

The Perfection of our First Parents, According to St Thomas Aquinas

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In discussing the question of whether paradise, as described in the second chapter of the book of Genesis, was a geographical place or simply an allegory of a spiritual truth, St Thomas Aquinas makes the following observation and rule:

Those things which are said in Scripture about Paradise, are put forward in the style of a historical narrative; but whenever Scripture puts something forward in this way, the historical truth must be retained as the basis, and spiritual interpretations built upon it.¹

In observing that the things said in Scripture about our first parents are put forward in the style of an historical narrative, St Thomas is surely pointing to an obvious fact. These things, that is to say, are not written in the style of a lyric poem like the Canticum of Canticles, or of a parable like parts of the Book of Proverbs or the parables of the gospel, or of a prophetic vision like the visions of the Book of Daniel or the Apocalypse. Rather, they are presented as a coherent series of events, without the use of any stylistic devices that would make the style of the passage anything other than that of a simple narration of facts: for example, without such phrases as “behold, in a vision there appeared to me” or “I, Moses, looked and saw” or “the human race is like to a man placed in a garden.” Likewise, in setting forth the rule that when Scripture narrates things in a straightforward, historical manner, we must hold fast to the obvious sense, whatever other, spiritual senses we may also be able to discern, St Thomas is again acting rationally. Any truthful author will in some way indicate to his intended readers if he does not want his words to be taken according to their obvious sense. Since the principal author of Holy Scripture is God Himself, the first Truth, it follows that where there is no indication in the text that a passage which seems to be historical is anything other than historical, then it should be taken according to its obvious sense. Thus St Thomas, in describing the perfection of our first parents, bases himself on the obvious sense of Holy Scripture, read in particular in the light of the fathers of the Church. The importance which he attributes to the subject can be seen from the copious treatment which he gives it in the *Summa Theologiae*. No less than forty articles are dedicated to the state of man before the Fall, and to the hypothetical condition of the human race had sin not entered into our world.²

That the formation of our first parents was a work performed immediately by God, and outside the course of nature, is for the angelic doctor a matter both of revelation and of reason. It is a matter of revelation since the book of Genesis plainly presents God as forming a man from the slime or dust of the earth, and a woman from the rib or side of the man. He also quotes

¹ STh 1a 102, 1: “Ea enim quae de Paradiso in Scriptura dicuntur, per modum narrationis historicae proponuntur, in omnibus autem quae sic Scriptura tradit, est pro fundamento tenenda veritas historiae, et desuper spirituales expositiones fabricandae.”

² Cf. STh 1a 90-102, with the exception of question 93, 'on the image of God', which does not relate exclusively to the pre-lapsarian state.

Ecclesiasticus 17: "God created man out of the earth (*Deus de terra creavit hominem*)."³ In his commentary on St Paul's epistle to the Romans, he remarks that one of the ways in which Adam was a "type" of Christ, is that just as Adam's body was formed without any sexual activity, so our Lord's body was formed from a Virgin.³

The immediate formation of the bodies of our first parents is a matter of reason, according to Aquinas, because assuming that there was a first man and a first woman, they could not come into being by virtue of the causality of creatures, even allowing for the movement by which the first cause, that is, God, operates in all creatures in order that they may have the effects proportionate to their natures. This is true both in regard to the soul and the body of our first parents. It is true as regards the soul, because the human soul being spiritual can only come into existence by a creation out of nothing, and not by the transmutation of some existing material thing. But only God, as an infinite agent, can create out of nothing, and so the soul of Adam and the soul of Eve, like our own souls, were created by God out of nothing without the intervention or co-operation of any creature. But it is also, for St Thomas, a rational necessity that the *bodies* of our first parents were formed immediately by God, that is to say, miraculously.⁴ No created power sufficed for the first formation of the human body. The angels cannot transform one material thing, for example dust, into another of a different nature, for example a human body; nor does the material world as a whole have the power to cause what he calls "a perfect animal" to exist, except as generated by other animals of the same species.⁵ The expression "perfect animal" here does not refer specifically to man; it is a technical phrase deriving from Aristotle, used to refer to an animal with all the senses and with the power of locomotion. Thus a cat and a dog are perfect animals in this sense. Aquinas does not argue for the impossibility of a perfect animal being generated by the powers of nature except from parents of the same species; he seems to take it as an obvious truth of experience. It is true that on St Thomas's general, metaphysical principles, it would be possible for God in His absolute power to use one animal as a mere instrument to generate another of a different species, for example miraculously to cause a cat to generate a dog; but such an act would be pointless and therefore contrary to what is called God's ordered power, that is, His power as considered in conjunction with His wisdom. In any case, as already said, Aquinas takes the immediate formation of the bodies of our first parents to be a truth plainly taught by Scripture.

