

QUESTION 102

The Reasons for the Ceremonial Precepts

We next have to consider the reasons (*causae*) for the ceremonial precepts. On this topic there are six questions: (1) Are there reasons for the ceremonial precepts? (2) Do the ceremonial precepts have literal reasons or just figurative reasons? (3) What are the reasons for the sacrifices? (4) What are the reasons for the sacred things? (5) What are the reasons for the sacraments? (6) What are the reasons for the observances?

Article 1

Are there reasons for the ceremonial precepts?

It seems that there are no reasons for the ceremonial precepts (*non habeant causam*):

Objection 1: A Gloss on Ephesians 2:15 (“..... making void the Law of the commandments by the decrees”) says, “That is, making the Law void with respect to bodily observances, by means of the decrees, i.e., by means of the Gospel precepts, which are based on reasons (*ex ratione*).” But if the observances of the Old Law had been based on reasons, then there would not have been no point to making them void by means of the reasoned decrees (*per rationabilia decreta*) of the New Law. Therefore, there were no reasons for the ceremonial observances of the Old Law.

Objection 2: The Old Law is the successor of the law of nature. But as Augustine says in *Super Genesim ad Litteram* 8 about the prohibition regarding the tree of life, the law of nature contained a precept that had no reason behind it except to test man’s obedience. Therefore, in the Old Law some precepts likewise had to be given by which man’s obedience would be tested and which had no intrinsic reason behind them (*de se nullam rationem haberent*).

Objection 3: A man’s deeds are called moral insofar as they proceed from reason. Therefore, if there were reasons for the ceremonial precepts, then the ceremonial precepts would not differ from the moral precepts. Therefore, it seems that the ceremonial precepts have no causes, since the reason for a precept is taken from some cause.

But contrary to this: Psalm 18:9 says, “The precept of the Lord is clear, enlightening the eye.” But the ceremonial precepts are God’s precepts. Therefore, they are clear. But they would not be clear unless they had a reasoned cause (*nisi haberent rationabilem causam*). Therefore, the ceremonial precepts have a reasoned cause.

I respond: Since, according to the Philosopher in *Metaphysics* 1, “one who is wise has the role of giving order,” what proceeds from God’s wisdom must be well-ordered, as the Apostle says in Romans 13:1.

Now for things to be well-ordered, there are two requirements:

The first is that they be ordered toward a fitting end, since the end is the principle of all order in things to be done. For if things occur by chance without tending toward an end (*praeter intentionem finis*), or if they are done playfully and not in earnest, we say that they are unordered (*inordinata*).

Second, what is ordered toward an end must be proportioned to the end. From this it follows that the reasons for things that are ordered toward an end are themselves taken from the end—in the way that, as *Physics* 2 points out, the reason for the configuration of a saw is taken from the act of cutting.

Now it is clear that the ceremonial precepts, like all the other precepts of the Law, were instituted by God’s wisdom; hence, Deuteronomy 4:6 says, “This is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations.” Thus, one must assert that the ceremonial precepts are ordered toward an end and that their reasoned causes can be gathered (*assignari*) from that end.

Reply to objection 1: The observances of the Old Law can be described as being ‘without reason’ (*sine ratione*) in the sense that the deeds themselves did not have an explanation (*ratio*) in terms of their own nature—for instance, that a garment should not be made from wool and linen. However, they were able to be reasoned observances because of their relation to something else, viz., either because they were a figure of something or because they prevented something.

By contrast, the decrees of the New Law, which consist principally in having faith in God and in loving God, take their reason from the very nature of the act.

Reply to objection 2: The prohibition regarding the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was not made because the tree was evil by its nature; instead, this prohibition had a reason that was taken from its relation to something else, viz., insofar as it was a figure of something. In the same way, the ceremonial precepts of the Old Law have their reason in their relation to something else.

Reply to objection 3: It is by their very nature that moral precepts such as ‘You shall not kill’ and ‘You shall not steal’ have reasoned causes. By contrast, as has been explained, the ceremonial precepts have their reasoned causes from their relation to something else.

Article 2

Do the ceremonial precepts have literal reasons or only figurative reasons?

It seems that the ceremonial precepts have only figurative reasons (*causa figuralis*) and not literal reasons (*causa litteralis*):

Objection 1: The main ceremonial precepts were circumcision and the immolation of the Paschal lamb. But each of these had only a figurative reason, since each was given as a sign. For Genesis 17:11 says, “You shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin, that it may be a sign of the covenant between me and you.” And regarding the celebration of the Passover, Exodus 13:9 says, “It shall be as a sign in your hand, and as a memorial before your eyes.” Therefore, *a fortiori*, the other ceremonial precepts have only figurative reasons.

Objection 2: An effect is proportioned to its cause. But as was explained above (q. 101, a. 2), all the ceremonial precepts are figurative. Therefore, they have only a figurative reason.

Objection 3: If something is of itself indifferent with respect to its being done this way or that way, then it does not seem to have a literal reason. But there are some ceremonial precepts that do not seem to determine whether things should be done this way or that way—for instance, with respect to the number of animals that are to be offered or with respect to other particular circumstances of this sort. Therefore, the [ceremonial] precepts of the Old Law do not have literal reasons.

But contrary to this: Just as the ceremonial precepts were figures of Christ, so too was the history (*historia*) of the Old Testament; for 1 Corinthians 10:11 says, “All these things happened to them in figure.” But in the historical events of the Old Testament there is, besides a mystical or figurative meaning (*intellectus mysticus seu figuralem*), a literal meaning as well. Therefore, the ceremonial precepts likewise had literal reasons in addition to their figurative reasons.

I respond: As was explained above (a. 1), the reason behind what is ordered toward an end must be taken from that end. Now the ceremonial precepts have two ends, since they were ordered (a) toward the worship of God for that time and (b) toward being figures of Christ—in the same way that, as Jerome points out in his commentary on Hosea, the words of the prophets were related to the present time in such a way that they were spoken to prefigure the future as well.

So, then, there are two ways to think of the reasons for the ceremonial precepts of the Old Law.

In the first way, the reasons are derived from the worship of God that was to be observed for that time. These are the *literal* reasons, which have to do (a) with preventing idolatrous worship, or (b) with commemorating certain favors bestowed by God, or (c) with intimating God's excellence, or (d) with making clear the mental disposition required for that time in those who were worshiping God.

In the second way, the reasons are derived from the fact that the precepts are ordered toward being figures of Christ. And in this way the precepts have *figurative* and *mystical* reasons—whether these reasons are taken (a) from Christ Himself and the Church (and this pertains to the *allegorical sense*), or (b) from the practice of the Christian people (and this pertains to the *moral sense*), or (c) from the state of future glory insofar as we are led to it by Christ (and this pertains to the *anagogical sense*).

Reply to objection 1: Just as the interpretation of a metaphorical locution in Scripture is literal, given that the words were used in order to signify metaphorically, so too the signification of those ceremonies of the Law that commemorate God's favors and have been instituted because of those favors does not go beyond the order of literal reasons. Hence, the fact that the reason for the celebration of the Passover is taken from its being a sign of the liberation from Egypt, or the fact that circumcision is a sign of the covenant (*pactum*) God had with Abraham, pertains to a literal reason.

Reply to objection 2: This objection would go through if the ceremonial precepts had been given solely in order to prefigure the future and not in order to worship God in the present.

Reply to objection 3: It was explained above (q. 96, a. 6) that there are general reasons for human laws, but not reasons for their particular conditions; rather, the particular conditions stem from the judgment of those who institute the laws. So, too, many of the particular determinations found in the ceremonies of the Old Law have only a figurative reason and not a [specific] literal reason, even though they do have a general literal reason.

Article 3

Can appropriate reasons be assigned for the ceremonies that involve sacrifices?

It seems that appropriate reasons cannot be assigned for the ceremonies that involve sacrifices:

Objection 1: What was offered in sacrifice were things necessary for sustaining human life, e.g., certain animals and breads. But God does not need such sustenance—this according to Psalm 49:13 (“Will I eat the flesh of bullocks? Or will I drink the blood of goats?”). Therefore, it was inappropriate for sacrifices of this sort to be offered to God.

Objection 2: The only animals offered in divine sacrifice were (a) three kinds of quadrupeds, viz., oxen, sheep, and goats, and (b), among the birds, the turtledove and the dove generally speaking, while the sparrow was sacrificed in the specific case of the cleansing of a leper. But there are many other animals more noble than these. Therefore, since whatever is best ought to be given to God, it seems that it should not have been just these things that had to be offered to God as sacrifices.

Objection 3: Just as man has dominion from God over the birds and the beasts, so too he has dominion over the fish. Therefore, it was inappropriate for fish to be excluded from the divine sacrifices.

Objection 4: It is commanded indifferently that doves and turtledoves be offered. Therefore, just as it is commanded that the young of the doves be offered, so too it should be commanded that the young of the turtledoves be offered.

Objection 5: As is clear from what is said in Genesis 1, God is the author of the life not only of men but also of the animals. But death is opposed to life. Therefore, what should have been offered to God were living animals instead of animals that had been killed—especially because in Romans 12:1 the

Apostle likewise admonishes that we should present our bodies “as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God.”

Objection 6: If animals were offered to God in sacrifice only after they had been killed, then it does not seem to make any difference how they were killed. Therefore, it was inappropriate for the manner of immolation to be set down—especially in the case of birds, as in Leviticus 1:15-16.

Objection 7: Every defect in an animal is a path to corruption and death. Therefore, if animals that had already been killed were being offered to God, then it was inappropriate to prohibit the sacrifice of a defective animal, e.g., a lame or blind or otherwise unclean animal.

Objection 8: Those who offer victims to God ought to partake of those victims—this according to the Apostle in 1 Corinthians 10:18 (“Are not they that eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?”). Therefore, it was inappropriate for certain parts of the victims—viz., the blood, the fat, the breastbone, and the right shoulder—to be withheld from those who were offering the sacrifice.

Objection 9: Just as holocausts were offered in honor of God, so too were peace-offerings and sin-offerings. But no female animal was offered to God in a holocaust, even though holocausts were made with both quadrupeds and birds. Therefore, it was inappropriate for female animals to be offered as peace-offerings and sin-offerings, and yet for birds not to be offered as peace-offerings.

Objection 10: All peace-offerings seem to be of the same type. Therefore, no distinction should have been drawn among them, as Leviticus 7:15-16 does in mandating that the flesh of some peace-offerings cannot be eaten a day later, whereas the flesh of others can be.

Objection 11: All sins alike involve a turning away from God. Therefore, a single type of sacrifice should have been offered for all sins in order to be reconciled with God.

Objection 12: All the animals that were offered in sacrifice were offered in a single way, viz., after having been killed. Therefore, it does not seem appropriate that offerings of things that grow in the earth should have been made in diverse ways. For instance, sometimes an offering was made of grain, sometimes of flour, and sometimes of bread, where the bread was sometimes cooked in an oven, sometimes in a pan, and sometimes on a grill.

Objection 13: All things that we have use of are such that we should acknowledge them as coming from God. Therefore, it was unfitting that, besides animals, the only things offered to God were bread, wine, oil, incense, and salt.

Objection 14: Bodily sacrifices express the heart’s interior sacrifice, by which a man offers his own spirit to God. But in an interior sacrifice there is more of sweetness, which is represented by honey, than of sharpness, which is represented by salt; for Ecclesiasticus 24:27 says, “My spirit is sweet beyond honey.” Therefore, it was inappropriate to prohibit in sacrifices the use of honey and leaven, which make bread tasty, and to prescribe instead the use of salt, which is sharp, and incense, which has a bitter taste.

Therefore, it seems that the things having to do with the ceremonies of the sacrifices do not have a reasoned cause.

But contrary to this: Leviticus 1:13 says, “The priest shall offer all the gifts and burn them upon the altar for a holocaust and a most sweet savor to the Lord.” But according to Wisdom 7:28, “God loves no one except he who dwells with wisdom,” from which one can infer that whatever is acceptable to God is imbued with wisdom. Therefore, the ceremonies of the sacrifices were imbued with wisdom, i.e., they had reasoned causes.

I respond: As was explained above (a. 2), there are two kinds of reasons for the ceremonies of the Old Law, viz., (a) *literal* reasons, given that the ceremonies are ordered toward the worship of God, and (b) *figurative* or *mystical* reasons, given that the ceremonies are ordered toward prefiguring Christ. The ceremonies having to do with sacrifices can be appropriately assigned reasons of both kinds.

Insofar as the sacrifices are ordered to the worship of God, there are two reasons that can be

specified for them:

The first reason is that the sacrifices represent that ordering of the mind toward God which the one offering the sacrifice is incited to. Now the correct ordering of the mind to God involves (a) a man's acknowledging that all the things he has are from God as their first principle and (b) his ordering all those things to God as their ultimate end. This was represented in the oblations and sacrifices by the fact that a man offered some of his own things to honor God, as if acknowledging that he had them from God. Accordingly, in 1 Paralipomenon 39:14 David said, "All things are yours, and we have given you what we received from your hand." So in offering sacrifices man was professing that God is the first principle of the creation of things and the ultimate end to whom all things should be directed.

Now because the correct ordering of the mind to God involves the human mind's (a) not recognizing any first author of things other than God alone and (b) not setting up any other being as its own last end, the Law prohibits offering sacrifices to any being other than God—this according to Exodus 22:20 ("Anyone who sacrifices to gods besides the Lord alone shall be put to death"). And so the second reason that can be specified for the ceremonies involving sacrifice is that through ceremonies of this sort men were restrained from offering sacrifices to idols. Moreover, this is why the precepts concerning the sacrifices were given to the Jewish people only after they had fallen into idolatry by worshiping the molten calf; it was as if these sacrifices were instituted in order that a people eager to offer sacrifices should offer such sacrifices to God rather than to idols. Hence, Jeremiah 7:22 says, "For I spoke not to your fathers, and I commanded them not, in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning the matter of burnt offerings and sacrifices."

Now among all the gifts that God gave to the human race once it had already fallen through sin, the principal one was that He gave His own Son. Hence, John 3:16 says, "God so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son, so that whoever believes in Him may not perish, but may have eternal life." And so the most powerful sacrifice is the one by which Christ "offered Himself to God for an odor of sweetness," as Ephesians 5:22 puts it. Because of this, all the other sacrifices were offered in the Old Law in order that they might be figures of this one singular and principal sacrifice, in the way that the imperfect is a figure of the perfect. Hence, in Hebrews 10:11 the Apostle says that a priest of the Old Law "offered many times the same sacrifices, which are never able to take away sins," whereas Christ "offered one sacrifice for sins" for all times. And since the reason for a figure is taken from what it is a figure of, it follows that the reasons for the figurative sacrifices of the Old Law are to be taken from the true sacrifice of Christ.

