

QUESTION 27

The Causes of Love

Next we have to consider the causes of love. And on this topic there are four questions: (1) Is the good the only cause of love? (2) Is cognition a cause of love? (3) Is likeness a cause of love? (4) Are any other passions of the soul causes of love?

Article 1

Is the good the only cause of love?

It seems that the good is not the only cause of love:

Objection 1: The good is a cause of love only because it is loved. But it happens that the bad is loved as well—this according to Psalm 10:6 (“He who loves iniquity hates his own soul”). Otherwise, every instance of love would be good. Therefore, the good is not the only cause of love.

Objection 2: In *Rhetoric 2* the Philosopher says, “We love those who acknowledge their own bad deeds.” Therefore, it seems that the bad is a cause of love.

Objection 3: In *De Divinis Nominibus*, chap. 4, Dionysius says that not only the good, but also “the beautiful is lovable to all things.”

But contrary to this: In *De Trinitate 8* Augustine says, “Surely, nothing is loved except the good.” Therefore, only the good is a cause of love.

I respond: As was explained above (q. 26, a. 1), love belongs to the appetitive power, which is a passive power (*vis passiva*). Hence, its object is related to it as a cause of its movement or act. Therefore, the object of love must be a cause, properly speaking, of the love. But the proper object of love is the good, since, as has been explained (q. 26, aa. 1-2), love implies the lover’s connaturality with, or his being pleased with, what is loved (*amor importat quandam connaturalitatem vel complacentiam amantis ad amatum*). But the good for each thing is what is connatural to it and proportioned to it. Hence, it follows that the good is a proper cause of love.

Reply to objection 1: The bad is never loved except under some notion of goodness—more specifically, insofar as it is good in some respect and is apprehended as good absolutely speaking (*inquantum est secundum quid bonum et apprehenditur ut simpliciter bonum*). So an instance of love is bad insofar as it tends toward something that is not a genuine good absolutely speaking. And a man “loves iniquity” in the sense that through iniquity he acquires some good, e.g., pleasure or money or something else of this sort.

Reply to objection 2: Those who “acknowledge their own bad deeds” are loved not because of the bad deeds, but because they acknowledge the bad deeds. For acknowledging one’s own bad deeds has the character of something good, insofar as it does away with dissimulation or pretense (*inquantum excludit fictionem seu simulationem*).

Reply to objection 3: The beautiful is the same as the good and differs from it only in concept (*sola ratione*). For since the good is what all things desire, it is part of the notion of the good that the appetite comes to rest in it, whereas it is part of the notion of the beautiful that the appetite comes to rest in seeing it or knowing it. Hence, the senses that are principally directed toward the beautiful are those that are especially cognitive, viz., seeing and hearing at the service of reason. For we talk of beautiful sights and beautiful sounds. By contrast, in the case of the sensible objects of the other senses, we do not use the name ‘beauty’. For instance, we do not call tastes and odors ‘beautiful’.

So it is clear that *beautiful* adds to *good* a certain ordering toward the cognitive power, so that the good is that which pleases the appetite absolutely speaking, whereas the beautiful is such that the apprehension of it is itself pleasing.

Article 2

Is cognition a cause of love?

It seems that cognition is not a cause of love:

Objection 1: The fact that something is sought after stems from love. But some things that are sought after are unknown, e.g., the sciences. For since, in the case of the sciences, “having them is the same as knowing them,” as Augustine says in *83 Quaestiones*, it follows that if they were known, they would be had and would not be sought after. Therefore, cognition is not a cause of love.

Objection 2: Something’s being loved without being known seems to be the same sort of thing as something’s being loved more than it is known. But some things are loved more than they are known—e.g., God, who in this life can be loved in Himself but cannot be known in Himself. Therefore, cognition is not a cause of love.

Objection 3: If cognition were a cause of love, then love could not exist where there is no cognition. But love exists in all things, as Dionysius says in *De Divinis Nominibus*, chap. 4, whereas cognition does not exist in all things. Therefore, cognition is not a cause of love.

But contrary to this: In *De Trinitate* 10 Augustine says, “No one can love anything that is unknown.”

