

Objection 1. It seems that God does not always love more the better things. For it is manifest that Christ is better than the whole human race, being God and man. But God loved the human race more than He loved Christ; for it is said: "He spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all" (Rom. 8:32). Therefore God does not always love more the better things.

Objection 2. Further, an angel is better than a man. Hence it is said of man: "Thou hast made him a little less than the angels" (Ps. 8:6). But God loved men more than He loved the angels, for it is said: "Nowhere doth He take hold of the angels, but of the seed of Abraham He taketh hold" (Heb. 2:16). Therefore God does not always love more the better things.

Objection 3. Further, Peter was better than John, since he loved Christ more. Hence the Lord, knowing this to be true, asked Peter, saying: "Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me more than these?" Yet Christ loved John more than He loved Peter. For as Augustine says, commenting on the words, "Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me?": "By this very mark is John distinguished from the other disciples, not that He loved him only, but that He loved him more than the rest." Therefore God does not always love more the better things.

Objection 4. Further, the innocent man is better than the repentant, since repentance is, as Jerome says (Cap. 3 in Isa.), "a second plank after shipwreck." But God loves the penitent more than the innocent; since He rejoices over him the more. For it is said: "I say to you that there shall be joy in heaven upon the one sinner that doth penance, more than upon ninety-nine just who need not penance" (Lk. 15:7). Therefore God does not always love more the better things.

Objection 5. Further, the just man who is foreknown is better than the predestined sinner. Now God loves more the predestined sinner, since He wills for him a greater good, life eternal. Therefore God does not always love more the better things.

On the contrary, Everything loves what is like it, as appears from (Ecclus. 13:19): "Every beast loveth its like." Now the better a thing is, the more like is it to God. Therefore the better things are more loved by God.

I answer that, It must needs be, according to what has been said before, that God loves more the better things. For it has been shown (Aa. 2,3), that God's loving one thing more than another is nothing else than His willing for that thing a greater good: because God's will is the cause of goodness in things; and the reason why some things are better than others, is that God wills for them a greater good. Hence it follows that He loves more the better things.

Reply to Objection 1. God loves Christ not only more

than He loves the whole human race, but more than He loves the entire created universe: because He willed for Him the greater good in giving Him "a name that is above all names," in so far as He was true God. Nor did anything of His excellence diminish when God delivered Him up to death for the salvation of the human race; rather did He become thereby a glorious conqueror: "The government was placed upon His shoulder," according to Is. 9:6.

Reply to Objection 2. God loves the human nature assumed by the Word of God in the person of Christ more than He loves all the angels; for that nature is better, especially on the ground of the union with the Godhead. But speaking of human nature in general, and comparing it with the angelic, the two are found equal, in the order of grace and of glory: since according to Rev 21:17, the measure of a man and of an angel is the same. Yet so that, in this respect, some angels are found nobler than some men, and some men nobler than some angels. But as to natural condition an angel is better than a man. God therefore did not assume human nature because He loved man, absolutely speaking, more; but because the needs of man were greater; just as the master of a house may give some costly delicacy to a sick servant, that he does not give to his own son in sound health.

Reply to Objection 3. This doubt concerning Peter and John has been solved in various ways. Augustine interprets it mystically, and says that the active life, signified by Peter, loves God more than the contemplative signified by John, because the former is more conscious of the miseries of this present life, and therefore the more ardently desires to be freed from them, and depart to God. God, he says, loves more the contemplative life, since He preserves it longer. For it does not end, as the active life does, with the life of the body.

Some say that Peter loved Christ more in His members, and therefore was loved more by Christ also, for which reason He gave him the care of the Church; but that John loved Christ more in Himself, and so was loved more by Him; on which account Christ commended His mother to his care. Others say that it is uncertain which of them loved Christ more with the love of charity, and uncertain also which of them God loved more and ordained to a greater degree of glory in eternal life. Peter is said to have loved more, in regard to a certain promptness and fervor; but John to have been more loved, with respect to certain marks of familiarity which Christ showed to him rather than to others, on account of his youth and purity. While others say that Christ loved Peter more, from his more excellent gift of charity; but John more, from his gifts of intellect. Hence, absolutely speaking, Peter was the better and more beloved; but, in a certain sense, John was the better, and was loved the more. However, it may

seem presumptuous to pass judgment on these matters; since “the Lord” and no other “is the weigher of spirits” (Prov. 16:2).

Reply to Objection 4. The penitent and the innocent are related as exceeding and exceeded. For whether innocent or penitent, those are the better and better loved who have most grace. Other things being equal, innocence is the nobler thing and the more beloved. God is said to rejoice more over the penitent than over the innocent, because often penitents rise from sin more cautious, humble, and fervent. Hence Gregory commenting on these words (Hom. 34 in Ev.) says that, “In battle the general loves the soldier who after flight returns and bravely pursues the enemy, more than him who has never fled, but has never done a brave deed.”

Or it may be answered that gifts of grace, equal in themselves, are more as conferred on the penitent, who deserved punishment, than as conferred on the innocent, to whom no punishment was due; just as a hundred pounds [marcoe] are a greater gift to a poor man than to a king.

Reply to Objection 5. Since God’s will is the cause of goodness in things, the goodness of one who is loved by God is to be reckoned according to the time when some good is to be given to him by divine goodness. According therefore to the time, when there is to be given by the divine will to the predestined sinner a greater good, the sinner is better; although according to some other time he is the worse; because even according to some time he is neither good nor bad.