

QUESTION 96

The Sort of Dominion That Belonged to the First Man in the State of Innocence

The next thing we have to consider is the sort of dominion that belonged to man in the state of innocence. And on this topic there are four questions: (1) Did man in the state of innocence have dominion over the animals? (2) Did he have dominion over every creature? (3) Would all men have been equal in the state of innocence? (4) Did one man have dominion over another in the state of innocence?

Article 1

Did Adam in the state of innocence have dominion over the animals?

It seems that in the state of innocence Adam did not have dominion over the animals (*Adam in statu innocentiae animalibus non dominabatur*):

Objection 1: In *Super Genesim ad Litteram* 9 Augustine says that it was by the ministry of the angels that the animals were brought to Adam, so that he might impose names on them. But the ministry of the angels would not have been necessary in this case if man had had dominion over the animals in his own right. Therefore, in the state of innocence man did not have dominion over the other animals.

Objection 2: It is not right to bring together under one dominion things that are in conflict with one another (*discordant ad invicem*). But many animals, e.g. the sheep and the wolf, are naturally in conflict with one another. Therefore, it is not the case that all the animals were included under man's dominion.

Objection 3: Jerome says, "God gave man dominion over the animals before the sin even though man did not need it, because He foreknew that after the Fall man would be helped by the support of the animals." Therefore, before the sin it was at least the case that man did not make use of his dominion over the animals.

Objection 4: It seems proper to a master (*dominus*) to rule (*praecipere*). But rule (*praeceptum*) is appropriately exercised only over those who have reason. Therefore, man did not have dominion over the non-rational animals.

But contrary to this: Genesis 1:26 says of man, "Let him have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air and over the beasts of the earth."

I respond: As was explained above (q. 95, a. 1), disobedience against man on the part of those things that should be subject to him followed as his punishment for his own disobedience against God. And so in the state of innocence, before this act of disobedience, nothing that should naturally be subject to man put up any opposition against him. But all the animals were naturally subject to man.

This is made clear in three ways:

First, from *the very manner in which nature proceeds*. For just as in the generation of things one sees a certain order by which nature proceeds from the imperfect to the perfect (since matter exists for the sake of form, and a less perfect form exists for the sake of a more perfect form), so too this holds with respect to the use that is made of natural things; more specifically, the less perfect are made use of by the more perfect. For instance, for their nourishment plants make use of the earth, and animals make use of plants, and men make use of both plants and animals. Hence, man by nature has dominion over the animals. Thus, the Philosopher says in *Politics* 1 that it is just and natural to hunt wild animals, because man thereby lays claim to what is naturally his.

Second, the same point is clear from *the order of God's providence*, which always governs lower things by means of higher things. Hence, since man is higher than the rest of the animals, given that he is

made to the image of God, it is appropriate for the other animals to be subject to his governance.

Third, the same point is clear from *the properties of man and the other animals*. For in the other animals what one finds, in accord with their natural judgment, is a certain participation in prudence with respect to some particular acts, whereas in man one finds general prudence, i.e., reason with respect to all actions (*ratio omnium agibilium*). But whatever is such-and-such by participation is subject to that which is such-and-such through its essence and in a general way.

Hence, it is clear that the subjection of the other animals to man is something natural.

Reply to objection 1: A higher power can do many things to his subjects that a lower power cannot do. But an angel is naturally higher than a man. Hence, some effect with respect to animals that was not able to be brought about by human power was able to be brought about by angelic power, viz., that all the animals should be brought together at once.

Reply to objection 2: Some claim that the animals that are now ferocious and kill other animals were tame in that initial state not only with respect to men but also with respect to the other animals.

However, this claim is wholly unreasonable. For the nature of the animals was not changed through man's sin in such a way that certain animals, e.g., lions and falcons, for whom it is now natural to eat the flesh of other animals, lived off of plants at that time. Moreover, Bede's gloss on Genesis 1:30 says that trees and plants were given not to *all* the animals and birds as food, but to *some* of them. Therefore, there would have been natural conflict among certain animals.

However, the animals were not thereby removed from man's dominion, just as they are not now thereby removed from the dominion of God, by whose providence all of this is arranged. Moreover, man executed this providence, even as is now obvious in the case of domestic animals. For men give hens as food to domesticated falcons.

Reply to objection 3: In the state of innocence men did not need animals (a) for bodily necessities, or (b) for clothing, since they were naked and unashamed and untroubled by any movement of disordered desire, or (c) for food, since they fed on the trees of Paradise, or (d) for transportation, because of their own bodily strength.

