

Summa Theologica III q61. The necessity of the sacraments.

[From the *Summa Theologica* of Saint Thomas Aquinas as translated by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province, and from the works of Blessed John Duns Scotus as selected and arranged by Jerome of Montefortino and as translated by Peter L.P. Simpson. Texts are taken from the *Opus Oxoniense*, the *Reportata Parisiensia*, and the *Quaestiones Miscellaneae* of the Wadding edition of Scotus' works.]

Article 1. Whether sacraments are necessary for man's salvation?

Aquinas

Objection 1. It seems that sacraments are not necessary for man's salvation. For the Apostle says (*1 Timothy* 4:8): "Bodily exercise is profitable to little." But the use of sacraments pertains to bodily exercise; because sacraments are perfected in the signification of sensible things and words, as stated above (60, 6). Therefore sacraments are not necessary for the salvation of man.

Objection 2. Further, the Apostle was told (*2 Corinthians* 12:9): "My grace is sufficient for thee." But it would not suffice if sacraments were necessary for salvation. Therefore sacraments are not necessary for man's salvation.

Objection 3. Further, given a sufficient cause, nothing more seems to be required for the effect. But Christ's Passion is the sufficient cause of our salvation; for the Apostle says (*Romans* 5:10): "If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son: much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by His life." Therefore sacraments are not necessary for man's salvation.

On the contrary, Augustine says (*Contra Faust.* xix): "It is impossible to keep men together in one religious denomination, whether true or false, except they be united by means of visible signs or sacraments." But it is necessary for salvation that men be

Scotus [Oxon. 4 d.1 q.3]

Objection 1. Sacraments do not seem to be necessary for human salvation. For [*Oxon.* 3 d.20. - 4 d.15 q.1 n.4ff.] neither the incarnation nor the death of Christ was so necessary for achieving human salvation that without these means that end could not be obtained, as was said above (q.1 a.1, q.46 aa.1-2); therefore much less necessary was it for achieving human salvation that some sacrament be instituted.

Objection 2. If the sacraments were to be necessary for eternal salvation, everyone would therefore have to be initiated in them and receive them; otherwise if we could, even though not receiving one or another of them, still achieve salvation, then we could just as well attain that end without receiving any of them. But [*Oxon.* 3 d.40 n.5] it is established in the law of Christians that not everyone gets married nor is everyone initiated into the priesthood or into orders; therefore the sacraments are not necessary for eternal salvation.

Objection 3. In the present order of divine providence, wherein it has been decreed that the reconciliation of the human race with God is to be carried out through the mediator, it does not seem required, now that that mediation has been completed and made manifest as altogether necessary for salvation, that any signs be instituted through which God was to infuse grace; because then the mission of the mediator

united together in the name of the one true religion. Therefore sacraments are necessary for man's salvation.

I answer that, Sacraments are necessary unto man's salvation for three reasons. The first is taken from the condition of human nature which is such that it has to be led by things corporeal and sensible to things spiritual and intelligible. Now it belongs to Divine providence to provide for each one according as its condition requires. Divine wisdom, therefore, fittingly provides man with means of salvation, in the shape of corporeal and sensible signs that are called sacraments.

The second reason is taken from the state of man who in sinning subjected himself by his affections to corporeal things. Now the healing remedy should be given to a man so as to reach the part affected by disease. Consequently it was fitting that God should provide man with a spiritual medicine by means of certain corporeal signs; for if man were offered spiritual things without a veil, his mind being taken up with the material world would be unable to apply itself to them.

The third reason is taken from the fact that man is prone to direct his activity chiefly towards material things. Lest, therefore, it should be too hard for man to be drawn away entirely from bodily actions, bodily exercise was offered to him in the sacraments, by which he might be trained to avoid superstitious practices, consisting in the worship of demons, and all manner of harmful action, consisting in sinful deeds.

It follows, therefore, that through the institution of the sacraments man, consistently with his nature, is instructed through sensible things; he is humbled,

would not have efficaciously achieved its result of full reconciliation if other things had, for that end, to be necessarily made use of.