Reply to objection 1: God did not want sacrifices of this sort for the sake of the things themselves that were offered, as if He stood in need of them; hence, Isaiah 1:11 says, "I did not want holocausts of rams, and the fat of fatlings, and the blood of calves and lambs and goats." Rather, as has been explained, He wanted them offered to Himself (a) in order to prevent idolatry, (b) in order to signify the appropriate ordering of the human mind toward God, and (c) in order to be a figure of the mystery of human redemption accomplished by Christ.

Reply to objection 2: In all the respects just mentioned, there was an appropriate reason why the animals in question—and not others—were offered to God in sacrifice.

First, in order to prevent idolatry. For the idolaters offered all the other animals to their gods or used them for their sorceries (*maleficia*), whereas among the Egyptians, with whom they had lived, it was an abomination to kill the animals in question, and so the Egyptians did not offer them in sacrifice to their own gods. Hence, Exodus 8:26 says, "We shall sacrifice the abominations of the Egyptians to the Lord our God." For the Egyptians worshiped sheep and venerated goats, since demons appeared in the shape of these animals, whereas they used oxen for agriculture, which they held to be something sacred.

Second, this was appropriate in two ways for the ordering of the mind toward God:

(a) First, because animals of the sort in question are especially the ones that human life is sustained

by and, along with this, they are the cleanest animals and eat the cleanest food. By contrast, other animals are such that they either live in the wild and are not commonly thought of as useful to men or, if domesticated, then, like the pig and the goose, eat unclean food. But only what is pure should be offered to God. On the other hand, the birds in question were specifically offered to God because they were found in abundance in the promised land.

(b) Second, because purity of mind is signified by the immolation of animals of the sort in question. For as a Gloss on Leviticus 1 says, “We offer a calf when we conquer the pride of the flesh; we offer a lamb when we correct our irrational movements; we offer a goat when we conquer our lasciviousness; we offer a turtledove when we preserve our chastity; we offer unleavened bread when we eat the unleavened bread of sincerity.” Moreover, the turtledove clearly signifies charity and simplicity of mind.

Third, these animals were appropriately offered as figures of Christ. For a Gloss on the same passage says, “Christ is offered in the calf as a figure of the power of the cross; He is offered in the lamb as a figure of His innocence; He is offered in the ram as a figure of His sovereignty; He is offered in the goat as a figure of the sinful flesh. What is shown in the turtledove and the dove is the conjoining of the two natures”—or, alternatively, the turtledove signifies chastity and the dove signifies charity—“and the flour is a figure of the sprinkling of believers with the water of Baptism.”

Reply to objection 3: Since they live in the water, fish are more distant from man than are the other animals, which live in the air, as man does. Again, when fish are taken from the water, they immediately die, and so they could not be offered in the temple in the way the other animals were.

Reply to objection 4: Among the turtledoves, the older ones are better than the younger, whereas it is just the opposite in the case of the doves. And so, as Rabbi Moses puts it, they were told to offer turtledoves and the young of the doves, because everything that is the best should be given to God.

Reply to objection 5: The animals offered in sacrifice were killed because animals that have been killed are useful to man, insofar as God has given them to man for food. And so they were consumed by fire, because it was through fire that, having been cooked, they were apt for human use. Again, the killing of the animals signified the destruction of sins, and also signified that men deserved to be killed for their sins—as if the animals were being killed in place of the men in order to signify the expiation of sins.

Moreover, the killing of these animals signified the killing of Christ.

Reply to objection 6: The Law set down a specific way of killing the immolated animals in order to exclude the other ways by which idolaters sacrificed animals to their idols.

Alternatively, as Rabbi Moses puts it, “The Law chose a type of killing by which the animals being killed would suffer the least.” This excluded (a) cruelty (*immisericordia*) on the part of those offering the sacrifice and (b) the mangling (*deterioratio*) of the animals killed.

Reply to objection 7: Defective animals are normally held in contempt by men, and so it was forbidden that they be offered in sacrifice to God. Because of this, it was also forbidden “to offer the price of a prostitute or the price of a dog in the house of God” (Deuteronomy 23:18). And for this same reason they did not offer animals that were not yet seven days old; for such animals were, so to speak, abortive—not as yet fully firmed up because of their tender age.

Reply to objection 8: There were three kinds of sacrifice:

One kind was totally consumed by fire, and this was called a *holocaust* (*holocaustum*). For a sacrifice of this sort was offered to God specifically to show reverence to His majesty and love for His goodness, and it corresponded to *the state of perfection in fulfilling His counsels*. And so the sacrifice was totally consumed by fire, in order that just as the entire animal, reduced to smoke, ascended upward, so this might signify that the whole man and all that belonged to him were subject to the Lord God and were to be offered to Him.

The second kind of sacrifice was a *sin-offering* (*sacrificium pro peccatis*), which was offered to God because of the need for the forgiveness of sins and which corresponded to *the state of those doing penance as satisfaction for their sins*. The offering was divided into two parts: one part of it was consumed by fire, and the other part went for the use of the priests in order to signify that the expiation of sins is accomplished by God through the ministry of the priests. The only exception occurred when the sacrifice was being offered for the sins of all the people or specifically for the sins of the priests. On such occasions the whole offering was consumed by fire. For it would have been unfitting for the priests to have use of what had been offered for their sins in such a way that nothing sinful should remain in them. For this would not have been satisfaction for their sins. After all, if the offering were handed over for the use of those whose sins it had been offered for, this would seem to be equivalent to their not having made an offering at all.

The third kind of sacrifice was called a *peace-offering* (*hostia pacifica*), which was offered to God either as a thanksgiving (*pro gratiarum actione*) or for the well-being (*salus*) and prosperity of those making the offering, in return for a favor already received or to be received in the future, and which corresponds to *the state of those proficient in the fulfillment of the commandments*. These offerings were divided into three parts: (a) one part was burned in honor of God, (b) another part went for the use of the priests, and (c) the third part went for the use of those making the offering. This was in order to signify that (a) man's well-being proceeds from God, (b) under the direction of God's ministers, and (c) with the cooperation of the very men who are being saved.

Now it was a general rule that the blood and fat did not go either for the use of the priests or for the use of those making the offering; instead, the blood was poured out at the foot of the altar in honor of God, while the fat was burned up in the fire.

One reason for this was to prevent idolatry, since idolaters drank the blood of sacrificial victims and ate their fat—this according to Deuteronomy 32:38 (“Of the victims [of the idols] they ate the fat, and drank the wine of their drink offerings”).

A second reason was to give shape to a humane way of life. For the use of the blood was forbidden to them in order that they might abhor the shedding of human blood; hence, Genesis 9:4-5 says, “Flesh with blood you shall not eat; for I will require the blood of your lives.” And the use of the fat was forbidden to them in order to stave off licentiousness; hence, Ezekiel 34:3 says, “You killed that which was fat.”

A third reason was to show reverence for God. For blood is especially necessary for life and, because of this, the soul is said to exist in the blood (see Leviticus 17:11). Fat, on the other hand, points to an abundance of food. And so in order to show that life and every adequate supply of goods come to us from God, the blood was poured out and the fat burned in honor of God.

A fourth reason is that it prefigured the shedding of Christ's blood and the abundance of charity with which He offered Himself to God on our behalf.

The priests were given the breast and right shoulder from the peace-offerings in order to prevent the type of divination that is called spatulamancy (*spatulamantia*), since divinations were made in the shoulder-blades (*in spatulis*) of sacrificed animals, as well as in their breastbones. And so these things were taken away from those who made the offerings. This practice also signified that the priest needed (a) ‘wisdom of the heart’ (*sapientia cordis*) in order to instruct the people, and this is signified by the breast, which covers the heart, as well as (b) the fortitude to endure their defects, and this is signified by the right shoulder.

Reply to objection 9: Since the holocaust was the most perfect among the sacrifices, only the male was offered in a holocaust. For the female is an imperfect animal.

Now turtledoves and doves were offered because of the poverty of those making the offering; for they were unable to offer the bigger animals. Moreover, since the peace-offerings were offered

spontaneously and no one was forced to offer them unwillingly, birds of this sort were offered not in the peace-offerings, but rather in the holocausts and sin-offerings, which had to be offered at certain times. In addition, these birds fit in with the perfection of the holocausts because they fly high in the sky, and they fit in with the sin-offerings because of their sad singing.

Reply to objection 10: The holocaust was the chief among the sacrifices, since the entire offering was consumed by fire in honor of God, and none of it was eaten. The second place in holiness was held by the sin-offering, which was eaten only in the court, by the priests, and on the very day of the sacrifice. The third place was held by the peace-offerings of thanksgiving, which were eaten on the same day, but anywhere in Jerusalem. And the fourth place was had by peace-offerings made with a private vow (*ex voto*); the meat from these sacrifices could be eaten on the next day as well.

The reason for this ordering is that man is obligated to God (a) most of all because of His majesty; (b) second, because of the offenses committed against Him; (c) third, because of favors already received; and (d) fourth, because of favors hoped for.

Reply to objection 11: As was explained above (q. 73, a. 10), sins are made more serious by the status of the sinner. And so the offerings mandated for the sins of a priest or a ruler are different from those mandated for the sins of a private person.

But notice that, as Rabbi Moses points out, “the graver the sin was, the lower the species of animal offered for it. Hence, the goat, which is a very low animal, was offered for idolatry, which is the gravest sin, whereas a calf was offered for a sin of ignorance on the part of a priest, and a ram was offered for a sin of negligence on the part of a ruler.”

Reply to objection 12: In the case of sacrifices, the Law wished to take into account the poverty of those making the offering, so that someone who could not afford a four-footed animal might at least offer a bird, and someone who could not afford a bird might at least offer bread, and someone who could not afford bread might at least offer flour or grain.

The figurative reason for this is that the bread signifies Christ, who is the living bread, as John 6:41 says. Under the law of nature Christ was like grain in the faith of the patriarchs; and then He was like flour in the teaching of the Law of the prophets; and then He was like formed bread-dough after He assumed His human nature; and then He was cooked by a fire, i.e., He was formed by the Holy Spirit in the oven of the virgin’s womb, and He was also cooked in a baking pan through the hardships (*labores*) He endured in the world; and on the cross He was, as it were, consumed by fire on a grill.

Reply to objection 13: Among the things that grow from the earth, those that are useful to man are either (a) for eating, and from these bread was offered, or (b) for drinking, and from these wine was offered, or (c) for seasoning, and from these oil and salt were offered, or (d) for healing, and from these incense, which is aromatic and gives strength, was offered.

Now the bread is a figure of Christ’s flesh; the wine is a figure of His blood, through which we have been redeemed; the oil is a figure of Christ’s grace; the salt is a figure of His knowledge; and the incense is a figure of His prayer.

Reply to objection 14: The reason why honey was not offered in sacrifices to God was that it used to be offered in sacrifices to idols, and also in order to prevent any sort of carnal delight or pleasure in those who intended to make sacrifice to God.

The reason why leaven was not offered was to prevent spoiling. And perhaps it, too, used to be offered in sacrifices to idols.

On the other hand, salt was offered because it prevents spoiling, and sacrifices to God ought to be unspoiled. Also, salt signifies the discretion of wisdom as well as the mortification of the flesh.

Incense was offered in order to signify the devotion of mind required in those making the offering, and also to signify the odor of a good reputation. For incense is rich and fragrant. Moreover, since the

‘sacrifice of jealousy’ (*sacrificium zelotypiae*) proceeded not from devotion but instead from suspicion, incense was not offered in this sort of sacrifice (see Numbers 5:15).

Article 4

Can appropriate reasons be assigned for the ceremonies that involve the sacred things?

It seems that appropriate reasons cannot be assigned for the ceremonies that involve the sacred things:

Objection 1: In Acts 17:24 Paul says, “God, who made the world, and all things therein; He, being Lord of heaven and earth, dwells not in temples made with hands.” Therefore, it was inappropriate for the tabernacle or temple to be instituted under the Old Law for the worship of God.

Objection 2: The status of the Old Law was altered only by Christ. But the tabernacle signified the status of the Old Law. Therefore, it should not have been altered by the building of a temple.

Objection 3: The divine law should be principally concerned with inducing men to worship God. But as is clear in the New Law, the making of many altars and many temples contributes to an increase in the worship of God. Therefore, it seems that even in the Old Law there should have been many temples or tabernacles, and not just a single temple or single tabernacle.

Objection 4: The tabernacle or temple was ordered toward the worship of God. But it is especially God’s oneness and simplicity that should be venerated. Therefore, it does not seem to have been appropriate for the tabernacle or temple to be divided by veils.

Objection 5: The power of the first mover, who is God, is first apparent in the East (*in parte orientis*), where the first motion begins. But the tabernacle was instituted for the adoration of God. Therefore, it should have faced toward the East rather than the West.

Objection 6: In Exodus 20:4 the Lord commanded that they should “not make a graven thing, nor the likeness of anything.” Therefore, it was improper for there to have been graven images of the Cherubim in the tabernacle or temple. Similarly, there seems to have been no appropriate reason for the ark or the propitiatory or the candelabra or the table or the two altars to be there.

Objection 7: In Exodus 20:24 the Lord commanded, “You shall make an altar of earth unto me,” and again, “You shall not go up by steps unto my altar.” Therefore, it was inappropriate to command later on that the altar be made of wood covered with gold or bronze and of such a height that it could not be ascended except by means of steps. For Exodus 27:1-2 says, “You shall make also an altar of setim wood, which shall be five cubits long and as many wide and three cubits high and you shall cover it with brass.” And Exodus 30:1,3 says, “You shall make an altar to burn incense of setim wood and you shall overlay it with the purest gold.”

Objection 8: There should be nothing superfluous in the works of God, since there is nothing superfluous in the works of nature. But a single covering (*operimentum*) is sufficient for one tabernacle or house. Therefore it was inappropriate for the tabernacle to have many coverings, viz., curtains, blankets made of the hair of goats, ram skins dyed red, and violet-colored skins (see Exodus 26).

Objection 9: Exterior consecration signifies interior holiness, whose subject is the soul. Therefore, since the tabernacle and its vessels were inanimate corporeal things, it was inappropriate for them to be consecrated.

