

QUESTION 98

The Conservation of the Species in the Initial State: Generation

The next thing to consider is what pertains to the conservation of the species: first, with respect to generation itself (question 98) and, second, with respect to the condition of the generated offspring (questions 99-101).

On the first topic are two questions: (1) Would there have been generation in the state of innocence? (2) Would the generation have been through sexual union?

Article 1

Would there have been generation in the state of innocence?

It seems that in the state of innocence there would not have been generation:

Objection 1: As *Physics* 5 says, "Corruption is contrary to generation." But contraries have to do with the same thing, and in the state of innocence there would not have been corruption. Therefore, there would not have been generation, either.

Objection 2: Generation is ordered toward conserving within the species what cannot be conserved with respect to the individual; hence, generation is not found among those individuals that last forever. But in the state of innocence man would have lived forever without death. Therefore, generation would not have existed in the state of innocence.

Objection 3: It is through generation that men are multiplied. But when owners are multiplied (*multiplicatis dominis*), there has to be a division of possessions in order to avoid confusion about ownership (*ad evitandam confusionem domini*). Therefore, since man was set up as the owner of the animals, if a multiplication of the human race had been made through generation, then a division of ownership would have ensued. But this seems contrary to the natural law, according to which all things are held in common, as Isidore says. Therefore, there would not have been generation in the state of innocence.

But contrary to this: Genesis 1:28 says, "Grow and multiply, and fill the earth." But multiplication of the sort in question here could not have occurred without new generation, since only two human beings were made at the beginning. Therefore, there would have been generation in the initial state.

I respond: In the state of innocence there would have been generation for the multiplication of the human race. Otherwise, man's sin would have been absolutely necessary in order that such a great good might follow from it.

Therefore, note that man by nature is constituted as a sort of middle ground between corruptible creatures and incorruptible creatures. For his soul is naturally incorruptible, whereas his body is naturally corruptible. But notice that what nature intends (*intentio naturae*) relates to corruptible creatures in a way different from the way it relates to incorruptible creatures. For it seems that it is what exists always and forever that belongs *per se* to nature's intention. By contrast, what exists only for some temporal interval does not seem to stem chiefly from what nature intends, but is instead ordered toward something else; otherwise, when it is corrupted, nature's intention would cease. Therefore, since among corruptible things the only thing that remains forever or is everlasting is the species, what nature principally intends has to do with the good of the species, whose conservation natural generation is ordered toward. By contrast, incorruptible substances remain forever not only with respect to the species but also with respect to the individuals, and so what nature principally intends has to do with the individuals themselves as well.

So, then, generation belongs to man with respect to his body, which is corruptible by its nature. But on the part of the soul, which is incorruptible, what belongs to man is that a multitude of individuals is intended *per se* by nature—or, better, by the author of nature, who alone is the creator of human souls. And so for the multiplication of the human race He established generation within the human race—even in the state of innocence.

Reply to objection 1: In the state of innocence man’s body, taken just by itself, was corruptible, but it was able to be preserved from corruption by the soul. And this is why generation, which is appropriate for corruptible things, was not to be taken away from man.

Reply to objection 2: Even if generation in the state of innocence was not for the sake of the conservation of the species, it was nonetheless for the sake of the multiplication of the individuals.

Reply to objection 3: In our present state, it is necessary for there to be a division of possessions when the owners are multiplied. For as the Philosopher says in *Politics* 2, the holding of possessions in common (*communitas possessionis*) is an occasion for discord.

However, in the state of innocence men’s wills were ordered in such a way that, without any danger of discord, they would have had, to the extent appropriate for each, common use (*communiter usi fuissent*) of the goods that fell under their ownership. For this practice is observed even now among many good men.

Article 2

Would there have been generation through sexual union in the state of innocence?

It seems that in the state of innocence there would not have been generation through sexual union (*per coitum*):

Objection 1: As Damascene says, in the earthly paradise man was “like an angel.” But in the future state of resurrection, when men will be similar to angels, “they will neither marry nor be given in marriage,” as Matthew 22:30 says. Therefore, neither would there have been generation through sexual union in paradise.

Objection 2: The first men were created at a perfect age. Therefore, if among them there had been generation through sexual union before the sin, then they would have been carnally joined even in paradise—which is clearly false according to Scripture.

Objection 3: In carnal union (*in coniunctione carnali*) man becomes especially like the beasts, because of the vehemence of the pleasure; this is why there is praise for celibacy (*continentia*), through which men abstain from pleasures of this sort. But it is because of sin that man is compared to the beasts—this according to Psalm 48:21 (“Man, when he was in honor, did not understand; he is compared to senseless beasts, and is become like to them”). Therefore, before the sin there would have been no carnal union between male and female.

Objection 4: In the state of innocence there would have been no corruption. But virginal integrity is corrupted through sexual union. Therefore, there would not have been sexual union in the state of innocence.

But contrary to this:

1. According to Genesis 1:27 and 2:22, it was before the sin that God made them male and female. But nothing in the works of God is in vain. Therefore, even if man had not sinned, there would have been sexual union, which the difference between the sexes is ordered toward.

