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“If a donation to a charity is an act of love it is charitable, if not, not” [last week’s Column]: Yes, but puzzles remain, don’t they? Being an act of love isn’t a condition that’s needed to *justify* the donation (*except as* charity). It doesn’t mean that if your act of giving falls short of love you shouldn’t give. The giving doesn’t need love or anything else to justify it. And because the donation isn’t made an act of love by love being something separate from and accompanying the donation, it must commonly be a moot point whether any donation is an act of love or not. There are no doubt cases where it plainly is and cases where it plainly isn’t (when they divorced, Heather Mills claimed from Paul McCartney, as part of her settlement, £50,000 a year for charitable donations) but very commonly it must be the case that the love is by no means as sure as the donation—certainly to the extent that we’d all be much happier to have the Lord judge the charitableness of our action rather than have to try to judge it ourselves. *Duke Maskell*

I wonder why charity is supposed to be less sure than an entry in a bank account? From the point of view of the charitable fund-raiser it is the latter that matters, but is that guaranteed as a more dependable view of things? Yes, I was offering a few ideas about charity as charity. Charity as something else did not arise. But if *justification* comes in, I wonder what Mr Maskell thinks are the alternative justifications? If the idea is something like “It is a good thing to keep the lifeboat service going” why is not that, however inexplicit, however dilute, a form of loving one’s neighbour? Apart from charity what are the “justifications” for giving? If somebody else in the family, for instance, tells you not to waste your money, what other justification is there?—*Ed.*

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