

## FIRST PART OF THE SECOND PART, QUESTION 101

### Of the Ceremonial Precepts in Themselves

(In Four Articles)

We must now consider the ceremonial precepts: and first we must consider them in themselves; secondly, their cause; thirdly, their duration. Under the first head there are four points of inquiry:

- (1) The nature of the ceremonial precepts;
- (2) Whether they are figurative?
- (3) Whether there should have been many of them?
- (4) Of their various kinds.

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**Whether the nature of the ceremonial precepts consists in their pertaining to the worship of God?** Ia IIae q. 101 a. 1

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**Objection 1.** It would seem that the nature of the ceremonial precepts does not consist in their pertaining to the worship of God. Because, in the Old Law, the Jews were given certain precepts about abstinence from food (Lev. 11); and about refraining from certain kinds of clothes, e.g. (Lev. 19:19): “Thou shalt not wear a garment that is woven of two sorts”; and again (Num. 15:38): “To make to themselves fringes in the corners of their garments.” But these are not moral precepts; since they do not remain in the New Law. Nor are they judicial precepts; since they do not pertain to the pronouncing of judgment between man and man. Therefore they are ceremonial precepts. Yet they seem in no way to pertain to the worship of God. Therefore the nature of the ceremonial precepts does not consist in their pertaining to Divine worship.

**Objection 2.** Further, some state that the ceremonial precepts are those which pertain to solemnities; as though they were so called from the “cerei” [candles] which are lit up on those occasions. But many other things besides solemnities pertain to the worship of God. Therefore it does not seem that the ceremonial precepts are so called from their pertaining to the Divine worship.

**Objection 3.** Further, some say that the ceremonial precepts are patterns, i.e. rules, of salvation: because the Greek *chaire* is the same as the Latin “salve.” But all the precepts of the Law are rules of salvation, and not only those that pertain to the worship of God. Therefore not only those precepts which pertain to Divine worship are called ceremonial.

**Objection 4.** Further, Rabbi Moses says (Doct. Perplex. iii) that the ceremonial precepts are those for which there is no evident reason. But there is evident reason for many things pertaining to the worship of God; such as the observance of the Sabbath, the feasts of the Passover and of the Tabernacles, and many other things, the reason for which is set down in the Law. Therefore the ceremonial precepts are not those which pertain to the worship of God.

**On the contrary,** It is written (Ex. 18:19,20): “Be thou to the people in those things that pertain to

God...and...shew the people the ceremonies and the manner of worshipping.”

**I answer that,** As stated above (q. 99, a. 4), the ceremonial precepts are determinations of the moral precepts whereby man is directed to God, just as the judicial precepts are determinations of the moral precepts whereby he is directed to his neighbor. Now man is directed to God by the worship due to Him. Wherefore those precepts are properly called ceremonial, which pertain to the Divine worship. The reason for their being so called was given above (q. 99, a. 3), when we established the distinction between the ceremonial and the other precepts.

**Reply to Objection 1.** The Divine worship includes not only sacrifices and the like, which seem to be directed to God immediately, but also those things whereby His worshippers are duly prepared to worship Him: thus too in other matters, whatever is preparatory to the end comes under the science whose object is the end. Accordingly those precepts of the Law which regard the clothing and food of God’s worshippers, and other such matters, pertain to a certain preparation of the ministers, with the view of fitting them for the Divine worship: just as those who administer to a king make use of certain special observances. Consequently such are contained under the ceremonial precepts.

**Reply to Objection 2.** The alleged explanation of the name does not seem very probable: especially as the Law does not contain many instances of the lighting of candles in solemnities; since, even the lamps of the Candlestick were furnished with “oil of olives,” as stated in Lev. 24:2. Nevertheless we may say that all things pertaining to the Divine worship were more carefully observed on solemn festivals: so that all ceremonial precepts may be included under the observance of solemnities.

**Reply to Objection 3.** Neither does this explanation of the name appear to be very much to the point, since the word “ceremony” is not Greek but Latin. We may say, however, that, since man’s salvation is from God, those precepts above all seem to be rules of salvation, which direct man to God: and accordingly those which

refer to Divine worship are called ceremonial precepts.

**Reply to Objection 4.** This explanation of the ceremonial precepts has a certain amount of probability: not that they are called ceremonial precisely because there is no evident reason for them; this is a kind of conse-

quence. For, since the precepts referring to the Divine worship must needs be figurative, as we shall state further on (a. 2), the consequence is that the reason for them is not so very evident.

