

Objection 1. It would seem that man is not more shamefaced of those who are more closely connected with him. For it is stated in Rhet. ii, 6 that “men are more shamefaced of those from whom they desire approbation.” Now men desire this especially from people of the better sort who are sometimes not connected with them. Therefore man is not more shamefaced of those who are more closely connected with him.

Objection 2. Further, seemingly those are more closely connected who perform like deeds. Now man is not made ashamed of his sin by those whom he knows to be guilty of the same sin, because according to Rhet. ii, 6, “a man does not forbid his neighbor what he does himself.” Therefore he is not more shamefaced of those who are most closely connected with him.

Objection 3. Further, the Philosopher says (Rhet. ii, 6) that “men take more shame from those who retail their information to many, such as jokers and fable-tellers.” But those who are more closely connected with a man do not retail his vices. Therefore one should not take shame chiefly from them.

Objection 4. Further, the Philosopher says (Rhet. ii, 6) that “men are most liable to be made ashamed by those among whom they have done nothing amiss; by those of whom they ask something for the first time; by those whose friends they wish to become.” Now these are less closely connected with us. Therefore man is not made most ashamed by those who are more closely united to him.

On the contrary, It is stated in Rhet. ii, 6 that “man is made most ashamed by those who are to be continually with him.”

I answer that, Since reproach is opposed to honor, just as honor denotes attestation to someone’s excellence, especially the excellence which is according to virtue, so too reproach, the fear of which is shamefacedness, denotes attestation to a person’s defect, especially that which results from sin. Hence the more weighty a person’s attestation is considered to be, the more does he make another person ashamed. Now a person’s attestation may be considered as being more weighty, either because he is certain of the truth or because of its effect. Certitude of the truth attaches to a person’s attestations for two reasons. First on account of the rectitude of his judgement, as in the case of wise and virtuous men, by whom man is more desirous of being honored and by whom he is brought to a

greater sense of shame. Hence children and the lower animals inspire no one with shame, by reason of their lack of judgment. Secondly, on account of his knowledge of the matter attested, because “everyone judges well of what is known to him”*. In this way we are more liable to be made ashamed by persons connected with us, since they are better acquainted with our deeds: whereas strangers and persons entirely unknown to us, who are ignorant of what we do, inspire us with no shame at all.

An attestation receives weight from its effect by reason of some advantage or harm resulting therefrom; wherefore men are more desirous of being honored by those who can be of use to them, and are more liable to be made ashamed by those who are able to do them some harm. And for this reason again, in a certain respect, persons connected with us make us more ashamed, since we are to be continually in their society, as though this entailed a continual harm to us: whereas the harm that comes from strangers and passersby ceases almost at once.

Reply to Objection 1. People of the better sort make us ashamed for the same reason as those who are more closely connected with us; because just as the attestation of the better men carries more weight since they have a more universal knowledge of things, and in their judgments hold fast to the truth: so, too, the attestation of those among whom we live is more cogent since they know more about our concerns in detail.

Reply to Objection 2. We fear not the attestation of those who are connected with us in the likeness of sin, because we do not think that they look upon our defect as disgraceful.

Reply to Objection 3. Tale-bearers make us ashamed on account of the harm they do by making many think ill of us.

Reply to Objection 4. Even those among whom we have done no wrong, make us more ashamed, on account of the harm that would follow, because, to wit, we should forfeit the good opinion they had of us: and again because when contraries are put in juxtaposition their opposition seems greater, so that when a man notices something disgraceful in one whom he esteemed good, he apprehends it as being the more disgraceful. The reason why we are made more ashamed by those of whom we ask something for the first time, or whose friends we wish to be, is that we fear to suffer some injury, by being disappointed in our request, or by failing to become their friends.

* Ethic. i, 3