Objection 10: Psalm 33:2 says, “I will bless the Lord at all times, His praise will always be in my mouth.” But the solemn feasts (*solemnitates*) were instituted in order to praise God. Therefore, it was inappropriate for certain set days to be instituted for celebrating the feasts.

So, then, it seems that there were no appropriate reasons for the ceremonies involving the sacred things.

But contrary to this: In Hebrews 8:4 the Apostle says, “Those who offer gifts according to the law serve as an example and shadow of heavenly things. As Moses was told when he was finishing the tabernacle: ‘See to it that you make all things according to the pattern which was shown to you on the mountain.’”

I respond: The whole of the exterior worship of God was principally ordered toward men’s holding God in reverence. However, human affection is such that things that are common and not distinctive in relation to other things are less revered, whereas things that have some mark of excellence in distinction from other things are more revered and admired. Because of this, it has been the custom among men that kings and princes, who should be held in reverence by their subjects, dress in more expensive clothes and have bigger and more beautiful houses to live in.

For this reason, it was necessary that special times and special places and special vessels and special ministries should be ordered toward the worship of God, so that men’s minds might thereby be led to a greater reverence for God.

Similarly, as has been explained (a. 2), the status of the Old Law was instituted in order that it might be a figure of the mystery of Christ. But that which is a figure of another must itself be something determinate in order to represent a likeness of that other. And so, again, it was necessary for special things to be observed in those matters that involve the worship of God.

Reply to objection 1: The worship of God involves two things, viz., the God who is being worshiped and the men who are doing the worshiping. The God who is being worshiped is not Himself confined to any corporeal place, and hence it is not because of Him that a tabernacle or temple must be fashioned. By contrast, the men worshiping Him are corporeal, and it is because of them that a special tabernacle or temple must be instituted for the worship of God—and this for two reasons.

First, when they come together at such a place with the thought that the place has been set aside for the worship of God, they come with greater reverence.

Second, the arrangement of the tabernacle or temple signifies certain things that bear upon the excellence of the divine nature or of the humanity of Christ.

Thus, in 3 Kings 8:27 Solomon says, “If heaven and the heavens of heavens cannot contain You, how much less this house which I have built for You?” And after this he adds, “Let Your eyes be open upon this house of which You said, ‘My name shall be there’, so that You may hear the prayer of Your servant and of Your people Israel.” From this it is clear that the house of the sanctuary was instituted not in order to capture God, as if He might live there as in a place, but rather in order that (a) the name of God might dwell there, i.e., in order that the knowledge of God might be made manifest in that place through the things that were said and done there, and in order that (b) out of reverence for the place, the prayers made there would be heard more readily because of the devotion of those praying.

Reply to objection 2: In the time before Christ the status of the Old Law was not altered with respect to the fulfillment of the Law, which was accomplished only through Christ. However, it was altered with respect to the condition of the people who were living under the Law.

For at first the people were living in the desert and had no fixed dwelling place. After that, they waged various wars against the neighboring Gentiles. Finally, at the time of David and Solomon the people lived in a very peaceful state. And it was at that time that the temple was first built on the site that Abraham, instructed by God, had designated for sacrifice. For Genesis 22:2 says that Lord commanded Abraham to offer his son “for a holocaust upon one of the mountains which I will show you.” And afterwards it says that he named this place ‘The Lord Sees’—as if it were in accord with God’s foreknowledge that this place had been chosen for divine worship. It is for this reason that Deuteronomy 12:5-6 says, “You shall come to the place which the Lord your God shall choose and you shall offer

..... your holocausts and victims.”

However, before the time of David and Solomon it would have been inappropriate to designate a place for building the temple, and this for the three reasons Rabbi Moses puts forth: first, so that the Gentiles would not appropriate that place for themselves; second, so that the Gentiles would not destroy that place; and, third, so that the tribes would not all want to have that place in their own territory, with quarrels and disputes arising as a result. And so the temple was not built until the people had a king who could stop the quarreling.

Before that time, a tabernacle that could be carried to different places had been ordained for the worship of God—as if there was not yet a determinate place for divine worship. And this is literal reason for the difference between the tabernacle and the temple.

Now one possible figurative reason is that this signified our twofold status. For the tabernacle, which is mutable, signifies the state of our present mutable life, whereas the temple, which is fixed and stable, signifies the state of the future life, which is completely unchangeable. And because of this it is said that when the temple was being built, no sound of hammers or saws was heard, and this to signify that all disturbances will be far removed from the future state.

An alternative reason is that the tabernacle signifies the status of the Old Law, whereas the temple constructed by Solomon signifies the status of the New Law. Hence, only Jews worked on the construction of the tabernacle, whereas even Gentiles from Tyre and Sidon cooperated in the building of the temple.

Reply to objection 3: Both a literal and a figurative reason can be given for the fact that there is just one temple or tabernacle.

The literal reason is to prevent idolatry. For the Gentiles used to build different temples to different gods, and so in order to strengthen in the minds of men a faith in God’s oneness, God willed that sacrifices to Himself should be offered in just one place. Again, He did this in order to show that it was not because of itself that bodily worship was acceptable to Him. And so they were kept from offering sacrifices at just any time or place. By contrast, worship under the New Law, whose sacrifice contains spiritual grace, is acceptable to God in its own right, and this is why the multiplication of altars and temples is accepted under the New Law.

However, as regards those things that had to do with the spiritual worship of God and consisted in the teaching of the Law and the prophets, even under the Old Law there were different places set aside where they would come together to praise God. These were called ‘synagogues’, just as now there are places called ‘churches’ where the Christian people congregate to praise God. And so among us the church has taken the place of both the temple and the synagogue, since the very sacrifice of the Church is spiritual, and so there is no distinction among us between the place of sacrifice and the place of teaching.

A possible figurative reason is that the oneness of the temple signifies the oneness of the Church, whether the Church militant or the Church triumphant.

Reply to objection 4: Just as the oneness of God or the oneness of the Church is represented by the oneness of the tabernacle or temple, so the distinctions within the tabernacle or temple represent the distinctions among the things which are subject to God and out of which we rise up to venerate God.

Now the tabernacle was divided into two parts. The one part was called the ‘Holy of Holies’ and was situated to the West, and the other was called ‘The Holy Place’ and was situated to the East. Again, in front of the tabernacle there was a court.

There are two reasons for this division.

The first reason is that the tabernacle is ordered toward the worship of God. For the divisions within the tabernacle are a figure of the different parts of the world. The part called the ‘Holy of Holies’ was a figure of the higher world, i.e., the world of spiritual substances, whereas the part called the ‘Holy Place’ represented the corporeal world. And this is why the Holy Place was divided off from the Holy of

Holies by a veil divided into four colors designating the four elements, viz., (a) flaxen (*byssum*), signifying *earth*, since linen, i.e., flax, grows from the earth; (b) purple (*purpura*), signifying *water*, since the purple tint was made from a certain shellfish found in the sea; (c) violet (*hyacinthus*), signifying *air*, since it has the color of the atmosphere; and (d) twice-dyed scarlet (*coccus bis tinctus*), signifying *fire*. The reason for this is that the matter composed of the four elements is a barrier by which the incorporeal substances are veiled from us. And so only the high priest entered the inner tabernacle, i.e., the Holy of Holies, and this just once a year, in order to signify that man's final perfection is to enter into that higher world. By contrast, the priests entered the outer part, i.e., the Holy Place, every day—though not the people, who went only as far as the court. For while the people can perceive corporeal things, only the wise are able, by their study, to grasp the inner natures (*rationes*) of those things.

As for the figurative reasons, the outer tabernacle, called the Holy Place, signifies the status of the Old Law, as the Apostle says in Hebrews 9:6-7. For the priests always entered the outer tabernacle in carrying out the duties associated with the sacrifices.

By contrast, the inner tabernacle, called the Holy of Holies, signifies either heavenly glory or the spiritual status of the New Law, which is a sort of beginning of future glory. Christ led us into this status, and a figure of this was the fact that the high priest entered into the Holy of Holies by himself.

Now the veil was a figure of the hiddenness of the spiritual sacrifices within the old sacrifices. And as for the fact that the veil was decorated with four colors, the flaxen signified the purification of the flesh (*carnis puritatem*), the purple signified the sufferings that the saints have endured for the sake of God, the twice-dyed scarlet signified the twofold love of God and neighbor, and the violet signified heavenly contemplation (*caelestis meditatio*).

Now the people and the priests were related in different ways to the status of the Old Law. For the people concentrated on the corporeal sacrifices that were offered in the court. The priests, on the other hand, took into account the reasons behind the sacrifices and had a more explicit faith concerning the mysteries of the Christ. And so they entered the outer tabernacle, which was divided off from the court by a veil, because certain things about the mystery of the Christ which were veiled from the people were made known to the priests. However, as Ephesians 3:5 says, these things were not revealed to them in full, as they would later be revealed in the New Testament.

Reply to objection 5: Adoration toward the West was introduced in the Law in order to prevent idolatry. For all the Gentiles worshiped toward the East out of reverence for the sun. Hence, Ezekiel 8:16 says, "Some had their backs toward the temple of the Lord, and their faces to the East, and they adored in the direction of the sun's rising." Hence, in order to prevent this, the tabernacle had the Holy of Holies situated to the West, so that they worshiped toward the West.

This can also serve as a figurative reason, since the whole status of the prior tabernacle was ordered toward being a figure of the death of Christ, which is signified by the West—this according to Psalm 67:5 ("He ascends unto the West, the Lord is His name.")

Reply to objection 6: Both literal and figurative reasons can be given for the things that were contained in the tabernacle.

The literal reasons, of course, have to do with their relation to the worship of God.

Since, as was explained above, the *inner tabernacle*, called the 'Holy of Holies', signified the higher world of spiritual substances, there were three things contained in that inner tabernacle. One was the ark of the covenant (*arca testamenti*), in which there was a golden vase containing manna, the rod of Aaron that had flowered, and the tablets on which the ten precepts of the Law had been written. This ark was situated between the two Cherubim, who were looking at each other. And above the ark there was a sort of table, called the 'propitiatory', which was located over the wings of the Cherubim and was being held up, as it were, by the Cherubim themselves—as if one were to imagine that this table was the seat of God. The reason the table was called the 'propitiatory' is that the people received propitiation when the

high priest prayed. And it was held up by the Cherubim, who were bowing down to God, whereas the ark of the covenant served as the footstool, as it were, of the One sitting on the propitiatory.

These three things signify three things that exist in that higher world.

First there is *God*, who exists above all things and is incomprehensible to every creature. And in order to represent His invisibility, no likeness of Him was placed there. Instead, a representation of His seat was placed there, because a creature's being subject to God is comprehensible, just like a seat's being subject to the one sitting on it. Again, there are *spiritual substances* called 'angels' in that higher world, and they are signified by the two Cherubim. They are looking at each other in order to signify their concord with one another—this according to Job 25:2 ("He makes concord in high places"). And the reason why there was not just one Cherub was to signify the multitude of heavenly spirits and to prevent their being worshiped by those who were commanded to worship the one God alone. Again, *conceptions (rationes)* of all the things that are brought to completion in our world are contained in some sense in that intelligible world—in the way that conceptions of effects are contained in their causes and that conceptions of his artifacts are contained in a craftsman. And this was signified by the ark, which, by the three things it contained, represented the three most powerful things in human affairs, viz., wisdom, which was represented by the tablets of the covenant; political power (*potestas regiminis*), which was represented by Aaron's rod; and life, which was represented by the manna that sustained life. An alternative explanation is that these three items represented three of God's attributes, viz., wisdom, in the tablets; power, in the rod; and goodness, in the manna, both because of its sweetness and because it was given to the people out of God's mercy and so was conserved in memory of God's mercy.

Figures of these three things are likewise found in Isaiah's vision (see Isaiah 6). For he saw the Lord exalted and elevated on His throne, and he saw the Seraphim attending Him, and the house was filled with the glory of God. And so the Seraphim proclaimed, "All the earth is full of the glory of God." And thus, as has been explained, the likenesses of the Seraphim were placed there not to be worshiped—something forbidden by the first precept of the Law—but instead, as has been explained, as a sign of their ministry.

On the other hand, the *outer tabernacle*, which signifies the present world, likewise contained three things, viz., the *altar of incense (altare thymiamatis)*, which was directly across from the ark; the *table of proposition (mensa propositionis)*, with the twelve loaves of bread on it, which was positioned toward the North; and the *candelabra*, which was positioned toward the South. These three items seem to correspond to the three things contained in the ark, but they represented them in a more evident way. For the conceptions of things have to be given a more evident manifestation than their existence in the minds of God and the angels in order for wise men to be able to grasp them, where the wise men are signified by the priests entering the tabernacle. The candelabra signified, as a visible sign, the wisdom that was expressed in intelligible words on the tablets. The altar of incense signified the role of the priests in leading the people back to God, and this was likewise signified by the rod. For the sweet-smelling incense, which signified the holiness of a people acceptable to God, was lit on that altar; as Apocalypse 8:3-4 puts it, the smoke of aromatic herbs signifies the "prayers of the saints" (*iustificaciones sanctorum*). The dignity of the priests was appropriately signified in the ark by the rod and in the inner tabernacle by the altar of incense, because the priest is a mediator between God and the people, ruling over the people by God's power, which is signified by the rod. And he offers, as it were, the fruit of his rule, viz., the holiness of the people, on the altar of incense. Now the table signifies the nourishment of life, just as the manna does—though the former is a more common and coarse sort of nourishment, while the latter is sweeter and more subtle. The candelabra was appropriately positioned toward the South and the table toward the North, since, as *De Caelo et Mundo 2* says, the South is the right-hand part of the world, whereas the North is the left-hand part. And wisdom pertains to the right, as do other spiritual goods, whereas temporal nourishment pertains to the left—this according to Proverbs 3:16 ("In her left hand are

riches and glory”). Moreover, the power of the priesthood occupies a middle place between temporal things and spiritual wisdom, since both spiritual wisdom and temporal goods are dispensed through this power.

Now these things can be assigned another and more literal reason.