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### Whether the ceremonial precepts are figurative?

Ia IIae q. 101 a. 2

**Objection 1.** It would seem that the ceremonial precepts are not figurative. For it is the duty of every teacher to express himself in such a way as to be easily understood, as Augustine states (*De Doctr. Christ.* iv, 4,10) and this seems very necessary in the framing of a law: because precepts of law are proposed to the populace; for which reason a law should be manifest, as Isidore declares (*Etym.* v, 21). If therefore the precepts of the Law were given as figures of something, it seems unbecoming that Moses should have delivered these precepts without explaining what they signified.

**Objection 2.** Further, whatever is done for the worship of God, should be entirely free from unfitness. But the performance of actions in representation of others, seems to savor of the theatre or of the drama: because formerly the actions performed in theatres were done to represent the actions of others. Therefore it seems that such things should not be done for the worship of God. But the ceremonial precepts are ordained to the Divine worship, as stated above (a. 1). Therefore they should not be figurative.

**Objection 3.** Further, Augustine says (*Enchiridion* iii, iv) that "God is worshipped chiefly by faith, hope, and charity." But the precepts of faith, hope, and charity are not figurative. Therefore the ceremonial precepts should not be figurative.

**Objection 4.** Further, Our Lord said (*Jn.* 4:24): "God is a spirit, and they that adore Him, must adore Him in spirit and in truth." But a figure is not the very truth: in fact one is condivided with the other. Therefore the ceremonial precepts, which refer to the Divine worship, should not be figurative.

**On the contrary,** The Apostle says (*Col.* 2:16,17): "Let no man... judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of a festival day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come."

**I answer that,** As stated above (a. 1; q. 99, Aa. 3,4), the ceremonial precepts are those which refer to the worship of God. Now the Divine worship is twofold: internal, and external. For since man is composed of soul and body, each of these should be applied to the worship of God; the soul by an interior worship; the body by an outward worship: hence it is written (*Ps.* 83:3): "My heart and my flesh have rejoiced in the living God." And as the body is ordained to God through the soul, so the outward worship is ordained to the internal worship. Now interior worship consists in the soul being united to God by the intellect and affections. Wherefore according to the various ways in which the intellect and affec-

tions of the man who worships God are rightly united to God, his external actions are applied in various ways to the Divine worship.

For in the state of future bliss, the human intellect will gaze on the Divine Truth in Itself. Wherefore the external worship will not consist in anything figurative, but solely in the praise of God, proceeding from the inward knowledge and affection, according to *Is.* 51:3: "Joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving and the voice of praise."

But in the present state of life, we are unable to gaze on the Divine Truth in Itself, and we need the ray of Divine light to shine upon us under the form of certain sensible figures, as Dionysius states (*Coel. Hier.* i); in various ways, however, according to the various states of human knowledge. For under the Old Law, neither was the Divine Truth manifest in Itself, nor was the way leading to that manifestation as yet opened out, as the Apostle declares (*Heb.* 9:8). Hence the external worship of the Old Law needed to be figurative not only of the future truth to be manifested in our heavenly country, but also of Christ, Who is the way leading to that heavenly manifestation. But under the New Law this way is already revealed: and therefore it needs no longer to be foreshadowed as something future, but to be brought to our minds as something past or present: and the truth of the glory to come, which is not yet revealed, alone needs to be foreshadowed. This is what the Apostle says (*Heb.* 11:1): "The Law has [Vulg.: 'having'] a shadow of the good things to come, not the very image of the things": for a shadow is less than an image; so that the image belongs to the New Law, but the shadow to the Old.

**Reply to Objection 1.** The things of God are not to be revealed to man except in proportion to his capacity: else he would be in danger of downfall, were he to despise what he cannot grasp. Hence it was more beneficial that the Divine mysteries should be revealed to uncultured people under a veil of figures, that thus they might know them at least implicitly by using those figures to the honor of God.

**Reply to Objection 2.** Just as human reason fails to grasp poetical expressions on account of their being lacking in truth, so does it fail to grasp Divine things perfectly, on account of the sublimity of the truth they contain: and therefore in both cases there is need of signs by means of sensible figures.

**Reply to Objection 3.** Augustine is speaking there of internal worship; to which, however, external wor-

ship should be ordained, as stated above.

The same answer applies to the Fourth Objection:

because men were taught by Him to practice more perfectly the spiritual worship of God.

