

**THIRD PART, QUESTION 10**  
**Of the Beatific Knowledge of Christ's Soul**  
*(In Four Articles)*

Now we must consider each of the aforesaid knowledges. Since, however, we have treated of the Divine knowledge in the Ia, q. 14, it now remains to speak of the three others: (1) of the beatific knowledge; (2) of the infused knowledge; (3) of the acquired knowledge.

But again, because much has been said in the Ia, q. 12, of the beatific knowledge, which consists in the vision of God, we shall speak here only of such things as belong properly to the soul of Christ. Under this head there are four points of inquiry:

- (1) Whether the soul of Christ comprehended the Word or the Divine Essence?
- (2) Whether it knew all things in the Word?
- (3) Whether the soul of Christ knew the infinite in the Word?
- (4) Whether it saw the Word or the Divine Essence clearer than did any other creature?

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**Whether the soul of Christ comprehended the Word or the Divine Essence?**

IIIa q. 10 a. 1

**Objection 1.** It would seem that the soul of Christ comprehended and comprehends the Word or Divine Essence. For Isidore says (*De Summo Bono* i, 3) that “the Trinity is known only to Itself and to the Man assumed.” Therefore the Man assumed communicates with the Holy Trinity in that knowledge of Itself which is proper to the Trinity. Now this is the knowledge of comprehension. Therefore the soul of Christ comprehends the Divine Essence.

**Objection 2.** Further, to be united to God in personal being is greater than to be united by vision. But as Damascene says (*De Fide Orth.* iii, 6), “the whole Godhead in one Person is united to the human nature in Christ.” Therefore much more is the whole Divine Nature seen by the soul of Christ; and hence it would seem that the soul of Christ comprehended the Divine Essence.

**Objection 3.** Further, what belongs by nature to the Son of God belongs by grace to the Son of Man, as Augustine says (*De Trin.* i, 13). But to comprehend the Divine Essence belongs by nature to the Son of God. Therefore it belongs by grace to the Son of Man; and thus it seems that the soul of Christ comprehended the Divine Essence by grace.

**On the contrary,** Augustine says (*Qq.* lxxxiii, qu. 14): “Whatsoever comprehends itself is finite to itself.” But the Divine Essence is not finite with respect to the soul of Christ, since It infinitely exceeds it. Therefore the soul of Christ does not comprehend the Word.

**I answer that,** As is plain from q. 2, Aa. 1,6, the union of the two natures in the Person of Christ took place in such a way that the properties of both natures remained unconfused, i.e. “the uncreated remained uncreated, and the created remained within the limits of the creature,” as Damascene says (*De Fide Orth.* iii,

3,4). Now it is impossible for any creature to comprehend the Divine Essence, as was shown in the Ia, q. 12, Aa. 1,4,7, seeing that the infinite is not comprehended by the finite. And hence it must be said that the soul of Christ nowise comprehends the Divine Essence.

**Reply to Objection 1.** The Man assumed is reckoned with the Divine Trinity in the knowledge of Itself, not indeed as regards comprehension, but by reason of a certain most excellent knowledge above the rest of creatures.

**Reply to Objection 2.** Not even in the union by personal being does the human nature comprehend the Word of God or the Divine Nature, for although it was wholly united to the human nature in the one Person of the Son, yet the whole power of the Godhead was not circumscribed by the human nature. Hence Augustine says (*Ep. ad Volusian.* cxxxvii): “I would have you know that it is not the Christian doctrine that God was united to flesh in such a manner as to quit or lose the care of the world’s government, neither did He narrow or reduce it when He transferred it to that little body.” So likewise the soul of Christ sees the whole Essence of God, yet does not comprehend It; since it does not see It totally, i.e. not as perfectly as It is knowable, as was said in the Ia, q. 12, a. 7.

**Reply to Objection 3.** This saying of Augustine is to be understood of the grace of union, by reason of which all that is said of the Son of God in His Divine Nature is also said of the Son of Man on account of the identity of suppositum. And in this way it may be said that the Son of Man is a comprehensor of the Divine Essence, not indeed by His soul, but in His Divine Nature; even as we may also say that the Son of Man is the Creator.

**Objection 2.** It would seem that the soul of Christ does not know all things in the Word. For it is written (Mk. 13:32): “But of that day or hour no man knoweth, neither the angels in heaven nor the Son, but the Father.” Therefore He does not know all things in the Word.

**Objection 2.** Further, the more perfectly anyone knows a principle the more he knows in the principle. But God sees His Essence more perfectly than the soul of Christ does. Therefore He knows more than the soul of Christ knows in the Word. Therefore the soul of Christ does not know all things in the Word.

