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978-0-521-02937-7 - Summa Theologiae: Volume 29 - The Old Law, (1a2ae. 98-105)

David Bourke and Arthur Littledale

Excerpt

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SUMMA THEOLOGIAE, 1a2ae. 98, I

CONSEQUENTER CONSIDERANDUM EST de lege veteri.

Et primo, de ipsa lege;
secundo, de præceptis ejus.

Quæstio 98. de lege veteri

Circa primum quærantur sex:

1. utrum lex vetus sit bona;
2. utrum sit a Deo;
3. utrum sit ab eo mediantibus angelis;
4. utrum data sit omnibus;
5. utrum omnes obliget;
6. utrum congruo tempore fuerit data.

articulus 1. utrum lex vetus fuerit bona

AD PRIMUM sic proceditur:¹ 1. Videtur quod lex vetus non fuerit bona. Dicitur enim,² *Dedi eis præcepta non bona, et judicia in quibus non vivent.* Sed lex non dicitur bona nisi propter bonitatem præceptorum quæ continet. Ergo lex vetus non fuit bona.

2. Præterea, ad bonitatem legis pertinet ut communi saluti proficiat, sicut Isidorus dicit.³ Sed lex vetus non fuit salutifera, sed magis mortifera et nociva. Dicit enim Apostolus,⁴ *Sine lege peccatum mortuum erat. Ego autem vivebam sine lege aliquando: sed cum venisset mandatum, peccatum revixit, ego autem mortuus sum;* et,⁵ *Lex subintravit ut abundaret delictum.* Ergo lex vetus non fuit bona.

3. Præterea, ad bonitatem legis pertinet quod sit possibilis ad observandum et secundum naturam et secundum humanam consuetudinem. Sed hoc non habuit lex vetus: dicit enim Petrus,⁶ *Quid tentatis imponere jugum super cervicem discipulorum, quod neque nos, neque patres nostri, portare potuimus?* Ergo videtur quod lex vetus non fuerit bona.

¹cf art. 2 ad 1 & 2 below. In *Gal.* 3, lect. 7, 8. In *I Tim.* 1, lect. 3. In *Rom.* 7, lect. 2, 3

²*Ezekiel* 20, 25

³*Etymologies* II, 10. PL 82, 131

⁴*Romans* 7, 8

⁵*Romans* 5, 20

⁶*Acts* 15, 10 f.

⁸It is important to notice how the philosophical part of St Thomas's argument, which is based on the Aristotelean metaphysics of final causality, 'dovetails' into the theological part, which is based on St Paul's evaluation of the Old Law as set forth primarily in *Romans*. The key 'point of intersection' between these two is St Paul's statement that 'Christ is the end (*telos*) of the Law' (*Romans* 10, 4). This may be

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THE NEXT TOPIC TO BE INVESTIGATED IS the Old Law.

We must consider first the Law itself,
second, the precepts contained in it (99).

Question 98. the Old Law

Here there are six points of inquiry:

1. whether the Old Law is good;
2. whether it comes from God;
3. whether it comes from him through the mediation of angels;
4. whether it was bestowed upon all;
5. whether it is binding for all;
6. whether the time at which it was bestowed was appropriate.

article 1. whether the Old Law was good^a

THE FIRST POINT:¹ 1. It seems that the Old Law was not good, for we read,² *I gave them statutes that were not good, and ordinances by which they could not live.* Now a law cannot be said to be good unless the precepts contained in it are good. Therefore the Old Law was not good.

2. Again, as Isidore says,³ it is an essential property of a good law that it should contribute to the well-being of the community.^b Now the Old Law was not beneficial in this sense, but rather death-dealing and harmful in its effects. For St Paul says,⁴ *Apart from the Law sin lies dead. I was once alive apart from the Law, but when the commandment came sin revived and I died, and, Law came in to increase the trespass.* Therefore the Old Law was not good.

