

QUESTION 13

The Power belonging to Christ's Soul

Next we have to consider the power belonging to Christ's soul. And on this topic there are four questions: (1) Did Christ's soul have omnipotence absolutely speaking? (2) Did Christ's soul have omnipotence with respect to corporeal creatures? (3) Did Christ's soul have omnipotence with respect to its own body? (4) Did Christ's soul have omnipotence with respect to the execution of its own will?

Article 1

Did Christ's soul have omnipotence?

It seems that Christ's soul had omnipotence (*anima Christi habuit omnipotentiam*):

Objection 1: In *Super Lucam* Ambrose says, "The power which the Son of God possessed naturally was such that a man was going to receive it in time (*homo erat ex tempore accepturus*)." But this [reception] seems mainly to have to do with the soul, which is the most important part of a man. Therefore, since the Son of God had omnipotence from eternity, it seems that Christ's soul received omnipotence in time.

Objection 2: Just as God's power is infinite, so, too, is His knowledge. But as was explained above (q. 10, a. 2), Christ's soul has knowledge of all those things that God knows in any way. Therefore, Christ's soul likewise has all power. And so it is all-powerful.

Objection 3: Christ's soul has all knowledge. But some of the knowledge is practical and some is theoretical. Therefore, Christ's soul has practical knowledge of those things which it knows, so that it knows how to do or make those things which it knows. And so it seems that Christ's soul can do or make all things.

But contrary to this: What is peculiar to God cannot belong to any creature. But it is peculiar to God to be omnipotent—this according to Exodus 15:2 ("He is my God and I will glorify Him," and later, "Almighty is His name"). Therefore, since Christ's soul is a creature, it does not have omnipotence.

I respond: As was explained above (q. 2, a. 1 and q. 10, a. 1), in the mystery of the Incarnation the union is effected in such a way that the distinction between the natures still remains, with each nature retaining what is proper to itself.

Now the active power in any given thing follows upon its form, which is the principle of acting. But the form is either (a) *the very nature of the thing*, as in the case of simple beings, or (b) *a constituent of the very nature of the thing (vel est constituens ipsam rei naturam)*, as in the case of those things that are composed of matter and form. Hence, it is clear that the active power of any given thing follows upon its nature.

And it is in this way that omnipotence is related to the divine nature as a consequence. For since, as is clear from Dionysius, *De Divinis Nominibus*, chap. 5, the divine nature is the uncircumscribed *esse* itself of God, it follows that the divine nature has active power with respect to all things that can have the character of a *being*, and this is what it means to have omnipotence—in the same way that every other entity has active power with respect to those things to which the perfection of its own nature extends, e.g., in the way that a *hot* entity has the active power *to make things hot*.

Therefore, since Christ's soul is a part of a *human nature*, it is impossible for it to have omnipotence.

Reply to objection 1: It was through the very union [of the natures] in a person that a man received in time the omnipotence that the Son of God had from eternity, and because of this it happened that just as a man is said to be God, so, too, He is said to be omnipotent—not in the sense that the man's omnipotence, not to mention the man's divinity, is different from the omnipotence or divinity that belongs to the Son of God, but because there is a single person who is both God and man (*sed eo quod*

est una persona Dei et hominis).

Reply to objection 2: As certain writers explain, the line of reasoning concerning the knowledge is different from the line of reasoning concerning the active power. For active power follows upon the very nature of an entity, because the action is thought of as coming from an agent. By contrast, knowledge is not always had through the very essence of the knower, but instead can be had through an assimilation of the knower to the things known by means of acquired likenesses.

However, this line of reasoning does not seem to be sufficient. For just as an individual can have a cognition through a likeness received from another, so, too, it can act through a form received from another, in the way that water or a piece of iron makes something hot through heat received from a fire. Therefore, the line of reasoning in question does not rule out its being the case that just as Christ's soul can have cognition of all things through the likenesses of all things that are infused into it by God, so, too, Christ's soul could do or make those things through the same likenesses.

