div. Nom. viii) that “God’s justice is seen in this that He treats all things according to their mode and dignity.” But it is not in accordance with man’s mode and worth that he be raised above what he is according to nature. Therefore it would seem that man’s soul is not carried away to things divine.

Objection 3. Further, rapture denotes violence of some kind. But God rules us not by violence or force, as Damascene says†. Therefore man’s soul is not carried away to things divine.

On the contrary, The Apostle says (2 Cor. 12:2): “I know a man in Christ. . . rapt even to the third heaven.” On which words a gloss says: “Rapt, that is to say, uplifted contrary to nature.”

I answer that, Rapture denotes violence of a kind as stated above (obj. 3); and “the violent is that which has its principle without, and in which he that suffers violence concurs not at all” (Ethic. iii, 1). Now everything concurs in that to which it tends in accordance with its proper inclination, whether voluntary or natural. Wherefore he who is carried away by some external agent, must be carried to something different from that to which his inclination tends. This difference arises in two ways: in one way from the end of the inclination—for instance a stone, which is naturally inclined to be borne downwards, may be thrown upwards; in another way from the manner of tending—for instance a stone may be thrown downwards with greater velocity than consistent with its natural movement.

Accordingly man’s soul also is said to be carried

away, in a twofold manner, to that which is contrary to its nature: in one way, as regards the term of transport—as when it is carried away to punishment, according to Ps. 49:22, “Lest He snatch you away, and there be none to deliver you”; in another way, as regards the manner connatural to man, which is that he should understand the truth through sensible things. Hence when he is withdrawn from the apprehension of sensibles, he is said to be carried away, even though he be uplifted to things whereunto he is directed naturally: provided this be not done intentionally, as when a man betakes himself to sleep which is in accordance with nature, wherefore sleep cannot be called rapture, properly speaking.

This withdrawal, whatever its term may be, may arise from a threefold cause. First, from a bodily cause, as happens to those who suffer abstraction from the senses through weakness: secondly, by the power of the demons, as in those who are possessed: thirdly, by the power of God. In this last sense we are now speaking of rapture, whereby a man is uplifted by the spirit of God to things supernatural, and withdrawn from his senses, according to Ezech. 8:3, “The spirit lifted me up between the earth and the heaven, and brought me in the vision of God into Jerusalem.”

It must be observed, however, that sometimes a person is said to be carried away, not only through being withdrawn from his senses, but also through being withdrawn from the things to which he was attending, as when a person’s mind wanders contrary to his purpose. But this is to use the expression in a less proper signification.

Reply to Objection 1. It is natural to man to tend to divine things through the apprehension of things sensible, according to Rom. 1:20, “The invisible things of God. . . are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made.” But the mode, whereby a man is uplifted to divine things and withdrawn from his senses, is not natural to man.

Reply to Objection 2. It belongs to man’s mode and dignity that he be uplifted to divine things, from the very fact that he is made to God’s image. And since

* Reference unknown; Cf. De Veritate xiii, 1 † De Fide Orth. ii, 30

a divine good infinitely surpasses the faculty of man in order to attain that good, he needs the divine assistance which is bestowed on him in every gift of grace. Hence it is not contrary to nature, but above the faculty of nature that man's mind be thus uplifted in rapture by God.

Reply to Objection 3. The saying of Damascene refers to those things which a man does by himself. But

as to those things which are beyond the scope of the free-will, man needs to be uplifted by a stronger operation, which in a certain respect may be called force if we consider the mode of operation, but not if we consider its term to which man is directed both by nature and by his intention.

Whether rapture pertains to the cognitive rather than to the appetitive power?

IIa IIae q. 175 a. 2

Objection 1. It would seem that rapture pertains to the appetitive rather than to the cognitive power. For Dionysius says (Div. Nom. iv): "The Divine love causes ecstasy." Now love pertains to the appetitive power. Therefore so does ecstasy or rapture.

Objection 2. Further, Gregory says (Dial. ii, 3) that "he who fed the swine debased himself by a dissipated mind and an unclean life; whereas Peter, when the angel delivered him and carried him into ecstasy, was not beside himself, but above himself." Now the prodigal son sank into the depths by his appetite. Therefore in those also who are carried up into the heights it is the appetite that is affected.