3. Again, it is an essential property of a good law that it should be able to be observed both by man's natural powers and as a matter of human custom. Now this was not the case with the Old Law, for Peter says,⁶ *Why do you try to impose a yoke upon the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear?* Therefore it seems that the Old Law was not good.

taken as axiomatic for the treatise as a whole. According to W. D. Davies, Christ was thought of in the primitive Church as the new Torah, replacing the old Torah and supplying its deficiencies (*Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*, London, 1948, pp. 147 ff.)

^bFor the references to St Thomas's theory of law in general (1a2ae. 90-97) cf Vol. 28 of this series, *Law and Political Theory*, edited by T. Gilby, 1966.

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SUMMA THEOLOGIAE, 1a2ae. 98, I

SED CONTRA est quod Apostolus dicit,⁷ *Itaque lex quidem sancta est, et mandatum sanctum et justum et bonum.*

RESPONSIO: Dicendum quod absque omni dubio lex vetus bona fuit. Sicut enim doctrina ostenditur esse vera ex hoc quod consonat rationi rectae, ita etiam lex aliqua ostenditur esse bona ex eo quod consonat rationi. Lex autem vetus rationi consonabat. Quia concupiscentiam reprimebat, quæ rationi adversatur; ut patet in illo mandato, *Non concupisces rem proximi tui*, quod ponitur.⁸ Ipsa etiam omnia peccata prohibebat, quæ sunt contra rationem. Unde manifestatum est quod bona erat. Et hæc est ratio Apostoli,⁹ *Condelector*, inquit, *legi Dei secundum interiorem hominem*; et iterum,¹⁰ *Consentio legi, quoniam bona est.*

Sed notandum est quod bonum diversos gradus habet, ut Dionysius dicit;¹¹ est enim aliquod bonum perfectum, et aliquod bonum imperfectum. Perfecta quidem bonitas est, in his quæ ad finem ordinantur, quando aliquid est tale quod per se sufficiens est inducere ad finem: imperfectum autem bonum est quod operatur aliquid ad hic quod perveniatur ad finem, non tamen sufficit ad hoc quod ad finem perducatur. Sicut medicina perfecte bona est quæ hominem sanat; imperfecta autem est quæ hominem adjuvat, sed tamen sanare non potest.

Est autem sciendum quod est alius finis legis humanæ et alius legis divinæ. Legis enim humanæ finis est temporalis tranquillitas civitatis, ad quem finem pervenit lex cohibendo exteriores actus, quantum ad illa mala quæ possunt perturbare pacificum statum civitatis. Finis autem legis divinæ est perducere hominem ad finem felicitatis æternæ; qui quidem finis impeditur per quodcumque peccatum, et non solum per actus exteriores, sed etiam per interiores. Et ideo illud quod sufficit ad perfectionem legis humanæ, ut scilicet peccata prohibeat et pœnam apponat, non

⁷Romans 7, 12

⁸Exodus 20, 15

⁹Romans 7, 22

¹⁰ibid 16

¹¹*De div. nom.* IV, 20. PG 3, 720. lect. 16

^cAs F. G. Leenhardt explains, what St Paul means by this is that 'the Law in itself is holy because it springs from God; it is righteous because it expresses the righteous will of God; good because it is meant to serve the beneficent will of God. These three epithets thus characterize the Law in respect of its origin, its nature and its effects' (*The Epistle to the Romans*, London, 1964, p. 189).

