

## QUESTION 101

### The Condition of the Generated Offspring with respect to Knowledge

The next thing to consider is the condition of the offspring with respect to knowledge (*quantum ad scientiam*). On this topic there are two questions: (1) Would the children have been born perfect in knowledge? (2) Would they have had the full use of reason immediately upon birth?

#### Article 1

##### In the state of innocence, would the children have been born perfect in knowledge?

It seems that in the state of innocence the children would have been born perfect in knowledge (*in scientia perfecti*):

**Objection 1:** Adam would have generated children who were like himself. But as was explained above (q. 99, a. 1), Adam was perfect in knowledge. Therefore, children would have been born from him perfect in knowledge.

**Objection 2:** As Bede says, ignorance is caused by sin. But ignorance is a privation of knowledge. Therefore, before sin the children would have had every sort of knowledge (*omnem scientiam*) immediately upon birth.

**Objection 3:** The children would have had justice at their birth. But knowledge, which directs actions (*dirigit in agendis*), is required for justice. Therefore, they would have had knowledge as well.

**But contrary to this:** As *De Anima* 3 says, our soul is by nature “like a blank slate on which nothing has been written.” But the nature of the soul is the same now as it would have been then. Therefore, the souls of the children would have lacked knowledge at the beginning.

**I respond:** As was explained above (q. 94, a. 3), what is supernatural is such that one has faith in it on authority alone (*soli auctoritate creditur*); hence, in a case where such authority is lacking, we ought to be guided by what is natural (*sequi debemus naturae conditionem*).

Now as was explained above (q. 84, a. 6), it is natural for man to acquire knowledge (*scientia*) through his senses, and so the soul is united to a body because it needs the body for its own proper operation. This would not be the case if right at the very beginning the soul had knowledge that was not acquired through the sentient powers.

So one should claim that in the state of innocence children would not have been born perfect in knowledge, but that instead they would have acquired knowledge without difficulty as time went on, by discovery or by being taught.

**Reply to objection 1:** Being perfect in knowledge was an *individual* accident of the first parent—more specifically, insofar as he was established as the father and instructor of the whole human race. And so it was not with respect to this accident that he generated children who were similar to him, but only with respect to the natural or grace-related accidents that belong to *the whole nature*.

**Reply to objection 2:** Ignorance (*ignorantia*) is a privation of the knowledge that ought to be had at a given time—which would not have been the case with the children immediately upon birth, since they would have had the knowledge that was appropriate for them at that time. Hence, it was not ignorance (*ignorantia*) that existed in them, but rather an absence of knowledge (*nescientia*) with respect to certain things—something that Dionysius likewise posits in the holy angels in *De Caelesti Hierarchia* 7.

**Reply to objection 3:** The children would have had enough knowledge to direct them in those works of justice in which men are directed by the universal principles of the law, and they would have had this knowledge much more fully at that time than we have it by nature now. The same thing holds

for other universal principles as well.

## Article 2

### In the state of innocence, would the children have had the full use of reason immediately upon birth?

It seems that in the state of innocence the children would have had the full use of reason (*usum perfectum rationis*) immediately upon birth:

**Objection 1:** Children now do not have the perfect use of reason because their soul is weighed down (*aggravatur*) by their body. But this would not have been the case at that time, since, as Wisdom 9:15 says, “The corruptible body is a load upon the soul.” Therefore, before the sin and the corruption that followed upon the sin, children would have had the full use of reason immediately upon birth.

**Objection 2:** Certain other animals have the use of their natural talents immediately upon birth; for instance, a lamb immediately flees from a wolf. Therefore, *a fortiori*, in the state of innocence men would have had the full use of reason immediately upon birth.

**But contrary to this:** Nature proceeds from the imperfect to the perfect in all generated things. Therefore, the children would not have had the full use of reason immediately from the beginning.

**I respond:** As is clear from what was said above (q. 84, a. 7), the use of reason depends in a certain sense on the use of the sentient powers; hence, when the sensory power is inoperative and the interior sensory powers are impeded, a man does not have the full use of reason, as is obvious in the case of those who are asleep (*in dormientibus*) and those who are delirious (*in phreneticis*). But the sentient powers are powers of corporeal organs, and so when their organs are impeded, their acts must likewise be impeded and, as a result, the use of reason is impeded.

Now in children these powers are impeded because of the brain’s excessive moisture. And so children do not have the full use of reason, just as they do not have the full use of their other bodily members.

So in the state of innocence the children would not have had the full use of reason in the way that they were going to have it at a mature age. However, they would have had a more perfect use of reason than children do now with regard to those things that were appropriate to them in their state—just as was claimed above (q. 99, a. 1) about the use of their limbs as well.

**Reply to objection 1:** ‘Weight’ is added by the corruption of the body in the sense that the use of reason is impeded even with respect to what is appropriate for a man at each particular age.

**Reply to objection 2:** The other animals likewise do not have as perfect a use of their natural talents immediately at the beginning as they will later on. This is clear from the fact that birds teach their young to fly; and similar examples are found among the other kinds of animals. Yet, as was explained above (q. 99, a. 1), in the case of man there is a special impediment because of the abundance of moisture in the brain.