On the Contrary, [*Oxon.* 4 d.1 q.3 n.1] Augustine says (*Contra Faustum* 19): "into no name of religion can men be gathered together unless they be bound by association in certain signs as if in visible sacraments." Since therefore it is necessary for salvation that men be bound together with each other, so that they may mutually help each other to attain that end, necessarily were sacraments instituted in sensible signs.

I answer that, The sacraments are not so needed by men for procuring eternal salvation that without them men could not attain it, because there were not lacking innumerable other means occurrent to divine wisdom beyond the institution of the said sacraments, whereby man might be brought back whence he had strayed, just as anyone is saved now through the sacraments who is achieving salvation. But, all the same, [*Oxon. ib.* n.2ff.] saving medicine for man, wounded by sin and fallen, is most agreeably presented through the mediation of sacraments instituted, most savingly, in sensible things. And this indeed for three reasons: humility, learning, and exercise. Because of humility, I say, so that while man himself subjects himself, from divine command, to sensible things, he is, on account of this humility and obedience, more pleasing to God, and earns with Him more merit, by whose precept he seeks salvation in things inferior to himself -- not from them, indeed, but from God through them. Because of learning too it was fitting for salvation to be instituted in sensible things, insofar as through sensible signs, which are discerned without, the mind might be instructed to acknowledge

through confessing that he is subject to corporeal things, seeing that he receives assistance through them: and he is even preserved from bodily hurt, by the healthy exercise of the sacraments.

Reply to Objection 1. Bodily exercise, as such, is not very profitable: but exercise taken in the use of the sacraments is not merely bodily, but to a certain extent spiritual, viz. in its signification and in its causality.

Reply to Objection 2. God's grace is a sufficient cause of man's salvation. But God gives grace to man in a way which is suitable to him. Hence it is that man needs the sacraments that he may obtain grace.

Reply to Objection 3. Christ's Passion is a sufficient cause of man's salvation. But it does not follow that the sacraments are not also necessary for that purpose: because they obtain their effect through the power of Christ's Passion; and Christ's Passion is, so to say, applied to man through the sacraments according to the Apostle (*Romans* 6:3): "All we who are baptized in Christ Jesus, are baptized in His death."

desire, for salvation.

Reply to Objection 3. [*Oxon.* 3 d.10 n.8] The mediator merited on our behalf the first grace, which is given without any disposition preceding it in children; but for recovering that first grace, or for increasing it, cooperation by adults, lest they should seem to be contemptuous, was fitting; and this happens through worthy reception of the sacraments, in the using of which man the wayfarer, after his fall, is most savingly exercised.

invisible virtue, which is within. Finally because of exercise it was agreeable that salvation be so instituted; for since man could not be idle, a useful and saving exercise in sacraments is proposed to him, whereby he might shun a vain and noxious occupation; for he who takes leisure in good exercise is not easily caught by the tempter.

Reply to Objection 1. The reply is evident in the solution. For we do not say that the sacraments are necessary such that man could not be saved in another way, but for the present state of things; given, therefore, the promulgation of the Gospel law, [*Oxon.* 4 d.2 q.1 n.2ff.] it was fitting and necessary for the observing of it, since it is the most perfect of all laws, that the most perfect helps were instituted, such as are the sacraments of the same law.

Reply to Objection 2. [*Oxon. ib.* n.3] There are some sacraments which are congruent with and necessary for each particular person, as are spiritual regeneration, nutrition, strengthening, and repair of lost salvation; there are others which are for the grace of the community, as orders and matrimony. These latter, therefore, do not have to be common to all, because they are instituted for the community; but the rest are necessary, whether in reality or in

Article 2. Whether before sin sacraments were necessary to man?

Aquinas

Objection 1. It seems that before sin sacraments were necessary to man. For, as stated above (1, ad 2) man needs sacraments that he may obtain grace. But man needed grace even in the state of innocence, as we stated in I, 95, 4] (cf. I-II, 109, 2; I-II, 114, 2). Therefore sacraments were necessary in that state also.

Objection 2. Further, sacraments are suitable to man by reason of the conditions of human nature, as stated above (1). But man's nature is the same before and after sin. Therefore it seems that before sin, man needed the sacraments.