Thus, we have to consider further that whatever is received from a higher nature in a lower nature is had in an inferior mode; for instance, heat is not received with the same perfection and power from water as that with which it exists in a fire. Therefore, since Christ's soul is of a lower nature than His divine nature, likenesses of things are not received in Christ's soul itself with the same perfection and power as that with which they exist in the divine nature. And from this it follows that the knowledge belonging to Christ's soul is inferior to His knowledge as God, both (a) with respect to the *mode of knowing*, since God has cognition in a more perfect way than Christ's soul does, and also (b) with respect to the *number of things known*, since Christ's soul does not have cognition of all the things which God is able to do and to make and which He has cognition of by His *knowledge of simple understanding*—even though Christ's soul does have cognition of all the present, past, and future things that God has cognition of by His *knowledge of vision*. Similarly, the likenesses of things that are infused into Christ's soul are not equal in acting to the divine power, in the sense of being able to do all the things that God does or, again, in the sense of acting in the same mode that God acts in, given that He *acts by an infinite power*—something that no creature is capable of. By contrast, there is no entity such that an infinite power is required in order *to have cognition* of it, even though there is a mode of knowing that belongs to an infinite power. Still, as was explained in the First Part (*ST* 1, q. 45, a. 5 and q. 65, a. 5), there are some things that can be done only by an infinite power, e.g., creating [*ex nihilo*] and other things of this sort.

And so since Christ's soul is a creature with finite power, it can, to be sure, *have cognition of all things*, though not in every mode, but it cannot *do or make all things*—something that belongs to the nature of omnipotence. And among other things, it is clear that Christ's soul cannot create itself.

Reply to objection 3: Christ's soul had both practical knowledge and theoretical knowledge, but it did not have to have practical knowledge of all the things that it had theoretical knowledge of. For in order to have theoretical knowledge it is enough for there to be just a conformity or assimilation of the knower to the thing known, whereas in order to have practical knowledge it is required that the forms of things existing in the intellect be *operational* forms (*formae factivae*). Now to have a form *and* to impress this possessed form on another is more than just having the form, in the way that being bright *and* illuminating is more than just being bright. And so it is that Christ's soul has theoretical knowledge about creating, since it knows how God creates, but it does not have practical knowledge of the sort in question, since it does not have operational knowledge of creating.

Article 2

Does Christ's soul have omnipotence with respect to making changes in creatures?

It seems that Christ's soul has omnipotence with respect to making changes in creatures (*anima*

Christi habeat omnipotentiam respectu immutationis creaturarum):

Objection 1: In Matthew 28:18 our Lord Himself says, “All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me.” But the names ‘heaven’ and ‘earth’ mean every creature, as is clear from Genesis 1:1 (“In the beginning God created heaven and earth”). Therefore, it seems that Christ’s soul has omnipotence with respect to making changes in creatures.

Objection 2: Christ’s soul is more perfect than any creature. But every creature can be moved by some other creature; for in *De Trinitate* 3 Augustine says, “Just as the denser and lower bodies are ruled in a fixed order by the subtler and stronger bodies, so are all bodies ruled by the rational spirit of life, and the spirit of rational life that is a deserter and sinner is ruled by the rational spirit of life that is pious and just.” And as Dionysius explains in *De Coelesti Hierarchia*, chap. 7, Christ’s soul likewise moves the highest spirits themselves by illuminating them. Therefore, it seems that Christ’s soul has omnipotence with respect to making changes in creatures.

Objection 3: Christ’s soul had the grace of miracles, i.e., of powers, to the fullest extent, in the same way that it had the other graces. But every change made in a creature can involve the grace of miracles, since, as Dionysius proves in *Epistola ad Polycarpum*, even celestial bodies have been miraculously altered in their ordering. Therefore, Christ’s soul had omnipotence with respect to making changes in creatures.

But contrary to this: Making changes in creatures belongs to the same [agent] that conserving them belongs to. But the latter belongs to God alone—this according to Hebrews 1:3 (“Upholding all things by the word of His power”). Therefore, it belongs to God alone to have omnipotence with respect to making changes in creatures. Therefore, this does not belong to Christ’s soul.

I respond: It is necessary to make two distinctions here:

The first distinction is *on the part of the change made in creatures (ex parte transmutationis creaturarum)*, and this distinction is threefold: One sort of change is *natural* and is effected by a proper agent according to the order of nature. A second sort of change is *miraculous* and is effected by a supernatural agent outside of the usual order and course of nature, as in a case of the raising of the dead. A third sort of change occurs insofar as *an entire creature is turned into nothingness (omnis creatura vertibilis est in nihil)*.

A second distinction has to be made *on the part of Christ’s soul*, which can be thought of in two ways: In one way, *with respect to its own nature and its own power*, whether that power is natural or due to grace. In a second way, *insofar as it is an instrument of the Word of God, who is united to it in a person*.

Thus, if we are talking about Christ’s soul with respect to its own nature and its own power, whether that power is natural or due to grace, then it had the power to bring about effects that are appropriate for a [human] soul, e.g., to govern its body and to carry out human acts, and also, through its plenitude of grace and knowledge, to illuminate all rational creatures who fall short of its perfection, in a way that is appropriate for a rational creature.