Objection 3. Further, a gloss on Ps. 30:1, "In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped, let me never be confounded," says in explaining the title*: "Ekstasis in Greek signifies in Latin 'excessus mentis,' an aberration of the mind. This happens in two ways, either through dread of earthly things or through the mind being rapt in heavenly things and forgetful of this lower world." Now dread of earthly things pertains to the appetite. Therefore rapture of the mind in heavenly things, being placed in opposition to this dread, also pertains to the appetite.

On the contrary, A gloss on Ps. 115:2, "I said in my excess: Every man is a liar," says: "We speak of ecstasy, not when the mind wanders through fear, but when it is carried aloft on the wings of revelation." Now revelation pertains to the intellectual power. Therefore ecstasy or rapture does also.

I answer that, We can speak of rapture in two ways. First, with regard to the term of rapture, and thus, properly speaking, rapture cannot pertain to the appetitive, but only to the cognitive power. For it was stated (a. 1) that rapture is outside the inclination of the person who is rapt; whereas the movement of the appetitive power is an inclination to an appetible good. Wherefore, properly speaking, in desiring something, a man is not rapt, but is moved by himself.

Secondly, rapture may be considered with regard to its cause, and thus it may have a cause on the part of the appetitive power. For from the very fact that the appetite is strongly affected towards something, it may happen, owing to the violence of his affection, that a man is carried away from everything else. Moreover, it has an effect on the appetitive power, when for instance a man delights in the things to which he is rapt.

Hence the Apostle said that he was rapt, not only "to the third heaven"—which pertains to the contemplation of the intellect—but also into "paradise," which pertains to the appetite.

Reply to Objection 1. Rapture adds something to ecstasy. For ecstasy means simply a going out of oneself by being placed outside one's proper order[†]; while rapture denotes a certain violence in addition. Accordingly ecstasy may pertain to the appetitive power, as when a man's appetite tends to something outside him, and in this sense Dionysius says that "the Divine love causes ecstasy," inasmuch as it makes man's appetite tend to the object loved. Hence he says afterwards that "even God Himself, the cause of all things, through the overflow of His loving goodness, goes outside Himself in His providence for all beings." But even if this were said expressly of rapture, it would merely signify that love is the cause of rapture.

Reply to Objection 2. There is a twofold appetite in man; to wit, the intellectual appetite which is called the will, and the sensitive appetite known as the sensuality. Now it is proper to man that his lower appetite be subject to the higher appetite, and that the higher move the lower. Hence man may become outside himself as regards the appetite, in two ways. In one way, when a man's intellectual appetite tends wholly to divine things, and takes no account of those things whereto the sensitive appetite inclines him; thus Dionysius says (Div. Nom. iv) that "Paul being in ecstasy through the vehemence of Divine love" exclaimed: "I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me."

In another way, when a man tends wholly to things pertaining to the lower appetite, and takes no account of his higher appetite. It is thus that "he who fed the swine debased himself"; and this latter kind of going out of oneself, or being beside oneself, is more akin than the former to the nature of rapture because the higher appetite is more proper to man. Hence when through the violence of his lower appetite a man is withdrawn from the movement of his higher appetite, it is more a case of being withdrawn from that which is proper to him. Yet, because there is no violence therein, since the will is able to resist the passion, it falls short of the true nature of rapture, unless perchance the passion be so strong that it takes away entirely the use of reason, as happens to those who are mad with anger or love.

* Unto the end, a psalm for David, in an ecstasy † Cf. Ia IIae, q. 28, a. 3

It must be observed, however, that both these excesses affecting the appetite may cause an excess in the cognitive power, either because the mind is carried away to certain intelligible objects, through being drawn away from objects of sense, or because it is caught up into some imaginary vision or fanciful apparition.

Reply to Objection 3. Just as love is a movement of the appetite with regard to good, so fear is a movement of the appetite with regard to evil. Wherefore either of them may equally cause an aberration of mind; and all the more since fear arises from love, as Augustine says (De Civ. Dei xiv, 7,9).

Whether Paul, when in rapture, saw the essence of God?

IIa IIae q. 175 a. 3

Objection 1. It would seem that Paul, when in rapture, did not see the essence of God. For just as we read of Paul that he was rapt to the third heaven, so we read of Peter (Acts 10:10) that “there came upon him an ecstasy of mind.” Now Peter, in his ecstasy, saw not God’s essence but an imaginary vision. Therefore it would seem that neither did Paul see the essence of God.