However, they did need the animals in order to gain experiential cognition of the animals' natures. This is indicated by the fact that God brought the animals to Adam, so that he might impose upon them names that designate their natures.

Reply to objection 4: The other animals have a certain participation in prudence and reason because of their natural judgment (*secundum aestimationem naturalem*), by which cranes follow their leader and bees obey their ruler. And they obeyed man at that time in the same way that certain domestic animals obey him now.

Article 2

Did man have dominion over all other creatures?

It seems that man did not have dominion over all other creatures:

Objection 1: Angels are naturally more powerful than men. But as Augustine says in *De Trinitate* 3, "Corporeal matter did not obey even the holy angels at their will." Therefore, *a fortiori*, it did not obey man in the state of innocence.

Objection 2: The only powers of the soul had by plants are the nutritive power, the augmentative power, and the generative power. But these powers are not apt by nature to obey reason, as is clear within one and the same man. Therefore, since dominion belongs to man because of his reason, it seems

that in the state of innocence man did not have dominion over plants.

Objection 3: Whoever has dominion over a thing can change that thing. But man was not able to change the course of the celestial bodies, since this belongs to God alone, as Dionysius says in his letter to Polycarp. Therefore, he did not have dominion over them.

But contrary to this: Genesis 1:26 says of man, "... that he might have dominion over every creature."

I respond: In a certain sense all things exist within man, and so he has dominion over other things in the sense that he has dominion over what exists within himself.

Now there are four things to take account of within man, viz., *reason*, in accord with which he is like the angels; *the sentient powers*, in accord with which he is like the animals; *the natural powers*, in accord with which he is like the plants; and *the body itself*, in accord with which he is like inanimate things.

Now within man reason plays the role of that which has dominion and is not subject to any dominion. Hence, in his initial state man did not have dominion over the angels; and when it says "every creature," what this means is "every creature that is not made to God's image."

On the other hand, the soul, by commanding, has dominion over the sentient powers, such as the irascible and concupiscible powers, which in some sense obey reason. Hence, in the state of innocence man likewise had dominion over the other animals through his command.

Again, man has dominion over the natural powers, and the body itself, by making use of them rather than by commanding them. And so in the state of innocence man likewise had dominion over plants and inanimate things in this way—not by commanding them or changing them, but by using their help without impediment.

Reply to objection 1 and objection 2 and objection 3: The replies to the objections are clear from what has been said.

Article 3

Would all men have been equal in the state of innocence?

It seems that all men would have been equal in the state of innocence (*homines omnes fuissent aequales*):

Objection 1: Gregory says, "When we do not commit crimes (*ubi non delinquimus*), we are all equal (*pares*)."¹ But there was no crime in the state of innocence. Therefore, everyone was equal.

Objection 2: Likeness and equality are the reason for mutual love (*ratio mutuae dilectionis*)—this according to Ecclesiasticus 13:19 ("Every animal loves what is like itself, and so too every man loves his neighbor"). But love among men, which is a bond of peace, abounded in the state of innocence. Therefore, everyone would have been equal in the state of innocence.

Objection 3: When a cause ceases, its effect ceases. But the cause of inequality among men at present seems to be (a) from the side of *God*, given that He rewards some for merits and punishes others, and (b) from the side of *nature*, given that some are born disabled or deprived because of a natural defect, while some are born strong and perfect. These things would not have occurred in the initial state.

But contrary to this: Romans 13:1 says, "What is from God is ordered toward God."² But order seems to consist especially in inequality; for in *De Civitate Dei* 19 Augustine says, "Order is an arrangement of equal and unequal things, assigning places to each."³ Therefore, in the initial state, which would have been the most orderly, there was inequality.

I respond: One must claim that there would have been some inequality in the initial state, at least with respect to sex, since without diversity of sex there would have been no generation. Likewise, there would have been inequality with respect to age, since some would have been born from others; nor would those who had sexual relations have been sterile.

But there would also have been diversity in the soul, both with respect to moral rectitude (*quantum ad iustitiam*) and with respect to knowledge. For man would have acted by free choice and not by necessity, and because of this men would have been able to apply themselves in greater or lesser degrees to doing or willing or knowing something. Hence, some would have made more progress than others in moral rectitude and knowledge.

Again, there could have been inequality on the part of the body. For the human body was not wholly exempt from the laws of nature in the sense that it would not receive greater or lesser help or assistance from exterior agents, since the life of men would likewise have been sustained by food. So nothing prevents one from saying that, given the diverse climatic conditions and the diverse arrangements of the stars, some would have been born more robust and bigger and more beautiful and more attractive in body than others. Yet in those who were surpassed in such things, there would have been no defect or flaw (*defectus sive peccatum*), either with respect to the soul or with respect to the body.

