

Objection 1. It would seem that it is more proper to charity to be loved than to love. For the better charity is to be found in those who are themselves better. But those who are better should be more loved. Therefore to be loved is more proper to charity.

Objection 2. Further, that which is to be found in more subjects seems to be more in keeping with nature, and, for that reason, better. Now, as the Philosopher says (Ethic. viii, 8), “many would rather be loved than love, and lovers of flattery always abound.” Therefore it is better to be loved than to love, and consequently it is more in keeping with charity.

Objection 3. Further, “the cause of anything being such is yet more so.” Now men love because they are loved, for Augustine says (De Catech. Rud. iv) that “nothing incites another more to love you than that you love him first.” Therefore charity consists in being loved rather than in loving.

On the contrary, The Philosopher says (Ethic. viii, 8) that friendship consists in loving rather than in being loved. Now charity is a kind of friendship. Therefore it consists in loving rather than in being loved.

I answer that, To love belongs to charity as charity. For, since charity is a virtue, by its very essence it has an inclination to its proper act. Now to be loved is not the act of the charity of the person loved; for this act is to love: and to be loved is competent to him as coming under the common notion of good, in so far as another tends towards his good by an act of charity. Hence it is clear that to love is more proper to charity than to be loved: for that which befits a thing by reason of itself and its essence is more competent to it than that which is befitting to it by reason

of something else. This can be exemplified in two ways. First, in the fact that friends are more commended for loving than for being loved, indeed, if they be loved and yet love not, they are blamed. Secondly, because a mother, whose love is the greatest, seeks rather to love than to be loved: for “some women,” as the Philosopher observes (Ethic. viii, 8) “entrust their children to a nurse; they do love them indeed, yet seek not to be loved in return, if they happen not to be loved.”

Reply to Objection 1. A better man, through being better, is more lovable; but through having more perfect charity, loves more. He loves more, however, in proportion to the person he loves. For a better man does not love that which is beneath him less than it ought to be loved: whereas he who is less good fails to love one who is better, as much as he ought to be loved.

Reply to Objection 2. As the Philosopher says (Ethic. viii, 8), “men wish to be loved in as much as they wish to be honored.” For just as honor is bestowed on a man in order to bear witness to the good which is in him, so by being loved a man is shown to have some good, since good alone is lovable. Accordingly men seek to be loved and to be honored, for the sake of something else, viz. to make known the good which is in the person loved. On the other hand, those who have charity seek to love for the sake of loving, as though this were itself the good of charity, even as the act of any virtue is that virtue’s good. Hence it is more proper to charity to wish to love than to wish to be loved.

Reply to Objection 3. Some love on account of being loved, not so that to be loved is the end of their loving, but because it is a kind of way leading a man to love.