Objection 2. Further, the vision of God is beatific. But Paul, in his rapture, was not beatified; else he would never have returned to the unhappiness of this life, but his body would have been glorified by the overflow from his soul, as will happen to the saints after the resurrection, and this clearly was not the case. Therefore Paul when in rapture saw not the essence of God.

Objection 3. Further, according to 1 Cor. 13:10-12, faith and hope are incompatible with the vision of the Divine essence. But Paul when in this state had faith and hope. Therefore he saw not the essence of God.

Objection 4. Further, as Augustine states (Gen. ad lit. xii, 6,7), “pictures of bodies are seen in the imaginary vision.” Now Paul is stated (2 Cor. 12:2,4) to have seen certain pictures in his rapture, for instance of the “third heaven” and of “paradise.” Therefore he would seem to have been rapt to an imaginary vision rather than to the vision of the Divine essence.

On the contrary, Augustine (Ep. CXLVII, 13; ad Paulin., de videndo Deum) concludes that “possibly God’s very substance was seen by some while yet in this life: for instance by Moses, and by Paul who in rapture heard unspeakable words, which it is not granted unto man to utter.”

I answer that, Some have said that Paul, when in rapture, saw “not the very essence of God, but a certain reflection of His clarity.” But Augustine clearly comes to an opposite decision, not only in his book (De videndo Deum), but also in Gen. ad lit. xii, 28 (quoted in a gloss on 2 Cor. 12:2). Indeed the words themselves of the Apostle indicate this. For he says that “he heard secret words, which it is not granted unto man to utter”: and such would seem to be words pertaining to the vision of the blessed, which transcends the state of the wayfarer, according to Is. 64:4, “Eye hath not seen, O God, besides Thee, what things Thou hast prepared for them that love [Vulg.: ‘wait for’] Thee”*. Therefore it is more becoming to hold that he saw God in His essence.

Reply to Objection 1. Man’s mind is rapt by God to the contemplation of divine truth in three ways. First, so that he contemplates it through certain imaginary pictures, and such was the ecstasy that came upon Peter. Secondly, so that he contemplates the divine truth through its intelligible effects; such was the ecstasy of David, who said (Ps. 115:11): “I said in my excess: Every man is a liar.” Thirdly, so that he contemplates it in its essence. Such was the rapture of Paul, as also of Moses†; and not without reason, since as Moses was the first Teacher of the Jews, so was Paul the first “Teacher of the gentiles”‡.

Reply to Objection 2. The Divine essence cannot be seen by a created intellect save through the light of glory, of which it is written (Ps. 35:10): “In Thy light we shall see light.” But this light can be shared in two ways. First by way of an abiding form, and thus it beatifies the saints in heaven. Secondly, by way of a transitory passion, as stated above (q. 171, a. 2) of the light of prophecy; and in this way that light was in Paul when he was in rapture. Hence this vision did not beatify him simply, so as to overflow into his body, but only in a restricted sense. Consequently this rapture pertains somewhat to prophecy.

Reply to Objection 3. Since, in his rapture, Paul was beatified not as to the habit, but only as to the act of the blessed, it follows that he had not the act of faith at the same time, although he had the habit.

Reply to Objection 4. In one way by the third heaven we may understand something corporeal, and thus the third heaven denotes the empyrean§, which is described as the “third,” in relation to the aerial and starry heavens, or better still, in relation to the aqueous and crystalline heavens. Moreover Paul is stated to be rapt to the “third heaven,” not as though his rapture consisted in the vision of something corporeal, but because this place is appointed for the contemplation of the blessed. Hence the gloss on 2 Cor. 12 says that the “third heaven is a spiritual heaven, where the angels and the holy souls enjoy the contemplation of God: and when Paul says that he was rapt to this heaven he means that God showed him the life wherein He is to be seen forevermore.”

In another way the third heaven may signify a supramundane vision. Such a vision may be called the third heaven in three ways. First, according to the order of the

* 1 Cor. 2:9 † Cf. q. 174, a. 4 ‡ Cf. Ia, q. 68, a. 4 § 1 Tim. 2:7; Cf. Ia, q. 12, a. 11, ad 2

cognitive powers. In this way the first heaven would indicate a supramundane bodily vision, conveyed through the senses; thus was seen the hand of one writing on the wall (Dan. 5:5); the second heaven would be an imaginary vision such as Isaias saw, and John in the Apocalypse; and the third heaven would denote an intellectual vision according to Augustine's explanation (Gen. ad lit. xii, 26,28,34). Secondly, the third heaven may be taken according to the order of things knowable, the first heaven being "the knowledge of heavenly bodies, the second the knowledge of heavenly spirits, the

third the knowledge of God Himself." Thirdly, the third heaven may denote the contemplation of God according to the degrees of knowledge whereby God is seen. The first of these degrees belongs to the angels of the lowest hierarchy[¶], the second to the angels of the middle hierarchy, the third to the angels of the highest hierarchy, according to the gloss on 2 Cor. 12.