The ark contained the tablets of the Law in order to prevent the Law from being forgotten; hence, Exodus 24 says, “I will give you two stone tablets, and the Law and commandments which I have written, that you might teach them to the children of Israel.” Aaron’s rod was placed there in order to suppress the dissension of the people against Aaron’s priesthood; hence, Numbers 17:10 says, “Carry back the rod of Aaron into the tabernacle of the testimony, that it may be kept there for a token of the rebellious children of Israel.” The manna was preserved in the ark as a reminder of the favors God had bestowed on the children of Israel in the desert; hence, Exodus 16:32 says, “Fill an omer with it, and let it be kept unto generations to come hereafter, that they may know the bread, wherewith I fed you in the wilderness.” The candelabra was set up to give honor to the tabernacle, since a house’s magnificence includes its being well lit. For the candelabra had seven arms to signify, as Josephus says, the seven planets by which the whole world is illumined, and the reason why the candelabra was positioned toward the South was that the course of the planets is from our South. The altar of incense was set up so that the tabernacle would continually have sweet-smelling smoke (*fumus boni odoris*)—both because of the veneration due the tabernacle and also as a remedy for the stench that necessarily arose from the outflow of blood and the killing of the animals. For things that smell bad are despised as vile, whereas things with a good odor are more highly valued by men. The table was set up to signify that the priests who served the temple were supposed to have their food in the temple; hence, as Matthew 12:4 says, only the priests were allowed to eat the twelve loaves of bread that were placed on the table as a memorial of the twelve tribes. Now the table was not placed exactly in the middle in front of the propitiatory. This was in order to prevent an idolatrous rite, since on the feasts of the moon the Gentiles put a table in front of the idol of the moon; hence, Jeremiah 7:18 says, “The women knead the dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven.”

In the *court outside the tabernacle* there was an altar of holocausts, on which sacrifices were offered to God from among the things possessed by the people. And so the people who offered sacrifices by the hand of the priests could be present in the court. But only the priests, whose role was to offer the people to God, could go up to the inner altar, on which the very devotion and holiness of the people was offered to God. The altar of holocausts was placed in the court outside the tabernacle in order to prevent idolatrous worship, since the Gentiles set up altars within their temples to offer sacrifices to their idols.

Now figurative reasons can be assigned for all these things on the basis of the tabernacle’s relation to Christ, of whom it is a figure. Note that in order to signify the imperfection of the figures in the Law, diverse figures were set up in the temple to signify Christ.

For He is signified by the propitiatory, since, as 1 John 2:2 puts it, He Himself is “a propitiation for our sins.” And it was appropriate for the propitiatory to be held up by the Cherubim, since it is written of Him that all the angels of God adore Him, as Hebrews 1:6 says. He is likewise signified by the ark, since just as the ark was made of setim wood, so Christ’s body consists of the purest members. The ark was overlaid with gold, since Christ was full of wisdom and charity, which are signified by gold. Inside the ark there was a golden urn, i.e., a holy soul, containing manna, i.e., all the plenitude of divinity. Inside the ark there was also the rod, i.e., priestly power, since He was made a priest forever. The tablets of the covenant were also there, in order to signify that Christ Himself is the lawgiver. Christ Himself is also signified by the candelabra, since He says, “I am the light of the world,” and the seven lights signify the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. He is spiritual food—this according to John 6:41 (“I am the living bread”), while the twelve loaves signify the twelve apostles, or their teaching. Alternatively, the candelabra and the table can signify the teaching and faith of the Church, which likewise gives light and spiritual

renewal. Christ is also signified by the two altars, the altar of holocausts and the altar of incense. For it is through Him that we must offer to God all the works of the virtues, or all the things by which we afflict our flesh and which are offered, as it were, on the altar of holocausts, along with those things which, with a greater perfection of mind and through the spiritual desires of the perfect, are offered to God in Christ as on the altar of incense—this according to Hebrews 13:15 (“By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise always to God”).

Reply to objection 7: The Lord commanded that the altar be constructed in order to offer gifts and sacrifices both in honor of God and for the sustenance of the ministers who served in the tabernacle. Now there are two commands given by the Lord concerning the construction of the altar.

The first occurs at the beginning of the Law in Exodus 20, where the Lord commanded that the altar be made of earth or at least of uncut stones and, again, that they not make the altar so high that it would be necessary to ascend it by means of steps. This was out of hatred for idolatrous worship, since the Gentiles constructed ornate and towering altars to their idols, and they believed there to be something holy and divine in their altars. It was for the same reason that the Lord commanded in Deuteronomy 16:21, “You shall plant no grove, nor any tree near the altar of the Lord your God.” For the idolaters used to offer sacrifices under trees because it was pleasant and shady there.

There was also a figurative reason for these precepts. For in Christ, who is our altar, we should confess the true nature of flesh with respect to His humanity, and this corresponds to making an altar of earth. And with respect to His divinity, we should confess His equality with the Father, and this corresponds to not ascending the altar by means of steps. Nor should we allow near to Christ the Gentile teaching which leads to licentiousness.

However, once the tabernacle had been fashioned in honor of God, then there was no reason to fear such occasions of idolatry. And so the Lord commanded that the altar of holocausts, which would be visible to all the people, should be made out of bronze, and that the altar of incense, which only the priests would see, should be made out of gold. Nor was bronze so precious that the people would be moved to idolatry because of it.

However, since Exodus 20:26 adds—as a reason for the precept ‘You shall not ascend my altar by steps’—“..... lest your nakedness be revealed,” one has to think that this precept was likewise instituted to prevent idolatry. For on the feasts of Priapus the Gentiles uncovered their genitals before the people. But later on the priests were ordered to use loincloths to cover their genitals, and so there was no danger in building an altar so high that at the hour of sacrifice the priests offering the sacrifices would ascend the altar by wooden steps—not permanent steps but portable ones.

Reply to objection 8: The main body of the tabernacle consisted of boards standing on end, which were covered on the inside by curtains of four different colors, viz., twisted flaxen, violet, purple, and twice-dyed scarlet. But these curtains covered only the sides of the tabernacle, whereas the roof of the tabernacle was one covering of violet-colored skins and, over that, another covering of red ram-skins, and, over that, a third covering of goat-skin blankets that not only covered the roof of the tabernacle but came down all the way to the ground and covered the outside of the boards of the tabernacle.

The general literal reason behind these coverings was to decorate and protect the tabernacle, in order that it might be treated with reverence. As for specific reasons, according to some the curtains signified the starry heaven, which is dotted with the different stars; and the blankets signified the waters that are above the firmament; and the red-colored skins signified the empyrean heaven, where the angels reside; and the violet-colored skins signified the heaven of the Holy Trinity.

On the other hand, the figurative reasons for these things are as follows: The boards out of which the tabernacle was built signify Christ’s faithful ones, out of whom the Church is built. The walls are covered on the inside with curtains of four different colors because the faithful are decorated interiorly with four virtues: for as a Gloss puts it, “The twisted flax signifies the flesh striving after chastity, the

violet signifies the mind desiring heavenly things, the purple signifies the flesh subject to the passions, and the twice-dyed scarlet signifies the mind shining forth from among the passions with the love of God and neighbor. As for the coverings on the roof, the violet-colored skins signify the prelates and doctors, in whom the celestial way of life should shine forth; the red-colored skins signify a readiness for martyrdom; and the goat-skin blankets—which, as a Gloss says, were exposed to the wind and the rain—signify austerity of life and perseverance against enemies.

Reply to objection 9: The sanctification of the tabernacle and its vessels had as its literal reason that they might be treated with great reverence, given that through this consecration they were being assigned to the worship of God.

On the other hand, the figurative reason is that this sanctification signifies the spiritual sanctification of the living tabernacle, viz., the tabernacle of the faithful from whom the Church of Christ is built.

Reply to objection 10: As can be seen from Numbers 28 and 29, in the Old Law there were seven periodic solemn feasts (*solemnitates temporales*) and one continuous solemn feast.

For there was, as it were, a continuous feast, since a lamb was sacrificed every day in the morning and in the evening, and this continuous feast of continual sacrifice represented the perpetuity of God's happiness.

Now the first of the periodic feasts was the one that was repeated every seventh day, and this was the solemn feast of the Sabbath, which, as explained above (q. 100, a. 5), was celebrated in memory of the creation of things.

The second solemn feast was repeated every month, viz., the feast of the New Moon (*festum Neomeniae*), which was celebrated to commemorate the work of divine governance. For things here below vary mainly according to the moon's motion, and so this feast was celebrated at the time of the new moon—and not at the time of the full moon, in order to prevent the idolatrous worship that offered sacrifices at the time of the full moon.

The other five feasts were celebrated once a year, and they recalled favors that had been specially given to that people. The feast of the Passover (*festum Phase*) was celebrated in the first month, in order to commemorate the favor of the liberation from Egypt, while the feast of Pentecost (*festum Pentecostes*) was celebrated fifty days later, in order to recall the favor of the giving of the Law. The other three feasts were celebrated in the seventh month, the whole of which was solemn among them in the same way that the seventh day was. On the first day of the seventh month was the feast of Trumpets (*festum Tubarum*), in memory of the liberation of Isaac, when Abraham found the ram caught by its horns, which were represented by the horns that they sounded. The feast of Trumpets was, as it were, an invitation to prepare oneself for the next feast, which was celebrated on the tenth day. This was the feast of Atonement (*festum Expiationis*), in memory of that favor by which, at the prayer of Moses, God forgave (*propitiatus est*) the sin of the people worshiping the calf. After this, the feast of Booths (*festum Scenopegiae*), i.e., the feast of Tabernacles, was celebrated for seven days to commemorate the favor of God's protecting them and leading them through the desert, where they lived in tents. Hence, on that feast they had to have the fruit of the most beautiful tree, i.e., the citron, and a tree of dense foliage, i.e., the myrtle, which is fragrant, and the branches of palm trees, and the willows of the brook, which keep their greenness for a long time. All of these are found in the promised land (*terra promissionis*), and signify that God had led them through the arid terrain of the desert into a delightful land. On the eighth day another feast was celebrated, viz., the feast of Assembly and Collection (*festum Coetus atque Collectae*), in which the necessary expenses for divine worship were collected from the people. This signified the union of the people and the peace bestowed on them in the promised land.

Now the figurative reasons for these feasts are as follows: The continual sacrifice of the lamb is a figure of the perpetuity of Christ, who is the Lamb of God—this according to Hebrews 13:8 (“Jesus

Christ yesterday and today, and the same for ever”). The Sabbath signifies the spiritual rest given to us through Christ, as Hebrews 4 says. The feast of the New Moon, which is the beginning of a new moon, signifies the illumination of the primitive Church by Christ through His preaching and miracles. The feast of Pentecost signifies the descent of the Holy Spirit on the apostles, whereas the feast of Trumpets signifies the preaching of the apostles. The feast of Atonement signifies the washing away of the sins of the Christian people, whereas the feast of Tabernacles signifies their journey in this world, in which they walk by advancing in virtue. The feast of Assembly and Collection signifies the congregation of the faithful in the kingdom of heaven, and that is why this feast was called “most holy.” And these last three feasts were continuous with one another because, as Psalm 83 says, it is necessary for those whose vices have been forgiven to make progress in virtue until they arrive at the vision of God.

Article 5

Can appropriate reasons be assigned for the sacraments of the Old Law?

It seems that appropriate reasons cannot be assigned for the sacraments of the Old Law:

Objection 1: What is done in divine worship should not be similar to the observances of the idolaters; for Deuteronomy 12:31 says, “You shall not do in like manner to the Lord your God. For they have done to their gods all the abominations which the Lord abhors.” But in their worship, the worshipers of idols used to cut themselves to the point of drawing blood; for 3 Kings 18:28 says, “They cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, until they were all covered with blood.” For this reason the Lord commanded in Deuteronomy 14:1, “You shall not cut yourselves, nor shave your heads over the dead.” Therefore, it was inappropriate for circumcision to have been instituted in the Law.

Objection 2: What is done in divine worship should be upright and serious—this according to Psalm 34:18 (“I will praise You in a serious people”). But it seems to smack of a certain levity that men should eat in haste. Therefore, it was inappropriate for Exodus 12 to command that they should eat the paschal lamb in haste. In addition, other rules that were instituted concerning the eating of the lamb seem to have no reason at all behind them.

Objection 3: The sacraments of the Old Law were figures of the sacraments of the New Law. But the paschal lamb signifies the sacrament of the Eucharist—this according to 1 Corinthians 5:7 (“Christ our Pasch is sacrificed”). Therefore, there should also have been sacraments in the Law that prefigured the other sacraments of the New Law such as Confirmation, Extreme Unction, Matrimony, and the others.

Objection 4: One can be purified only of impurities. But in God’s eyes, nothing corporeal is considered unclean; for every corporeal entity is a creature of God and, as 1 Timothy 4:4 says, “Every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be rejected that is received with thanksgiving.” Therefore, it was inappropriate for them to have to be purified because of contact with a human corpse or with a similar kind of bodily infection.

Objection 5: Ecclesiasticus 34:4 asks, “What can be made clean by the unclean?” But the ashes of a burnt red heifer (see Hebrews 9:13) were unclean; for Numbers 19:7ff. says that the priest who killed the red heifer was rendered impure until evening, and likewise the one who burned it and the one who collected its ashes. Therefore, it was inappropriate for there to have been a precept in the Law according to which the unclean were purified by the sprinkling of these ashes.

Objection 6: Sins are not anything corporeal that can be moved from one place to another; nor can

a man be cleansed of his sins by anything unclean. Therefore, it was inappropriate that, in order to expiate the sins of the people, the priest would confess the sins of the children of Israel over a goat which would then carry them into the desert, whereas through another goat, which the priests used for purification and which they burned along with a calf outside the camp, they were rendered unclean, so that they had to wash their clothes and their bodies with water.

Objection 7: That which has already been made clean does not need to be made clean again. Therefore, it was inappropriate that after a man's leprosy, or even his house, had been made clean, another purification should be made, as Leviticus 16 has it.

Objection 8: Spiritual uncleanness cannot be washed away by corporeal water or by shaving. Therefore, it seems that there is no reason for the Lord to have commanded in Exodus 30:18-20 that a brass washbasin with its own base be fashioned for the washing of the hands and feet of the priests who were about to enter the tabernacle, or for Him to have commanded in Numbers 8:7 that the Levites be sprinkled with the water of purification and shave all the hair off their bodies.

Objection 9: What is greater should not be sanctified by what is lesser. Therefore, it was inappropriate for the consecration of the higher and lower priests (Leviticus 8) and of the Levites (Numbers 8) to be done with bodily ointment and corporeal sacrifices and corporeal oblations.