Since the change whereby the bodies of Adam and Eve came into existence was something that took place, as he puts it, "outside the order of nature," it may rightly be called a miracle. St Thomas himself compares it to the miraculous enlightenment of a blind man or to the raising to

³ Cf. *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, cap. 5, lect. 4: "Sunt autem et aliae similitudines inter Christum et Adam, quod scilicet sicut corpus Adae formatum fuit sine coitu, ita et corpus Christi de virgine."

⁴ STh 1a 91, 2: "Prima formatio humani corporis non potuit esse per aliquam virtutem creatam, sed immediate a Deo."

⁵ *Ibid.*, ad 2. Rather than speak of "the material world as a whole", Aquinas speaks of "the heavenly bodies", which he took to be the first efficient causes, considering only material things, of all natural changes.

life of a corpse.⁶ It is therefore impossible to turn St Thomas into a theistic evolutionist, meaning by this one who holds that the different species of things, including the human body, result from the powers inherent in nature, with God simply implanting these powers in natural things and moving these natural things to act in accordance with them. The human body, according to St Thomas, did not come into existence as a result of God working through created causes. It came into existence *praeter naturae ordinem*, outside the order of nature, which is the very definition of a miracle.⁷

The fact that it was God Himself who directly formed our first parents by itself, for St Thomas, implies their perfection, even independently of the more explicit revelation about the state of original justice. When considering the idea that St Augustine toyed with, that God might have created the souls of Adam and Eve at the first moment of the creation of the world and only afterwards fashioned bodies for them, Aquinas rejects it as being contrary to the perfection of God's works. "It is obvious," he writes, "that God instituted the first things in the perfect state of their nature, in the way that the species of each different thing required."⁸ Thus the human soul would not have been created first without the body, for in that case human nature would originally have existed in a diminished way, it being natural to the soul to exist as the form of a living, human body. Elsewhere he affirms that all things, including therefore the first human beings, must have been formed by God in maturity, so that the great principle that actuality precedes potentiality might be manifested in creation. Thus Adam and Eve, though they could have been formed as children and cared for by a special providence till they reached maturity, were in fact formed as adults. He writes:

In the natural order, what is perfect precedes what is imperfect, as actuality precedes potentiality, for those things which are in potentiality are not made actual except by some actual being. And since things were originally instituted by God not only so that they should exist in themselves, but also so that they should be principles of other things, they were therefore produced in a perfect state in which they could also be principles of other things.⁹

We can see again how contrary this is to the evolutionary manner of thinking, which assumes that imperfection necessarily *precedes* perfection. Aquinas would doubtless say that this evolutionary assumption arises because people illegitimately transfer what is true about the

⁶ Ibid., ad 3: "ad 3: "Motus caeli est causa transmutationum naturalium, non tamen transmutationum quae fiunt praeter naturae ordinem, et sola virtute divina, sicut quod mortui resuscitantur, quod caeci illuminantur. Quibus est simile quod homo ex limo terrae formatur."

⁷ Cf. STh 1a 105, 6.

⁸ STh 1a 90, 4: "Manifestum est enim quod Deus primas res instituit in perfecto statu suae naturae, secundum quod uniuscuiusque rei species exigebat."

⁹ STh 1a 94, 3: "Naturali ordine perfectum praecedat imperfectum, sicut et actus potentiam, quia ea quae sunt in potentia, non reducuntur ad actum nisi per aliquod ens actu. Et quia res primitus a Deo institutae sunt, non solum ut in seipsis essent, sed etiam ut essent aliorum principia; ideo productae sunt in statu perfecto, in quo possent esse principia aliorum."

generation of some individual creature to the quite different case of the institution of an entire species; being too influenced by their imaginations, people fail to attend to the difference, which only reason can grasp, between the species and the individual. The species as such is directly instituted by God in a perfect state; it is the individuals who will subsequently be generated within that species who move from imperfection to maturity under the action of finite, secondary causes.