And since the vision of God cannot be without delight, he says that he was not only "rapt to the third heaven" by reason of his contemplation, but also into "Paradise" by reason of the consequent delight.

Whether Paul, when in rapture, was withdrawn from his senses?

Iia IIae q. 175 a. 4

Objection 1. It would seem that Paul, when in rapture, was not withdrawn from his senses. For Augustine says (Gen. ad lit. xii, 28): "Why should we not believe that when so great an apostle, the teacher of the gentiles, was rapt to this most sublime vision, God was willing to vouchsafe him a glimpse of that eternal life which is to take the place of the present life?" Now in that future life after the resurrection the saints will see the Divine essence without being withdrawn from the senses of the body. Therefore neither did such a withdrawal take place in Paul.

Objection 2. Further, Christ was truly a wayfarer, and also enjoyed an uninterrupted vision of the Divine essence, without, however, being withdrawn from His senses. Therefore there was no need for Paul to be withdrawn from his senses in order for him to see the essence of God.

Objection 3. Further, after seeing God in His essence, Paul remembered what he had seen in that vision; hence he said (2 Cor. 12:4): "He heard secret words, which it is not granted to man to utter." Now the memory belongs to the sensitive faculty according to the Philosopher (De Mem. et Remin. i). Therefore it seems that Paul, while seeing the essence of God, was not withdrawn from his senses.

On the contrary, Augustine says (Gen. ad lit. xii, 27): "Unless a man in some way depart this life, whether by going altogether out of his body or by turning away and withdrawing from his carnal senses, so that he truly knows not as the Apostle said, whether he be in the body or out of the body, he is not rapt and caught up into that vision.*"

I answer that, The Divine essence cannot be seen by man through any cognitive power other than the intellect. Now the human intellect does not turn to intelligible objects except by means of the phantasms[†] which it takes from the senses through the intelligible species; and it is in considering these phantasms that the intellect judges of and coordinates sensible objects. Hence in any operation that requires abstraction of the intellect from phantasms, there must be also withdrawal of the

intellect from the senses. Now in the state of the wayfarer it is necessary for man's intellect, if it see God's essence, to be withdrawn from phantasms. For God's essence cannot be seen by means of a phantasm, nor indeed by any created intelligible species[‡], since God's essence infinitely transcends not only all bodies, which are represented by phantasms, but also all intelligible creatures. Now when man's intellect is uplifted to the sublime vision of God's essence, it is necessary that his mind's whole attention should be summoned to that purpose in such a way that he understand naught else by phantasms, and be absorbed entirely in God. Therefore it is impossible for man while a wayfarer to see God in His essence without being withdrawn from his senses.

Reply to Objection 1. As stated above (a. 3, obj. 2), after the resurrection, in the blessed who see God in His essence, there will be an overflow from the intellect to the lower powers and even to the body. Hence it is in keeping with the rule itself of the divine vision that the soul will turn towards phantasms and sensible objects. But there is no such overflow in those who are raptured, as stated (a. 3, obj. 2, ad 2), and consequently the comparison fails.

Reply to Objection 2. The intellect of Christ's soul was glorified by the habit of the light of glory, whereby He saw the Divine essence much more fully than an angel or a man. He was, however, a wayfarer on account of the passibility of His body, in respect of which He was "made a little lower than the angels" (Heb. 2:9), by dispensation, and not on account of any defect on the part of His intellect. Hence there is no comparison between Him and other wayfarers.

Reply to Objection 3. Paul, after seeing God in His essence, remembered what he had known in that vision, by means of certain intelligible species that remained in his intellect by way of habit; even as in the absence of the sensible object, certain impressions remain in the soul which it recollects when it turns to the phantasms. And so this was the knowledge that he was unable wholly to think over or express in words.