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### Whether there should have been man ceremonial precepts?

Ia IIae q. 101 a. 3

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**Objection 1.** It would seem that there should not have been many ceremonial precepts. For those things which conduce to an end should be proportionate to that end. But the ceremonial precepts, as stated above (Aa. 1,2), are ordained to the worship of God, and to the foreshadowing of Christ. Now “there is but one God, of Whom are all things... and one Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom are all things” (1 Cor. 8:6). Therefore there should not have been many ceremonial precepts.

**Objection 2.** Further, the great number of the ceremonial precepts was an occasion of transgression, according to the words of Peter (Acts 15:10): “Why tempt you God, to put a yoke upon the necks of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear?” Now the transgression of the Divine precepts is an obstacle to man’s salvation. Since, therefore, every law should conduce to man’s salvation, as Isidore says (Etym. v, 3), it seems that the ceremonial precepts should not have been given in great number.

**Objection 3.** Further, the ceremonial precepts referred to the outward and bodily worship of God, as stated above (a. 2). But the Law should have lessened this bodily worship: since it directed men to Christ, Who taught them to worship God “in spirit and in truth,” as stated in Jn. 4:23. Therefore there should not have been many ceremonial precepts.

**On the contrary,** (Osee 8:12): “I shall write to them [Vulg.: ‘him’] My manifold laws”; and (Job 11:6): “That He might show thee the secrets of His wisdom, and that His Law is manifold.”

**I answer that,** As stated above (q. 96, a. 1), every law is given to a people. Now a people contains two kinds of men: some, prone to evil, who have to be coerced by the precepts of the law, as stated above (q. 95, a. 1); some, inclined to good, either from nature or from custom, or rather from grace; and the like have to be taught and improved by means of the precepts of the law. Accordingly, with regard to both kinds of the law. Accordingly, with regard to both kinds of men it was expedient that the Old Law should contain many ceremonial precepts. For in that people there were many prone to idolatry; wherefore it was necessary to recall them by means of ceremonial precepts from the worship of idols to the worship of God. And since men served idols in many ways, it was necessary on the other hand

to devise many means of repressing every single one: and again, to lay many obligations on such like men, in order that being burdened, as it were, by their duties to the Divine worship, they might have no time for the service of idols. As to those who were inclined to good, it was again necessary that there should be many ceremonial precepts; both because thus their mind turned to God in many ways, and more continually; and because the mystery of Christ, which was foreshadowed by these ceremonial precepts, brought many boons to the world, and afforded men many considerations, which needed to be signified by various ceremonies.

**Reply to Objection 1.** When that which conduces to an end is sufficient to conduce thereto, then one such thing suffices for one end: thus one remedy, if it be efficacious, suffices sometimes to restore men to health, and then the remedy needs not to be repeated. But when that which conduces to an end is weak and imperfect, it needs to be multiplied: thus many remedies are given to a sick man, when one is not enough to heal him. Now the ceremonies of the Old Law were weak and imperfect, both for representing the mystery of Christ, on account of its surpassing excellence; and for subjugating men’s minds to God. Hence the Apostle says (Heb. 7:18,19): “There is a setting aside of the former commandment because of the weakness and unprofitableness thereof, for the law brought nothing to perfection.” Consequently these ceremonies needed to be in great number.

**Reply to Objection 2.** A wise lawgiver should suffer lesser transgressions, that the greater may be avoided. And therefore, in order to avoid the sin of idolatry, and the pride which would arise in the hearts of the Jews, were they to fulfil all the precepts of the Law, the fact that they would in consequence find many occasions of disobedience did not prevent God from giving them many ceremonial precepts.

**Reply to Objection 3.** The Old Law lessened bodily worship in many ways. Thus it forbade sacrifices to be offered in every place and by any person. Many such like things did it enact for the lessening of bodily worship; as Rabbi Moses, the Egyptian testifies (Doct. Perplex. iii). Nevertheless it behooved not to attenuate the bodily worship of God so much as to allow men to fall away into the worship of idols.

**Objection 1.** It would seem that the ceremonies of the Old Law are unsuitably divided into “sacrifices, sacred things, sacraments, and observances.” For the ceremonies of the Old Law foreshadowed Christ. But this was done only by the sacrifices, which foreshadowed the sacrifice in which Christ “delivered Himself an oblation and a sacrifice to God” (Eph. 5:2). Therefore none but the sacrifices were ceremonies.