Objection 10: 1 Kings 16:7 says, "Men see those things that appear, but the Lord beholds the heart." But the things that appear outwardly in a man are his bodily disposition and his clothes. Therefore, it was inappropriate for special vestments to be assigned to the higher and lower priests (Exodus 28). And there seems to be no reason why anyone should be excluded from the priesthood because of bodily defects, in the way stated in Leviticus 21:17-18: "Whoever of your seed throughout their families has a blemish, he shall not offer bread to his God; neither shall he approach to minister to Him if he is blind or lame."

Therefore, it seems that there were no reasons behind the sacraments of the Old Law.

But contrary to this: Leviticus 20:8 says, "I am the Lord your God, who sanctifies you." But nothing comes from God without a reason; for Psalm 103:24 says, "You have made all things with wisdom." Therefore, in the sacraments of the Old Law, which were ordered toward the sanctification of men, there was nothing that did not have a reasoned cause behind it.

I respond: What are properly called sacraments are things that were done to the worshipers of God by way of a consecration through which they were in some sense set off (*deputabantur*) for the worship of God. Now the worship of God pertained in a general way to the whole people and in a specific way to the priests and Levites, who were the ministers of divine worship. And so among the sacraments of the Old Law, some pertained in general to all the people, whereas others pertained specifically to the ministers.

With respect to both groups, there were three requirements:

The first is being initiated (*institutio*) into the state of worshiping God. This general initiation with respect to everyone was accomplished through *circumcision*, without which no one was admitted to anything having to do with the Law. With respect to the priests, on the other hand, the initiation was accomplished through the *consecration of the priests*.

The second requirement was the exercise (*usus*) of what pertained to divine worship. With respect to the people, this consisted in the eating of the Paschal meal, which, as is clear from Exodus 12:43-45, no one uncircumcised was admitted to. With respect to the priests, it consisted in the offering of sacrifices (*oblatio victimarum*) and in the eating of the loaves of proposition and other items set aside for the use of the priests.

The third requirement was the removal of whatever might impede someone from divine worship, viz., impurities. And so with respect to the people, certain purifications from exterior impurities were

instituted, along with rites for the atonement for sins; and with respect to the priests, the washing of the hands and feet was instituted, along with the shaving of the hair.

For all these sacraments there were both (a) literal reasons, insofar as the sacraments were ordered toward the worship of God for that time period, and (b) figurative reasons, insofar as they were ordered toward being figures of Christ. This will become clear as we go through them one by one.

Reply to objection 1: The main literal reason behind circumcision was to give witness to faith in the one God. For since Abraham was the first to separate himself from the non-believers (*infideles*), leaving his home and his relatives, he was the first to receive circumcision. The reason for this is set forth by the Apostle in Romans 4:9-11: “He received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the justice of the faith that he had while still uncircumcised.” More specifically, we read, “Abraham’s faith was reputed to justice” because “he believed in hope against hope”—i.e., he believed in the hope of grace against the hope of nature—“that he would become the father of many nations,” even though he was old and his wife was an old woman and barren. And in order that this witness, along with the imitation of Abraham’s faith, should be strengthened in the hearts of the Jews, they received a sign in their flesh which they could not forget about. Hence, Genesis 17:13 says, “My covenant (*pactum*) shall be in your flesh for a perpetual covenant (*foedus*).”

Now the reason why it was done on the eighth day was that before then a boy is very delicate and could suffer gravely from it and is not yet considered strong enough (*solidatum*). Hence, even animals were not offered before their eighth day. On the other hand, the reason why it was not delayed longer was that some boys might refuse the sign of circumcision because of the pain, and also that some parents, given that their love for their sons would increase after constant contact with them and after the boys had grown, would prevent them from being circumcised.

A second possible reason was to reduce concupiscence in the bodily member in question.

A third reason was to give affront to the sacred rites of Venus and Priapus, in which that bodily part was honored.

Moreover, the Lord prohibited only the sort of slashing that took place in the worship of idols, and circumcision was not similar to that.

On the other hand, the figurative reason for circumcision was that it was a figure of the removal of corruption which was to be brought about by Christ and which will be perfectly completed on the eighth day, i.e., the time of resurrection. And it was because all the corruption of sin and punishment came to us through our carnal origin from the sin of our first parent that this circumcision was done to the body’s generative member. Hence, the Apostle says in Colossians 2:11, “You are circumcised with a circumcision not made by hand, in despoiling of the body of the flesh, but in the circumcision of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Reply to objection 2: The literal reason for the Paschal meal was to commemorate the favor by which God led them out of Egypt. Hence, through the celebration of this meal they professed that they belonged to that people whom God had taken to Himself out of Egypt. For when they were liberated from Egypt, they were commanded to sprinkle the lamb’s blood on the threshold of their houses, as if proclaiming that they rejected the rites of the Egyptians, who worshiped the ram. Hence, by sprinkling or rubbing the lamb’s blood on their door-posts, they were freed from the danger of being exterminated that threatened the Egyptians.

Now in their flight from Egypt there were two elements of note, viz., (a) their haste in going, since the Egyptians implored them to leave quickly, according to Exodus 12:33, and (b) the fact that those who did not hurry to leave with the crowd were threatened with the danger of being killed by the Egyptians if they remained behind.

Their haste was signified in two ways:

First, it was signified by *what* they ate. For they were commanded to eat unleavened bread, as a

sign of the fact that the bread “could not rise with the Egyptians pressing them to leave” (Exodus 12:39). And they were commanded to eat meat that had been roasted over a fire, since that was a quicker way to prepare it, and they were commanded not to separate the bone from the meat, since someone in a hurry does not have time to break the bones off.

Second, it was signified by *how* they ate. For Exodus 12:11 says, “You shall gird your loins, and you shall have shoes on your feet, holding your staffs in your hands; and you shall eat quickly.” This obviously signifies men who are ready to go on a journey. The same point is involved in this command that is given to them: “In one house shall you eat, and you shall not carry any of its meat outside” (Exodus 12:46). That is, because of their haste they do not have time to send out portions to one another. Again, the hardship that they had suffered in Egypt was signified by the bitter herbs (*lactuae agrestes*).

Now the figurative reasons behind the Paschal meal are clear. The sacrifice of the paschal lamb signified the sacrifice of Christ—this according to 1 Corinthians 5:7 (“Christ our paschal lamb has been sacrificed.”) The lamb’s blood, which freed them from the destroyer (*exterminator*) when it was sprinkled on the door-posts of their houses, signifies the faith in Christ’s passion which is found in the hearts and minds of the faithful and through which they are freed from sin and death—this according to 1 Peter 1:18 (“You were redeemed by the precious blood of the unspotted lamb”). They ate the meat to signify the eating of the body of Christ in the sacrament. The meat was roasted over a fire to signify the passion, or perhaps Christ’s charity. They ate it with unleavened bread to signify the pure way of life that belongs to the faithful who receive the body of Christ—this according to 1 Corinthians 5:8 (“Let us feast with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth”). The bitter herbs were added as a sign of the repentance of sinners that is required of those who receive the body of Christ. Their loins had to be girded by the cincture of chastity, whereas the shoes on their feet signify the example given by our dead ancestors (*patres*). The staffs held in their hands signify pastoral care. Moreover, they are commanded to eat the paschal lamb in one house, i.e., in the Catholic Church, and not in gatherings of heretics.

Reply to objection 3: Some of the sacraments of the New Law had corresponding sacraments in the Old Law that were figures of them.

For example, Baptism, which is the sacrament of faith, corresponds to circumcision; hence, Colossians 2:11-12 says, “You have been circumcised in the circumcision of our Lord Jesus Christ and buried with Him in Baptism.” The Eucharist in the New Law corresponds to the meal of the paschal lamb, while the sacrament of Penance corresponds to all the purifications under the Old Law. Again, the sacrament of Orders corresponds to the consecration of the high-priests and priests.

On the other hand, the sacrament of Confirmation, which is a sacrament of the fullness of grace, cannot have any corresponding sacrament in the Old Law; for the time of fullness had not yet arrived, because “the Law brought no one to perfection” (Hebrews 7:19). The same holds for Extreme Unction, which is an immediate preparation for one’s entrance into glory, whereas the way to glory was not yet open under the Old Law, because the price for it had not yet been paid.

Matrimony did, to be sure, exist in the Old Law as a natural institution (*officium naturae*), but not as the sacrament of the union of Christ and the Church, since the Church had not yet come into existence. Hence, a decree of divorce (*libellus repudii*) was granted under the Old Law—which is contrary to the nature of the sacrament.

Reply to objection 4: As has been explained, the purifications under the Old Law were ordered toward removing impediments to divine worship. There are two kinds of worship, viz., *spiritual worship*, which consists in devoting one’s mind to God, and *corporeal worship*, which consists in sacrifices, offerings, and other things of this sort.

Men are impeded in spiritual worship through the sins by which men were said to be polluted, e.g., idolatry, homicide, adultery, and incest. Men were purified of this sort of pollution by certain sacrifices or offerings made either communally on behalf of the whole multitude or for the sins of individuals.

These carnal sacrifices did not in their own right have the power to expiate sins; rather, they signified the future expiation of sins through Christ. For the ancients, too, participated in Christ by professing their faith in a redeemer through the figures of their sacrifices.

On the other hand, men were impeded in their exterior worship through certain corporeal impurities that were thought of as first existing in the men and then also in other animals and in their clothes and houses and vessels. In men the uncleanness was thought of as stemming in part from the men themselves and in part from their contact with unclean things. As for men themselves, what was considered unclean was anything that already had some sort of corruption or had been exposed to corruption. And so since death is a kind of corruption, a man's corpse was considered unclean. Similarly, since leprosy occurs because of a corruption of bodily fluids (*humores*) that erupt externally and infect others, lepers were also considered unclean. The same held for women who were having a flow of blood—either through illness or else through nature, whether during their menstrual periods or at the time of conception. For the same reason, men were considered unclean when having an emission of seminal fluid—whether through sickness or nocturnal emission or sexual intercourse. For every bodily fluid flowing from a man or a woman in one of these ways has a certain unclean taint. Again, one was also unclean from having contact with anything unclean.

There were both literal and figurative reasons for these types of uncleanness.

The literal reason was to promote reverence for what had to do with divine worship, because when men are unclean, they do not normally touch precious objects, and also because sacred things are more venerated when access to them is rare. For since one could only rarely avoid all impurities of the sort in question, it happened that men could only rarely approach to touch those things that had to do with divine worship; and so when they did approach, they did so with more reverence and humility of mind.

In some of these cases the literal reason was so that men would not stay away from divine worship in order to avoid contact with lepers or other sick people whose diseases were loathsome and contagious. Again, in some cases the reason was to prevent idolatry, since in their rites the Gentiles sometimes used human blood and seminal fluid.

Now all types of corporeal uncleanness were purified either through the mere sprinkling of water or, in the case of more serious impurities, through some sacrifice to expiate the sin from which the indispositions (*infirmities*) arose.

On the other hand, the figurative reason for these impurities was that the forms of exterior uncleanness were figures of different types of sin. For instance, the uncleanness of a corpse signifies the uncleanness of sin, which is the death of the soul. The uncleanness of leprosy signifies the uncleanness of heretical doctrine, because heretical doctrine is contagious, just as leprosy is, and also because there is no false doctrine that does not mix truths with falsehoods, just as on the surface of a leprous body there is a distinction between unclean parts of the flesh and healthy parts. The uncleanness of a woman with a flow of blood signifies the uncleanness of idolatry, because of the stream of blood from immolated victims [in idolatrous rites]. The uncleanness of a man's loss of seminal fluid signifies the uncleanness of fruitless speech (*vana locutio*), since "the seed (*semen*) is the word of God" (Luke 8:11). The uncleanness of sexual intercourse and of a woman giving birth signifies the uncleanness of original sin. The uncleanness of a menstruating woman signifies the uncleanness of a mind weakened by sensual pleasure.

In general, uncleanness contracted by touching an unclean thing signifies the uncleanness of consenting to the sin of another—this according to 2 Corinthians 6:17 ("Exit from among them and be separate, and do not touch what is unclean"). This type of uncleanness by touching also extended to non-living things, since whatever someone who was unclean touched in any way was itself unclean. In this respect, the Law attenuated the superstition of the Gentiles, who claimed that uncleanness is contracted not only by touching someone unclean, but also by speaking with him or looking at him—as

Rabbi Moses reports about a menstruating woman. This signified in a mystical way what Wisdom 14:9 says, “To God, the wicked and his wickedness are alike hateful.”

Now there was also a certain kind of uncleanness that non-living things had in their own right, in the way that the uncleanness of leprosy existed in a house or in clothes. For just as the disease of leprosy occurs in men because of corrupted fluids that putrefy and corrupt the flesh, so too because of corruption and because of excessive moistness or dryness, corrosion sometimes occurs in the stones of a house or even in clothing. And so the Law called this sort of corruption ‘leprosy’, and on the basis of it a house or piece of clothing would be judged unclean—because, as has been explained, every sort of corruption is relevant to uncleanness, and also because the Gentiles worshiped household gods in order to combat this sort of corruption. And so the Law commanded that houses in which persistent corruption of this sort existed should be destroyed and that clothes of this sort should be burned, in order to remove an occasion for idolatry.

There were also certain kinds of uncleanness with respect to vessels, spoken of in Numbers 19:15: “The vessel that has no cover or binding over it shall be unclean.” The reason for this uncleanness is that something unclean could easily fall into such vessels and they could in that way be made unclean. This precept, too, was meant to discourage idolatry. For the idolaters believed that if mice or lizards or something of this sort that they sacrificed to their idols suddenly fell into a vessel or into water, they would become more pleasing to their gods. Even now some girls leave vessels uncovered in honor of the nocturnal spirits called the *Janae*.

The figurative reasons for these impurities are as follows: A leprous house signifies the assembly of heretics. A leprous piece of linen clothing signifies the perversity of the habits arising from a bitterness of mind, whereas a leprous piece of wool clothing signifies the perversity of flatterers. A leprous warp signifies vices of the soul, whereas a leprous woof signifies carnal sins; for the soul is in the body as the warp is in the woof. The vase that has no cover or binding signifies a man who has no covering of taciturnity and who is not constrained by any strictness of discipline.

