

## St. Thomas Aquinas

# The Summa Theologica

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Translated by

Fathers of the English Dominican Province

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### OF THE PRESERVATION OF THE SPECIES (TWO ARTICLES)

We next consider what belongs to the preservation of the species; and, first, of generation; secondly, of the state of the offspring. Under the first head there are two points of inquiry:

[\(1\)](#) Whether in the state of innocence there would have been generation?

[\(2\)](#) Whether generation would have been through coition?

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### Whether in the state of innocence generation existed?

**Objection 1:** It would seem there would have been no generation in the state of innocence. For, as stated in Phys. v, 5, "corruption is contrary to generation." But contraries affect the same subject: also there would have been no corruption in the state of innocence. Therefore neither would there have been generation.

**Objection 2:** Further, the object of generation is the preservation in the species of that which is corruptible in the individual. Wherefore there is no generation in those individual things which last for ever. But in the state of innocence man would have lived for ever. Therefore in the state of innocence there would have been no generation.

**Objection 3:** Further, by generation man is multiplied. But the multiplication of masters requires the division of property, to avoid confusion of mastership. Therefore, since man was made master of the animals, it would have been necessary to make a division of rights when the human race increased by generation. This is against the natural law, according to which all

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**On the contrary,** It is written ([Gn. 1:28](#)): "Increase and multiply, and fill the earth." But this increase could not come about save by generation, since the original number of mankind was two only. Therefore there would have been generation in the state of innocence.

**I answer that,** In the state of innocence there would have been generation of offspring for the multiplication of the human race; otherwise man's sin would have been very necessary, for such a great blessing to be its result. We must, therefore, observe that man, by his nature, is established, as it were, midway between corruptible and incorruptible creatures, his soul being naturally incorruptible, while his body is naturally corruptible. We must also observe that nature's purpose appears to be different as regards corruptible and incorruptible things. For that seems to be the direct purpose of nature, which is invariable and perpetual; while what is only for a time is seemingly not the chief purpose of nature, but as it were, subordinate to something else; otherwise, when it ceased to exist, nature's purpose would become void.

Therefore, since in things corruptible none is everlasting and permanent except the species, it follows that the chief purpose of nature is the good of the species; for the preservation of which natural generation is ordained. On the other hand, incorruptible substances survive, not only in the species, but also in the individual; wherefore even the individuals are included in the chief purpose of nature.

Hence it belongs to man to beget offspring, on the part of the naturally corruptible body. But on the part of the soul, which is incorruptible, it is fitting that the multitude of individuals should be the direct purpose of nature, or rather of the Author of nature, Who alone is the Creator of the human soul. Wherefore, to provide for the multiplication of the human race, He established the begetting of offspring even in the state of innocence.

**Reply to Objection 1:** In the state of innocence the human body was in itself corruptible, but it could be preserved from corruption by the soul. Therefore, since generation belongs to things corruptible, man was not to be deprived thereof.

**Reply to Objection 2:** Although generation in the state of innocence might not have been required for the preservation of the species, yet it would have been required for the multiplication of the individual.

**Reply to Objection 3:** In our present state a division of possessions is necessary on account of the multiplicity of masters, inasmuch as community of possession is a source of strife, as the Philosopher says (*Politic. ii, 5*). In the state of innocence, however, the will of men would have been so ordered that without any danger of strife they would have used in common, according to each one's need, those things of which they were masters---a state of things to be observed even now among many good men.

## coition?

**Objection 1:** It would seem that generation by coition would not have existed in the state of innocence. For, as Damascene says (De Fide Orth. ii, 11; iv, 25), the first man in the terrestrial Paradise was "like an angel." But in the future state of the resurrection, when men will be like the angels, "they shall neither marry nor be married," as is written Mt. 22:30. Therefore neither in paradise would there have been generation by coition.

**Objection 2:** Further, our first parents were created at the age of perfect development. Therefore, if generation by coition had existed before sin, they would have had intercourse while still in paradise: which was not the case according to Scripture ([Gn. 4:1](#)).

**Objection 3:** Further, in carnal intercourse, more than at any other time, man becomes like the beasts, on account of the vehement delight which he takes therein; whence contingency is praiseworthy, whereby man refrains from such pleasures. But man is compared to beasts by reason of sin, according to Ps. 48:13: "Man, when he was in honor, did not understand; he is compared to senseless beasts, and is become like to them." Therefore, before sin, there would have been no such intercourse of man and woman.