**Objection 2.** Further, the Old Law was ordained to the New. But in the New Law the sacrifice is the Sacrament of the Altar. Therefore in the Old Law there should be no distinction between “sacrifices” and “sacraments.”

**Objection 3.** Further, a “sacred thing” is something dedicated to God: in which sense the tabernacle and its vessels were said to be consecrated. But all the ceremonial precepts were ordained to the worship of God, as stated above (a. 1). Therefore all ceremonies were sacred things. Therefore “sacred things” should not be taken as a part of the ceremonies.

**Objection 4.** Further, “observances” are so called from having to be observed. But all the precepts of the Law had to be observed: for it is written (Dt. 8:11): “Observe [Douay: ‘Take heed’] and beware lest at any time thou forget the Lord thy God, and neglect His commandments and judgments and ceremonies.” Therefore the “observances” should not be considered as a part of the ceremonies.

**Objection 5.** Further, the solemn festivals are reckoned as part of the ceremonial: since they were a shadow of things to come (Col. 2:16,17): and the same may be said of the oblations and gifts, as appears from the words of the Apostle (Heb. 9:9): and yet these do not seem to be inclined in any of those mentioned above. Therefore the above division of ceremonies is unsuitable.

**On the contrary,** In the Old Law each of the above is called a ceremony. For the sacrifices are called ceremonies (Num. 15:24): “They shall offer a calf. . . and the sacrifices and libations thereof, as the ceremonies require.” Of the sacrament of Order it is written (Lev. 7:35): “This is the anointing of Aaron and his sons in the ceremonies.” Of sacred things also it is written (Ex. 38:21): “These are the instruments of the tabernacle of the testimony. . . in the ceremonies of the Levites.” And again of the observances it is written (3 Kings 9:6): “If you. . . shall turn away from following Me, and will not observe [Douay: ‘keep’] My. . . ceremonies which I have set before you.”

**I answer that,** As stated above (Aa. 1,2), the ceremonial precepts are ordained to the Divine worship. Now in this worship we may consider the worship itself, the worshippers, and the instruments of worship. The worship consists specially in “sacrifices,” which are

offered up in honor of God. The instruments of worship refer to the “sacred things,” such as the tabernacle, the vessels and so forth. With regard to the worshippers two points may be considered. The first point is their preparation for Divine worship, which is effected by a sort of consecration either of the people or of the ministers; and to this the “sacraments” refer. The second point is their particular mode of life, whereby they are distinguished from those who do not worship God: and to this pertain the “observances,” for instance, in matters of food, clothing, and so forth.

**Reply to Objection 1.** It was necessary for the sacrifices to be offered both in some certain place and by some certain men: and all this pertained to the worship of God. Wherefore just as their sacrifices signified Christ the victim, so too their sacraments and sacred things of the New Law; while their observances foreshadowed the mode of life of the people under the New Law: all of which things pertain to Christ.

**Reply to Objection 2.** The sacrifice of the New Law, viz. the Eucharist, contains Christ Himself, the Author of our Sanctification: for He sanctified “the people by His own blood” (Heb. 13:12). Hence this Sacrifice is also a sacrament. But the sacrifices of the Old Law did not contain Christ, but foreshadowed Him; hence they are not called sacraments. In order to signify this there were certain sacraments apart from the sacrifices of the Old Law, which sacraments were figures of the sanctification to come. Nevertheless to certain consecrations certain sacrifices were united.

**Reply to Objection 3.** The sacrifices and sacraments were of course sacred things. But certain things were sacred, through being dedicated to the Divine worship, and yet were not sacrifices or sacraments: wherefore they retained the common designation of sacred things.

**Reply to Objection 4.** Those things which pertained to the mode of life of the people who worshipped God, retained the common designation of observances, in so far as they fell short of the above. For they were not called sacred things, because they had no immediate connection with the worship of God, such as the tabernacle and its vessels had. But by a sort of consequence they were matters of ceremony, in so far as they affected the fitness of the people who worshipped God.

**Reply to Objection 5.** Just as the sacrifices were offered in a fixed place, so were they offered at fixed times: for which reason the solemn festivals seem to be reckoned among the sacred things. The oblations and gifts are counted together with the sacrifices; hence the Apostle says (Heb. 5:1): “Every high-priest taken from among men, is ordained for men in things that appertain to God, that he may offer up gifts and sacrifices.”