**Objection 3.** Further, the extent depends on the number of things known. If, therefore, the soul of Christ knew in the Word all that the Word knows, it would follow that the knowledge of the soul of Christ would equal the Divine knowledge, i.e. the created would equal the uncreated, which is impossible.

**On the contrary,** on Apoc. 5:12, “The Lamb that was slain is worthy to receive. . . divinity and wisdom,” a gloss says, i.e. “the knowledge of all things.”

**I answer that,** When it is inquired whether Christ knows all things in the Word, “all things” may be taken in two ways: First, properly, to stand for all that in any way whatsoever is, will be, or was done, said, or thought, by whomsoever and at any time. And in this way it must be said that the soul of Christ knows all things in the Word. For every created intellect knows in the Word, not all simply, but so many more things the more perfectly it sees the Word. Yet no beatified intellect fails to know in the Word whatever pertains to itself. Now to Christ and to His dignity all things to some extent belong, inasmuch as all things are subject to Him. Moreover, He has been appointed Judge of all by God, “because He is the Son of Man,” as is said Jn. 5:27; and therefore the soul of Christ knows in the Word all things existing in whatever time, and the thoughts of men, of which He is the Judge, so that what is said of Him (Jn. 2:25), “For He knew what was in man,” can be understood not merely of the Divine knowledge, but also of His soul’s knowledge, which it had in the Word. Secondly, “all things” may be taken widely, as extending not merely to such things as are in act at some time, but even to such things as are in potentiality, and never have been nor ever will be reduced to act. Now some of these are in the Divine power alone, and not all of these does the soul of Christ know in the Word. For this would be to comprehend all that God could do, which would be to comprehend the Divine power, and, consequently, the Divine Essence. For every power is known from the knowledge of all it can do. Some, however, are not only in the power of God, but also in the power of the creature; and all of these the soul of Christ knows in the Word; for it comprehends in the Word the essence of every creature, and, consequently, its power and virtue, and all things that are in the power of the creature.

**Reply to Objection 1.** Arius and Eunomius understood this saying, not of the knowledge of the soul, which they did not hold to be in Christ, as was said above (q. 9, a. 1), but of the Divine knowledge of the Son, Whom they held to be less than the Father as regards knowledge. But this will not stand, since all things were made by the Word of God, as is said Jn. 1:3, and, amongst other things, all times were made by Him. Now He is not ignorant of anything that was made by Him.

He is said, therefore, not to know the day and the hour of the Judgment, for that He does not make it known, since, on being asked by the apostles (Acts 1:7), He was unwilling to reveal it; and, on the contrary, we read (Gn. 22:12): “Now I know that thou fearest God,” i.e. “Now I have made thee know.” But the Father is said to know, because He imparted this knowledge to the Son. Hence, by saying but the Father, we are given to understand that the Son knows, not merely in the Divine Nature, but also in the human, because, as Chrysostom argues (Hom. lxxviii in Matth.), if it is given to Christ as man to know how to judge—which is greater—much more is it given to Him to know the less, viz. the time of Judgment. Origen, however (in Matth. Tract. xxx), expounds it of His body, which is the Church, which is ignorant of this time. Lastly, some say this is to be understood of the adoptive, and not of the natural Son of God.

**Reply to Objection 2.** God knows His Essence so much the more perfectly than the soul of Christ, as He comprehends it. And hence He knows all things, not merely whatever are in act at any time, which things He is said to know by knowledge of vision, but also whatever He Himself can do, which He is said to know by simple intelligence, as was shown in the Ia, q. 14, a. 9. Therefore the soul of Christ knows all things that God knows in Himself by the knowledge of vision, but not all that God knows in Himself by knowledge of simple intelligence; and thus in Himself God knows many more things than the soul of Christ.

**Reply to Objection 3.** The extent of knowledge depends not merely on the number of knowable things, but also on the clearness of the knowledge. Therefore, although the knowledge of the soul of Christ which He has in the Word is equal to the knowledge of vision as regards the number of things known, nevertheless the knowledge of God infinitely exceeds the knowledge of the soul of Christ in clearness of cognition, since the uncreated light of the Divine intellect infinitely exceeds any created light received by the soul of Christ; although, absolutely speaking, the Divine knowledge exceeds the knowledge of the soul of Christ, not only as regards the mode of knowing, but also as regards the number of things known, as was stated above.

