

Objection 1. It would seem that temporal goods should be foregone on account of scandal. For we ought to love our neighbor's spiritual welfare which is hindered by scandal, more than any temporal goods whatever. But we forego what we love less for the sake of what we love more. Therefore we should forego temporal goods in order to avoid scandalizing our neighbor.

Objection 2. Further, according to Jerome's rule*, whatever can be foregone without prejudice to the threefold truth, should be omitted in order to avoid scandal. Now temporal goods can be foregone without prejudice to the threefold truth. Therefore they should be foregone in order to avoid scandal.

Objection 3. Further, no temporal good is more necessary than food. But we ought to forego taking food on account of scandal, according to Rom. 14:15: "Destroy not him with thy meat for whom Christ died." Much more therefore should all other temporal goods be foregone on account of scandal.

Objection 4. Further, the most fitting way of safeguarding and recovering temporal goods is the court of justice. But it is unlawful to have recourse to justice, especially if scandal ensues: for it is written (Mat. 5:40): "If a man will contend with thee in judgment, and take away thy coat, let go thy cloak also unto him"; and (1 Cor. 6:7): "Already indeed there is plainly a fault among you, that you have lawsuits one with another. Why do you not rather take wrong? why do you not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?" Therefore it seems that we ought to forego temporal goods on account of scandal.

Objection 5. Further, we ought, seemingly, to forego least of all those temporal goods which are connected with spiritual goods: and yet we ought to forego them on account of scandal. For the Apostle while sowing spiritual things did not accept a temporal stipend lest he "should give any hindrance to the Gospel of Christ" as we read 1 Cor. 9:12. For a like reason the Church does not demand tithes in certain countries, in order to avoid scandal. Much more, therefore, ought we to forego other temporal goods in order to avoid scandal.

On the contrary, Blessed Thomas of Canterbury demanded the restitution of Church property, notwithstanding that the king took scandal from his doing so.

I answer that, A distinction must be made in temporal goods: for either they are ours, or they are consigned to us to take care of them for someone else; thus the goods of the Church are consigned to prelates, and the goods of the community are entrusted to all such persons as have authority over the common weal. In this latter case the care of such things (as of things held in deposit) devolves of necessity on those persons to whom they are entrusted, wherefore, even as other things that are necessary for salvation, they are not to be foregone on account of scandal. On the other hand,

as regards those temporalities of which we have the dominion, sometimes, on account of scandal, we are bound to forego them, and sometimes we are not so bound, whether we forego them by giving them up, if we have them in our possession, or by omitting to claim them, if they are in the possession of others. For if the scandal arise therefrom through the ignorance or weakness of others (in which case, as stated above, a. 7, it is scandal of the little ones) we must either forego such temporalities altogether, or the scandal must be abated by some other means, namely, by some kind of admonition. Hence Augustine says (De Serm. Dom. in Monte i, 20): "Thou shouldst give so as to injure neither thyself nor another, as much as thou canst lend, and if thou refusest what is asked, thou must yet be just to him, indeed thou wilt give him something better than he asks, if thou reprove him that asks unjustly." Sometimes, however, scandal arises from malice. This is scandal of the Pharisees: and we ought not to forego temporal goods for the sake of those who stir up scandals of this kind, for this would both be harmful to the common good, since it would give wicked men an opportunity of plunder, and would be injurious to the plunderers themselves, who would remain in sin as long as they were in possession of another's property. Hence Gregory says (Moral. xxxi, 13): "Sometimes we ought to suffer those who rob us of our temporalities, while sometimes we should resist them, as far as equity allows, in the hope not only that we may safeguard our property, but also lest those who take what is not theirs may lose themselves."

This suffices for the Reply to the First Objection.

Reply to Objection 2. If it were permissible for wicked men to rob other people of their property, this would tend to the detriment of the truth of life and justice. Therefore we are not always bound to forego our temporal goods in order to avoid scandal.

Reply to Objection 3. The Apostle had no intention of counselling total abstinence from food on account of scandal, because our welfare requires that we should take food: but he intended to counsel abstinence from a particular kind of food, in order to avoid scandal, according to 1 Cor. 8:13: "I will never eat flesh, lest I should scandalize my brother."

Reply to Objection 4. According to Augustine (De Serm. Dom. in Monte i, 19) this precept of Our Lord is to be understood of the preparedness of the mind, namely, that man should be prepared, if it be expedient, to suffer being harmed or defrauded, rather than go to law. But sometimes it is not expedient, as stated above (ad 2). The same applies to the saying of the Apostle.

Reply to Objection 5. The scandal which the Apostle avoided, arose from an error of the gentiles who were not used to this payment. Hence it behooved him to forego it for the time being, so that they might be taught

* Cf. a. 7, obj. 4

first of all that such a payment was a duty. For a like reason the Church refrains from demanding tithes in those countries where it is not customary to pay them.