Part of the perfection of the human species, of course, is that it should exist both as male and female. So the angelic doctor writes: “Just as the diverse grades of things pertain to the perfection of the universe, so the diversity of sex pertains to the perfection of human nature.”¹⁰ Similarly he argues that an equal number of male and female children would have been born if mankind had remained unfallen, so that all those unfallen human beings would have exercised their power to procreate, monogamy of course being assumed. St Thomas did not believe in the complete natural equality of man and woman; he takes it for granted that man has by nature greater strength both of body and of mind; but in the state of original justice, grace would have come to the aid of nature so that each sex would have possessed the perfection proper to it without any defects.

I come now to examine in more detail what the perfection of that original state was. Here we have to distinguish between the perfection implied by original justice as such, and that which the angelic doctor believes to have been a personal prerogative of our first father. I shall speak mainly about the former, that is, about original justice.

Original justice, then, is that which was given to human nature as such, and therefore both to Adam and Eve before the Fall, and which would have been possessed by any children whom they had begotten in their unfallen condition. In explaining original justice, St Thomas takes as his text Ecclesiastes 7:30: “God made man right”. The word for “right” in his Latin bible was the word *rectus*, which could also be translated as “straight, direct, undeviating.” He writes:

This rightness consisted in the fact that reason was subordinate to God, the lower powers were subordinate to reason, and the body was subordinate to the soul. Now the first subordination was the cause of the second and the third; for while reason remained subject to God, the lower things were subordinate to it.¹¹

This triple subordination is the essence of the original perfection of man; with the exception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, conceived without Original Sin, it can never be recovered on earth, even though through the merits of Christ and the grace of baptism we can merit a yet higher perfection in the world to come. Let us consider each of these forms of subordination more closely.

¹⁰ STh 1a 99, 2: “Sicut autem ad perfectionem universi pertinent diversi gradus rerum, ita etiam diversitas sexus est ad perfectionem humanae naturae.”

¹¹ STh 1a 95,1 :“Erat enim haec rectitudo secundum hoc, quod ratio subdebatur Deo, rationi vero inferiores vires, et animae corpus. Prima autem subiectio erat causa et secundae et tertiae, quandiu enim ratio manebat Deo subiecta, inferiora ei subdebantur.”

First, reason was subordinate to God. Although some people in his day argued otherwise, St Thomas held that this subordination was brought about in our first parents, as it must be in us their descendants, by the gift of sanctifying grace and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. If it were not a gratuitous gift of this kind, he argued, it would not have been lost, as it was, by a single transgression. For as long as they remained unfallen, Adam and Eve were guided in all their actions by supernatural charity: the love by which God is loved above all things, by which other persons are loved as fellow heirs to eternal life, and lower creatures are loved as means to glorify God. According to St Thomas, the rightness of original justice was such that it would have been impossible for our first parents to have chosen something even slightly unaligned with God's will for them, that is, to have committed any venial sin. The compass-needle of their soul was always pointing due north; or perhaps we should say due east, since according to the Septuagint that was the direction in which Paradise faced.¹²

In their reason, therefore, and their rational appetite or will, they had the three theological virtues of faith, hope and charity. They knew, of course, the existence of God and His providence and His promise of a future reward for their fidelity. What else did they believe in? St Thomas holds that they had an explicit faith in the future incarnation of the Word. He writes:

Before the era of sin, man had an explicit faith concerning the incarnation of Christ insofar as it was directed to a glorious consummation, although not insofar as it was directed to a liberation from sin by means of the passion and resurrection, since man did not have foreknowledge of his own future sin.¹³

Adam understood, in other words, that God would one day become incarnate, though he did not know for what reason. St Thomas supports this by noting that some words in Genesis 2 which he takes to have been pronounced by the first man, “Therefore a man shall leave father and mother and shall cleave to his wife”, are quoted by St Paul in Ephesians 5, and that then St Paul adds immediately: “This is a great mystery, and I am speaking of Christ and the Church”.

But as well as the question of how *extensive* the faith of our first parents was, that is, to how many “articles of faith” it extended, there is also the question of how *intensive* or vigorous it was. These are separate questions, because someone, for example a lukewarm Catholic, can have a rather weak faith in many articles of faith, while someone else, for example a Protestant in invincible ignorance, can have a more lively faith in a much smaller number of articles. And in this regard St Thomas has something striking to say. He contrasts on the one hand the faith of even virtuous men since the Fall with, on the other hand, the angels in the moment of their creation and man before the Fall. Of the latter group, that is, angels and man in their original state, he writes:

¹² Cf. Gen 2:8: “Ἐφύτευσεν κύριος ὁ θεὸς παράδεισον ἐν Ἐδεμ κατὰ ἀνατολὰς”.