[¶] Cf. Ia, q. 108, a. 1 * The text of St. Augustine reads: "when he is rapt," etc. [†] Cf. Ia, q. 84, a. 7 [‡] Cf. Ia, q. 12, a. 2

Objection 1. It would seem that, while in this state, Paul's soul was wholly separated from his body. For the Apostle says (2 Cor. 5:6,7): "While we are in the body we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith, and not by sight"*. Now, while in that state, Paul was not absent from the Lord, for he saw Him by a species, as stated above (a. 3). Therefore he was not in the body.

Objection 2. Further, a power of the soul cannot be uplifted above the soul's essence wherein it is rooted. Now in this rapture the intellect, which is a power of the soul, was withdrawn from its bodily surroundings through being uplifted to divine contemplation. Much more therefore was the essence of the soul separated from the body.

Objection 3. Further, the forces of the vegetative soul are more material than those of the sensitive soul. Now in order for him to be rapt to the vision of God, it was necessary for him to be withdrawn from the forces of the sensitive soul, as stated above (a. 4). Much more, therefore, was it necessary for him to be withdrawn from the forces of the vegetative soul. Now when these forces cease to operate, the soul is no longer in any way united to the body. Therefore it would seem that in Paul's rapture it was necessary for the soul to be wholly separated from the body.

On the contrary, Augustine says (Ep. CXLVII, 13, ad Paulin.; de videndo Deum): "It is not incredible that this sublime revelation" (namely, that they should see God in His essence) "was vouchsafed certain saints, without their departing this life so completely as to leave nothing but a corpse for burial." Therefore it was not necessary for Paul's soul, when in rapture, to be wholly separated from his body.

I answer that, As stated above (a. 1, obj. 1), in the rapture of which we are speaking now, man is uplifted by God's power, "from that which is according to nature

to that which is above nature." Wherefore two things have to be considered: first, what pertains to man according to nature; secondly, what has to be done by God in man above his nature. Now, since the soul is united to the body as its natural form, it belongs to the soul to have a natural disposition to understand by turning to phantasms; and this is not withdrawn by the divine power from the soul in rapture, since its state undergoes no change, as stated above (a. 3, ad 2,3). Yet, this state remaining, actual conversion to phantasms and sensible objects is withdrawn from the soul, lest it be hindered from being uplifted to that which transcends all phantasms, as stated above (a. 4). Therefore it was not necessary that his soul in rapture should be so separated from the body as to cease to be united thereto as its form; and yet it was necessary for his intellect to be withdrawn from phantasms and the perception of sensible objects.

Reply to Objection 1. In this rapture Paul was absent from the Lord as regards his state, since he was still in the state of a wayfarer, but not as regards the act by which he saw God by a species, as stated above (a. 3, ad 2,3).

Reply to Objection 2. A faculty of the soul is not uplifted by the natural power above the mode becoming the essence of the soul; but it can be uplifted by the divine power to something higher, even as a body by the violence of a stronger power is lifted up above the place befitting it according to its specific nature.

Reply to Objection 3. The forces of the vegetative soul do not operate through the soul being intent thereon, as do the sensitive forces, but by way of nature. Hence in the case of rapture there is no need for withdrawal from them, as from the sensitive powers, whose operations would lessen the intentness of the soul on intellectual knowledge.

Objection 1. It would seem that Paul was not ignorant whether his soul were separated from his body. For he says (2 Cor. 12:2): "I know a man in Christ rapt even to the third heaven." Now man denotes something composed of soul and body; and rapture differs from death. Seemingly therefore he knew that his soul was not separated from his body by death, which is the more probable seeing that this is the common opinion of the Doctors.

Objection 2. Further, it appears from the same words of the Apostle that he knew whither he was rapt, since it was "to the third heaven." Now this shows that he knew whether he was in the body or not, for if he knew the third heaven to be something corporeal, he must have known that his soul was not separated from

his body, since a corporeal thing cannot be an object of sight save through the body. Therefore it would seem that he was not ignorant whether his soul were separated from his body.

Objection 3. Further, Augustine says (Gen. ad lit. xii, 28) that "when in rapture, he saw God with the same vision as the saints see Him in heaven." Now from the very fact that the saints see God, they know whether their soul is separated from their body. Therefore Paul too knew this.

On the contrary, It is written (2 Cor. 12:3): "Whether in the body, or out of the body, I know not, God knoweth."