**Objection 1.** It would seem that the soul of Christ cannot know the infinite in the Word. For that the infinite should be known is repugnant to the definition of the infinite which (Phys. iii, 63) is said to be that “from which, however much we may take, there always remains something to be taken.” But it is impossible for the definition to be separated from the thing defined, since this would mean that contradictories exist together. Therefore it is impossible that the soul of Christ knows the infinite.

**Objection 2.** Further, the knowledge of the infinite is infinite. But the knowledge of the soul of Christ cannot be infinite, because its capacity is finite, since it is created. Therefore the soul of Christ cannot know the infinite.

**Objection 3.** Further, there can be nothing greater than the infinite. But more is contained in the Divine knowledge, absolutely speaking, than in the knowledge of Christ’s soul, as stated above (a. 2). Therefore the soul of Christ does not know the infinite.

**On the contrary,** The soul of Christ knows all its power and all it can do. Now it can cleanse infinite sins, according to 1 Jn. 2:2: “He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.” Therefore the soul of Christ knows the infinite.

**I answer that,** Knowledge regards only being, since being and truth are convertible. Now a thing is said to be a being in two ways: First, simply, i.e. whatever is a being in act; secondly, relatively, i.e. whatever is a being in potentiality. And because, as is said *Metaph. ix, 20*, everything is known as it is in act, and not as it is in potentiality, knowledge primarily and essentially regards being in act, and secondarily regards being in potentiality, which is not knowable of itself, but inasmuch as that in whose power it exists is known. Hence, with regard to the first mode of knowledge, the soul of Christ does not know the infinite. Because there is not an infinite number in act, even though we were to reckon all that are in act at any time whatsoever, since the state of generation and corruption will not last for ever: consequently there is a certain number not only of things lacking generation and corruption, but also of things capable of generation and corruption. But with regard to the other mode of knowing, the soul of Christ knows infinite things in the Word, for it knows, as stated above (a. 2), all that is in the power of the creature. Hence, since in the power of the creature there is an infinite number of things, it knows the infinite, as it were, by a certain knowledge of simple intelligence, and not by a knowledge of vision.

**Reply to Objection 1.** As we said in the *Ia, q. 8, a. 1*, the infinite is taken in two ways. First, on the part of a form, and thus we have the negatively infinite, i.e. a form or act not limited by being received into matter or a subject; and this infinite of itself is most knowable on account of the perfection of the act, although it is

not comprehensible by the finite power of the creature; for thus God is said to be infinite. And this infinite the soul of Christ knows, yet does not comprehend. Secondly, there is the infinite as regards matter, which is taken privatively, i.e. inasmuch as it has not the form it ought naturally to have, and in this way we have infinite in quantity. Now such an infinite of itself, is unknown: inasmuch as it is, as it were, matter with privation of form as is said *Phys. iii, 65*. But all knowledge is by form or act. Therefore if this infinite is to be known according to its mode of being, it cannot be known. For its mode is that part be taken after part, as is said *Phys. iii, 62,63*. And in this way it is true that, if we take something from it, i.e. taking part after part, there always remains something to be taken. But as material things can be received by the intellect immaterially, and many things unitedly, so can infinite things be received by the intellect, not after the manner of infinite, but finitely; and thus what are in themselves infinite are, in the intellect of the knower, finite. And in this way the soul of Christ knows an infinite number of things, inasmuch as it knows them not by discoursing from one to another, but in a certain unity, i.e. in any creature in whose potentiality infinite things exist, and principally in the Word Himself.

**Reply to Objection 2.** There is nothing to hinder a thing from being infinite in one way and finite in another, as when in quantities we imagine a surface infinite in length and finite in breadth. Hence, if there were an infinite number of men, they would have a relative infinity, i.e. in multitude; but, as regards the essence, they would be finite, since the essence of all would be limited to one specific nature. But what is simply infinite in its essence is God, as was said in the *Ia, q. 7, a. 2*. Now the proper object of the intellect is “what a thing is,” as is said *De Anima iii, 26*, to which pertains the notion of the species. And thus the soul of Christ, since it has a finite capacity, attains to, but does not comprehend, what is simply infinite in essence, as stated above (a. 1). But the infinite in potentiality which is in creatures can be comprehended by the soul of Christ, since it is compared to that soul according to its essence, in which respect it is not infinite. For even our intellect understands a universal—for example, the nature of a genus or species, which in a manner has infinity, inasmuch as it can be predicated of an infinite number.