^dThat is, with a reason that is rightly informed as to where the subject's true and ultimate fulfilment lies, the end in the attainment of which he will achieve his due perfection, and therefore his true happiness. This should be compared with St Paul's concept of *nous* and the relation in which this stands to the Old Law. As R. Bultmann puts it, 'The true will of man—the "inward man" . . . , in so far as it is

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ON THE OTHER HAND we have St Paul saying,⁷ *The Law is holy and the commandment is holy and just and good.*^c

REPLY: There is no doubt that the Old Law was good, for just as a doctrine is shown to be true from the fact that it is in conformity with right reason,^d so too a law is shown to be good from the fact that it is in conformity with reason. The Old Law was so conformed. It restrained the appetite, which works against reason, a fact apparent in the commandment,⁸ *You shall not lust after anything that is your neighbour's.*^e For this same law also forbade all sins which are contrary to reason. From this it plainly appears that the Old Law was good, and this is St Paul's argument,⁹ *For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self*, and again,¹⁰ *I agree with the Law because it is good.*

It must be observed, however, that there are various degrees of goodness, as Dionysius says.¹¹ For one good may be complete and another incomplete. Let us consider the ordering of things to a given end. Complete goodness is to be found in that which is sufficient of itself to attain the end. That, on the other hand, is an incomplete good which, while it makes some limited contribution towards the eventual attainment of the end, is still not sufficient to bring about that attainment of itself. Thus for instance a medicine which actually cures a man is completely good, whereas one which, while it is helpful to a man, is still not able to cure him is incompletely so.

Now it must be recognized that human law is directed towards one end and divine law towards another. The end towards which human law is directed is that the State shall have tranquillity in its temporal affairs, and law achieves this by preventing anything from being done in the external sphere which may upset the State's peaceful condition. The end to which divine law is directed on the other hand is to bring man to the attainment of his goal of eternal happiness. Now any kind of sin—not only acts performed in the external sphere but internal ones too—constitutes an obstacle

nous (understanding, intent . . .), strives towards life as that which to him is "good". And since he can miss this "good", it straightway takes on for him the character of the "good" in the sense of that which is demanded . . . God's *demand* encounters man concretely in the *nomos*, the Law of the Old Testament, the purpose of which is no other than to lead man to life' (*Romans* 7, 10; cf *Romans* 10, 5; *Galatians* 3, 12b). (*Theology of the New Testament*, E.T., London, 1952, p. 259.)

^cIn terms of St Thomas's conception of instrumental causality, therefore, the Old Law has the function of a *removens prohibens*. It removes obstacles to the attainment of the end, in this instance sin and the inclination to sin, which is here epitomized under the general heading of 'concupiscence' or 'appetite'. In this St Thomas may well be thinking of the 'sinful passions' referred to in *Romans* 7, 5.

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sufficit ad perfectionem legis divinæ: sed oportet quod hominem totaliter faciat idoneum ad participationem felicitatis æternæ. Quod quidem fieri non potest nisi per gratiam Spiritus Sancti, per quam *diffunditur caritas in cordibus nostris*,¹² quæ legem adimplet: *gratia enim Dei vita æterna*, ut dicitur.¹³ Hanc autem gratiam lex vetus conferre non potuit, reservabatur enim hoc Christo: quia, ut dicitur,¹⁴ *lex per Moysen data est; gratia et veritas per Jesum Christum facta est*. Et inde est quod lex vetus bona quidem est, sed imperfecta; secundum illud,¹⁵ *Nihil ad perfectum adduxit lex*.

1. Ad primum ergo dicendum quod Dominus loquitur ibi de præceptis cæremonialibus; quæ quidem dicuntur non bona, quia gratiam non conferebant, per quam homines a peccato mundarentur, cum tamen per huiusmodi se peccatores ostenderent. Unde signanter dicitur, *et iudicia in quibus non vivent*, idest per quæ vitam gratiæ obtinere non possunt; et postea subditur, *Et pollui eos in muneribus suis*, idest pollutos ostendi, *cum offerrent omne quod aperit vulvam, propter delicta sua*.