Objection 3. Further, matrimony is a sacrament, according to *Eph. 5:32*: "This is a great sacrament; but I speak in Christ and in the Church." But matrimony was instituted before sin, as may be seen in *Gn. 2*. Therefore sacraments were necessary to man before sin.

On the contrary, None but the sick need remedies, according to *Mt. 9:12*: "They that are in health need not a physician." Now the sacraments are spiritual remedies for the healing of wounds inflicted by sin. Therefore they were not necessary before sin.

I answer that, Sacraments were not necessary in the state of innocence. This can be proved from the rectitude of that state, in which the higher (parts of man) ruled the lower, and nowise depended on them: for just as the mind was subject to God, so were the lower powers of the soul subject to the mind, and the body to the soul. And it would be contrary to this order if the soul were perfected either in

Scotus [Oxon. 4 d.1 q.3]

Objection 1. It seems that sacraments were necessary for man before sin. For through the sacraments is conferred either the first grace or increase of grace; but if the state of innocence had persisted man could have attained increase of grace; therefore sacraments would then have been necessary for him.

Objection 2. In the state of innocence the sacrament of marriage existed between Adam and Eve; therefore sacraments were necessary for man before sin. *The assumption is proved [Oxon. 4 d.26 n.1]* from *Genesis 2* where it is written that Adam said: "this now is bone from my bones and flesh from my flesh. Wherefore a man shall leave his mother and father and be joined to his wife." The intent of the Gloss on these words is that the sacrament of marriage was then instituted, and the words are called into evidence by the Savior in *Matthew 19*; therefore it could equally have been the case that the remaining sacraments were instituted in that state as well.

Objection 3. [*Oxon. 3 d.7 q.3 n.3*] If the state of innocence had persisted, the mediator was still going to come into the world; therefore he would then have instituted the remaining sacraments. *Proof of the consequence*: for [*Oxon. 1 d.3 q.4 n.2*] in the state of innocence sensible things were fitted to lead man to understanding insensible and immaterial things, just as they are now; therefore the mediator ought to have instituted certain sacraments in those very sensible things, so that through them man might acquire knowledge of intelligible things and be thus exercised until he might be transferred

knowledge or in grace, by anything corporeal; which happens in the sacraments. Therefore in the state of innocence man needed no sacraments, whether as remedies against sin or as means of perfecting the soul.

Reply to Objection 1. In the state of innocence man needed grace: not so that he needed to obtain grace by means of sensible signs, but in a spiritual and invisible manner.

Reply to Objection 2. Man's nature is the same before and after sin, but the state of his nature is not the same. Because after sin, the soul, even in its higher part, needs to receive something from corporeal things in order that it may be perfected: whereas man had no need of this in that state.

Reply to Objection 3. Matrimony was instituted in the state of innocence, not as a sacrament, but as a function of nature. Consequently, however, it foreshadowed something in relation to Christ and the Church: just as everything else foreshadowed Christ.

medicine against an evil which did not exist. From which it follows that much less in the state of the fatherland does man need sacraments; for man does not then need sensible things to recognize the intelligible things belonging to his salvation; nor in that state does he need to be stimulated to seek for things belonging to a salvation which he has now perfectly attained.

Reply to Objection 1. [*Oxon.* 3 d.7 q.3 n.7] Certainly men in the state of innocence could merit through good internal acts an increase of the grace which had been given to them and had descended from Christ as from their head; but Christ would not have existed as their redeemer or sanctifier. Just as, therefore, no one is redeemed unless he has been sold or has subjected himself, through his own will, to the power of another, so the grace then would not have been medicinal, as is the grace of the sacraments, nor curative of wounds which did not exist, but rather was it a preservative sanctifying grace. But if in that state there was no healing grace by way of medicine, then neither could there have been

to the joys of paradise.

On the Contrary, [*Oxon.* 4 d.1 q.3 n.7] Through the sacraments medicinal grace is conferred for healing the wounds of sin; but in the state of innocence there was no sin that might need to be healed; therefore the sacraments are proper precisely for the state of fallen nature; and to that extent they were not necessary for man before sin.