I respond: As has been explained (a. 1), the good is a cause of love in the manner of an object. But the good is not the object of an appetite except insofar as it is apprehended. And so love requires some sort of apprehension of the good that is loved. Because of this, the Philosopher says in *Ethics* 9 that the corporeal act of seeing is a principle of sentient love. And, similarly, the spiritual contemplation of beauty or goodness is a principle of spiritual love.

So, then, cognition is a cause of love for the same reason that the good is, viz., that the good cannot be loved unless there is a cognition of it.

Reply to objection 1: Someone who seeks after scientific knowledge is not altogether ignorant of it, but has some cognition of it beforehand, either in general, or in some of its effects, or through hearing it praised, as Augustine says in *De Trinitate* 10. So what is the same as having scientific knowledge is not having *some* cognition of scientific knowledge, but rather having a *perfect* cognition of scientific knowledge.

Reply to objection 2: Something is required for perfection in the case of cognition that is not required for perfection in the case of love. For cognition involves reason, the role of which is to separate things that are conjoined in reality and to bring together, by comparing one to another, things that are diverse. And so for perfection in the case of cognition it is required that a man know individually whatever exists in a thing, e.g., its parts, powers, and properties. By contrast, love exists in the appetitive power, which is directed toward a thing as it exists in itself. Hence, for perfection in the case of love it is sufficient that a thing be loved insofar as it is apprehended in itself. Thus, the reason why it is possible for a thing to be loved more than it is known is that it can be loved perfectly even if it is not known perfectly.

This is especially clear in the case of the sciences, which some individuals love because of the summary cognition they have of them; for instance, they know that rhetoric is a science through which a man can give persuasive arguments, and they love this feature in rhetoric. And something similar should be said about loving God.

Reply to objection 3: Even natural love, which exists in all things, is caused by some sort of cognition—not, to be sure, by a cognition that exists in the natural things themselves, but rather, as was explained above (q. 26, a.1), by a cognition that exists in the One who institutes their nature.

Article 3

Is likeness a cause of love?

It seems that likeness (*similitudo*) is not a cause of love:

Objection 1: The same thing is not a cause of opposites. But likeness is a cause of hatred; for Proverbs 13:10 says, “Among the proud there are always contentions,” and in *Ethics* 8 the Philosopher says, “Potters quarrel with each other.” Therefore, likeness is not a cause of love.

Objection 2: In *Confessiones* 4 Augustine says, “One loves in another what he does not want to be; for instance, a man loves an actor and yet does not want to be an actor.” But this would not be so if likeness were a proper cause of love; for in that case a man would love in another what he himself has or wants to have. Therefore, likeness is not a cause of love.

Objection 3: Each man loves what he himself needs, even if he does not have it; for instance, a sick man loves health and a poor man loves riches. But insofar as he both lacks and needs these things, he is unlike them. Therefore, it is not only likeness but also unlikeness that is a cause of love.

Objection 4: In *Rhetoric* 2 the Philosopher says, “We love those who give us money and health, and, similarly, everyone loves those who retain their friendship for the dead.” But not everyone is like that. Therefore, likeness is not a cause of love.

But contrary to this: Ecclesiasticus 13:19 says, “Every animal loves its like.”

I respond: Likeness is, properly speaking, a cause of love. But notice that there are two ways in which a likeness among things can be thought of: (a) insofar as both have the same feature in actuality, in the way that two individuals that have whiteness are said to be like one another; and (b) insofar as the one has in potentiality and by some sort of inclination what the other one has in actuality, as when we say that a heavy body located outside its proper place is like a heavy body that is located in its proper place—or even insofar as a potentiality bears a likeness to the corresponding actuality, since the actuality in some sense exists within the potentiality itself.

The first type of likeness is a cause of the love of friendship or benevolence (*causat amorem amicitiae seu benevolentiae*). For from the fact that two individuals are like one another and have, as it were, one form, they are in some sense united in that form (*sunt quodammodo unum in forma illa*), in the way that two men are united in the species *human nature* and in the way that two white individuals are united in whiteness. And so the affections of the one tend toward the other as toward something that is one with himself, and he wills the good for the other just as he wills it for himself.