2. Ad secundum dicendum quod lex dicitur occidisse, non quidem effective, sed occasionaliter, ex sua imperfectione: inquantum scilicet gratiam non conferebat, per quam homines implere possent quod mandabat, vel vitare quod vetabat. Et sic occasio ista non erat data, sed sumpta ab hominibus. Unde et Apostolus ibidem dicit, *Occasione accepta peccatum per mandatum seduxit me, et per illud occidit*. Et ex hac etiam ratione dicitur quod *lex subintravit ut abundaret delictum*, ut *ly ut teneatur consecutive*, non causaliter: inquantum scilicet homines, accipientes occasionem a lege, abundantius peccaverunt; tum quia gravius fuit peccatum post legis prohibitionem, tum etiam quia concupiscentia crevit, magis enim concupiscimus quod nobis prohibetur.

¹²Romans 5, 5¹³ibid 6, 23¹⁴John 1, 17¹⁵Hebrews 7, 19

¹In this way St Thomas assigns the Old Law its proper place within the broader framework of his ethical system as a whole. It is a special instance of law in general, differing from purely human law in that the human acts which it directs are at a deeper level (interior thoughts and dispositions as well as exterior actions), and in that the end to which those acts are ordained is more exalted (happiness that is not merely natural but supernatural). The obvious theological basis for this deepening and 'interiorizing' of the Law is the Sermon on the Mount.

²St Thomas is probably influenced here, to some extent, by St Augustine's interpretation of the Pauline contrast between letter and spirit as set forth in II *Corinthians* 3, 6. On this cf de Lubac, *Exégèse médiévale* II, 1964, p. 287.

³i.e. presumably in the performance of the prescribed rites of purification, expiatory sacrifice, penitence, etc. The objection is also found in the *Glossa Ordinaria*, and was probably a standard one. But St Thomas takes occasion of it to point out what for him is a primary function of the ceremonial law: to bring home to man his sinful state and so his need for Christ.

⁴According to P. Benoit the idea of the Law as the *occasion* of sin is secondary and subordinate in St Paul's argument as a whole. In *Romans* 7, 5 the phrase '*ta dia tou*

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to this end.^f This is why that which is adequate for the completeness of human law, namely the prohibiting of offences and the apportionment of penalties, is not adequate for the completeness of the divine law. This latter is required to make man totally equipped to share in eternal happiness—something which can be achieved only by the grace of the Holy Spirit, for it is by this that *charity is poured into our hearts*¹² which fulfils the requirements of the law. For, *The grace of God is eternal life*.¹³ Now the Old Law was not able to confer this grace;^g that was reserved to Christ. This is why we find it stated,¹⁴ *The law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ*. It is for this reason, then, that the Old Law is indeed good, but, incompletely so: *The Law made nothing perfect*.¹⁵

Hence: 1. What the Lord is referring to here is the ceremonial precepts. These are certainly said to be ‘not good’ because, whereas they were the means by which sinners stood revealed for what they were,^h they did not confer the grace by which men could be cleansed from their sins. This is why the passage stresses *and ordinances by which they could not live*, i.e. by means of which they could not obtain the life of grace. After this it goes on, *And I defiled them* (i.e. I showed them to be defiled) *in their very gifts, when they offered all that opens the womb for their offences*.

2. The Law is said to have killed not in the sense that it was the effective cause of death, but rather because it was the occasionⁱ of it by reason of its incompleteness. For this meant that it was powerless to confer that grace by which men could fulfil what the Law required and refrain from what it prohibited. Thus it was not given as an occasion of sin in this sense, but rather taken as such by men. Hence it is that we find St Paul saying in the same passage, *For sin, finding occasion in the commandment deceived me, and by it killed me*. It is for the same reason too that it is said that *Law came in so that the trespass increased*. The phrase *so that* here should be taken in a consecutive rather than a causal sense. What it means is that men, taking occasion from the law, sinned more greatly. This was the case both in the sense that sin committed after the prohibition of the Law was graver, and also in the sense that concupiscence increased. For when we are forbidden something we lust after it all the more.

nomou’ qualifies ‘sinful passions’, and this should be taken as implying a certain ‘collaboration’ (‘concoors’) on the part of the Law in the unleashing of concupiscence, whether by instructing man in the possibility of evil or in provoking him to desire evil by the very fact of forbidding it according to the aphorism ‘Stolen fruit are sweetest’ (cf also C. H. Dodd, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 1932, p. 127). Benoit goes on to say that the immediate and formal effect of the Law is to give true knowledge (*epignosis*) of sin (*Romans* 3, 2), and more than this, to constitute it as what it is of its very nature, namely rebellion against God (‘La Loi et la croix d’après St Paul: *Romans* 7, 7–8:4’, *Exégèse et Théologie* 11, Paris, 1961, pp. 13–15).