I answer that, [*Oxon. ib.*] in the state of innocence the sacraments were not necessary for man as they were after the human race fell, through Adams' prevarication, from innocence. For although man in the state of innocence could recognize intelligible things from sensible things, nevertheless no sensible thing was necessary, I mean as contributing to salvation by removing some impediment to it, such that it could thereby properly be called medicinal. For since at that time the inferior parts and the inferior powers of the body were perfectly subject to reason, such that they would not rebel against reason, and in this way reason and the superior parts were perfectly subject to eternal rules, there could be no impediment to salvation from sensible things; and so neither was it necessary to institute from those very sensible things anything that could be a

sacraments, which are signs of that sort of grace; for once the thing signified is removed, the sign of the thing signified must be removed too.

Reply to Objection 2. I say that that marriage was not a true sacrament, [*Oxon.* 4 d.26 nn.2, 20] but Adam, as a prophet, foretold in those words the true sacrament that was to be instituted by Christ in the Gospel law; however that marriage was a certain true contract especially congruent with rational nature for the due and honest educating of offspring, and to it Christ, by whom is made grace and truth, wished to add something for the richer sanctification of men living under the Gospel Law, so that it might be a sign of the grace to be given, for his part infallibly, to everyone who entered with due ritual and disposition upon that sort of contract.

Reply to Objection 3. I concede that Christ was to have come even if the human race had persisted in the state of innocence. And I concede again that sensible things could lead man to the understanding of invisible things. But I deny that for that reason any sacrament ought to have been instituted in sensible things; because however much man might not at any time have found any impediment to his salvation in sensible things, so neither was there to be located therein any remedy against a disease that at no time was to exist.

Article 3. Whether there should have been sacraments after sin, before Christ?

Aquinas

Objection 1. It seems that there should have been no sacraments after sin, before Christ. For it has been stated that the Passion of Christ is applied to men through the sacraments: so that Christ's Passion is compared to the sacraments as cause to effect. But effect does not precede cause. Therefore there should have been no sacraments before Christ's coming.

Objection 2. Further, sacraments should be suitable to the state of the human race, as Augustine declares (*Contra Faust.* xix). But the state of the human race underwent no change after sin until it was repaired by Christ. Neither, therefore, should the sacraments have been changed, so that besides the sacraments of the natural law, others should be instituted in the law of Moses.

Scotus [*Oxon.* 4 d.1 qq.3, 7]

Objection 1. It seems that there should not have been sacraments after sin, before Christ. For [*Oxon.* 4 d.1 q.3 n.1] God is not said to have instituted any sacrament in the law of nature; but a sacrament cannot be instituted except by God, as will be said below (q.64 a.2). Therefore before the savior came into the world there ought not to have been any sacraments; for certainly they would have existed if they could then have been of help to man. *The confirmation* comes from Gregory, 4 *Moral*, and is found in d.4 *De Consecrat.*: "What the water of baptism effects among us, that, among the ancients, was done, for children, by faith alone or, for the older, by the virtue of sacrifices." Therefore there was no sacrament among them which could be a medicine against the disease of sin.

Objection 2. [*Oxon.* *ib.*] Since several laws

Objection 3. Further, the nearer a thing approaches to that which is perfect, the more like it should it be. Now the perfection of human salvation was accomplished by Christ; to Whom the sacraments of the Old Law were nearer than those that preceded the Law. Therefore they should have borne a greater likeness to the sacraments of Christ. And yet the contrary is the case, since it was foretold that the priesthood of Christ would be “according to the order of Melchisedech, and not . . . according to the order of Aaron” (*Hebrews* 7:11). Therefore sacraments were unsuitably instituted before Christ.

On the contrary, Augustine says (*Contra Faust.* xix) that “the first sacraments which the Law commanded to be solemnized and observed were announcements of Christ’s future coming.” But it was necessary for man’s salvation that Christ’s coming should be announced beforehand. Therefore it was necessary that some sacraments should be instituted before Christ.

