

QUESTION 97

The Conservation of the Individual in the First State

The next thing we have to consider is what pertains to the state of the first man with respect to the body: first, as regards the conservation of the individual (question 97); and second, as regards the conservation of the species (question 98).

On the first topic there are four questions: (1) Was man immortal in the state of innocence? (2) Was man impassible in the state of innocence? (3) Did man need food in the state of innocence? (4) Did he attain immortality through the tree of life?

Article 1

Was man immortal in the state of innocence?

It seems that man was not immortal in the state of innocence:

Objection 1: *Mortal* is part of the definition of man. But when a definition is denied, the thing defined is denied. Therefore, if he was a man, then he could not have been immortal.

Objection 2: As *Metaphysics* 10 says, “What is corruptible differs in genus from what is incorruptible.” But there is no transmutation of things differing in genus into one another. Therefore, if the first man was incorruptible, then man would not be able to be corruptible in the present state (*in statu isto*).

Objection 3: If man was immortal in the state of innocence, this was so either by nature or by grace. But it was not by nature; for since nature remains the same in species, he would also be immortal now. Similarly, it was not by grace, since the first man recovered grace through repentance—this according to Wisdom 10:2 (“He brought him out of his sins”). Therefore, he would have recovered his immortality, too. But this is obviously false. Therefore, man was not immortal in the state of innocence.

Objection 4: Immortality is promised to man as a reward—this according to Apocalypse 21:4 (“Death will be no more”). But man was not created in a state of reward; rather, he was created in order to merit a reward. Therefore, man was not immortal in the state of innocence.

But contrary to this: Romans 5:12 says, “Through sin death entered into the world.” Therefore, before the sin man was immortal.

I respond: There are three senses in which a thing can be said to be incorruptible:

First, *because of matter (ex parte materiae)*, viz., either because it does not have matter, as in the case of the angels, or because it has matter that is in potentiality only to a single [substantial] form, as in the case of the celestial bodies. This is called *being incorruptible by nature*.

Second, a thing is said to be incorruptible *because of a form (ex parte formae)*, viz., when a thing corruptible by nature has a disposition by which it is absolutely prevented from being corrupted (*dispositio per quam totaliter a corruptione prohibetur*). This is called *being incorruptible by glory*, since as Augustine says in his letter to Dioscorus, “God made the soul so powerful by nature that the fullness of its health, i.e., the vigor of its incorruption, spills over from its beatitude into its body.”

Third, a thing is said to be incorruptible *because of an efficient cause (ex parte causae efficientis)*. This is the sense in which man was incorruptible and immortal in the state of innocence. For as Augustine says in *Quaestiones Veteris et Novi Testamenti*, “God made man to live immortally as long as he did not sin, so that he would be the source of life or death for himself.” For his body was not incorruptible (*indissolubile*) through any sort of vigor of immortality that existed within it; instead, his soul had a certain power, given supernaturally by God, through which, as long as it remained subject to God, it was able to preserve the body from all corruption. This made good sense. For since, as was

explained above (q. 76, a. 1), the rational soul exceeds the proportion of corporeal matter, it was fitting that at the beginning a power should be given to it by which it was able to conserve the body in a way that exceeded the nature of corporeal matter.

Reply to objection 1 and objection 2: These arguments go through in the case of what is incorruptible and immortal by nature.

Reply to objection 3: The power of preserving the body from corruption was not natural to the human soul, but stemmed from a gift of grace. And even though the soul would regain grace with respect to having its sins remitted and meriting glory, it would nonetheless not regain it with respect to the effect of its lost immortality. For this effect was reserved for Christ, through whom, as will be explained below (*ST* 3, q. 14, a. 4), the defect of nature was to be remade into something better.

Reply to objection 4: The immortality of glory, which is promised as a reward, is different from the immortality which was given to man in the state of innocence.

Article 2

Was man passible in the state of innocence?

It seems that man was passible in the state of innocence:

Objection 1: To sense something is a sort of being acted upon (*pati quoddam*). But in the state of innocence man was able to sense. Therefore, he was passible.

Objection 2: Sleeping is a sort of being acted upon (*passio quaedam*). But man slept in the state of innocence—this according to Genesis 2:21 (“God cast a deep sleep upon Adam”). Therefore, he was passible.

Objection 3: In the same place it adds, “He took one of his ribs.” Therefore, he was passible even to the point of the having part of his body cut out.