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3. Ad tertium dicendum quod jugum legis servari non poterat sine gratia adjuvante, quam lex non dabat: dicitur enim,¹⁶ *Non est volentis neque currentis*, scilicet velle et currere in præceptis Dei, *sed miserentis Dei*. Unde et dicitur,¹⁷ *Viam mandatorum tuorum cucurri, cum dilatasti cor meum*, scilicet per donum gratiæ et caritatis.

articulus 2. utrum lex vetus fuerit a Deo

AD SECUNDUM sic proceditur:¹ 1. Videtur quod lex vetus non fuerit a Deo. Dicitur enim,² *Dei perfecta sunt opera*. Sed lex fuit imperfecta, ut supra dictum est.³ Ergo lex vetus non fuit a Deo.

2. Præterea, dicitur,⁴ *Didici quod omnia opera quæ fecit Deus, perseverent in æternum*. Sed lex vetus non perseverat in æternum: dicit enim Apostolus,⁵ *Reprobatio fit quidem præcedentis mandati, propter infirmitatem ejus et inutilitatem*. Ergo lex vetus non fuit a Deo.

3. Præterea, ad sapientem legislatorem pertinet non solum mala auferre, sed etiam occasiones malorum. Sed vetus lex fuit occasio peccati, ut supra dictum est.⁶ Ergo ad Deum, cui *nullus est similis in legislatoribus*, ut dicitur,⁷ non pertinebat legem talem dare.

4. Præterea, dicitur⁸ quod *Deus vult omnes homines salvos fieri*. Sed lex vetus non sufficiebat ad salutem hominum, ut supra dictum est.⁹ Ergo ad Deum non pertinebat talem legem dare. Lex ergo vetus non est a Deo.

SED CONTRA est quod Dominus dicit,¹⁰ loquens Judæis, quibus erat lex vetus data, *Irritum fecistis mandatum Dei propter traditiones vestras*. Et paulo ante¹¹ præmittitur, *Honora patrem tuum et matrem tuam*, quod manifeste in lege veteri continetur.¹² Ergo lex vetus est a Deo.

RESPONSIO: Dicendum quod lex vetus a bono Deo data est, qui est Pater Domini nostri Jesu Christi. Lex enim vetus homines ordinabat ad Christum dupliciter. Uno quidem modo, testimonium Christo perhibendo: unde

¹⁶Romans 9, 16¹⁷In Heb. 7, lect. 3³art 1 above. 1a2æ. 91, 5⁵Hebrews 7, 18⁷Job 36, 22⁹art. 1 above. 1a2æ. 91, 5 ad 2¹¹ibid 4¹²Exodus 20, 12. Deuteronomy 5, 16¹⁷Psalms 118, 32²Deuteronomy 32, 4⁴Ecclesiastes 3, 14⁶art. 1 ad 2 above⁸1 Timothy 2, 4¹⁰Matthew 15, 6

⁸Here too the theological argument is neatly 'dovetailed' into the broader framework of the Aristotelean metaphysics of final causality, upon which St Thomas's ethical system is so largely based. This may be summed up in the axiom that that which is last in the order of execution is first in the order of conception and intention.