Reply to objection 5: As was explained above, there were two kinds of uncleanness under the Law. The one kind involved a corruption of mind or body, and this was the more serious kind of uncleanness. The other kind merely involved touching something unclean, and this was less serious and expiated by a more simple rite. The first kind of uncleanness was expiated by a sacrifice for sins, since every type of corruption proceeds from sin and signifies sin, whereas the second kind of uncleanness was expiated simply by the sprinkling of a certain sort of water. Numbers 19 talks of this water of expiation. For in that place the Lord commands them to take a red heifer in memory of the sin they committed when they adored the calf. And it says a heifer rather than a calf because that is what the Lord used to call the assembly (*synagoga*)—this according to Hosea 4:16 (“Israel has gone astray like a wanton heifer”). Perhaps this was because they worshiped heifers in the manner of the Egyptians—this according to Hosea 10:5 (“They worshiped the heifers of Beth-aven”). Out of detestation for the sin of idolatry, the heifer was sacrificed outside the camp, and whenever a sacrifice was made for the expiation of the sins of the multitude, it was burned as a whole outside the camp. And in order to signify that through this sacrifice the people were cleansed from the totality of their sins, the priest dipped his finger into the heifer’s blood and sprinkled it “over against the entrance of the tabernacle seven times” (Numbers 19:4) because the number *seven* signifies a totality. The sprinkling itself also had to do with the renunciation of idolatrous rites in which the blood was not poured out but instead collected, and the men gathered around it to have a meal in honor of the idols. Then the blood was burned in the fire. This was either because God had appeared to Moses in a fire and the Law had been given in the midst of fire, or because the burning of the blood signified that idolatry had to be completely rooted out, along with everything having to do with idolatry, just as the heifer was cremated “with her skin and her flesh, her blood and dung being delivered to the flames” (Numbers 19:5).

Also, “cedar wood, hyssop, and twice-dyed scarlet” (Numbers 19:6) were added to the fire to signify that just as cedar wood does not easily putrefy, and twice-dyed scarlet does not lose its color, and hyssop retains its smell even after it has been dried out, so too this sacrifice was for the preservation of the people itself and of its uprightness and devotion. Hence, the ashes of the heifer are said to be “reserved for the multitude of the children of Israel” (Numbers 19:9). Alternatively, according to Josephus, they signified the four elements: the cedar was added to the fire in order to signify earth, because of its earthiness; hyssop signified air, because of its smell; and scarlet signified water for the reason that purple did, because of the tints that are derived from the water—and this was meant to express that the sacrifice was being offered to the creator of the four elements.

And because this sort of sacrifice was offered for the sin of idolatry, and in detestation of idolatry, the one who did the burning and the one who collected the ashes and the one who sprinkled the water with which the ashes had been mixed were all considered unclean, in order to show that anything that had to do in any way with idolatry was to be rejected as unclean. Now the three of them were purified of this uncleanness merely by the washing of their clothes, and they did not need to be sprinkled with water because of this sort of uncleanness, since this would have involved an infinite regress. For the one who sprinkled the water became unclean, and so if he sprinkled himself, he would remain unclean; but if someone else sprinkled him, then that one would remain unclean, and, again, the one who sprinkled that one would remain unclean, and so on *ad infinitum*.

Now the figurative reason for this sacrifice is that the red heifer signifies Christ with respect to the weakness He has taken on (*secundum infirmitatem assumptam*), which the feminine gender designates. The color of the heifer signifies the blood of His passion. The red heifer was of full age, because every operation of Christ’s is perfect. There was no blemish in the heifer and it did not carry a yoke, because Christ did not carry the yoke of sin. It is commanded that the heifer be led to Moses, because they imputed to it the transgression of the Mosaic Law in the violation of the Sabbath. It was commanded that it be handed over to Eleazar the priest, because Christ was handed over to the hands of the priests to be killed. It was sacrificed outside the camp, because Christ suffered outside the gates. The priest dipped his finger into the heifer’s blood because the mystery of Christ’s passion is to be meditated on and imitated with prudence, which the finger signifies. The blood was sprinkled against the tabernacle, through which the assembly is signified, either in order to condemn non-believing Jews or to purify the believing Jews. And it was sprinkled seven times either because of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit or because of the seven days, in which the whole of time is understood.

Then there are all the things to be burned by the fire, i.e., to be understood spiritually, that have to do with Christ’s Incarnation. The skin and flesh signify Christ’s exterior action. The blood signifies the subtle interior virtue that gives life to His exterior actions. The dung signifies His weariness, His thirst, and every thing else related to His weakness. Of the three added things, the cedar wood signifies the height of hope or of contemplation, the hyssop signifies humility or faith, and the twice-dyed scarlet signifies the twofold charity—for it is through these things that we should adhere to the suffering Christ. The ashes of the fire are collected by “a man that is clean,” because the relics of Christ’s passion found their way to Gentiles who were not culpable in the death of Christ. The ashes were placed in water for the expiation because by virtue of Christ’s passion Baptism has the power to wash away sins. The priest who performed the sacrifice and burned the heifer, along with the priest who burned it and collected the ashes and the priest who sprinkled the water, were all unclean, either because (a) the Jews became unclean from the killing of Christ, through whom our sins are forgiven, and this right up to evening, i.e., until the end of the world, when the remnant of Israel will be converted, or because (b), as Gregory explains in *Pastoralis*, those who deal with holy things in order to cleanse others contract certain impurities themselves, and this right up to evening, i.e., to the end of this life.

Reply to objection 6: As has been explained, the sort of uncleanness that stemmed from the

corruption of mind or body was expiated through sacrifices made for sin. Now special sacrifices were made for the sins of individuals, but because some were negligent with regard to the expiation of such sins and impurities, or even failed to offer expiation out of ignorance, it was decreed that once a year, on the tenth day of the seventh month, a sacrifice of expiation should be offered for the whole people.

Since, as the Apostle points out in Hebrews 7:28, “the law makes men who have infirmity priests,” it was necessary that the priest first offer a calf on his own behalf for his own sins, in memory of the sin Aaron committed in the production of the golden calf, along with a ram in a holocaust in order to signify that the priest’s preeminence (*praelatio*), which the ram signifies as the leader of the flock, was ordered toward honoring God.

Then he offered two goats for the people.

One of the goats was sacrificed for the sins of the multitude. For the goat is a foul-smelling animal, and the clothes made from its skin have a pungent smell, and this signified the stench and impurity and pangs of sin. Now the blood of this sacrificial goat, along with the blood of the calf, was carried into the Holy of Holies and sprinkled over the whole sanctuary in order to signify that the tabernacle was being washed clean of the impurities of the children of Israel. But the corpses of the goat and the calf which had been sacrificed for sin had to be burned in order to signify the destruction (*consumptio*) of sin. However, this burning did not take place on the altar, since only the holocausts were totally consumed by fire on the altar. This is why it was commanded that the corpses of the goat and the calf be burned outside the camp in detestation of sin. This is what was done whenever a sacrifice was offered for some particular grave sin or for a multitude of sins.

However, the other goat was sent off into the desert, not to be offered to the demons whom the Gentiles used to worship in desert places, since [the children of Israel] were not allowed to make sacrifices to the demons, but rather to signify the effect of the immolated sacrifice. And so the priest imposed his hand on the goat’s head while confessing the sins of the children of Israel, as if the goat were carrying those sins off into the desert where he would be eaten by beasts—bearing, as it were, the punishment for the sins of the people. The goat was said to be carrying the sins of the people either because its being sent out signified the forgiveness of the sins of the people or because a piece of paper on which the sins had been written was tied to its head.

The figurative reason for these things were as follows: The calf signifies Christ because of His power (*propter virtutem*), the ram signifies Him because He is the leader of the faithful, and the goat signifies Him because of “the likeness of sinful flesh” (Romans 8:3). And Christ Himself was sacrificed for the sins of both the priests and the people, since through His passion both the great and the small (*maiores et minores*) were washed of their sins. Now the blood of the calf and the goat was carried into the sanctuary by the high priest because through the blood of Christ’s passion the entrance into the kingdom of heaven is opened up to us. Their corpses were burned outside the camp, because “Christ suffered outside the gates,” as the Apostle puts it in Hebrews 13:12. On the other hand, the goat that was sent out can signify either (a) Christ’s divine nature itself (*ipsa divinitas*), which goes off into solitude when Christ the man undergoes His suffering—not changing its place, but having its power restrained—or (b) evil desire, which we should cast off from ourselves while offering our virtuous actions (*virtuosos motus*) to the Lord.

As for the uncleanness of those who burned these sacrifices, the figurative reason is the same one given above in the case of the sacrifice of the red heifer.

Reply to objection 7: The rite of the Law did not cleanse a leper from the stain of leprosy, but rather declared him to be cleansed. This is shown in Leviticus 14:3-4, where it says of the priest, “When he finds that the leprosy has been cleansed, he shall command him to be purified.” Therefore, the leprosy had already been cleansed, whereas he was said to be purified insofar as he was restored by the priest’s decree to the fellowship of men and to divine worship. (However, it sometimes happened that when the

priest was mistaken in this judgment, the bodily leprosy was cleansed by a divine miracle through the rite of the Law.)

Now there were two purifications for the leper. First, he was judged to be clean, and, second, as clean, he was restored after seven days to the fellowship of men and to divine worship.

In the first purification, the leper who was to be cleansed offered on his own behalf “two living sparrows cedar wood, and scarlet, and hyssop” (Leviticus 14:4), in such a way that the one sparrow and the hyssop were tied to the cedar wood with a scarlet thread, so that the cedar wood was like the handle of a sprinkler, while the hyssop and sparrow were the part of the sprinkler that was dipped into the blood of the other sparrow, which had been “immolated over living waters” (Leviticus 14:5). He offered these four things to counter the four defects of leprosy. The cedar wood, which is a tree not subject to putrefaction, was offered to counter the putrefaction; the hyssop, which is a fragrant plant, was offered to counter the stench; the live sparrow was offered to counter the numbness; and the scarlet, which has a vivid color, was offered to counter the lurid color of leprosy. The live sparrow was sent off flying into the plain because the leper was being restored to his original freedom.

On the eighth day the leper was admitted to the divine worship and restored to the fellowship of men—though he first shaved the hair off his whole body and washed his clothes, since leprosy rots one’s hair and infects one’s clothes and makes them smell bad. Afterwards, a sacrifice was offered for his sins, since leprosy was often inflicted because of sin. Some blood from the sacrifice was put on the tip of the ear of the one who was being cleansed “and on the thumb of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot” (Leviticus 14:14), because it is in these parts of the body that leprosy is first diagnosed and felt. Three liquids were used in this rite, viz., blood, to counter the corruption of the blood; oil, to signify the healing of the disease; and living water, to wash away the filth.

The figurative reasons were as follows: The two sparrows signify Christ’s divinity and humanity. One of them, viz., the humanity, is immolated in an earthen vessel over living waters, because the waters of Baptism are consecrated by the passion of Christ. The other sparrow, viz., the impassible divinity, remained alive, because the divinity cannot die; and it flew away, because it could not be bound by the passion. Now as noted above, this living sparrow—along with the cedar wood and scarlet (or cochineal) and hyssop, i.e., faith, hope, and charity—was dipped into the water for sprinkling, since we are baptized in faith in the God-man (*in fide Dei et hominis*). Through the water of Baptism, or the water of tears, the man washes his clothes, i.e., his deeds, and all his strands of hair, i.e., his thoughts. The tip of the right ear of the one who is being cleansed is tinged with the blood and the oil in order to guard his hearing against corrupting words, whereas his right thumb and big toe are tinged in order that his action might be holy.

There is nothing special to be said about any of the other things involved in this purification, or in the purification of other kinds of uncleanness, over and beyond what has been said about the other sacrifices for sins or for crimes.

Reply to objections 8 and 9: Just as the people were initiated (*instituebatur*) for divine worship through circumcision, so the ministers were initiated for divine worship through a special purification or consecration. In this way they were perceived as being separated off from the others in the sense of being set aside specially, in preference to the others, for the ministry of divine worship. Everything that was done to them in their consecration or initiation had to do with showing that they had a certain prerogative of cleanness and power and dignity. And so three things were done in the initiation of the ministers: first, they were purified; second, they were vested (*ornabantur*) and consecrated; and third, they were assigned (*applicabantur*) to the exercise of the ministry.

As Leviticus 8 [and Numbers 8] have it, all of them were purified in general through a washing with water and through certain sacrifices, while the Levites (*Levitae*) in particular shaved all the hair off their bodies.

The consecration of the high priests (*pontifices*) and priests (*sacerdotes*) was done in the following order: First, after they had been washed, they were clothed with certain special vestments to signify their dignity. The high priest in particular was anointed on the head with the oil of unction in order to signify that the power of consecrating flowed from him to the others, just as the oil flowed from his head to the lower parts of his body—this according to Psalm 132:2 (“Like the precious ointment on the head that ran down upon the beard, the beard of Aaron”).

The Levites, on the other hand, did not have a consecration other than being offered to the Lord by the children of Israel through the hands of the high priest, who prayed for them.

As for the lower priests (*sacerdotes minores*), only their hands, which were to be used for the sacrifices, were consecrated. In addition, the tip of their right ear, the big toe of their right foot, and the thumb of their right hand were tinged with the blood of an immolated animal. This was done in order that (a) they would be obedient to the Law of God in the offering of sacrifices (this was signified by the intinction of the right ear), and in order that (b) they would be solicitous and prompt in carrying out the sacrifices (this was signified by the intinction of the big toe of the right foot and the thumb of the right hand). They, along with their vestments, were sprinkled with the blood of an immolated animal, in memory of the blood of the lamb through which they had been liberated from Egypt. Moreover, in their consecration the following sacrifices were offered: (a) a calf for sin, in memory of the remission of the sin of Aaron in the fashioning of the [golden] calf; (b) a ram for a holocaust, in memory of the offering of Abraham, whose obedience the high priest was expected to imitate; (c) a ram of consecration, which was, as it were, a peace-offering in memory of the liberation from Egypt through the blood of the lamb; and (d) a basket of loaves of bread, in memory of the manna bestowed upon the people.

As for the assignment to the ministry, the fat of the ram and its right shoulder and a piece of bread twisted off from one of the loaves were placed in their hands, in order to show that they accepted the power of making offerings to the Lord. The Levites, on the other hand, were assigned to their ministry by being sent into the tabernacle of the covenant in order to take care of the vessels of the sanctuary.

The figurative meaning of these things was as follows: Those who are to be consecrated to the spiritual ministry of Christ must first be purified by the water of Baptism and the water of tears of faith in Christ’s passion, which is an expiatory and cleansing sacrifice. And they should shave all the hairs off their bodies, i.e., they should shave off all evil thoughts. They should also be vested with the virtues and consecrated by the oil of the Holy Spirit and by being sprinkled with the blood of Christ. And they should in this way be ordered toward exercising their spiritual ministries.