2. Genesis 2:18-20 says that the woman was made to help the man—but not for anything if not for

the generation that is effected through sexual union, since for any other sort of work the man could be helped more fittingly by a man rather than by a woman. Therefore, even in the state of innocence there would have been generation through sexual union.

I respond: Some ancient doctors, reflecting on the shamefulness of the concupiscence associated with sexual union in our present state (*considerantes concupiscentiae foeditatem quae invenitur in coitu in isto statu*), claimed that in the state of innocence there would not have been generation through sexual union. Hence, in his book *De Homine* Gregory of Nyssa says that in paradise the human race would have been multiplied in some other way—just as the angels are multiplied without sexual intercourse (*absque concubitu*) through the operation of God’s power. Furthermore, he claims that God made them male and female before the sin with an eye toward the mode of generation that would exist after the sin, which God had foreknowledge of.

But this is unreasonable. For what is natural to man is neither taken away from nor added to man because of sin. But it is clear that because of his animal life—which, as was explained above (q. 97, a. 3), he had even before the sin—it is natural to man to generate through sexual union, just as it is natural to the other perfect animals as well. And this is made clear by the natural members of the body deputed for this use. So just as with the other bodily members, one should not claim that the use of these natural members did not exist before the sin.

Thus, there are two things to take into account concerning sexual union in our present state:

The first is what belongs to *nature*, viz., the union of the male and the female in order to generate. For every instance of generation requires an active power and a passive power. Hence, since in all the animals in which there is a distinction between the sexes, the active power exists in the male and the passive power in the female, the order of nature requires that the male and the female come together through sexual union in order to generate.

The other thing that can be taken into account is the *deformity of unbridled concupiscence* (*quaedam deformitas immoderatae concupiscentiae*). This did not exist in the state of innocence, wherein the lower powers were altogether subject to reason. Hence, in *De Civitate Dei* 14 Augustine says, “Far be it from us to suspect that offspring could not have been brought forth without the sickness of disordered desire (*sine libidinis morbo*). Instead, the members in question were moved at will just like the other members—and this without burning desire or seductive stimulation, but with tranquility of mind and body.”

Reply to objection 1: In paradise man was like the angels because of his spiritual mind, even though he had an animal life with respect to his body. However, after the resurrection man will be a spiritual effect like the angels, both with respect to his soul and with respect to his body. Hence, the arguments are not parallel.

Reply to objection 2: As Augustine says in *Super Genesim ad Litteram* 9, the reason why the first parents did not have sexual intercourse in paradise was either (a) that, because of their sin, they were ejected from Paradise shortly after the woman was formed, or (b) that they were waiting for God’s authority, from which they had received the general command [to multiply], to specify a determinate time for sexual intercourse (*ad determinatum tempus commixtionis*).

Reply to objection 3: The beasts lack reason. Hence, man becomes bestial in sexual union to the extent that he cannot by means of his reason moderate the pleasure of sexual union and the fervor of sensual desire.

However, in the state of innocence there was nothing of this sort that was not moderated by reason. This was not, as some claim, because there was less sensual pleasure. (For the sensual pleasure would have been greater to the extent that the nature was purer and the body more sensitive.) Instead, it was because the concupiscible power would not have indulged in pleasure of this sort in a disordered way, given that it was regulated by reason—which implies not that there is less pleasure in the senses, but

rather that the concupiscible power does not cling (*inhaeret*) to the pleasure in an unbridled way (*immoderate*). (By ‘unbridled’ I mean ‘beyond the measure of reason’.) In like manner, one who is temperate with respect to food taken in moderation (*sobrius in cibo moderate assumpto*) does not have less pleasure than a glutton; instead, his concupiscible power lingers less over this sort of pleasure (*minus super delectatione huiusmodi requiescit*).

This is consonant with the passage from Augustine, which does not rule out a great deal of pleasure (*magnitudinem delectationis*) in the state of innocence, but instead rules out feverish disordered desire (*ardorem libidinis*) and disquietude of mind. And so in the state of innocence celibacy (*continentia*) would not have been praiseworthy—even though in our times it is praised not because of its lack of fecundity, but because of its exclusion of disordered desire. For in the state of innocence fecundity would have existed without disordered desire.

Reply to objection 4: As Augustine says in *De Civitate Dei* 14, in the state of innocence “there was no corruption of virginal integrity involved in sexual intercourse (*nulla corruptione integritatis infunderetur gremio maritus uxoris*). For the man’s seed was able to be emitted into his wife’s uterus in such a way that the integrity of the female genitalia was preserved—just as, even now, a menstrual flow can be emitted from a virgin’s uterus while that same integrity is preserved. For just as it is not the groan of pain but the sense of completion (*impulsus maturitatis*) that relaxes a woman’s viscera in order for her to give birth, so too it was not lustful desire (*libidinis appetitus*) but the voluntary use [of the organs] (*voluntarius usus*) that united the two natures in order for them to conceive.”