On the other hand, if we are talking about Christ’s soul insofar as it is an instrument of the Word united to it, then it had the instrumental power to effect all of the miraculous changes that could be ordered toward the end of the Incarnation, which is “to restore all things, whether they exist in the heavens or on the earth” (Ephesians 1:10).

However, changes in creatures insofar as they are able to be turned into nothingness correspond to the creation of things, given that they are produced *ex nihilo*. And so just as God alone is able to create, so He alone is able to turn creatures back into nothingness, and He is likewise the only one who conserves them in *esse*, lest they fall back into nothingness. Because of this, one should reply that Christ’s soul does not have omnipotence with respect to making changes in creatures.

Reply to objection 1: As Jerome says, “Power was given to him who a little while before had been crucified and buried in a tomb and who afterwards rose”—that is, to Christ as a man. Now all power is said to be given to him by reason of the union by which, as was explained above, it was brought about

that a man is omnipotent. And even though this was made known to the angels before the resurrection, it was only after the resurrection that, as Remigius explains, it was made known to all men. But things are said to be done when they are made known. And this is why, after the resurrection, our Lord says that power has been given to Him in heaven and on earth.

Reply to objection 2: Even though every creature can be changed by some other creature, except for the highest angel, who can nonetheless be illuminated by Christ's soul, it is still not the case that every change that can be effected *with respect to* a creature is able to be effected *by* a creature. Instead, some changes can be effected by God alone.

Still, any changes in creatures that can be effected by creatures can also be effected by Christ's soul insofar as it is an instrument of the Word—though not by its own nature and power, since some of these changes do not pertain to a soul, either according to the order of nature or according to the order of grace.

Reply to objection 3: As was explained in the Second Part (*ST* 2-2, q. 178, a. 1), the grace of powers, i.e., of miracles, is granted to the soul of someone holy not in order that miracles of this sort might be worked by his own power, but in order that they might be worked by God's power. And this grace was given in a most excellent way to Christ's soul, not only in order for it to work miracles itself, but also in order to pour this grace into others. Thus, Matthew 10:1 says, "And having called his twelve disciples together, he gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of diseases, and all manner of infirmities."

Article 3

Did Christ's soul have omnipotence with respect to its own body?

It seems that Christ's soul had omnipotence with respect to its own body:

Objection 1: In *De Fide Orthodoxa* 3 Damascene says, "All natural things were voluntary for Christ; for He voluntarily became hungry, voluntarily became thirsty, voluntarily became fearful, voluntarily died." But God is called omnipotent because He does everything whatsoever that He wills. Therefore, it seems that Christ's soul had omnipotence with respect to the natural operations of its own body.

Objection 2: Christ's human nature was more perfect than the human nature of Adam, in whom, because of the original justice that he had in the state of innocence, the body had complete subjection to the soul, so that nothing could happen in the body against the will of the soul. Therefore, *a fortiori*, Christ's soul had omnipotence with respect to its own body.

Objection 3: As was established in the First Part (*ST* 1, q. 117, a. 3), the body changes naturally with the soul's act of imagining, and the more so to the extent that the soul has a stronger imagination. But Christ's soul had the most perfect strength of all, both with respect to the imagination and with respect to its other powers. Therefore, Christ's soul was omnipotent with respect to its own body.

But contrary to this: Hebrews 2:17 says, "It was appropriate for Him to be like His brethren in all things," and especially in those things that pertain to the condition of His human nature. But it pertains to the condition of His human nature that the state of His body, with respect to both nutrition and growth, are not subject to the command of reason or of the will, since natural things are subject only to God, who is the author of nature. Therefore, they are not subject to the command of reason or will in Christ, either. Therefore, Christ's soul was not omnipotent with respect to its own body.

I respond: As has been explained (a. 2), Christ's soul can be thought of in two ways:

In one way, *with respect to its own power and its own nature*. And on this score, just as Christ's soul was not able to make exterior bodies swerve from the course and order of nature, so, too, it was not able to make its own body swerve from its natural disposition; for in accord with its own nature, the soul

has a fixed proportion to its own body.

In the second way, Christ's soul can be thought of *insofar as it is an instrument united to the Word of God in a person*. And on this score, every disposition of its own body is totally subject to its power. However, since the power of an action is properly attributed to the principal agent and not to the instrument, this sort of omnipotence is attributed to the Word of God Himself rather than to Christ's soul.

Reply to objection 1: This passage from Damascene should be understood as having to do with Christ's divine will. For as Damascene says in the preceding chapter, "It was by the consent of the divine will (*benepiacito divinae voluntatis*) that the flesh was permitted to suffer and to do what was proper to it."