By contrast, the second type of likeness is a cause of the love of concupiscence, or a cause of a friendship of utility or of pleasure (*causat amorem concupiscentiae vel amicitiam utilis seu delectabilis*). For each thing that exists in potentiality has as such a desire for its own actuality, and, if it is something with sentience and cognition, then it delights in attaining that actuality.

Now it was explained above (q. 26, a. 4) that in a love of concupiscence the lover properly loves himself, since he wills the good that he desires. But each individual loves himself more than he loves another, since he is united with himself in his substance, whereas he is united to the other in a likeness of the same form. And so if he himself is impeded from attaining the good that he loves by the fact that there is someone else who is like him by participation in a form, then that individual becomes hateful to him, not insofar as he is like him, but insofar as the other poses an obstacle to his own good. And the reason why “potters quarrel with one another” is that each one poses an obstacle to the other’s own profit; and the reason why “among the proud there are contentions” is that each keeps the other from attaining the excellence that he desires for himself (*se invicem impediunt in propria excellentia quam concupiscunt*).

Reply to objection 1: This makes clear the reply to the first objection.

Reply to objection 2: Even in the fact that someone loves in another what he does not love in

himself one finds the character of a likeness by proportionality. For the individual is related to what he loves in himself in the same way that the other individual is related to what is loved in him. For instance, if a good singer loves a good writer, there is a likeness of proportion insofar as each of them has what is appropriate for him in accord with his own art.

Reply to objection 3: As has been explained, someone who loves what he needs bears a likeness to what he loves in the way that potentiality bears a likeness to actuality.

Reply to objection 4: In accord with this same sort of likeness that potentiality bears to actuality, someone who is not generous (*non liberalis*) loves someone who is generous insofar as he expects from him what he desires. And the same line of reasoning holds for the case of an individual who perseveres in his friendship toward someone who does not persevere in friendship toward him. In both cases, there seems to be a friendship of utility.

An alternative reply is that even though not all men have virtues of the relevant sort by a perfect habit, they nonetheless have certain seeds of reason in accord with which someone who lacks virtue loves a virtuous individual insofar as the latter conforms to his own natural reason.

Article 4

Can any of the other passions be a cause of love?

It seems that some of the other passions can be a cause of love:

Objection 1: In *Ethics* 8 the Philosopher says that some individuals are loved for the sake of pleasure. But pleasure (*delectatio*) is a passion. Therefore, there is some other passion that is a cause of love.

Objection 2: Desire (*desiderium*) is a passion. But we love some individuals out of a desire for what we expect from them, as is obvious in every friendship that exists for the sake of utility. Therefore, there is some other passion that is a cause of love.

Objection 3: In *De Trinitate* 10 Augustine says, "If someone has no hope of getting a thing, he either loves it tepidly or does not love it at all, even though he sees how beautiful it is." Therefore, hope is likewise a cause of love.

But contrary to this: As Augustine says in *De Civitate Dei* 14, all the other affections of the soul are caused by love.

I respond: There is no other passion of the soul that does not presuppose some instance of love. The reason for this that every other passion of the soul involves either a movement toward something or resting in something. But every movement toward something or instance of resting in something proceeds from some sort of connaturality or bond (*ex aliqua connaturalitate vel coaptationem procedit*), and this belongs to the nature of love. Hence, it is impossible for any other passion of the soul to be a cause in general of every instance of love.

However, it does happen that some other passion is a cause of some instance of love, just as one good is likewise a cause of another good.

Reply to objection 1: When someone loves something for the sake of pleasure, the love is, to be sure, caused by pleasure, but that pleasure is, once again, caused by another previous instance of love. For no one takes pleasure except in a thing that is in some way loved.

Reply to objection 2: The desire for a thing always presupposes love for that thing. But the desire for a thing can be a cause of another thing's being loved. For instance, someone who desires money loves for this reason the one from whom he receives money.

Reply to objection 3: Hope causes and increases love, both (a) by reason of pleasure, since hope is a cause of pleasure, and (b) by reason of desire, since hope fortifies desire, since we do not desire as intensely what we do not hope for. And yet the hope is itself a hope for some good that is loved.