¹³ STh 2a2ae 2, 7: “Ante statum peccati homo habuit explicitam fidem de Christi incarnatione secundum quod ordinabatur ad consummationem gloriae, non autem secundum quod ordinabatur ad liberationem a peccato per passionem et resurrectionem, quia homo non fuit praescius peccati futuri.”

Their contemplation was higher than ours, and by means of it, they drew nearer to God than we do and so could in a clear way know more things about divine actions and mysteries than we can. For this reason, there was not in them a faith by which God is sought as being absent, in the way that He is sought by us. For He was more present to them by the light of wisdom than He is to us, even though He was not present to them as He is to the blessed through the light of glory.¹⁴

Our first parents, thinks St Thomas, were conscious of God in a way that surpasses all experience on earth, unless perhaps it may sometimes have been matched in the lives of the greatest mystics. Part of the reason for this, he also explains, is that until we see God face-to-face, all our knowledge of Him is mediated by creatures; what St Paul calls the knowledge “through a mirror.” Now in this regard, immaterial things provide a better mirror than material ones, being more similar to God Himself, who is Spirit. But in our fallen state, we experience considerable difficulty in grasping non-material realities directly, which, in passing, is one reason why we need the sacraments.¹⁵ Our first parents, however, would have been able to attend to non-material creatures without difficulty, having as they did a reason that dominated the imagination and was not dominated by it. For example they would have had a much clearer idea of the spirituality of their soul than we do. For this reason they would also have had a clearer knowledge of God the Creator, who is reflected by all His works, but especially, as I have just said, by the non-material ones. So Aquinas writes:

The rectitude in which man was divinely instituted was such that lower things were subordinate to higher ones, and higher one were not obstructed by lower ones. Therefore the first man was not prevented by external things from having a clear and steady contemplation of [God's] intelligible effects, which he grasped under the light coming to him from the first Truth, both by natural and supernatural knowledge.¹⁶

For this reason, this antelapsarian knowledge of God is said to be “in a certain sense midway between the knowledge of our present state, and the knowledge of heaven where God is seen in His essence.”¹⁷ Adam did not reason *from* God's effects to God's existence, as we have to; rather, in the light both of a clear reason and a clear faith, he saw God *in* His effects, even though not

¹⁴ STh 2a2ae 5, 1 ad 1: “Eorum contemplatio erat altior quam nostra, per quam, magis de propinquo accedentes ad Deum, plura manifeste cognoscere poterant de divinis effectibus et mysteriis quam nos possumus. Unde non inerat eis fides qua ita quaereretur Deus absens sicut a nobis quaeritur. Erat enim eis magis praesens per lumen sapientiae quam sit nobis, licet nec eis esset ita praesens sicut est beatis per lumen gloriae.”

¹⁵ Aquinas held that there would have been no sacraments if there had been no sin; cf. 3a 61, 2.

¹⁶ STh 1a 94, 1: “Haec autem fuit rectitudo hominis divinitus instituti, ut inferiora superioribus subderentur, et superiora ab inferioribus non impedirentur. Unde homo primus non impediabatur per res exteriores a clara et firma contemplatione intelligibilium effectuum, quos ex irradiatione primae veritatis percipiebat, sive naturali cognitione sive gratuita.”

¹⁷ Ibid.: “Cognoscebat tamen Deum quadam altiori cognitione quam nos cognoscamus, et sic quodammodo eius cognitio media erat inter cognitionem praesentis status, et cognitionem patriae, qua Deus per essentiam videtur.”

according to God's essence.¹⁸ Perhaps we might compare this knowledge to the knowledge of a friend's soul that we can have by seeing his face; we don't see the essence of his soul, and yet there is no process of reasoning or interval of time between seeing our friend's expression and knowing his thought. Somewhat in this way did Adam see God in creation.

