

## QUESTION 43

### The Causes of Fear

Next we have to consider the causes of fear. And on this topic there are two questions: (1) Is love a cause of fear? (2) Is weakness (*defectus*) a cause of fear?

#### Article 1

##### Is love a cause of fear?

It seems that love (*amor*) is not a cause of fear:

**Objection 1:** That which ‘introduces’ (*introducitur*) a thing is a cause of it. But as Augustine says in his commentary on 1 John 4:18, “Fear introduces (*introducitur*) the love of charity.” Therefore, fear is a cause of love, and not vice versa.

**Objection 2:** In *Rhetoric 2* the Philosopher says, “The men who are feared the most are those from whom we expect bad things to threaten us.” But by the fact that we expect something bad from someone, we are prompted to hate him rather than to love him (*magis provocamur ad odium eius quam ad amorem*). Therefore, fear is caused by hatred rather than by love.

**Objection 3:** It was explained above (q. 42, a. 3) that what comes from within ourselves does not have the character of something to be feared. But it is especially the case that what comes from love proceeds from the depth of our heart (*ex intimo cordis*). Therefore, fear is not caused by love.

**But contrary to this:** In *83 Quaestiones* Augustine says, “Without doubt, there is no cause of fear except (a) losing what we love and have acquired or (b) not acquiring what we love and hope for.” Therefore, every instance of fear is caused by the fact that we love something. Therefore, love is a cause of fear.

**I respond:** The objects of the passions are related to the passions in the way that forms are related to natural things or artifacts, since the passions of the soul take their species from their objects, in the same way that the things just mentioned take their species from their forms. Therefore, just as anything that is a cause of a form is a cause of the thing constituted by that form, so, too, anything that is in any way a cause of the object of a passion is a cause of that passion.

Now something can be a cause of the object of a passion either in the manner of an *efficient cause* or in the manner of a *material disposition*. For instance, the object of pleasure is something good that is apprehended and fitting and conjoined [to the appetite] (*bonum apparens conveniens coniunctum*), where (a) its *efficient cause* includes anything that brings about the conjoining or that brings it about that the good thing in question is fitting or good or apprehended (*illud quod facit coniunctionem vel quod facit convenientiam vel bonitatem vel apparentiam huiusmodi boni*), while (b) its cause in the manner of a *material disposition* is a habit, or any sort of disposition, in accord with which the good that is conjoined to him becomes fitting for someone or is apprehended by him (*habitus vel quaecumque dispositio secundam quam fit alicui conveniens aut apparens illud bonum quod est ei coniunctum*).

So, then, in the case under discussion, the object of fear is something judged to be evil and in the near future and such that it cannot easily be resisted (*obiectum timoris est aestimatum malum futurum propinquum cui resisti de facili non potest*). And so whatever is able to inflict such an evil is an *efficient cause* of the object of fear and thus of the fear itself. On the other hand, that by which someone is so disposed that something is an evil of the sort in question for him is a cause of fear and of its object in the manner of a *material disposition*. And it is in this latter sense that love is a cause of fear. For from the fact that someone loves a certain good, it follows that it is bad for him to be deprived of that good and, as a result, it follows that he fears being deprived of it as something bad.

**Reply to objection 1:** As was explained above (q. 42, a. 1), fear has to do in the first place and *per se* with something bad which one is with withdrawing from and which is opposed to a certain good

that is loved. And so fear arises *per se* from love.

However, in a secondary sense, fear has to do with the source of the relevant sort of evil (*secundario vero respicit ad id per quod provenit tale malum*). And so sometimes fear induces love *per accidens*, viz., insofar as a man who fears being punished by God keeps God's commandments, and so begins to hope; and as was explained above (q. 40, a. 7), hope introduces love.

**Reply to objection 2:** Someone from whom bad things are expected is, to be sure, at first hated (*primo quidem odio habetur*). However, after good things begin to be hoped for from him, then he begins to be loved.

Still, the good that the feared evil is contrary to was loved from the beginning.

**Reply to objection 3:** This argument goes through with respect to anything that is a cause of a fearsome evil in the manner of an *efficient* cause. But as has been explained, love is a cause of fear in the manner of a *material disposition*.

## Article 2

### Is weakness a cause of fear?

It seems that weakness is not a cause of fear (*defectus non sit causa timoris*):

**Objection 1:** Those who have power are feared most of all. But weakness is opposed to power. Therefore, weakness is not a cause of fear.

**Objection 2:** Those who are already being executed are in an especially weakened state (*illi qui iam decapitantur maxime sunt in defectu*). But as *Rhetoric 2* points out, such men do not have fear. Therefore, weakness is not a cause of fear.

**Objection 3:** To contend with a rival has its source in courage and not in weakness (*decertare ex fortitudine provenit, non ex defectu*). But as *Rhetoric 2* says, "Those who are contending have a fear of those who are fighting for the same things." Therefore, weakness is not a cause of fear.

**But contrary to this:** Contraries are causes of contraries. But as *Rhetoric 2* says, "Fear is eliminated by wealth, and strength, and a multitude of friends, and power." Therefore, fear is caused by a weakness in such things.

**I respond:** As was explained above (a. 1), one can identify two sorts of causes of fear, (a) one in the manner of a *material disposition* on the part of the one who has the fear, and (b) the other in the manner of an *efficient cause* on the part of what is feared:

(a) Thus, as regards the first of these, weakness is, speaking *per se*, a cause of fear, since it happens that, because of some weakness in one's capacities (*ex aliquo defectu virtutis*), one is unable to easily repel an imminent evil. However, what is required in order to cause fear is a weakness of a certain measure. For a weakness that causes fear of a future evil is a lesser weakness than that which follows upon a present evil, with respect to which there is sadness. And the weakness would be still greater if one's perception of the evil, or one's love for the good whose contrary is feared, were totally eliminated (*si totaliter sensus mali auferretur vel amor boni cuius contrarium timetur*).

(b) On the other hand, as regards the second sort of cause of fear, it is power and strength that are, speaking *per se*, causes of fear. For by virtue of the fact that something apprehended as harmful is powerful, it happens that its effect cannot be repelled.

However, it is possible *per accidens* for a weakness on this side to be a cause of fear, viz., insofar as it happens that, because of some weakness on his part, someone wills to inflict a harm, e.g., to redress an injustice, either because he has previously been harmed by the other or because he fears being harmed by him (*puta propter iniustitiam, vel quia ante laesus fuit vel quia timet laedi*).

**Reply to objection 1:** This argument goes through for a cause of fear that is an *efficient* cause of

the fear.

**Reply to objection 2:** Those who are already being executed are suffering from a present evil. And so their weakness exceeds the measure involved in fear (*iste defectus excedit mensuram timoris*).

**Reply to objection 3:** Those who are contending are fearful not because of the power by which they are able to contest with their rival, but because of a weakness in their power, the result of which is that they are not confident that they will be victorious.