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3. The yoke of the Law could not be borne except with the help of grace, and the Law did not give this. For we read,¹⁶ *It depends not upon man's will or striving*, i.e. his will to observe and striving to execute the precepts of God, *but upon God's mercy*. Hence too we read also,¹⁷ *I have run in the way of thy commandments when you enlarged my heart*, through the gift, that is, of grace and charity.

article 2. whether the Old Law came from God^a

THE SECOND POINT:¹ 1. It seems that the Old Law did not come from God. For, *the works of God are perfect*.² But, as has been said above,³ the Law was imperfect. Therefore the Old Law was not from God.

2. Again, it is said,⁴ *I have learnt that all the works which God has made continue for ever*. But the Old Law does not last for ever. For St Paul says,⁵ *There is indeed a setting aside of the former commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness*. Therefore the Old Law was not from God.

3. Again, it is the mark of a wise legislator to remove not only evils, but also the occasions of evils. Now, as has been said above,⁶ the Old Law was an occasion of sin. Therefore it was not appropriate for such a law to have been given by God for, *None is like him among the law-givers*.⁷

4. Again it is said⁸ that *God desires all men to be saved*. But the Old Law did not suffice for the salvation of man, as has been said.⁹ Therefore it is not appropriate for God to give a law of this kind. Therefore the Old Law does not come from God.

ON THE OTHER HAND, we have¹⁰ the following saying of the Lord, spoken in the course of an address to the Jews, to whom the Old Law was given, *For the sake of your traditions you have made void the word of God*. And a little earlier,¹¹ what leads up to this, *Honour thy father and thy mother*, a saying which manifestly belongs to the Old Law.¹² Therefore the Old Law does come from God.

REPLY: The Old Law was given by the good God, who is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. For the Old Law turned men towards Christ in

Between this 'first' and that 'last' are interposed a number of subordinate means, by which the initial concept is duly put into execution. The very *raison d'être* of such a subordinate means is determined by the ultimate end which was conceived of prior to it, and to the ultimate execution of which it is ordained. Applying this to the Old Law, it is a subordinate means ordained to salvation from God through Christ. As has been said, Christ is the end (*telos*) of the Law (*Romans 10, 4*), and since in his rôle as Saviour he has been ordained as such by God, the Law, as the subordinate means to that end, has come from God also.

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ipse dicit,¹³ *Oportet impleri omnia quæ scripta sunt in lege et psalmis et prophetis de me*; et,¹⁴ *Si crederetis Moysi, crederetis forsitan et mihi: de me enim ille scripsit*. Alio modo, per modum cuiusdam dispositionis, dum, retrahens homines a cultu idololatriæ, concludebat eos sub cultu unius Dei, a quo salvandum erat humanum genus per Christum: unde Apostolus dicit,¹⁵ *Priusquam veniret fides, sub lege custodiebamur conclusi in eam fidem quæ revelanda erat*. Manifestum est autem quod ejusdem est disponere ad finem et ad finem perducere: et dico *ejusdem* per se vel per suos subjectos. Non enim diabolus legem tulisset per quam homines adducerentur ad Christum, per quem erat ejiciendus; secundum illud,¹⁶ *Si Satanæ Satanam ejicit, divisum est regnum ejus*. Et ideo ab eodem Deo a quo facta est salus hominum per gratiam Christi lex vetus data est.

1. Ad primum ergo dicendum quod nihil prohibet aliquid non esse perfectum simpliciter quod tamen est perfectum secundum tempus: sicut dicitur aliquis puer perfectus non simpliciter, sed secundum temporis conditionem. Ita etiam præcepta quæ pueris dantur, sunt quidem perfecta secundum conditionem eorum quibus dantur, etsi non sint perfecta simpliciter. Et talia fuerunt præcepta legis. Unde Apostolus dicit,¹⁷ *Lex pædagogus noster fuit in Christo*.

2. Ad secundum dicendum quod opera Dei perseverant in æternum, quæ sic Deus fecit ut in æternum perseverent: et hæc sunt ea quæ sunt perfecta. Lex autem vetus reprobatur tempore perfectionis gratiæ, non tanquam mala, sed tanquam infirma et inutilis pro isto tempore: quia, ut subditur, *nihil ad perfectum adduxit lex*. Unde dicit Apostolus,¹⁸ *Ubi venit fides, jam non sumus sub pædogogo*.