Reply to objection 10: As has been explained, the intention of the Law was to induce reverence for divine worship, and this in two ways: first, by excluding from divine worship anything that could have been contemptible; second, by affixing to divine worship everything that seemed relevant to giving honor. And if this norm was observed in the case of the tabernacle and the vessels and the animals to be sacrificed, it had to be observed all the more in the case of the ministers themselves.

And so to remove any contempt for the ministers, it was commanded that they not have any bodily blemish or defect, since men of this sort are apt to be held in contempt by others. Because of this, it was also prescribed that those to be assigned to the ministry of God would come not in a haphazard way from just any family (*genus*), but would instead come by a succession of generation from a particular stock, so that in this way they might be thought of as more distinctive and more noble.

To ensure that they would be held in reverence, special ornate vestments and a special consecration were likewise provided for them—this is the general reason for their ornate vestments. As for specific reasons, note that the high priest had eight ornate vestments:

First, he had a linen tunic (*vestis lineae*).

Second, he had a violet tunic (*tunica hyacinthia*), at whose bottom edges there was a circle of little bells and “pomegranates of violet, and purple, and scarlet twice dyed” (Exodus 39:23).

Third, he had a humeral veil (*superhumorale*) that covered his shoulders and the front part of his body down to waist. The humeral veil was composed of gold, violet, purple, twice-dyed scarlet, and twisted linen, and on the shoulders it had two onyx-stones on which were inscribed the names of the sons of Israel.

Fourth, he had a breastpiece (*rationale*) made of the same material. It was square and positioned on the breast, and it was fastened to the humeral veil. On this breastpiece there were twelve precious stones separated into four rows, and the names of the sons of Israel were likewise inscribed on these stones. This was to signify that (a) the high priest was to bear the burden of the whole people, given that he was carrying their names on his shoulders, and that (b) he should constantly be thinking about their well-being, given that he was carrying them on his breast—having them, as it were, in his heart. The Lord also commanded that doctrine and truth (*doctrinam et veritatem*) be put on the breastpiece. For certain points concerning the truth of justice and the truth of doctrine were written on the breastpiece. (The Jews, however, imagine that there was a stone on the breastpiece that changed colors according to the different things that were going to happen to the sons of Israel, and they call this stone ‘Truth and Doctrine’.)

Fifth, there was the belt (*balteus*), i.e., girdle (*cingulus*), of the four colors mentioned above.

Sixth, there was the tiara (*tiara*), i.e., miter (*mitra*), made of linen.

Seventh, hanging on his forehead there was a thin piece of gold metal (*lamina aurea*) that had the name of the Lord on it.

Eighth, there were “the linen loincloths (*femoralia linea*) to cover the flesh of their nakedness” (Exodus 28:42) when they climbed up to the sanctuary or climbed up to the altar.

Of these eight ornate vestments, the lower priests had four, viz., the linen tunic, the loincloth, the belt, and the tiara.

Some give literal reasons for these ornate vestments, claiming that the arrangement of the world is signified in them, as if the high priest were declaring that he is the minister of the creator of the world. Hence Wisdom 18:24 says, “The world was described on the vestments of Aaron.” For the loincloth was a figure of the earth, in which linen grows. The circularity of the belt signified the ocean that surrounds the earth. The color of the purple tunic signified the atmosphere, its little bells signified claps of thunder, and the pomegranates signified flashes of lightning. The humeral veil signified by its variety the stars of the heavens, and the two onyx-stones signified the two hemispheres or, alternatively, the sun and the moon. The twelve gems on the breast, which were positioned on the breastpiece, signify the twelve signs of the zodiac, since the heavens contain explanations of earthly things—this according to Job 38:33 (“Do you know the order of heaven, and can you set down the reason thereof on the earth”). The miter or tiara signified the empyrean heaven, and the piece of gold metal signified God presiding over all things.

The figurative reasons are obvious. The blemishes or defects from which the priests should be immune signify the different vices and sins which they ought to lack. For a priest is not permitted to be blind, i.e., ignorant. Nor is he allowed to be lame, i.e., unstable and tending in many different directions. Nor is he allowed to have a nose that is too small or too big or crooked, i.e., he should not through a lack of discretion do too much or too little or engage in depraved acts; for the nose signifies discretion, because it distinguishes smells. Nor is he allowed to have a broken foot or hand, i.e., he is not allowed to lose the habit of acting well or of progressing toward virtue. He is also rejected if he has a large belly or is hunch-backed, since these signify a love of earthly things. If he is bleary-eyed, then his mind is darkened by carnal desire; for bleary eyes stem from a flow of the humors. He is likewise rejected if he has a pearl-like white spot in his eye, i.e., if in his own mind he presumes that he has the brightness of moral uprightness. He is also rejected if he has a chronic scab, i.e., lustfulness of the flesh (*petulantia carnis*). And he is also rejected if he has a skin disease (*impetigo*) that covers his body without pain and destroys the beauty of his body; this signifies avarice. Also, he is rejected if he has a rupture or is

overweight, since this gives rise to a heaviness of evil in his heart, even if he does not express it in his deeds.

The ornate vestments signify the virtues of the ministers of God. Now there are four virtues that are necessary for all ministers, viz., chastity, which is signified by the loincloth; purity of life, which is signified by the linen tunic; the moderation of discretion, which is signified by the girdle; and rectitude of intention, which is signified by the tiara covering the head.

But before all these, the high priests should have four things. First, they should have the constant remembrance of God in their contemplation, and this is signified by the thin piece of gold metal on their forehead with the name of God on it. Second, they should bear the weaknesses of the people, and this is signified by the humeral veil. Third, they should have the people in their hearts and in their breasts through the solicitude of charity, and this is signified by the breastpiece. Fourth, they should have a heavenly way of life through works of perfection, and this is signified by the violet tunic. That is also why the violet tunic has the golden bells at its edges, signifying the teaching of divine things that must be joined to the high priest's heavenly way of life. The adjoined pomegranates signify unity of faith and agreement in good morals, since his teaching ought to be interconnected in such a way that the unity of faith and peace is not ruptured by it.

Article 6

Are there reasoned causes for the ceremonial observances?

It seems that there are no reasoned causes for the ceremonial observances:

Objection 1: As the Apostle says in 1 Timothy 4:4: "Every creature of God is good, and nothing received with thanksgiving is to be rejected." Therefore, it was inappropriate to prohibit, as Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14 do, the eating of certain foods regarded as unclean.

Objection 2: Just as animals are given as food for man, so too are plants; hence, Genesis 9:3 says, "..... even as I have given you the green plants, so I have given all meat to you." But the Law did not single out any plants as unclean, even though some of them were especially harmful, e.g., the poisonous ones. Therefore, it seems that no animals should have been prohibited as unclean, either.

Objection 3: If the matter from which something is generated is unclean, then by parity of reasoning that which is generated from it should be unclean. But meat is generated from blood. Therefore, since not all meats were prohibited as unclean, then by parity of reasoning neither should blood—or fat, which is generated from blood—have been prohibited as unclean.

Objection 4: In Matthew 10:28 and Luke 12:4 the Lord says, "Do not fear those who kill the body since after death there is nothing else for them to do"—which would not be true if a man were harmed by something that came from his corpse. *A fortiori*, it does not matter how one cooks the meat of an animal that has already been killed. Therefore, it seems unreasonable for Exodus 23:19 to say, "You shall not cook a kid in the milk of his mother."

Objection 5: Among men and animals, it is the ones that come forth first (*primitiva*) that are mandated to be offered to the Lord, since they are more perfect. Therefore, it is inappropriate for Leviticus 10:23 to command, "When you shall have come into the land and shall have planted fruit trees in it, you shall take away their foreskins (*praeputia*) [*read*: their first fruits], and they shall be unclean for you, and you shall not eat of them."

Objection 6: A man's clothing is something separate from his body. Therefore, it should not have been the case that certain specific types of clothing were forbidden to the Jews—for instance, Leviticus

19:19 says, “You shall not wear a garment that is woven of two sorts of cloth,” and Deuteronomy 22:5 says, “A woman shall not be clothed with men’s apparel, neither shall a man use women’s apparel,” and later on in verse 11, “You shall not wear a garment that is woven of wool and linen together.”

Objection 7: Being mindful of God’s commandments has to do not with the body, but with the heart. Therefore, it was inappropriate for Deuteronomy 6 to command, “You shall tie the precepts of God as a sign on your hand and they shall be written on the threshold of your doors.” And it was inappropriate for Numbers 15:38-39 to command, “They shall make themselves fringes in the corners of their garments, on which they will put violet ribbons to remind them of the commandments of God.”

Objection 8: In 1 Corinthians 9:9 the Apostle says, “God is not concerned about oxen,” and, as a consequence, neither is He concerned about other non-rational animals. Therefore, it was inappropriate for Deuteronomy 22:6 to command, “If you are walking along and you find a bird’s nest, you shall not take the mother with her young.” And it was inappropriate for Deuteronomy 25:4 to command, “You shall not muzzle the ox that is threshing.” And it was inappropriate for Leviticus 19:19 to command, “You shall not make your cattle mate with beasts of any other kind.”

Objection 9: The Law made no distinction between clean plants and unclean plants. Therefore, *a fortiori*, there should have been no distinctions made with respect to the cultivation of plants. Therefore, it was inappropriate for Leviticus 19:19 to command, “You shall not sow your field with different kinds of seeds.” And it was inappropriate for Deuteronomy 22:9-10 to command, “You shall not sow your vineyard with different kinds of seeds You shall not plow with an ox and an ass together.”

Objection 10: We notice that inanimate things are especially subject to the power of men. Therefore, it was inappropriate to restrict a man, as the precept of the Law found in Deuteronomy 7:25-26 does, from taking the silver and gold from which idols had been made, or from taking the other things found in the temples of the idols. Likewise, the command in Deuteronomy 23:13, “Digging a hole in the earth, they shall cover their excrement with dirt,” seems ridiculous.

Objection 11: Piety is especially required in the priests. But piety seems to involve one’s being concerned with the burial of one’s friends; hence, Tobias is praised for this, as Tobias 1:20-25 attests. Similarly, piety sometimes also involves a man’s taking a prostitute for his wife, since in this way he frees her from sin and from a bad reputation. Therefore, it seems inappropriate that these things should be forbidden to the priests in Leviticus 21.

But contrary to this: Deuteronomy 18:14 says, “But you are otherwise instructed by the Lord your God.” From this one can gather that observances of the sort in question were instituted by God as the special prerogative of this people. Therefore, these observances are not unreasonable or without due cause.

I respond: As has been explained (a. 5), the Jewish people were set aside in a special way for divine worship; and, among the people, the priests were set aside in a special way. And just as the other things assigned to divine worship ought to have some sort of special character that involves the honored status (*honorificentia*) of divine worship, so too in the way of life of the people, and especially of the priests, there ought to be certain special elements, whether spiritual or corporeal, that are congruent with divine worship.

Now worship under the Law was a figure of the mystery of Christ, and so all their actions were a figure of things having to do with Christ—this according to 1 Corinthians 10:11 (“All these things happened to them in figure”). And so the reasons for the observances in question can be assigned in two ways: first, according to their fittingness for divine worship; and, second, insofar as they prefigured something in the life of Christians.

Reply to objection 1: As was explained above (a. 5), there were two kinds of pollution or uncleanness observed under the Law, viz., (a) the uncleanness of sin, through which the soul is polluted,

and (b) the uncleanness of any sort of corruption through which the body is in some way defiled.

If we are talking about the first kind of uncleanness, then no types of food are unclean, or able to defile a man, according to their nature; hence, Matthew 15:11 says, “It is not what goes into his mouth that defiles a man, but rather it is what comes out of his mouth that defiles a man,” and this is understood as talking about sins. However, certain foods are incidentally able to defile a man, viz., insofar as they are eaten out of disobedience or contrary to a vow or from excessive sensual desire, or insofar as they promote lust, for which reason some men abstain from wine and meat.

Now as regards corporeal uncleanness, i.e., the uncleanness of corruption, the meat of certain animals is unclean either because (a) the animals feed on unclean things, as the pig does, or because (b) they live in an unclean way, as do animals that live underground, such as moles and mice and others of this sort, and hence have a foul smell, or because (c) their meat generates corrupted humors in human bodies because of its moistness or dryness. And so the people were forbidden to eat the meat of animals having soles, i.e., uncloven hoofs, because of their earthiness. Similarly, they were forbidden to eat the meat of animals that have many clefts in their feet, since these are fierce and sun-scorched, e.g., lion meat and others of this sort. And for the same reason, they were forbidden to eat certain birds of prey, which have excessive dryness, along with certain water fowls, because of their excessive moistness. The same held for certain fish that do not have fins and scales, e.g., eels and others, and this because of their excessive moistness. On the other hand, they were permitted to eat animals that ruminate and have a cloven hoof, since these animals have well-digested humors and a balanced composition; for they are not too moist, which is signified by their hoofs, or too earthy, given that they have a cloven and not a continuous hoof. Among the fish, they were allowed to eat the fish that are drier, which is signified by the fact that they have scales and fins, since it is in this way that the moist composition of fish is tempered. Among the birds, they were permitted to eat the more temperate ones, such as hens, partridges, and others of this sort.

A second reason [for the prohibitions] was the detestation of idolatry. For the Gentiles, and especially the Egyptians, among whom they had been brought up, sacrificed these forbidden animals to their idols or used them for sorcery (*ad maleficia*). On the other hand, they did not eat the animals that the Jews were permitted to eat; instead, they worshiped those animals as gods or abstained from them for other reasons, as was explained above (a. 3, ad 2).

A third reason was to prevent excessive concern about food. This is why they were permitted to eat animals that could be easily and promptly obtained. However, they were generally forbidden to eat the blood and fat of any animal. The prohibition of blood was meant (a) to prevent cruelty, in order that they might hate the shedding of human blood, as was explained above (a. 3, ad 8), and (b) to prevent idolatrous rites, since the custom of the idolaters was to come together around the collected blood in order to have a meal in honor of the idols to whom they thought the blood was especially acceptable. This is why the Lord commanded that the blood be poured out and covered with dust. For this reason they were also forbidden to eat suffocated or strangled animals, because their blood was not separated from their flesh, or because the animals suffered greatly in that kind of death and the Lord wanted to prohibit cruelty even with respect to brute animals, so that having shown kindness (*exercitium pietatis*) even to beasts, the people might withdraw further from cruelty to men. They were forbidden to eat fat, because (a) the idolaters ate it in honor of their gods, and because (b) it was burned in honor of God, and because (c) blood and fat do not make for good nutrition—this is the explanation Rabbi Moses gives. Now the reason for the prohibition of the eating of sinews is expressed in Genesis 32:32, where it says, “The children of Israel, unto this day, eat not the sinew, because Jacob touched the sinew of his thigh and it shrank.”

