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(1a2ae. 106-114)

Cornelius Ernst O.P.

Excerpt

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SUMMA THEOLOGIAE, 1a2ae. 106, 1

CONSEQUENTER CONSIDERANDUM EST de lege Evangelii, quod dicitur lex nova;

et primo de ipsa secundum se;  
secundo de ipsa per comparationem ad legem veterem;  
tertio de his quæ in lege nova continentur.

Quæstio 106. de lege evangelica secundum se

1. qualis sit, utrum scilicet sit scripta, vel indita;
2. de virtute ejus, utrum justificet;
3. de principio ejus, utrum debuerit dari a principio mundi;
4. de termino ejus, utrum scilicet sit duratura usque ad finem,  
an debeat ei alia lex succedere.

*articulus 1. utrum lex nova sit lex scripta*

AD PRIMUM sic proceditur:<sup>1</sup> 1. Videtur quod lex nova sit lex scripta. Lex enim nova est ipsum Evangelium. Sed Evangelium est descriptum, *Joan.*,<sup>2</sup> *Hæc autem scripta sunt, ut credatis.* Ergo lex nova est lex scripta.

2. Præterea, lex indita est lex naturæ, secundum illud *Rom.*,<sup>3</sup> *Naturaliter ea quæ legis sunt, faciunt, qui habent opus legis scriptum in cordibus suis.* Si igitur lex Evangelii esset lex indita, non differret a lege naturæ.

3. Præterea, lex Evangelii propria est eorum qui sunt in statu Novi Testamenti. Sed lex indita communis est et eis qui sunt in Novo Testamento et eis qui sunt in Veteri Testamento; dicitur enim *Sap.*<sup>4</sup> *quod divina sapientia per nationes in animas sanctas se transfert; amicos Dei, et prophetas constituit.* Ergo lex nova non est lex indita.

SED CONTRA est quod lex Nova est lex Novi Testamenti. Sed lex Novi Testamenti est indita in corde; Apostolus enim, ad *Heb.*, inducens

<sup>1</sup>cf art. 2 below. 1a2ae. 107, 1 ad 2 & 3; 108, 1. In *Joan.* 20, 6. In *Rom.* 8, 1. In *II Cor.* 3, 2. In *Heb.* 8, 2

<sup>2</sup>*John* 20, 31

<sup>3</sup>*Romans* 2, 14 f. (conflated)

<sup>4</sup>*Wisdom* 7, 27. The Vulgate has 'peoples' for Septuagint 'generations'.

<sup>5</sup>'Law' for St Thomas is the principle not only of social but also of cosmic order. cf 1a2ae. 91, and compare such archaic notions of principles of cosmic order as Logos, Rta, Tao. See Appendix 1.

<sup>6</sup>*Indita*, implanted, ingrained, innate. St Thomas's answer consists in showing how

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## THE LAW OF THE GOSPEL IN ITSELF

WE MUST NOW CONSIDER the Law<sup>a</sup> of the Gospel, which is called the New Law:

- first, in itself (106);
- second, in relation to the Old Law (107);
- third, what is contained in it (108).

### Question 106. the Law of the Gospel in itself

There are four points of inquiry here:

1. is it a written law or an inward one?
2. as to its power, does it justify?
3. as to the time of its origin, should it have been given from the beginning of the world?
4. as to the time of its end, is it to last till the end of the world, or is it to be succeeded by another law?

*article 1. is the New Law a written law?*

THE FIRST POINT:<sup>1</sup> It seems that the New Law is a written law. For the New Law is the Gospel itself. But the Gospel is written down: *These things are written so that you may believe.*<sup>2</sup> Therefore the New Law is a written law.

2. The inward<sup>b</sup> law is the natural law; as Paul says, *They do by nature what is contained in the law, having what is required by the law written in their hearts.*<sup>3</sup> Therefore if the Law of the Gospel were within, it would not differ from the natural law.

3. The Law of the Gospel belongs properly to those who are in the state of the New Covenant.<sup>c</sup> But the inward law is the common possession of those who are in the Old Covenant as well as those who are in the New; for the divine wisdom *passes among every people into holy souls, and makes them friends of God and prophets.*<sup>4</sup> Therefore the New Law is not an inward law.

