

Objection 1. It would seem that Christ received knowledge from the angels. For it is written (Lk. 22:43) that “there appeared to Him an angel from heaven, strengthening Him.” But we are strengthened by the comforting words of a teacher, according to Job 4:3,4: “Behold thou hast taught many and hast strengthened the weary hand. Thy words have confirmed them that were staggering.” Therefore Christ was taught by angels.

Objection 2. Further, Dionysius says (Coel. Hier. iv): “For I see that even Jesus—the super-substantial substance of supercelestial substances—when without change He took our substance upon Himself, was subject in obedience to the instructions of the Father and God by the angels.” Hence it seems that even Christ wished to be subject to the ordinations of the Divine law, whereby men are taught by means of angels.

Objection 3. Further, as in the natural order the human body is subject to the celestial bodies, so likewise is the human mind to angelic minds. Now Christ’s body was subject to the impressions of the heavenly bodies, for He felt the heat in summer and the cold in winter, and other human passions. Therefore His human mind was subject to the illuminations of supercelestial spirits.

On the contrary, Dionysius says (Coel. Hier. vii) that “the highest angels question Jesus, and learn the knowledge of His Divine work, and of the flesh assumed for us; and Jesus teaches them directly.” Now to teach and to be taught do not belong to the same. Therefore Christ did not receive knowledge from the angels.

I answer that, Since the human soul is midway between spiritual substances and corporeal things, it is perfected naturally in two ways. First by knowledge received from sensible things; secondly, by knowledge imprinted or infused by the illumination of spiritual substances. Now in both these ways the soul of Christ was perfected;

first by empirical knowledge of sensible things, for which there is no need of angelic light, since the light of the active intellect suffices; secondly, by the higher impression of infused knowledge, which He received directly from God. For as His soul was united to the Word above the common mode, in unity of person, so above the common manner of men was it filled with knowledge and grace by the Word of God Himself; and not by the medium of angels, who in their beginning received the knowledge of things by the influence of the Word, as Augustine says (Gen. ad lit. ii, 8).

Reply to Objection 1. This strengthening by the angel was for the purpose not of instructing Him, but of proving the truth of His human nature. Hence Bede says (on Lk. 22:43): “In testimony of both natures are the angels said to have ministered to Him and to have strengthened Him. For the Creator did not need help from His creature; but having become man, even as it was for our sake that He was sad, so was it for our sake that He was strengthened,” i.e. in order that our faith in the Incarnation might be strengthened.

Reply to Objection 2. Dionysius says that Christ was subject to the angelic instructions, not by reason of Himself, but by reason of what happened at His Incarnation, and as regards the care of Him whilst He was a child. Hence in the same place he adds that “Jesus’ withdrawal to Egypt decreed by the Father is announced to Joseph by angels, and again His return to Judaea from Egypt.”

Reply to Objection 3. The Son of God assumed a passible body (as will be said hereafter (q. 14, a. 1)) and a soul perfect in knowledge and grace (q. 14, a. 1, ad 1; a. 4). Hence His body was rightly subject to the impression of heavenly bodies; but His soul was not subject to the impression of heavenly spirits.