Reply to objection 1: With these words Gregory intends to rule out an inequality that stems from differences in moral rectitude and sin, on the basis of which some have to be subjected to others as a punishment.

Reply to objection 2: Equality is the reason why mutual love is equal. However, it is possible for there to be greater love among unequals than among equals, even though this sort of love does not come from both parties equally. For instance, a father naturally loves his child more than a brother loves his brother—even though a child does not love his father to the same degree that he is loved by him.

Reply to objection 3: The reason for the inequality could have been from the side of God, not in the sense that He punished some and rewarded others, but in the sense that He elevated some to a greater degree and some to a lesser degree, so that the beauty of order would better shine through among men. And the inequality could also have been caused in the way explained above from the side of nature—and this without any defect of nature.

Article 4

Did one man have dominion over another in the state of innocence?

It seems that one man did not have dominion over another in the state of innocence (*homo homini non dominabatur*):

Objection 1: In *De Civitate Dei* 19 Augustine says, “God wanted rational man, made to His own image, to have dominion only over non-rational beings; He wanted man to have dominion over the beasts and not over man.”

Objection 2: Anything introduced as a punishment for sin would not have existed in the state of innocence. But man’s being subject to man was introduced as a punishment for sin; for instance, after the sin the woman was told, “You will be under the man’s power” (Genesis 3:16). Therefore, in the state of innocence it was not the case that one man was subject to another.

Objection 3: Subordination is opposed to freedom. But freedom is one of the principal goods that was not lacking in the state of innocence, where “nothing was lacking that a good will could desire,” as Augustine puts it in *De Civitate Dei* 14. Therefore, it is not the case that one man had dominion over

another in the state of innocence.

But contrary to this: The condition of men in the state of innocence was not more dignified than the condition of the angels. But among the angels there are some who have dominion over others; thus, one order of angels is even called Dominations. Therefore, it is not contrary to the dignity of the state of innocence that one man should have dominion over another.

I respond: ‘Dominion’ (*dominium*) is taken in two senses:

(a) In one sense, dominion is opposed to servitude, and in this sense a lord (*dominus*) is one to whom someone is subject as a servant (*servus*).

(b) In the second sense, dominion is related in general to any kind of subject at all, and in this sense even someone who has the role of governing and directing free men (*liberi*) can be called a lord.

Thus, if we take ‘dominion’ in the first sense, then it is not the case that one man had dominion over another in the state of innocence, whereas if we take ‘dominion’ in the second sense, then it was possible for one man to have dominion over another in the state of innocence. The reason for this is that a servant differs from a free man in that “a free man is a cause of himself (*causa sui*),” as it says at the beginning of the *Metaphysics*, whereas a servant is ordered toward another.

Thus, someone has dominion over another *as a servant* when the one who has dominion looks to the one over whom he has dominion for his usefulness to himself, i.e., to the one who has dominion. And since everyone desires his own good and consequently finds it deplorable to have to give exclusively to someone else a good that ought to have been his own, it follows that this sort of dominion cannot exist without suffering on the part of the subjects (*sine poena subiectorum*). Consequently, this sort of dominion of one man over another would not have existed in the state of innocence.

On the other hand, someone has dominion over another *as a free man* when he directs him either to the proper good of the one who is being directed or to the common good. And this sort of dominion of one man over another would have existed in the state of innocence—and this for two reasons.

First, man is naturally a social animal, and so in the state of innocence men would have lived in society (*vixissent socialiter*). But it would not be possible for a multitude to live in society unless there were someone in charge who looked toward the common good (*nisi aliquis praesideret qui ad bonum commune intenderet*); for the many necessarily look toward many goods, while the one looks toward one good. This is why the Philosopher says at the beginning of the *Politics* that whenever the many are ordered toward one thing, that one thing will always be found to be central and directive (*unum ut principale et dirigens*).

Second, if one man had preeminence over another in knowledge and moral rectitude, then it would not have been fitting for him not to act for the benefit of the others—this according to 1 Peter 4:10 (“As every man has received grace, ministering the same one to another”). Thus, in *De Civitate Dei* 19 Augustine says, “Those who are just rule not out of a desire to dominate, but because it is their duty to give counsel (*officio consulendi*). The natural order of things prescribes this, and thus did God make man.”

Reply to objection 1 and objection 2 and objection 3: From what has been said it is clear how to reply to all the objections, which are based on the first sense of ‘dominion’.