I have already said something about what St Thomas calls the second subordination characteristic of the happy state of original justice, namely that of the “lower powers” to the reason. For we have seen that the imagination, which is one of the lower powers, would not have impeded contemplation of non-material things. But also included among the lower powers are the body's appetites, what Aquinas calls the concupiscible and irascible powers, by which a person is drawn to or repulsed by certain things that his senses perceive, or else is motivated to resist or avoid obstacles. These appetites, then, and the emotions which arise within them, would have seconded the rational appetite or will, and not obstructed it, as they can often do with us. This does not mean that unfallen emotions would have been weak, but that they would never have been irrational or disordered. And of course, there would have been no place for those emotions which are incompatible with the paradisaal state, such as anger or fear.¹⁹ Adam in his unfallen state could for example have keenly hoped that his descendants would fill the earth according to the divine precept, or desired to see some thing which he had not previously seen, but not in such a way as to become restless or unsettled by his hope or desire, thanks to the peace that resulted in his soul from his continual awareness of God in creation. St Thomas applies the same principle to the hypothetical question of conjugal relations before the Fall. He writes:

In the state of innocence nothing would have happened that was not regulated by reason, not that sense-pleasure would have been less, as some say – for in fact sense-pleasure would have been greater insofar as nature was more pure and the body more sensitive – but rather because the appetite would not have yielded itself inordinately to such pleasure. The appetite would have been ruled by the reason; and it belongs to the reason not to lessen the pleasures of sense, but rather to prevent the appetite from cleaving to them immoderately. . . In the same way, a temperate person does not take less pleasure in his duly taken food than the glutton does, but yet his appetite lingers less in such pleasures.²⁰

St Thomas concludes logically that there would have been no place for the virtue of virginity before the Fall. “Continence,” he says, “would not have been praiseworthy in the state of

¹⁸ Ibid., ad 3: “Non enim oportebat primum hominem pervenire in Dei cognitionem per demonstrationem sumptam ab aliquo effectu, sicut nobis est necessarium; sed simul in effectibus, praecipue intelligibilibus, suo modo Deum cognoscebat.”

¹⁹ Cf. STh 1a 95, 2.

²⁰ Ibid.: 98, 2 ad 3: “In statu innocentiae nihil huiusmodi fuisset quod ratione non moderaretur, non quia esset minor delectatio secundum sensum, ut quidam dicunt (fuisset enim tanto maior delectatio sensibilis, quanto esset purior natura, et corpus magis sensibile); sed quia vis concupiscibilis non ita inordinate se effudisset super huiusmodi delectatione, regulata per rationem, ad quam non pertinet ut sit minor delectatio in sensu, sed ut vis concupiscibilis non immoderate delectationi inhaereat. . . Sicut sobrius in cibo moderate assumpto non minorem habet delectationem quam gulosus; sed minus eius concupiscibilis super huiusmodi delectatione requiescit.”

innocence, whereas it is praiseworthy in our present state, not because it removes fecundity, but because it excludes disordered desire. In that state fecundity would have been without lust.”²¹

As for what St Thomas calls the “third subordination,” that of the body to the soul, this is most clearly shown by the dogma defined at the Council of Trent and recalled in Vatican II's Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, that man before the Fall was immortal. Aquinas does not think that Adam's body in itself was essentially different before the Fall than a human body is today, though of course it would have been a perfect example of such a body. If it was immortal, this is primarily because of the state of his soul. This is rather a difficult point to grasp, I think. St Thomas does not say that immortality was a gift conferred on our first parents simply *together with* the grace and virtues that adorned their souls, but that the supernatural rectitude of their souls was the *cause* of the immortality of their bodies. In other words, grace was given to them in a somewhat different manner from that in which it is given to us. To us it is given so as to sanctify our souls and the higher powers that flow from our souls, in particular our intellect and will. To them it was given so as to sanctify the soul and to sanctify or perfect all that depended on the soul, including the body's appetites and natural powers and even the body's own organic cohesion. It was not the soul alone that kept the matter of their bodies united into one, organized whole, but the soul insofar as by grace it shared in the divine nature. This also seems to be, incidentally, why Adam's sin could be passed on to his descendants; as all the powers of his soul, even the power of procreation, were elevated by the divine grace that dwelt within him, so they all shared in the soul's fall when that grace was expelled by his free choice. But for as long as grace remained in his soul, that soul had a power to preserve the body from its natural tendency to grow old and decay.²² Aquinas also supposed that there would have been a nourishment in the paradisaal state that was able to counteract the ageing process, and he takes this to be the meaning of the tree of life, referred to in the second chapter of Genesis.²³

This, then, was the triple subordination of original innocence, given to our first parents in order to be passed to all their children. But as I mentioned, St Thomas also thought that Adam, at least, enjoyed a special prerogative that would not be passed to his children, and this was an excellence of knowledge. I have already said something about the clarity of his mind, and this as part of original justice would have been transmitted to his offspring. But for knowledge it does not suffice to have a clear mind, one must also have something to think about. And since the first man would have to teach others but had no one to teach him, St Thomas reasons that he must have been taught directly by God those things which would be necessary for him to act as father of the human race and principal ruler of the political society that would have come into being even in the unfallen world. He writes:

²¹ Ibid.: “Continentia in statu innocentiae non fuisset laudabilis, quae in tempore isto laudatur non propter defectum fecunditatis, sed propter remotionem inordinatae libidinis. Tunc autem fuisset fecunditas absque libidine.”