Objection 4: Man’s body was soft. But what is soft is naturally passive in relation to what is hard. Therefore, if a hard body had struck the first man’s body, he would have been acted upon by it. And so the first man was passible.

But contrary to this: If he was passible, then he was also corruptible, since being acted upon, if amplified, brings a substance to ruin (*passio magis facta abiicit a substantia*).

I respond: There are two senses of ‘being acted upon’ (*passio*).

The first sense is the proper one, and in this sense ‘is acted upon’ is said of something that is taken out of its natural disposition (*a sua naturali dispositione removetur*). For a passion is the effect of an action, and among natural things contraries act on one another and are acted upon by one another, and one takes another out of its natural disposition.

In the second sense, ‘is acted upon’ is taken in a general way for any sort of change, even if it contributes to the perfection of the nature. It is in this sense that an act of intellectual understanding or an act of sensing is said to be an instance of being acted upon.

Therefore, in the second sense, man was passible in the state of innocence, and he was acted upon, both with respect to his body and with respect to his soul. By contrast, in the first sense of ‘being acted upon’, he was impassible both with respect to his body and with respect to his soul, just as he was immortal. For he was able to prevent his being acted upon—just as he was likewise able to prevent his death—as long as he persisted without sin.

Reply to objection 1 and objection 2: This makes clear the reply to objections one and two. For sensing and sleeping do not take man out of his natural disposition, but instead order him toward the good of nature.

Reply to objection 3: As was explained above (q. 92, a. 3), the rib existed in Adam insofar as he was the source of the human race, just as semen exists in a man insofar as he is a source through generation. Therefore, just as the release of semen is not accompanied by an instance of being acted upon which takes a man out of his natural disposition, so one should say the same thing about the removal of the rib in question.

Reply to objection 4: In the state of innocence man's body was able to persist for a long time without suffering any injury—partly because of man's own reason, through which he was able to avoid dangers, and partly because of God's providence, which protected him in such a way that nothing unexpected would happen to him by which he might be injured.

Article 3

Did man need food in the state of innocence?

It seems that man did not need food in the state of innocence:

Objection 1: Man needs food in order to restore what has been lost. But in Adam's body, it seems, there was no loss, since he was incorruptible. Therefore, he did not need food.

Objection 2: Food is necessary for nutrition. But nutrition does not occur without one's being acted upon. Therefore, since man's body was impassible, food was not, it seems, necessary for him.

Objection 3: For us food is necessary for the conservation of our life. But there was another way in which Adam was able to conserve his life, since he was not going to die as long as he did not sin. Therefore, food was not necessary for him.

Objection 4: The discharge of excess materials (*emissio superfluitatum*) follows upon the consumption of food; but this excess material has a foulness that does not befit the dignity of the initial state. Therefore, it seems that in the initial state man did not make use of food.

But contrary to this: Genesis 2:16 says, "You shall eat of every tree that is in Paradise."

I respond: In the state of innocence man had an animal life in need of food, whereas after the resurrection he will have a spiritual life that is not in need of food.

To see this clearly, note that the rational soul is both a *soul (anima)* and a *spirit (spiritus)*. It is called a *soul* with respect to what is common to it and the other souls, viz., giving life to a body; hence Genesis 2:7 says, "Man was made into a living soul," i.e., a soul giving life to a body. On the other hand, it is called a *spirit* with respect to what is proper to itself and not to the other souls, viz., that it has an immaterial intellective power.

Therefore, in the initial state the soul communicated to the body what belonged to the soul insofar as it is a *soul*, and so the body was called an animal insofar as it had life from the soul. But as the *De Anima* says, among the lower things here below the source of life is the vegetative soul, whose operations are to make use of food and to generate and to grow. And hence these works belong to man in the initial state.

However, in the last state, after the resurrection, the soul will in some way communicate to the body those things that are proper to the soul insofar as it is a *spirit*—immortality for everyone, but also impassibility, glory, and power for the blessed (*quantum ad bonos*), whose bodies will be called 'spiritual'.

Hence, after the resurrection men will not need food, but in the state of innocence they did need food.

Reply to objection 1: As Augustine put it in *Quaestiones Veteris et Novi Testamenti*, "How is it that an immortal body was sustained by food? For what is immortal does not need food or drink."

Now it was explained above (a. 1) that the immortality that belonged to the initial state stemmed from a certain supernatural power residing in the soul—and not from any disposition inhering in the body. Hence, some of the body's moisture was able to be lost through the action of heat; and so it was necessary for man to help himself by taking food, lest the moisture be totally consumed.