I answer that, Sacraments are necessary for man’s salvation, in so far as they are sensible signs of invisible things whereby man is made holy. Now after sin no man can be made holy save through Christ, “Whom God hath proposed to be a propitiation, through faith in His blood, to the showing of His justice . . . that He Himself may be just, and the justifier of him who is of the faith of Jesus Christ” (*Romans* 3:25-26). Therefore before Christ’s coming there was need for some visible signs whereby man might testify to his faith in the future coming of a Saviour. And these signs are called sacraments. It is therefore clear that some sacraments were necessary before Christ’s coming.

were given by God, if there had been sacraments instituted by God for the time of any one of them, the same sacraments would not have existed but diverse ones, respectively suited, of course, to those laws; for if the sacraments of an earlier law had remained in the time of a later law, there would not have been other ones instituted for the later law; but it is unfitting for sacraments once instituted to have ceased to exist; therefore it is better to say that they did not exist or were not instituted. *Proof of the minor*: a vocal sound once imposed to signify something remains significative of that same thing; therefore much more does a sign once imposed by God remain significative of the same signified thing.

Objection 3. The sacraments are for this reason efficacious signs of grace that they have received this efficacy from the passion of Christ; but before Christ came into the world his passion did not exist nor could it be represented; therefore there ought to have been no sacraments before the advent of Christ; for there would have existed no signs efficacious of grace as after the passion and advent of Christ.

On the Contrary, [*Oxon. ib.*] Augustine says (*Contra Faustum* 19): “into no name of religion can men be gathered together unless they be bound by association in certain signs as if in visible sacraments.” Therefore since, at every time after the fall, there was religion towards God, there was need for the men of that religion to be gathered together by association in certain sensible signs or sacraments.

I answer that, For every time after the fall before Christ sacraments were necessary. For [*Oxon. ib. n.7*] in every state where there is disease a medicine is necessary; but after the fall of the first parent the disease

Reply to Objection 1. Christ's Passion is the final cause of the old sacraments: for they were instituted in order to foreshadow it. Now the final cause precedes not in time, but in the intention of the agent. Consequently, there is no reason against the existence of sacraments before Christ's Passion.

Reply to Objection 2. The state of the human race after sin and before Christ can be considered from two points of view. First, from that of faith: and thus it was always one and the same: since men were made righteous, through faith in the future coming of Christ. Secondly, according as sin was more or less intense, and knowledge concerning Christ more or less explicit. For as time went on sin gained a greater hold on man, so much so that it clouded man's reason, the consequence being that the precepts of the natural law were insufficient to make man live aright, and it became necessary to have a written code of fixed laws, and together with these certain sacraments of faith. For it was necessary, as time went on, that the knowledge of faith should be more and more unfolded, since, as Gregory says (*Hom. vi in Ezech.*): "With the advance of time there was an advance in the knowledge of Divine things." Consequently in the old Law there was also a need for certain fixed sacraments significative of man's faith in the future coming of Christ: which sacraments are compared to those that preceded the Law, as something determinate to that which is indeterminate: inasmuch as before the Law it was not laid down precisely of what sacraments men were to make use: whereas this was prescribed by the Law; and this was necessary both on account of the overclouding of the natural law, and for the clearer signification of faith.

of malice and the wounds of sin waxed strong in human nature; therefore it was necessary for them to be cured through the medicine of sacraments. And because it was fitting, especially after the fall, for man to be guided to invisible things through sensible signs, it was becoming for God to have, for that time, instituted sacraments. - Further, [*Oxon.* 4 d.1 q.7 n.2] at no time has God left his worshipers without a necessary remedy for salvation; but after the fall the removal of original sin was necessary for salvation; therefore at every time and for every state provision was made by God for an efficacious remedy whereby original sin might be removed; for although that sin could be removed in adults through a good interior movement, in children, however, in whom such a movement was impossible, it could not be removed by their own movement; therefore it had to be removed through some act of others concerning them or referred to them; but no one could be certain that an act of another referred to a child was sufficient for removing the original stain unless this had been instituted by God; and since no one could be certain of reaching salvation through a thing unless he knew for certain that God would accept that thing for that end, therefore most agreeably was there, during the time of every law before the advent of Christ, some sacrament, at least against original sin, instituted by God.