The figurative reason for these prohibitions is that particular sins are signified by all the prohibited animals, and it is as a figure of those sins that the animals are prohibited. Hence, in *Contra Faustum*

Augustine says, “If someone asks about the pig and the lamb, both are clean by nature, since every creature of God’s is good; however, by signification the lamb is clean and the pig is unclean. It is as if one were to say that both of the words ‘foolish’ and ‘wise’ are clean with respect to the nature of the sounds and letters and syllables out of which they are composed, and yet by signification the one is clean and the other is unclean.” For the animal that ruminates and has a cloven hoof is clean by signification, since the cleft in the hoof signifies the distinction between the two Testaments, or between the Father and the Son, or between the two natures in Christ, or the distinction between good and evil—whereas the rumination signifies meditation on the Scriptures and the sound interpretation of the Scriptures, where anyone who lacks either of these things is spiritually unclean.

The same holds in the case of fish. The ones that have scales and fins are clean by signification, since the fins signify the sublime life, i.e., contemplation, whereas the scales signify the difficult life—and each of these is necessary for spiritual cleanness.

In the case of birds, certain kinds are specifically prohibited. For in the eagle (*aquila*), which flies high, pride is prohibited, and in the griffin (*gryps*), which is inimical to horses and men, the cruelty of the powerful is prohibited. The seahawk (*haliaeetos*), which feeds on small birds, signifies those who prey upon the poor, whereas the kite (*milvus*), which makes special use of deception, signifies fraudulent men. The vulture (*vultur*), which follows an army with the expectation of eating the corpses of the dead, signifies those who desire men to die or to have conflicts with one another, so that they can thereby profit. Raven-like animals (*animalia corvini generis*) signify those who are sullied by sensual desire or who are devoid of good affections, since the raven, once it had been sent off from the ark, did not return. The ostrich (*struthiocamelus*), which cannot fly even though it is a bird, but is always close to the ground, signifies those who, fighting for God, entangle themselves in worldly affairs. The night-raven (*nycticorax*), which sees well at night but cannot see in the daytime, signifies those who are astute in temporal matters but dull in spiritual matters. The seagull (*larus*), which both flies in the air and swims in the sea, signifies those who revere both circumcision and Baptism or, alternatively, those who wish to fly through contemplation and yet to live in the waters of sensual desire. The hawk (*accipiter*), which helps men in catching prey, signifies those who serve the powerful in preying upon the poor. The owl (*bubo*), which seeks its food at night and hides during the day, signifies the lustful, who seek to remain hidden in the night-time works they do. The sea-dove (*mergulus*), which by nature stays under water for long periods of time, signifies the gluttonous, who immerse themselves in the waters of delicacies. The ibis (*ibis*) is an African bird with a long beak which feeds on snakes and is perhaps the same as the stork (*ciconia*); it signifies the envious, who feed upon the ills of others as upon snakes. The swan (*cygnus*) is dazzling white in color and with its long neck extracts its food from the depths of the earth or water; and it can signify men who seek earthly profit with an external veneer of virtue. The pelican (*onocrotalus*) is a bird of the Orient with a long beak, whose jaws have sacks in which it first stores its food, and after an hour sends it to its belly; it signifies the greedy, who collect the necessities of life with excessive solicitude. The purple swamphen (*porphyrio*), beyond the manner of other birds, has one wide foot for swimming and one cloven foot for walking, since in the water it swims like a duck (*anas*), and on dry ground it walks like a partridge (*perdix*); it drinks only when it chews, since it moistens its food with water, and it signifies those who do not want to do anything at another’s bidding but want to do only what has been moistened with the water of their own will. The herodion (*herodio*), commonly called the falcon (*falco*), signifies those whose feet are “quick to the shedding of blood” (Psalm 13:3). The plover (*charadrius*), which is a garrulous bird, signifies the loquacious, whereas the hoopoe (*upupa*), which nests in dung and eats stinking excrement and simulates a moan in its song, signifies the sadness of the world, which works death in unclean men. The bat (*vespertilio*), which flies close to the ground, signifies those who, gifted in worldly knowledge, are wise only about worldly things.

In the case of the fowls and quadrupeds, the only permitted ones are those that have longer back

legs, so that they are able to leap. By contrast, the others, which stay closer to the ground, are prohibited, because those who misuse the doctrine of the four Evangelists and are not uplifted by it are considered unclean.

In the case of the blood and the fat and the nerves, what is being understood as prohibited are cruelty and voluptuousness and a bravado for sinning (*fortitudo ad peccandum*).

Reply to objection 2: Men ate plants and other things growing from the earth even before the flood, but the eating of meat seems to have been introduced after the flood. For Genesis 9:3 says, “I have given you all the meat, even as I have given you the green plants.” This is because the eating of things that grow in the earth bespeaks a certain simplicity of life, whereas the eating of meat bespeaks certain pleasures and cares in living. For the earth generates plants spontaneously, and things growing in the earth are procured in great volume with a modicum of effort, whereas a great effort is necessary for eating animals or even for catching them. And so the Lord, wishing to lead His people to a more simple way of life, forbade them to eat many things in the genus of animals, but not in the genus of things growing in the earth.

An alternative reason is that animals were sacrificed to idols, whereas things growing in the earth were not.

Reply to objection 3: The reply to the third objection is obvious from what has been said.

Reply to objection 4: Even if the kid that has been killed does not know how its own flesh is being cooked, there still seems to be a certain cruelty in the mind of the cook if the mother’s milk, which was given to the kid for nutrition, is used in the consumption of its meat.

Alternatively, one can point out that in the feasts of their idols the Gentiles cooked the meat of the kid in this way in order either to sacrifice it or to eat it. This is why Exodus 23, after it has previously talked about the celebration of the solemn feasts in the Law, adds, “You shall not cook a kid in the milk of his mother.”

The figurative reason for this prohibition is that it prefigured the fact that Christ, who is a kid because of the “likeness of sinful flesh” (Romans 8:3), was not to be cooked, i.e., killed, by the Jews in His mother’s milk, i.e., at the time of His infancy.

An alternative reply is that it signifies that the kid, i.e., the sinner, is not to be cooked in his mother’s milk, i.e., he is not to be soothed with blandishments.

Reply to objection 5: The Gentiles offered first fruits, which they considered lucky, to the gods, or even burned them in order to do certain forms of magic. And so the precept is that the people should consider the fruits of the first three years to be unclean. For in a period of three years almost all the trees of that land produce fruit from either seeding or grafting or planting. However, it rarely happens that the stones inside the tree fruits or the hidden seeds are planted; for these take more time to produce fruit, whereas the Law had an eye toward what happened for the most part. Now the fruits of the fourth year were offered to God as the first of the clean fruits, whereas the fruits from the fifth year and beyond were eaten.

The figurative reason was that this prefigured the fact that after the three stages of the Law—one of which lasted from Abraham to David, the second from David to the Babylonian exile, and the third from the Babylonian exile to Christ—Christ, who is the fruit of the Law, was to be offered to God.

An alternative figurative reason is that we should put the first of our own works under suspicion, because of our imperfection.

Reply to objection 6: As Ecclesiasticus 19:27 says, “A man’s clothing shows what he is.” And so the Lord wanted His people to be distinguished from other peoples not only by the sign of circumcision, but also by a distinctive way of dressing (*habitus*).

There were two reasons why they were forbidden to wear a garment sewn together from wool and

linen, and why the women were forbidden to wear men's clothes, and vice versa.

First, to prevent idolatrous worship. For in the worship of their gods the Gentiles used various vestments made of diverse materials. Moreover, in the worship of Mars the women put on men's armor, while, conversely, in the worship of Venus men used women's clothing.

The second reason is to fend off lust. For all kinds of disordered sexual intercourse are excluded [by the prohibition of] various mixtures of clothing. A woman dressing in men's clothing, or vice versa, is an incentive to sensual desire and provides an occasion for lust.

The figurative reason is that what is forbidden in the case of a garment sewn together from wool and linen is the combination of the simplicity of innocence, of which the wool is a figure, with the subtlety of malice, of which the linen is a figure. It is also prohibited that a woman should take upon herself the office of teaching or any of the other functions of a man, or that a man should descend to the softness of women.

Reply to objection 7: As Jerome says in *Super Matthaëum*, "The Lord commanded that they make violet fringes in the four corners of their garments in order to mark the people of Israel off from other peoples." Hence, in this way they professed that they were Jews, and so by looking at this sign they were induced to be mindful of their Law.

Now the words "You shall tie them on your hand, and they will be always before your eyes" were misinterpreted by the Pharisees when they wrote the Decalogue of Moses on scrolls and tied it on their foreheads like a crown, so that it would move before their eyes. The Lord's intention, however, was that the precepts should be tied to their hand, i.e., to their actions, and that the precepts should be before their eyes, i.e., in meditation. Also, in the case of the violet strips which were inserted inside their cloaks, what is signified is the heavenly intention that ought to be joined to all our works.

Still, one could claim that since these people were carnal and stiff-necked, they had to be stirred to the observance of the Law through sensible things of this sort.

Reply to objection 8: There are two kinds of human affect, the one involving reason and the other involving the passions.

With respect to the affect of reason, it does not matter what a man does with brute animals, since all of them have been subjected to his power by God—this according to Psalm 8:8 ("You have subjected all things under his feet"). In this regard, the Apostle says that God is not concerned about oxen because God does not require of man what he does to the oxen or other animals.

However, with respect to the affect of passion, human affect is moved even with respect to the other animals. For since the passion of pity (*miseriordia*) arises from the sufferings of others, and since brute animals are also able to sense pain, the affect of pity can arise in a man even with respect to the sufferings of animals. It follows that one who is able to feel the affect of pity with respect to animals is thereby more disposed toward the affect of pity with respect to men; hence, Proverbs 12:10 says, "The just man has regard for the lives of his beasts, but the innards of the wicked are cruel." And so the Lord, in order that He might call the Jewish people, who were prone to cruelty, back to pity, wished them to be moved to pity even for brute animals and prohibited them from doing to animals certain things that seem to involve cruelty. Thus, He forbade them to cook a kid in its mother's milk, or to muzzle an ox threshing grain, or to kill a mother with her children.

Still, one could also claim that it was out of a detestation of idolatry that they were forbidden to do these things. For the Egyptians considered it evil for oxen that were threshing to eat any of the grain. Again, certain magicians used an incubating mother together with her captured young ones for securing fertility and good fortune in the nurturing of children; also, among the fortune-tellers it was considered good fortune to find a mother incubating young ones.

As for the [prohibition against] mixing animals of differing species, there were three possible literal reasons:

First, detestation of the idolatry of the Egyptians, who used differing mixtures in the service of the planets, which according to their different conjunctions have diverse effects on diverse kinds of things.

The second reason was to prevent sexual intercourse that is contrary to nature.

The third reason is the general one of removing occasions for sensual desire. For animals of different species do not easily mate with one another unless this is procured by men, and the movement of sensual desire is excited in men when they witness animals having sexual intercourse. Hence, as Rabbi Moses reports, among the Jewish traditions there is a precept according to which men should avert their eyes from animals that are having sexual intercourse.

The figurative reasons for these things are as follows: The necessities of life should not be taken from the ox who is threshing, i.e., from the preacher who bears the sheaves of doctrine, as the Apostle puts it in 1 Corinthians 9:10. Again, we should not hold fast the mother along with her young, since in certain matters the spiritual meaning, i.e., the young, should be held on to while the literal observance, i.e., the mother, is overridden. Again, as beasts of burden, i.e., ordinary people, we are forbidden to have sexual intercourse, i.e., to have close connections, with living things of a different kind, i.e., with Gentiles or Jews.

Reply to objection 9: As far as the literal reason is concerned, all these agricultural mixtures were prohibited in renunciation of idolatry. For in their veneration of the stars, the Egyptians concocted different mixtures of seeds and animals and clothes, representing the different conjunctions of the stars.

An alternative reply is that all mixtures of the sort in question were prohibited in renunciation of sexual intercourse that is contrary to nature.

Still, these prohibitions have a figurative reason behind them. For the passage “You shall not sow your vineyard with diverse seeds” is to be understood spiritually to mean that strange doctrine is not to be sown within the Church, which is a spiritual vine. And similarly, the field, i.e., the Church, is not to be sown with diverse seeds, i.e., with both Catholic doctrine and heretical doctrine. Nor is to be plowed simultaneously with an ox and a donkey, since he who is foolish is not to join with him who is wise in preaching; for the one impedes the other.

Reply to objection 10: [*There is no reply in the manuscripts to objection 10.*]

Reply to objection 11: In their rites the magicians and priests of the idols used the bones or flesh of dead men. And so, in order to root out idolatrous worship, the Lord commanded that the lower priests, who ministered in the sanctuary for fixed periods, should not be defiled with death, except for the deaths of those close to them, viz., their father or mother or persons related to them in like manner.

The high priest, however, had always to be prepared for the ministry of the sanctuary, and so he was absolutely forbidden to approach the dead, no matter how closely related they were.

Again, the priests were also commanded to take a virgin as a wife, and not to marry a prostitute or divorced woman. This was meant to induce reverence for the priests, whose dignity might seem to be diminished by such a marriage, and also because of the sons, for whom the mother’s shame would be a source of ignominy—something to be especially avoided insofar as the dignity of the priesthood would be conferred on them according to familial succession.

In order to prevent idolatrous rites, they were also forbidden to shave their heads or beards or to make incisions in their flesh. For the priests of the Gentiles shaved their heads and beards; hence, Baruch 6:30 says, “The priests sit with their garments rent, and their heads and beards shaven.” Also, in the worship of their idols “they cut themselves with knives and lances,” as 3 Kings 18:28 reports. Hence, the contraries of these things were mandated for the priests of the Old Law.

The spiritual reasons behind these precepts are as follows: The priests had to be entirely immune from dead works, i.e., the works of sin. And they should also not shave, i.e., put off wisdom, or rid themselves of their beards, i.e., rid themselves of wisdom, or tear their vestments or cut their flesh, i.e., incur the vice of schism.