**Objection 4:** Further, in the state of innocence there would have been no corruption. But virginal integrity is corrupted by intercourse. Therefore there would have been no such thing in the state of innocence.

**On the contrary,** God made man and woman before sin ([Gn. 1,2](#)). But nothing is void in God's works. Therefore, even if man had not sinned, there would have been such intercourse, to which the distinction of sex is ordained. Moreover, we are told that woman was made to be a help to man ([Gn. 2:18,20](#)). But she is not fitted to help man except in generation, because another man would have proved a more effective help in anything else. Therefore there would have been such generation also in the state of innocence.

**I answer that,** Some of the earlier doctors, considering the nature of concupiscence as regards generation in our present state, concluded that in the state of innocence generation would not have been effected in the same way. Thus Gregory of Nyssa says (De Hom. Opif. xvii) that in paradise the human race would have been multiplied by some other means, as the angels were multiplied without coition by the operation of the Divine Power. He adds that God made man male and female before sin, because He foreknew the mode of generation which would take place after sin, which He foresaw. But this is unreasonable. For what is natural to man was neither acquired nor forfeited by sin. Now it is clear that generation by coition is natural to man by reason of his animal life, which he possessed even before sin, as above explained ([Question \[97\]](#), [Article \[3\]](#)), just as it is natural to other perfect animals, as the corporeal members make it clear. So we cannot allow that these members would not have had a natural use, as other members had, before sin.

Thus, as regards generation by coition, there are, in the present state of life, two things to be considered. One, which comes from nature, is the union of man and woman; for in every act of generation there is an active and a passive principle. Wherefore, since wherever there is distinction of sex, the active principle is male and the passive is female; the order of nature demands that for the purpose of generation there should be concurrence of male and female. The second thing to be observed is a certain deformity of excessive concupiscence, which in

[Donate bitcoin](#). St. Isidore [e-book library/forum](#) » [aquinas](#) » [english](#) » [summa](#) » [FP](#) » [FP098.html](#) to reason. Wherefore Augustine says (De Civ. Dei xiv, 26): "We must be far from supposing that offspring could not be begotten without concupiscence. All the bodily members would have been equally moved by the will, without ardent or wanton incentive, with calmness of soul and body."

**Reply to Objection 1:** In paradise man would have been like an angel in his spirituality of mind, yet with an animal life in his body. After the resurrection man will be like an angel, spiritualized in soul and body. Wherefore there is no parallel.

**Reply to Objection 2:** As Augustine says (Gen. ad lit. ix, 4), our first parents did not come together in paradise, because on account of sin they were ejected from paradise shortly after the creation of the woman; or because, having received the general Divine command relative to generation, they awaited the special command relative to time.

**Reply to Objection 3:** Beasts are without reason. In this way man becomes, as it were, like them in coition, because he cannot moderate concupiscence. In the state of innocence nothing of this kind would have happened that was not regulated by reason, not because delight of sense was less, as some say (rather indeed would sensible delight have been the greater in proportion to the greater purity of nature and the greater sensibility of the body), but because the force of concupiscence would not have so inordinately thrown itself into such pleasure, being curbed by reason, whose place it is not to lessen sensual pleasure, but to prevent the force of concupiscence from cleaving to it immoderately. By "immoderately" I mean going beyond the bounds of reason, as a sober person does not take less pleasure in food taken in moderation than the glutton, but his concupiscence lingers less in such pleasures. This is what Augustine means by the words quoted, which do not exclude intensity of pleasure from the state of innocence, but ardor of desire and restlessness of the mind. Therefore continence would not have been praiseworthy in the state of innocence, whereas it is praiseworthy in our present state, not because it removes fecundity, but because it excludes inordinate desire. In that state fecundity would have been without lust.

**Reply to Objection 4:** As Augustine says (De Civ. Dei xiv, 26): In that state "intercourse would have been without prejudice to virginal integrity; this would have remained intact, as it does in the menses. And just as in giving birth the mother was then relieved, not by groans of pain, but by the instigations of maturity; so in conceiving, the union was one, not of lustful desire, but of deliberate action."