**Reply to Objection 3.** That which is infinite in every way can be but one. Hence the Philosopher says (*De Coel. i, 2,3*) that, since bodies have dimensions in every part, there cannot be several infinite bodies. Yet if anything were infinite in one way only, nothing would hinder the existence of several such infinite things; as if we were to suppose several lines of infinite length drawn on a surface of finite breadth. Hence, because infinitude is not a substance, but is accidental to things that are said to be infinite, as the Philosopher says (*Phys. iii, 37,38*);

as the infinite is multiplied by different subjects, so, too, a property of the infinite must be multiplied, in such a way that it belongs to each of them according to that particular subject. Now it is a property of the infinite that nothing is greater than it. Hence, if we take one infinite line, there is nothing greater in it than the infinite; so, too, if we take any one of other infinite lines, it is plain that each has infinite parts. Therefore of necessity in this particular line there is nothing greater than all these infinite parts; yet in another or a third line there will be more infinite parts besides these. We observe this in numbers also, for the species of even numbers are infinite, and likewise the species of odd numbers

are infinite; yet there are more even and odd numbers than even. And thus it must be said that nothing is greater than the simply and in every way infinite; but than the infinite which is limited in some respect, nothing is greater in that order; yet we may suppose something greater outside that order. In this way, therefore, there are infinite things in the potentiality of the creature, and yet there are more in the power of God than in the potentiality of the creature. So, too, the soul of Christ knows infinite things by the knowledge of simple intelligence; yet God knows more by this manner of knowledge or understanding.

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**Whether the soul of Christ sees the Word or the Divine Essence more clearly than does any other creature?**

IIIa q. 10 a. 4

**Objection 1.** It would seem that the soul of Christ does not see the Word more perfectly than does any other creature. For the perfection of knowledge depends upon the medium of knowing; as the knowledge we have by means of a demonstrative syllogism is more perfect than that which we have by means of a probable syllogism. But all the blessed see the Word immediately in the Divine Essence Itself, as was said in the Ia, q. 12, a. 2. Therefore the soul of Christ does not see the Word more perfectly than any other creature.

**Objection 2.** Further, the perfection of vision does not exceed the power of seeing. But the rational power of a soul such as is the soul of Christ is below the intellectual power of an angel, as is plain from Dionysius (Coel. Hier. iv). Therefore the soul of Christ did not see the Word more perfectly than the angels.

**Objection 3.** Further, God sees His Word infinitely more perfectly than does the soul of Christ. Hence there are infinite possible mediate degrees between the manner in which God sees His Word, and the manner in which the soul of Christ sees the Word. Therefore we cannot assert that the soul of Christ sees the Word or the Divine Essence more perfectly than does every other creature.

**On the contrary,** The Apostle says (Eph. 1:20,21) that God set Christ “on His right hand in the heavenly places, above all principality and power and virtue and dominion and every name that is named not only in this world, but also in that which is to come.” But in that heavenly glory the higher anyone is the more perfectly does he know God. Therefore the soul of Christ sees God more perfectly than does any other creature.

**I answer that,** The vision of the Divine Essence is granted to all the blessed by a partaking of the Divine

light which is shed upon them from the fountain of the Word of God, according to Ecclus. 1:5: “The Word of God on high is the fountain of Wisdom.” Now the soul of Christ, since it is united to the Word in person, is more closely joined to the Word of God than any other creature. Hence it more fully receives the light in which God is seen by the Word Himself than any other creature. And therefore more perfectly than the rest of creatures it sees the First Truth itself, which is the Essence of God; hence it is written (Jn. 1:14): “And we saw His glory, the glory as it were of the Only-begotten of the Father,” “full” not only of “grace” but also of “truth.”

**Reply to Objection 1.** Perfection of knowledge, on the part of the thing known, depends on the medium; but as regards the knower, it depends on the power or habit. And hence it is that even amongst men one sees a conclusion in a medium more perfectly than another does. And in this way the soul of Christ, which is filled with a more abundant light, knows the Divine Essence more perfectly than do the other blessed, although all see the Divine Essence in itself.

**Reply to Objection 2.** The vision of the Divine Essence exceeds the natural power of any creature, as was said in the Ia, q. 12, a. 4. And hence the degrees thereof depend rather on the order of grace in which Christ is supreme, than on the order of nature, in which the angelic nature is placed before the human.

**Reply to Objection 3.** As stated above (q. 7, a. 12), there cannot be a greater grace than the grace of Christ with respect to the union with the Word; and the same is to be said of the perfection of the Divine vision; although, absolutely speaking, there could be a higher and more sublime degree by the infinity of the Divine power.