3. Ad tertium dicendum quod, sicut supra dictum est,¹⁹ Deus aliquando permittit aliquos cadere in peccatum ut exinde humiliantur. Ita etiam voluit talem legem dare quam suis viribus homines implere non possent,

¹³Luke 24, 44¹⁴John 5, 46¹⁵Galatians 3, 23¹⁶Matthew 12, 26¹⁷Galatians 3, 24¹⁸Galatians 3, 24¹⁹1a2ae. 79, 4

^bThis more strictly theological part of the argument may be regarded as a summary of the traditional teaching of the Fathers on the fulfilment of the Old Testament in Christ. First, salvation in Christ sums up Old Testament revelation (cf Irenæus' doctrine of *anakephalaïsis*), so that all of it points to, prefigures and bears witness to him, second, men are predisposed for the final goal of full communion with God in Christ by the monotheism inculcated by the Old Testament. For this directs them to the exclusive worship of the Father of Christ, from whom salvation comes.

^cManifestly St Thomas's choice of the word *concludebat*, here translated 'united', is determined by the occurrence of the word *conclusi* in the quotation from *Galatians* 3, 23 which follows. The Greek original *synkleiomenoi* literally means 'imprisoned'. We were 'imprisoned', i.e. 'deprived of the power to achieve that which was pro-

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two ways.^b The first is by bearing witness to Christ. Hence¹³ he himself says, *Everything written about me in the Law and psalms and prophets must be fulfilled*, and,¹⁴ *If you did believe Moses perhaps you would believe me also, for he wrote of me*. The second way in which the Old Law turned men towards Christ was by predisposing them for him in a certain way. For when it withdrew men from the worship of idols it united^c them in the worship of the one God by whom the human race was to be saved through Christ. Hence St Paul says,¹⁵ *Before faith came we were confined under the law, kept under restraint until faith should be revealed*. Now it is manifest that the person who predisposes someone for a given end ought to be the same as the one who actually causes him to attain to that end. When I say *the same* I mean that he ought to do this either himself or through his subordinates.^d For the devil could not have been the legislator of the Law that brought men to Christ, inasmuch as it was by Christ that he himself was to be cast out according to the text,¹⁶ *If Satan cast out Satan his kingdom is divided*. It follows then that the Old Law was given by the same God by whom the salvation of men was effected through the grace of Christ.

Hence: 1. There is nothing to prevent a thing from being absolutely speaking imperfect even while it is perfect for the purposes of some particular time. Thus we may say that a boy is perfect not in an absolute sense but as far as the condition proper to his age is concerned. Thus too the precepts given to boys are indeed perfect as far as the condition of those to whom they are given is concerned, even though, taken absolutely, they are not perfect. Now the precepts of the Law are of this kind. This is why St Paul says,¹⁷ *The Law was our tutor in Christ*.

2. Those works of God which he made in such a way that they should endure to eternity do in fact so endure. These are the ones which are perfect. But the Old Law is set aside at the time when the fulness or 'perfection' of grace arrives, not because it is bad but because, for the purposes of such a time, it is weak and useless, for, as the passage referred to goes on to say, *The Law made nothing perfect*. This is why St Paul says,¹⁸ *Now that faith has come we are no longer under a tutor*.

3. As has been said previously,¹⁹ God does sometimes allow individuals to fall into sin so that they may thereby be humbled. In the same way too he decided to give men a Law such as they could not fulfil of their own powers. His purpose in doing this was that when men relied excessively on

mised' (cf v. 22). But St Thomas's use of the word suggests that the Jews were 'hedged about' by the Law to keep them from the idolatrous practices of those around them.

^dcf the ensuing article. Again this argument presupposes St Thomas's doctrine of instrumental causality.