Another Problem of Foreknowledge and Freedom: Aquinas on the Knowledge of Christ's Human Soul

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St. Thomas Aquinas claimed that God knows all truths, past, present, and future. So God knows those things which have not yet come to pass. How, then, can we be free in our actions, if God already knows what we will do? We can’t make God to have known a falsehood, after all. To this problem of God’s foreknowledge and creaturely freedom, Aquinas answered that God exists outside of time (or eternally) and hence, while he knows everything there is to know, he foreknows nothing. That is, he does not know that which will come to pass before it comes to pass, since knowing before something requires temporal procession, and God is outside the flux of time. So there is no problem of divine foreknowledge and creaturely freedom.

A problem arises, though, when one considers Aquinas’s Christology. For he claims, in multiple texts, that the human soul of Christ, which is the same in kind as our souls, knew all things past, present and future. So two thousand years ago Christ’s human intellect knew you would be reading this abstract at this time, along with everything else there is to know about the entirety of your life. Christ’s human intellect is a temporal entity, and so the eternity solution to foreknowledge and freedom would be silent on this issue. The problem of foreknowledge and creaturely freedom, thus, arises again for Aquinas, this time in his Christology. In this paper I present the difficulty that arises for Aquinas from the knowledge of Christ’s human intellect. I then present some responses that a Thomist might give to this difficulty.