²² Cf. STh 1a 97, 1: “Inerat animae vis quaedam supernaturaliter divinitus data, per quam poterat corpus ab omni corruptione praeservare, quandiu ipsa Deo subiecta mansisset.”

²³ Cf. De Malo 5, 5, ad 9: “Lignum vitae coadiuvabat ad immortalitatem; sed principalis causa immortalitatis erat virtus a Deo animae collata.”

Just as the first man was created in a perfect state as to his body, so that he could procreate, so he was also created in a perfect state as to his soul, so that he could teach and govern others. But no one can teach unless he have knowledge. Therefore the first man was so created by God as to have knowledge of all things which man is apt to be taught, which means all the things that can be deduced from first principles.²⁴

To examine in detail what is implied by this last phrase would be beyond the scope of this paper. Aquinas certainly does not mean that Adam would have known all contingent truths, for example how many stones there were in the garden of Eden. Nor need we suppose that if Aquinas could have foreseen our modern physical science he would have insisted that the first man must have possessed it all in advance. I suggest that he is thinking rather of a knowledge that is more proportioned to human nature than is our modern science, with its reliance on instruments other than the human senses for gathering its data.²⁵ St Thomas would thus have in mind those general truths that man can gain from observing the natural world, and himself, without specialized instruments, and reasoning upon what he has observed, somewhat like the knowledge that an Aristotle or a St Albert the Great might have possessed, only even more extensive and with no admixture of error. It is in virtue of this infused knowledge, St Thomas argues, that Adam was able to name the animals fittingly.²⁶ It is also by virtue of this infused knowledge that Adam would have been able to teach his children, who would have been born, Aquinas thinks, without any infused knowledge of their own, even though they would have been, of course, very apt to learn and to discover truth.²⁷

This brings to an end my survey of what the common doctor of the Church has to say about the perfection of our first parents. The principal points of it have in fact been confirmed by the definitions of the Council of Trent, namely that Adam before the Fall possessed holiness without disordered desires of sense, and that as long as he remained free from sin he was also free from mortality and bodily suffering. Where St Thomas develops these points, it is not at all in a desire to multiply marvels, for as he says precisely in regard to the prelapsarian life: “in all the statements that we make, we must follow the nature of things, except when things which are above nature have been communicated to us on the authority of God.”²⁸ Rather, St Thomas's

²⁴ S Th 1a 94, 3: “Sicut primus homo institutus est in statu perfecto quantum ad corpus, ut statim posset generare; ita etiam institutus est in statu perfecto quantum ad animam, ut statim posset alios instruere et gubernare. Non potest autem aliquis instruere, nisi habeat scientiam. Et ideo primus homo sic institutus est a Deo, ut haberet omnium scientiam in quibus homo natus est instrui. Et haec sunt omnia illa quae virtualiter existunt in primis principiis per se notis.”

²⁵ St Thomas speaks of the science that man is born (*natus est*) to acquire. One would not say that man is born to use an electron microscope, for example, even though he is born with the power of learning to use one.

²⁶ S Th 1a 94, 3, *sed contra*.

²⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, 101, 1: “Pueri in statu innocentiae non nascerentur perfecti in scientia; sed eam in processu temporis absque difficultate acquisivissent, inveniendo vel addiscendo.”

²⁸ S Th 1a 99, 1: “In omnibus asserendis sequi debemus naturam rerum, praeter ea quae auctoritate divina traduntur, quae sunt supra naturam.”

developments spring from his deep desire to be faithful to what has been communicated to us on the authority of God, and to unfold all the meaning of this revelation. His description of our first parents before the Fall evokes for us the love of God in constituting mankind in such a state; the mystery of the iniquity by which it was lost; and the still greater mystery by which the second Adam leads us towards a second and incommutable home.