

QUESTION 7

The Effects of Faith

Next we have to consider the effects of faith. And on this topic there are two questions: (1) Is fear an effect of faith? (2) Is the purification of the heart an effect of faith?

Article 1

Is fear an effect of faith?

It seems that fear is not an effect of faith:

Objection 1: An effect does not precede its cause. But fear precedes faith; for Ecclesiasticus 2:8 says, “You who fear the Lord, believe in him.” Therefore, fear is not an effect of faith.

Objection 2: The same thing is not a cause of contraries. But as was explained above (*ST* 1-2, q. 23, a. 2), fear and hope are contraries, while, as a Gloss on Matthew 1:2 says, faith generates hope. Therefore, faith is not a cause of fear.

Objection 3: One contrary is not a cause of another contrary. But the object of faith is a certain good, viz., the First Truth, whereas, as was explained above (*ST* 1-2, q. 42, a. 1), the object of fear is something bad. But according to what was said above (*ST* 1-2, q. 18, a. 2) acts have their species from their objects. Therefore, faith is not a cause of fear.

But contrary to this: James 2:19 says, “The demons believe, and they tremble.”

I respond: As was explained above (*ST* 1-2, q. 41, a. 1 and q. 42, a. 1), fear is a certain movement of the appetitive power. Now the principle of all appetitive movements is either an apprehended good or an apprehended evil. Hence, the principle of fear and of all appetitive movements is some apprehension.

Now faith engenders in us an apprehension of the evils of punishment (*de quibus malis poenalibus*) that are inflicted in accord with God’s judgment, and in this way faith is a cause of a fear by which one fears being punished by God. This is *servile fear*.

Faith is also a cause of *filial fear*, by which one fears being separated from God, or by which one shrinks back from equating himself with God by reverencing Him. For through faith we make the judgment that God is an immense and sublime good, so that the worst thing is to be separated from Him and it is evil to want to be equal to Him.

Now it is unformed faith that is a cause of the first sort of fear, viz., servile fear. But the cause of the second sort of fear, viz., filial fear, is informed faith, which through charity makes a man adhere to God and subject himself to Him.

Reply to objection 1: The fear of God does not always precede faith, since if we are altogether ignorant of Him as regards the rewards and punishments about which we are instructed by the Faith, then we do not fear Him in any way.

By contrast, once we presuppose faith with respect to certain of the articles of the Faith, e.g., articles about God’s excellence, then what follows is a fear of reverence, and from this it follows further that a man subjects his intellect to God in believing everything that has been promised by God. Hence, the cited passage continues, “... and your reward will not be made void.”

Reply to objection 2: The same thing can be a cause of contraries in contrary respects, but the same thing cannot be a cause of contraries in the same respect. Now faith generates hope insofar as it gives us an estimation of the rewards that God awards to the just. And faith is a cause of fear insofar as it gives us an estimation of the punishments that He will inflict on sinners.

Reply to objection 3: The first and formal object of faith is the good which is the First Truth. But, materially speaking, certain bad things are also proposed to us to take on faith. For instance, it is bad not to submit oneself to God or to be separated from Him, and it is bad that sinners will undergo the evils of punishment from God. And it is in this way that faith can be a cause of fear.

Article 2

Is the purification of the heart an effect of faith?

It seems that the purification of the heart (*purificatio cordis*) is not an effect of faith:

Objection 1: Purity of heart consists mainly in an affection. But faith exists in the intellect. Therefore, faith does not cause the purification of the heart.

Objection 2: That which causes the purification of the heart cannot exist together with impurity. But faith can exist together with the impurity of sin, as is clear in the case of those who have unformed faith. Therefore, faith does not purify the heart.

Objection 3: If faith purified the human heart in any way, then it would especially purify a man's intellect. But faith does not purify the intellect of obscurity, since it is a dark cognition. Therefore, faith in no way purifies the heart.

But contrary to this: In Acts 15:9 Peter says, "Purifying their hearts by faith."

I respond: The impurity of any given thing consists in its being mixed with baser things. For instance, silver is said to be impure not when it is mixed with gold, through which it is made better, but rather when it is mixed with lead or tin.

Now it is clear that a rational creature has more dignity (*dignior est*) than all temporal and corporeal creatures. And so the rational creature is rendered impure by subjecting himself to temporal things through his love. He is purified of this impurity through a contrary movement, viz., when he tends toward what is above himself, i.e., toward God. In this movement faith is the first principle, since, as Hebrews 11:6 says, "One who approaches God must believe." And so the first principle of the purification of the heart is faith, which, if it is perfected by charity, causes a perfect purification.

Reply to objection 1: Things that exist in the intellect are principles of things that exist in the affections, viz., insofar as it is an apprehended good that moves the affections.

Reply to objection 2: Even unformed faith excludes a certain sort of impurity that is its opposite, viz., the impurity of error, which stems from the human intellect's adhering to things lower than it in a disordered way, when it wills to measure divine things by the standard of the natures of sensible things.

By contrast, when faith is informed by charity, then it is incompatible with any sort of impurity, since, as Proverbs 10:12 puts it, "Charity covers all sins."

Reply to objection 3: The darkness of faith belongs not to the impurity of sin, but rather to the natural defectiveness of the human intellect in the state of the present life.