Reply to Objection 1. [*Oxon. ib.* n.3ff.] I say that God could have revealed such a sacrament to some one of the Fathers, with whom he used to speak frequently, although Scripture, which passes from Adam to Abraham with brevity enough, does not say to whom or when. Or it could be said that sacrifices are expressly held in Scripture to have pleased God after the fall, as is clear from the sacrifices of Abel, Noah, Melchisedech, and Abraham

Reply to Objection 3. The sacrament of Melchisedech which preceded the Law is more like the Sacrament of the New Law in its matter: in so far as “he offered bread and wine” (*Genesis* 14:18), just as bread and wine are offered in the sacrifice of the New Testament. Nevertheless the sacraments of the Mosaic Law are more like the thing signified by the sacrament, i.e. the Passion of Christ: as clearly appears in the Paschal Lamb and such like. The reason of this was lest, if the sacraments retained the same appearance, it might seem to be the continuation of one and the same sacrament, where there was no interruption of time.

(*Genesis*, 4, 8, 14, 15). This would certainly not be so had they not been instituted by God; on the contrary, those men should be reputed foolish and presumptuous if they had performed such sacrifices without divine precept or inspiration; they acted therefore from divine instinct and revelation, as Scripture elegantly testifies (*Genesis* 15), where it is held that God commanded Abraham to take a calf and a goat and a ram three years old, a dove and a pigeon, and offer them all as a sacrifice to him. But it is possible for some determinate sacrifice to be a sacrament, for it is not contrary to the idea of a sacrament that a sacrifice itself or the offering of it be a sacrament; and then the same for its institution, although it be held indistinctly

by Scripture that it was a remedy from God of original sin for attaining eternal salvation after the fall. - To Gregory it must be said that he did not mean by faith alone the habit of faith nor, perhaps, only an interior act; he meant a protestation of faith by an exterior, sensible act, which act, directed by faith, could sufficiently possess the nature of a sacrament. Faith therefore, that is an exterior and sensible act of faith, can be understood to be contradistinguished from a protestation of faith made by sacrifices; and Gregory posited that the former act of faith was sufficient for children, which act could sufficiently possess the nature of a sacrament from divine institution; but that protestation perhaps took place in some word of invocation towards God or in an offering of the child to God. But Gregory thought that faith along with sacrifices was necessary for adults.

Reply to Objection 2. I concede that for diverse states and laws diverse sacraments were instituted by God, but not, however, diverse in such a way as to have some other or diverse signification; because, [*Oxon.* 4 d.1 q.3 n.8] as they were instituted against the same disease, so they signified the same spiritual medicine. But because in the process of the human race the knowledge of truth always increased, as Gregory says (*Homil. 16 in Exech.*), it was thereafter fitting for God to have instituted in a later law, as being a more perfect law, a sign that did more evidently signify the thing signified; for as the later law was more perfect than the earlier, so it required, for its observance, more perfect means of assistance; and consequently its sacraments ought to signify a more perfect grace. As far, therefore, as concerns the sensible thing doing the signifying, it was proper that the sacrament be progressively different; nor could that be achieved by means of the first sacrament, for that had, from its institution, always been signifying the same thing; but a more perfect grace was to be signified; therefore another sign had to be instituted. Thus also does it happen in practical signs instituted by us when, to signify a more perfect effect of ours and more evidently, we choose to impose new signs rather than to use those already imposed. But vocal sounds are either speculatively signs or they always signify the same invariant thing. Sacraments, however, are signs that practically and

efficaciously signify an invisible effect to be caused by God.

Reply to Objection 3. I concede, [*Oxon.* 4 d.2 q.1 n.2-3, 9] that no less the sacraments of the Gospel law but those also of any other law had their efficacy from the passion of Christ. - And when it is added that the passion of Christ could not bestow that efficacy until after it was exhibited to view, I answer that God conferred every grace at any time on the members of Christ's mystical body in view of the merits of his Son, not in so far as these were placed in effect but to the extent that they were foreseen to be sometime future. Albeit it must be confessed that after the exhibiting to view of the same merits a richer grace was given through the sacraments he instituted, because "grace and truth came to be through Jesus Christ" (*John* 1).