Reply to objection 2: What belonged to the original justice that Adam had in the state of innocence was not that a man's soul would have the power to change its body into any form whatsoever, but instead that it would be able to preserve the man without harm. And Christ could likewise have taken on this power if He had willed to do so. However, since there are three states of men—viz., the state of *innocence*, the state of *sin*, and the state of *glory*—just as Christ assumed comprehension [of God's essence] from the state of glory, and just as He assumed immunity from sin from the state of grace, so, too, as will be explained below (q. 14, a. 2), from the state of sin He assumed the necessity of being subject to the punishments of the present life.

Reply to objection 3: The body is naturally obedient to the imagination with respect to some things if the imagination is strong—for instance, with respect to falling from a beam placed high up—since, as *De Anima* 3 explains, the imagination is apt to be a principle of *local motion*. The same holds with respect to an *alteration* that involves heat and cold and what follows from them, since the passions of the soul by which the heart is moved are apt by nature to follow the imagination, and thus the whole body is altered by the agitation of the spirits.

By contrast, other corporeal dispositions that have no natural ordering toward the imagination—for instance, the shape of a hand or a foot, or something like that—are not changed by the imagination, no matter how strong it is.

Article 4

Did Christ's soul have omnipotence with respect to the execution of its own will?

It seems that Christ's soul did not have omnipotence with respect to the execution of its own will (*non habuerit omnipotentiam respectu executionis propriae voluntatis*):

Objection 1: Mark 7:24 says, "Entering into a house, He wanted no one to know, but He could not escape notice." Therefore, He was unable to execute His will's purpose in all things.

Objection 2: As was explained in the First Part (*ST* 1, q. 19, a. 12), a precept is the sign of an act of will. But our Lord ordered certain things to be done, the contrary of which happened. For instance, Matthew 9:30-31 says that after the blind men received their sight, "Jesus strictly warned them, saying, 'See that no one finds out about this.' But having left, they spread His fame throughout the whole district." Therefore, He was not able to execute His will's purpose in all matters.

Objection 3: An individual does not ask another to do what he himself can do. But our Lord petitioned His Father, praying for something that He willed to be done; for instance, Luke 6:12 says, "He went up the mountain to pray, and He spent the night praying to God." Therefore, He was not able to execute His will's purpose in all matters.

But contrary to this: In *De Quaestionibus Novi et Veteris Testamenti* Augustine says, "It is impossible for the will of our Savior not to be fulfilled, nor can He will what He knows ought not to be effected."

I respond: There are two ways in which Christ's soul willed something:

In one way, *as something to be fulfilled by its own power (quasi per se implendum)*. And on this score one should reply that Christ's soul was able to effect whatever it willed. For it would not befit [our Lord's] wisdom for there to be something which His soul willed to be done through its own power and which was not subject to its will.

In a second way, Christ's soul willed a thing *as something to be fulfilled by the divine power*, e.g., the raising of its own body and other miraculous works of this sort. These things it could do not by its own power, but, as has been explained, insofar as it was an instrument of the divine nature.

Reply to objection 1: As Augustine explains in *De Quaestionibus Novi et Veteris Testamenti*, "Christ must be said to have willed whatever was done. For notice that the incident in question occurred in the country of the Gentiles, and it was not yet the right time to preach to them. Yet it would have been objectionable not to receive those who were coming spontaneously to the Faith. Hence, He did not wish to be made known by His own people, and yet He did wish to be sought after. And so it came to pass."

An alternative reply is that this desire of Christ's had to do not with what was going to be done by Him, but with what was going to be done by others and was not subject to His human will. Hence, in a letter that was written by Pope Agatho and approved by the Sixth Council, we read: "Therefore, if He, the creator and redeemer of all, wanted to remain hidden and was unable to, is this not to be traced back just to His human will, which He deigned to assume in time?"

Reply to objection 2: As Gregory explains in *Moralia* 19, by the fact that our Lord commanded that His powers be kept secret, "He gave an example to those servants of His who would come along after Him, that they should desire their powers to remain hidden and yet, in order that others might profit from their example, those powers would be made public against their will." So, then, the precept in question was a sign of His desire to flee from human glory—this according to John 8:50 ("I do not seek my own glory"). Yet He did will—absolutely speaking and in accord with His divine will—that the miracle should be publicized for the sake of the good of others.

Reply to objection 3: Christ prayed both for those things that were going to be done by divine power and also for those things that He was going to do by His human will. For the power and operation that belonged to Christ's soul depended on God, who works in everyone "to will and to accomplish," as Philippians 2:13 puts it.