Reply to objection 2: In the act of nutrition there is an alteration and an instance of being acted upon, viz., on the part of the food, which is converted into the substance of the one that is nourished. Hence, one can infer from this not that the man's body was passible, but rather that the food that was taken was passible—though it is also true that such an instance of being acted upon contributed to the perfection of the nature.

Reply to objection 3: If the man had not helped himself to food, he would have sinned—just as he did sin by taking the forbidden food. For at one and the same time he was commanded both to abstain from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and to eat from every other tree in Paradise.

Reply to objection 4: Some claim that in the state of innocence man took only as much food as was necessary for him, so that there was no emission of excess material.

But it seems hard to believe that in the food that was consumed there was no excess material that was unable to be converted into human nourishment. Hence, it was necessary for the waste excess to be emitted. However, God saw to it (*divinitus provisum*) that this did not involve anything foul.

Article 4

Could the tree of life have been a cause of immortality?

It seems that the tree of life could not have been a cause of immortality:

Objection 1: Nothing is able to act beyond its own species, since an effect does not exceed its cause. But the tree of life was corruptible; otherwise it could not have been taken in nourishment, since, as has been explained (a. 3), food is converted into the substance of the one that is nourished. Therefore, the tree of life could not have conferred incorruptibility or immortality.

Objection 2: Effects that are caused by the powers of plants and other natural things are natural. Therefore, if the tree of life had caused immortality, the immortality in question would have been natural.

Objection 3: This seems to go back to the fables of the ancients, who claimed that the gods who ate of a certain food became immortal; but the Philosopher ridicules these ancients in *Metaphysics* 3.

But contrary to this:

1. Genesis 3:22 says, “..... lest perhaps he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever.”

2. In *Quaestiones Veteris et Novi Testamenti* Augustine says, “Tasting of the tree of life held back the corruption of the body, and even then, after the sin, he would have been able to remain uncorrupted if he had been permitted to eat of the tree of life.”

I respond: The tree of life caused immortality in a certain way, but not absolutely speaking.

To see this clearly, note that in the initial state man had two remedies, directed against two defects, for conserving his life.

The first defect is the loss of moisture due to the action of natural heat, which is an instrument of the soul. And against this defect man helped himself by eating of the other trees in Paradise, in the same way that we ourselves now help ourselves by the food we eat.

However, the second defect is that, as the Philosopher puts it in *De Generatione Animalium* 1, whatever is generated from what is extraneous and is added to what was previously moist diminishes the active power of the species. For instance, water added to wine is at first converted into the taste of the

wine, but as more and more water is added, it weakens the strength of the wine, and finally the wine becomes watery. So, then, we see that at the beginning the active power of the species is so strong that it can convert food in a way that is sufficient not only to restore what was lost but also to add to it. However, afterwards, what is assimilated is sufficient not for an increase, but only for restoring what was lost. And, finally, in the state of old age, it is not even sufficient for this, and so a loss of size follows, and finally the natural dissolution of the body.

Man was helped by the tree of life against this defect, since the tree of life had the power to fortify the power of the species against the sort of weakness that stems from the admixture of what is extraneous. Hence, in *De Civitate Dei* 14 Augustine says, "Food was there for man, lest he get hungry; drink was there, lest he get thirsty; and the tree of life was there, lest old age destroy him." And in *Quaestiones Veteris et Novi Testamenti* he says, "In the manner of medicine the tree of life prevented men from dying."

However, it was not a cause of immortality absolutely speaking. For the power that existed in the soul to conserve the body was not caused by the tree of life. Nor was the tree of life able to confer on the body even the disposition for immortality, so that it might never be destroyed. This is clear from the fact that the power of a body is finite. Hence, the power of the tree of life was able to reach as far as to give the body the power to endure up to some determinate time, but not for an infinitely long time. For it is clear that the greater the power, the more durable the effect it imparts. Hence, since its power was finite, once the tree of life was eaten from, it preserved the body from corruption up to some determinate time. And when that time ended, either the man would be transferred to a spiritual life or he would need to eat from the tree of life once again.

Reply to objection 1 and objection 2 and objection 3 and argument to the contrary 1 and argument to the contrary 2: The replies to the objections are clear from what has been said. For the first set of arguments reach the conclusion that the tree of life did not cause incorruptibility absolutely speaking, whereas the other arguments reach the conclusion that it did cause incorruptibility by impeding corruption in the way explained above.