Article 4. Whether there was need for any sacraments after Christ came?

Aquinas

Objection 1. It seems that there was no need for any sacraments after Christ came. For the figure should cease with the advent of the truth. But "grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (*John* 1:17). Since, therefore, the sacraments are signs or figures of the truth, it seems that there was no need for any sacraments after Christ's Passion.

Objection 2. Further, the sacraments consist in certain elements, as stated above (60, 4). But the Apostle says (*Galatians* 4:3-4) that "when we were children we were serving under the elements of the world": but that now "when the fulness of time" has "come," we are no longer children. Therefore it seems that we should not serve God under the elements of this world, by making use of corporeal sacraments.

Objection 3. Further, according to James 1:17 with God "there is no change, nor shadow of alteration." But it seems to argue some change in the Divine will that God should give man certain sacraments for his sanctification now during the time of grace, and other sacraments before Christ's coming. Therefore it seems that

Scotus [*Oxon.* 4 d.1 q.3]

Objection 1. It seems that after the advent of Christ there should have been no sacraments. For [*Oxon.* 4 d.3 q.4 n.19ff.] with the advent of Christ the figures in the Old Law about him should have ceased; therefore no sacraments after his advent were fitting; the law of Moses, indeed, had certain sacraments, but that law ceased and was abrogated by the Gospel of Christ; therefore also all the sacraments should have ceased, and so none should exist, in the Gospel law brought by Christ.

Objection 2. [*Oxon.* 4 d.2 q.1 n.3] "Grace and truth came to be through Jesus Christ" (*John* 1); therefore, for achieving that grace, which Christ abundantly merited for us through his passion, it was not fitting to bring other causes to bear to influence its attainment, for otherwise grace would not adequately have come to be through Jesus Christ; therefore, although it was necessary for other laws to have some sacraments because of their imperfection, yet for the Gospel law, the most perfect of all, they would seem to be not in the least fitting.

Objection 3. [*Quest. Miscell.* q.6 n.3] According to the Apostle (*Galatians* 3)

other sacraments should not have been instituted after Christ.

On the contrary, Augustine says (*Contra Faust.* xix) that the sacraments of the Old Law “were abolished because they were fulfilled; and others were instituted, fewer in number, but more efficacious, more profitable, and of easier accomplishment.”

I answer that, As the ancient Fathers were saved through faith in Christ’s future coming, so are we saved through faith in Christ’s past birth and Passion. Now the sacraments are signs in protestation of the faith whereby man is justified; and signs should vary according as they signify the future, the past, or the present; for as Augustine says (*Contra Faust.* xix), “the same thing is variously pronounced as to be done and as having been done: for instance the word ‘passurus’ [going to suffer] differs from ‘passus’ [having suffered].” Therefore the sacraments of the New Law, that signify Christ in relation to the past, must needs differ from those of the Old Law, that foreshadowed the future.

Reply to Objection 1. As Dionysius says (*Eccl. Hier.* v), the state of the New Law is between the state of the Old Law, whose figures are fulfilled in the New, and the state of glory, in which all truth will be openly and perfectly revealed. Wherefore then there will be no sacraments. But now, so long as we know “through a glass in a dark manner,” (*1 Corinthians* 13:12) we need sensible signs in order to reach spiritual things: and this is the province of the sacraments.

Reply to Objection 2. The Apostle calls the sacraments of the Old Law “weak and needy elements” (*Galatians* 4:9) because they neither contained nor caused grace. Hence the Apostle says that those who used

“the Law was our school teacher in Christ;” therefore the Law existed as a disposition to the New Law and to Christ; but things that are fitting to a disposition for a form are not in the form itself nor can be adapted to it; therefore since certain sacraments were fitting for the law that was disposing and leading us to Christ, the law of Christ, as being perfective and form of the Old Law, should properly have lacked them.

On the Contrary, [*Oxon.* 4 d.1 q.3 n.1] Augustine says (*Contra Faustum* 19): “into no name of religion can men be gathered together unless they be bound by association in certain signs as if in visible sacraments.” Therefore there should be some sacraments in the religion of Christians in which all the followers of Christ may be bound, mutually helping each other to observe the Gospel law; and so it was altogether necessary after Christ for there to be some sacraments.

