

Objection 1. It would seem that in Christ there was not the gift of prophecy. For prophecy implies a certain obscure and imperfect knowledge, according to Num. 12:6: “If there be among you a prophet of the Lord, I will appear to him in a vision, or I will speak to him in a dream.” But Christ had full and unveiled knowledge, much more than Moses, of whom it is subjoined that “plainly and not by riddles and figures doth he see God” (Num. 6:8). Therefore we ought not to admit prophecy in Christ.

Objection 2. Further, as faith has to do with what is not seen, and hope with what is not possessed, so prophecy has to do with what is not present, but distant; for a prophet means, as it were, a teller of far-off things. But in Christ there could be neither faith nor hope, as was said above (Aa. 3,4). Hence prophecy also ought not to be admitted in Christ.

Objection 3. Further, a prophet is in an inferior order to an angel; hence Moses, who was the greatest of the prophets, as was said above (IIa IIae, q. 174, a. 4) is said (Acts 7:38) to have spoken with an angel in the desert. But Christ was “made lower than the angels,” not as to the knowledge of His soul, but only as regards the sufferings of His body, as is shown Heb. 2:9. Therefore it seems that Christ was not a prophet.

On the contrary, It is written of Him (Dt. 18:15): “Thy God will raise up to thee a prophet of thy nation and of thy brethren,” and He says of Himself (Mat. 13:57; Jn. 4:44): “A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country.”

I answer that, A prophet means, as it were, a teller or seer of far-off things, inasmuch as he knows and announces what things are far from men’s senses, as Augustine says (Contra Faust. xvi, 18). Now we must bear in mind that no one can be called a prophet for knowing and announcing what is distant from others, with whom he is not. And this is clear in regard to place and time. For if anyone living in France were to know and announce to others living in France what things were transpiring in Syria, it would be prophetic, as Eliseus told Giezi (4

Kings 5:26) how the man had leaped down from his chariot to meet him. But if anyone living in Syria were to announce what things were there, it would not be prophetic. And the same appears in regard to time. For it was prophetic of Isaias to announce that Cyrus, King of the Persians, would rebuild the temple of God, as is clear from Is. 44:28. But it was not prophetic of Esdras to write it, in whose time it took place. Hence if God or angels, or even the blessed, know and announce what is beyond our knowing, this does not pertain to prophecy, since they nowise touch our state. Now Christ before His passion touched our state, inasmuch as He was not merely a “comprehensor,” but a “wayfarer.” Hence it was prophetic in Him to know and announce what was beyond the knowledge of other “wayfarers”: and for this reason He is called a prophet.

Reply to Objection 1. These words do not prove that enigmatical knowledge, viz. by dream and vision, belongs to the nature of prophecy; but the comparison is drawn between other prophets, who saw Divine things in dreams and visions, and Moses, who saw God plainly and not by riddles, and who yet is called a prophet, according to Dt. 24:10: “And there arose no more a prophet in Israel like unto Moses.” Nevertheless it may be said that although Christ had full and unveiled knowledge as regards the intellectual part, yet in the imaginative part He had certain similitudes, in which Divine things could be viewed, inasmuch as He was not only a “comprehensor,” but a “wayfarer.”

Reply to Objection 2. Faith regards such things as are unseen by him who believes; and hope, too, is of such things as are not possessed by the one who hopes; but prophecy is of such things as are beyond the sense of men, with whom the prophet dwells and converses in this state of life. And hence faith and hope are repugnant to the perfection of Christ’s beatitude; but prophecy is not.

Reply to Objection 3. Angels, being “comprehensors,” are above prophets, who are merely “wayfarers”; but not above Christ, Who was both a “comprehensor” and a “wayfarer.”