I answer that, The true answer to this question must be gathered from the Apostle's very words, whereby he

* 'Per speciem,' i.e. by an intelligible species

says he knew something, namely that he was “rapt even to the third heaven,” and that something he knew not, namely “whether” he were “in the body or out of the body.” This may be understood in two ways. First, the words “whether in the body or out of the body” may refer not to the very being of the man who was rapt (as though he knew not whether his soul were in his body or not), but to the mode of rapture, so that he ignored whether his body besides his soul, or, on the other hand, his soul alone, were rapt to the third heaven. Thus Ezechiel is stated (Ezech. 8:3) to have been “brought in the vision of God into Jerusalem.” This was the explanation of a certain Jew according to Jerome (Prolog. super Daniel.), where he says that “lastly our Apostle” (thus said the Jew) “durst not assert that he was rapt in his body, but said: ‘Whether in the body or out of the body, I know not.’”

Augustine, however, disapproves of this explanation (Gen. ad lit. xii, 3 seqq.) for this reason that the Apostle states that he knew he was rapt even to the third heaven. Wherefore he knew it to be really the third heaven to which he was rapt, and not an imaginary likeness of the third heaven: otherwise if he gave the name of third heaven to an imaginary third heaven, in the same way he might state that he was rapt in the body, meaning, by body, an image of his body, such as appears in one’s dreams. Now if he knew it to be really the third heaven, it follows that either he knew it to be something spiritual and incorporeal, and then his body could not be rapt thither; or he knew it to be something corporeal, and then his soul could not be rapt thither without his body, unless it were separated from his body. Consequently we must explain the matter otherwise, by saying that the Apostle knew himself to be rapt both in soul and body, but that he ignored how his soul stood in relation to his body, to wit, whether it were accompanied by his body or not.

Here we find a diversity of opinions. For some say that the Apostle knew his soul to be united to his body as its form, but ignored whether it were abstracted from its senses, or again whether it were abstracted from the operations of the vegetative soul. But he could not but know that it was abstracted from the senses, seeing that he knew himself to be rapt; and as to his being abstracted from the operation of the vegetative soul, this was not of such importance as to require him to be so careful in mentioning it. It follows, then, that the Apostle ignored whether his soul were united to his body as its form, or separated from it by death. Some, however, granting this say that the Apostle did not consider the

matter while he was in rapture, because he was wholly intent upon God, but that afterwards he questioned the point, when taking cognizance of what he had seen. But this also is contrary to the Apostle’s words, for he there distinguishes between the past and what happened subsequently, since he states that at the present time he knows that he was rapt “fourteen years ago,” and that at the present time he knows not “whether he was in the body or out of the body.”

Consequently we must assert that both before and after he ignored whether his soul were separated from his body. Wherefore Augustine (Gen. ad lit. xii, 5), after discussing the question at length, concludes: “Perhaps then we must infer that he ignored whether, when he was rapt to the third heaven, his soul was in his body (in the same way as the soul is in the body, when we speak of a living body either of a waking or of a sleeping man, or of one that is withdrawn from his bodily senses during ecstasy), or whether his soul went out of his body altogether, so that his body lay dead.”

Reply to Objection 1. Sometimes by the figure of synecdoche a part of man, especially the soul which is the principal part, denotes a man. or again we might take this to mean that he whom he states to have been rapt was a man not at the time of his rapture, but fourteen years afterwards: for he says “I know a man,” not “I know a rapt man.” Again nothing hinders death brought about by God being called rapture; and thus Augustine says (Gen. ad lit. xii, 3): “If the Apostle doubted the matter, who of us will dare to be certain about it?” Wherefore those who have something to say on this subject speak with more conjecture than certainty.

Reply to Objection 2. The Apostle knew that either the heaven in question was something incorporeal, or that he saw something incorporeal in that heaven; yet this could be done by his intellect, even without his soul being separated from his body.

Reply to Objection 3. Paul’s vision, while he was in rapture, was like the vision of the blessed in one respect, namely as to the thing seen; and, unlike, in another respect, namely as to the mode of seeing, because he saw not so perfectly as do the saints in heaven. Hence Augustine says (Gen. ad lit. xii, 36): “Although, when the Apostle was rapt from his carnal senses to the third heaven, he lacked that full and perfect knowledge of things which is in the angels, in that he knew not whether he was in the body, or out of the body, this will surely not be lacking after reunion with the body in the resurrection of the dead, when this corruptible will put on incorruption.”