

**Objection 1.** It seems that it does not belong to a liberal man chiefly to give. For liberality, like all other moral virtues, is regulated by prudence. Now it seems to belong very much to prudence that a man should keep his riches. Wherefore the Philosopher says (*Ethic. iv, 1*) that “those who have not earned money, but have received the money earned by others, spend it more liberally, because they have not experienced the want of it.” Therefore it seems that giving does not chiefly belong to the liberal man.

**Objection 2.** Further, no man is sorry for what he intends chiefly to do, nor does he cease from doing it. But a liberal man is sometimes sorry for what he has given, nor does he give to all, as stated in *Ethic. iv, 1*. Therefore it does not belong chiefly to a liberal man to give.

**Objection 3.** Further, in order to accomplish what he intends chiefly, a man employs all the ways he can. Now a liberal man is not a beggar, as the Philosopher observes (*Ethic. iv, 1*); and yet by begging he might provide himself with the means of giving to others. Therefore it seems that he does not chiefly aim at giving.

**Objection 4.** Further, man is bound to look after himself rather than others. But by spending he looks after himself, whereas by giving he looks after others. Therefore it belongs to a liberal man to spend rather than to give.

**On the contrary,** The Philosopher says (*Ethic. iv, 1*) that “it belongs to a liberal man to surpass in giving.”

**I answer that,** It is proper to a liberal man to use money. Now the use of money consists in parting with it. For the acquisition of money is like generation rather than use: while the keeping of money, in so far as it is directed to facilitate the use of money, is like a habit. Now in parting with a thing—for instance, when we throw something—the farther we put it away the greater the force [virtus] employed. Hence parting with money by giving it to others proceeds from a greater virtue than when we spend it on ourselves. But it is proper to a virtue as such to tend to what is more perfect, since “virtue is a kind of perfection” (*Phys. vii, text. 17,18*). Therefore a liberal man is praised chiefly for giving.

**Reply to Objection 1.** It belongs to prudence to keep money, lest it be stolen or spent uselessly. But to spend it usefully is not less but more prudent than

to keep it usefully: since more things have to be considered in money’s use, which is likened to movement, than in its keeping, which is likened to rest. As to those who, having received money that others have earned, spend it more liberally, through not having experienced the want of it, if their inexperience is the sole cause of their liberal expenditure they have not the virtue of liberality. Sometimes, however, this inexperience merely removes the impediment to liberality, so that it makes them all the more ready to act liberally, because, not unfrequently, the fear of want that results from the experience of want hinders those who have acquired money from using it up by acting with liberality; as does likewise the love they have for it as being their own effect, according to the Philosopher (*Ethic. iv, 1*).

**Reply to Objection 2.** As stated in this and the preceding Article, it belongs to liberality to make fitting use of money, and consequently to give it in a fitting manner, since this is a use of money. Again, every virtue is grieved by whatever is contrary to its act, and avoids whatever hinders that act. Now two things are opposed to suitable giving; namely, not giving what ought suitably to be given, and giving something unsuitably. Wherefore the liberal man is grieved at both: but especially at the former, since it is more opposed to his proper act. For this reason, too, he does not give to all: since his act would be hindered were he to give to everyone: for he would not have the means of giving to those to whom it were fitting for him to give.

**Reply to Objection 3.** Giving and receiving are related to one another as action and passion. Now the same thing is not the principle of both action and passion. Hence, since liberality is a principle of giving, it does not belong to the liberal man to be ready to receive, and still less to beg. Hence the verse:

‘In this world he that wishes to be pleasing to many  
Should give often, take seldom, ask never.’ But he makes provision in order to give certain things according as liberality requires; such are the fruits of his own possessions, for he is careful about realizing them that he may make a liberal use thereof.

**Reply to Objection 4.** To spend on oneself is an inclination of nature; hence to spend money on others belongs properly to a virtue.