I answer that, [*Oxon.* ib. n.7ff.] after the advent of Christ there ought to have been some sacraments, by which as by sensible signs men might be led to invisible things, and in which the medicine of heavenly grace might be prepared for them to cure the wounds of sin. For sins were taken away not in their effect but in their cause by Christ’s passion, and that most efficaciously and abundantly. For through Christ grace and truth came to be, and these have been so readied in the sacraments that to those who worthily receive the sacraments grace itself might infallibly be given and sins remitted. But the reason for this solution is as follows: because [*Oxon.* 3 d.25 q.1 n.9] everyone in every state after the fall was held to faith in a mediator, so much so that no one might be saved unless he believe in him, from whom all grace descends on those who are saved. He himself therefore is the principle of

these sacraments served God “under the elements of this world”: for the very reason that these sacraments were nothing else than the elements of this world. But our sacraments both contain and cause grace: consequently the comparison does not hold.

Reply to Objection 3. Just as the head of the house is not proved to have a changeable mind, through issuing various commands to his household at various seasons, ordering things differently in winter and summer; so it does not follow that there is any change in God, because He instituted sacraments of one kind after Christ’s coming, and of another kind at the time of the Law; because the latter were suitable as foreshadowing grace; the former as signifying the presence of grace.

reparation in fallen nature. Just as, therefore, before his advent it was proper for God to have instituted, for every state and law, some sacrament to be the efficacious sign of grace, [*Oxon.* 4 d.1 q.7 n.3], so also after his advent it was necessary for similar efficacious signs to be instituted, by whose application men might both reach unto salvation and make protestation of their faith in the mediator. And just as the Ancient Fathers used to make, with those signs, protestation that they believed in a mediator to come, so the faithful in the Gospel law make, through the use of the sacraments, protestation that they believe in the mediator who has already come. And just as it was of no advantage for salvation to the Ancient Fathers to believe in a mediator by a merely internal act of faith, but there was need for them also to make profession by an outward act, whether for removal of original sin in children or for the use of sacraments, so in the Gospel law and after

Christ’s passion it was necessary, both for the removal of original sin and for curing the wounds of sin, that those believing unto salvation make use, either in effect or at least in desire, of those sensible signs instituted by Christ. After the advent of Christ, therefore, there ought to have been some sacraments instituted, just as that also had to have been done before his advent after the fall, as was said in the preceding article.

Reply to Objection 1. [*Oxon.* 4 d.3 q.4 n.19ff.] I respond by conceding that through the advent of Christ all the figures about him ought to have ceased, and that thus the law brought by Moses was in fact abrogated, and hence that the sacraments of the law ceased to exist, so much so that they thereafter began to be deadly; but I nevertheless deny, for the reasons stated in the preceding article, that in the law by which the old was abrogated there ought not to have been any sacraments. Nay, [*Oxon.* 4 d.2 q.1 n.2] since this later law is more perfect than the earlier one, it demands and requires for its observance means of assistance that are, both intensively and extensively, fuller and more perfect.

Reply to Objection 2. [*Oxon. ib.* nn.3, 9] For this reason is it said that Christ made grace or that it came to be through him, because after his advent a richer grace was conferred on those who received the sacraments of the law that he instituted than was conferred by the sacraments of the Old Law. Further, grace ought not to be conferred by these sacraments however and in whatever way they are received, because then grace would be despised; therefore some fitting disposition on the part of the receiver ought to intervene. And so similarly would it be despised if, before the receiving of sacraments, grace was

given in any indiscriminate way at all after the fall. No other causes, therefore, were made use of by Christ as if those causes had to have merited the grace. For the one meritorious cause is most sufficient and most adequate; but since this same cause merited that grace be conferred on men in a most agreeable and abundant way, sacraments were instituted in which man might be savingly exercised, as was said above in article 1.

Reply to Objection 3. All that can be concluded here is that the sacraments of the Old and New Law ought not to be the same, which I concede, as was said in response to Objection 1.