

Objection 1. It would seem fitting that Christ should receive a dowry. For the saints will be conformed to Christ through glory, according to Phil. 3:21, “Who will reform the body of our lowliness made like to the body of His glory.” Therefore Christ also will have a dowry.

Objection 2. Further, in the spiritual marriage a dowry is given in likeness to a carnal marriage. Now there is a spiritual marriage in Christ, which is peculiar to Him, namely of the two natures in one Person, in regard to which the human nature in Him is said to have been espoused by the Word, as a gloss* has it on Ps. 18:6, “He hath set His tabernacle in the sun,” etc., and Apoc. 21:3, “Behold the tabernacle of God with men.” Therefore it is fitting that Christ should have a dowry.

Objection 3. Further, Augustine says (De Doctr. Christ. iii) that Christ, according to the Rule† of Tyconius, on account of the unity of the mystic body that exists between the head and its members, calls Himself also the Bride and not only the Bridegroom, as may be gathered from Is. 61:10, “As a bridegroom decked with a crown, and as a bride adorned with her jewels.” Since then a dowry is due to the bride, it would seem that Christ ought to receive a dowry.

Objection 4. Further, a dowry is due to all the members of the Church, since the Church is the spouse. But Christ is a member of the Church according to 1 Cor. 12:27, “You are the body of Christ, and members of member, i.e. of Christ,” according to a gloss. Therefore the dowry is due to Christ.

Objection 5. Further, Christ has perfect vision, fruition, and joy. Now these are the dowries. Therefore, etc.

On the contrary, A distinction of persons is requisite between the bridegroom and the bride. But in Christ there is nothing personally distinct from the Son of God Who is the Bridegroom, as stated in Jn. 3:29, “He that hath the bride is the bridegroom.” Therefore since the dowry is allotted to the bride or for the bride, it would seem unfitting for Christ to have a dowry.

Further, the same person does not both give and receive a dowry. But it is Christ Who gives spiritual dowries. Therefore it is not fitting that Christ should have a dowry.

I answer that, There are two opinions on this point. For some say that there is a threefold union in Christ. One is the union of concord, whereby He is united to God in the bond of love; another is the union of condescension, whereby the human nature is united to the Divine; the third is the union whereby Christ is united to the Church. They say, then, that as regards the first two unions it is

fitting for Christ to have the dowries as such, but as regards the third, it is fitting for Him to have the dowries in the most excellent degree, considered as to that in which they consist, but not considered as dowries; because in this union Christ is the bridegroom and the Church the bride, and a dowry is given to the bride as regards property and control, although it is given to the bridegroom as to use. But this does not seem congruous. For in the union of Christ with the Father by the concord of love, even if we consider Him as God, there is not said to be a marriage, since it implies no subjection such as is required in the bride towards the bridegroom. Nor again in the union of the human nature with the Divine, whether we consider the Personal union or that which regards the conformity of will, can there be a dowry, properly speaking, for three reasons. First, because in a marriage where a dowry is given there should be likeness of nature between bridegroom and bride, and this is lacking in the union of the human nature with the Divine; secondly, because there is required a distinction of persons, and the human nature is not personally distinct from the Word; thirdly, because a dowry is given when the bride is first taken to the dwelling of the bridegroom and thus would seem to belong to the bride, who from being not united becomes united; whereas the human nature, which was assumed into the unity of Person by the Word, never was otherwise than perfectly united. Wherefore in the opinion of others we should say that the notion of dowry is either altogether unbecoming to Christ, or not so properly as to the saints; but that the things which we call dowries befit Him in the highest degree.

Reply to Objection 1. This conformity must be understood to refer to the thing which is a dowry and not to the notion of a dowry being in Christ: for it is not requisite that the thing in which we are conformed to Christ should be in the same way in Christ and in us.

Reply to Objection 2. Human nature is not properly said to be a bride in its union with the Word, since the distinction of persons, which is requisite between bridegroom and bride, is not observed therein. That human nature is sometimes described as being espoused in reference to its union with the Word is because it has a certain act of the bride, in that it is united to the Bridegroom inseparably, and in this union is subject to the Word and ruled by the Word, as the bride by the bridegroom.

Reply to Objection 3. If Christ is sometimes spoken of as the Bride, this is not because He is the Bride in very truth, but in so far as He personifies His spouse, namely the Church, who is united to Him spiritually. Hence nothing hinders Him, in this way of speaking, from being said

* St. Augustine, De Consensu Evang. i, 40 † Liber regularum

to have the dowries, not that He Himself is dowered, but the Church.

Reply to Objection 4. The term Church is taken in two senses. For sometimes it denotes the body only, which is united to Christ as its Head. In this way alone has the Church the character of spouse: and in this way Christ is not a member of the Church, but is the Head from which all the members receive. In another sense the Church denotes the head and members united together; and thus Christ is said to be a member of the Church, inasmuch as He fulfills an office distinct from all others, by pouring forth life into the other members: although He is not very properly called a member, since a member im-

plies a certain restriction, whereas in Christ spiritual good is not restricted but is absolutely entire*, so that He is the entire good of the Church, nor is He together with others anything greater than He is by Himself. Speaking of the Church in this sense, the Church denotes not only the bride, but the bridegroom and bride, in so far as one thing results from their spiritual union. Consequently although Christ be called a member of the Church in a certain sense, He can by no means be called a member of the bride; and therefore the idea of a dowry is not becoming to Him.

Reply to Objection 5. There is here a fallacy of “accident”; for these things are not befitting to Christ if we consider them under the aspect of dowry.

* Cf. IIIa, q. 8, a. 1