ON THE OTHER HAND, the New Law is the Law of the New Covenant. But the law of the New Covenant is inwardly implanted in the heart. For Paul

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the Gospel law can be 'inward' without being 'innate' (inward by nature), by being as it were added on to nature.

<sup>a</sup>*Testamentum*, Covenant, as determining a dispensation, regime, economy, period of saving history, not just the book, to which the term was only applied in the third century.

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## SUMMA THEOLOGIAE, 1a2ae. 106, 1

auctoritatem quæ habetur *Jerem.*, *Ecce dies venient, dicit Dominus, et consummabo super domum Israel, et super domum Juda testamentum novum, et exponens quid sit hoc Testamentum, dicit, Quia hoc est testamentum quod disponam domui Israel: dando leges meas in mentem eorum, et in corde eorum superscribam eas.*<sup>5</sup> Ergo lex nova est lex indita.

RESPONSIO: Dicendum quod *unaquæque res illud videtur esse quod in ea est potissimum*, ut Philosophus dicit.<sup>6</sup> Id autem quod est potissimum in lege Novi Testamenti, et in quo tota virtus ejus consistit, est gratia Spiritus sancti, quæ datur per fidem Christi. Et ideo principaliter lex nova est ipsa gratia Spiritus sancti, quæ datur Christi fidelibus. Et hoc manifeste apparet per Apostolum, qui ad *Rom.*<sup>7</sup> dicit, *Ubi est ergo gloriatio tua? Exclusa est. Per quam legem? Factorum? Non, sed per legem fidei;* ipsam enim fidei gratiam *legem* appellat. Et expressius ad *Rom.*<sup>8</sup> dicitur, *Lex spiritus vitæ in Christo Jesu liberavit me a lege peccati et mortis.* Unde et Augustinus dicit quod *sicut lex factorum scripta fuit in tabulis lapideis, ita lex fidei scripta est in cordibus fidelium;*<sup>9</sup> et alibi dicit, *Quæ sunt leges Dei ab ipso Deo scriptæ in cordibus, nisi ipsa præsentia Spiritus sancti?*<sup>10</sup>

Habet tamen lex nova quædam sicut dispositiva ad gratiam Spiritus sancti, et ad usum hujus gratiæ pertinentia, quæ sunt quasi secundaria in lege nova; de quibus oportuit instrui fideles Christi et verbis et scriptis, tam circa credenda quam circa agenda. Et ideo dicendum est quod principaliter lex nova est lex indita, secundo autem est lex scripta.

1. Ad primum ergo dicendum quod in scriptura Evangelii non continentur nisi ea quæ pertinent ad gratiam Spiritus sancti, vel sicut dispositiva, vel sicut ordinativa ad usum hujus gratiæ. Sicut dispositiva quidem quantum ad intellectum per fidem, per quam datur Spiritus sancti gratia, continentur in Evangelio ea quæ pertinent ad manifestandam divinitatem vel humanitatem Christi. Secundo affectum vero continentur in Evangelio ea quæ pertinent ad contemptum mundi, per quem homo fit capax gratiæ Spiritus sancti. *Mundus enim, idest, amatores mundi, non potest capere Spiritum sanctum*, ut habetur *Joan.*<sup>11</sup> Usus vero spiritualis

<sup>5</sup>*Hebrews* 8, 8 f., quoting *Jeremiah* 31, 31 f.

<sup>6</sup>*Ethic IX*, 8; 1169a2. The tag only remotely resembles Aristotle's original text.

<sup>7</sup>*Romans* 3, 27

<sup>8</sup>*Romans* 8, 2

<sup>9</sup>*De Spiritu et Littera* 24. PL 44, 225

<sup>10</sup>*ibid* 21, 222

<sup>11</sup>*John* 14, 17

<sup>a</sup>The phrase becomes a formula: the grace of the active and abiding presence of the Holy Spirit.

<sup>e</sup>'Through' faith, in the sense that the grace of the Spirit is expressed in and

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quotes the authoritative text of *Jeremiah*, *Behold the days will come, says the Lord, and I will bring to fulfilment a new covenant for the house of Israel and the house of Judah*; and the text goes on to explain this covenant by saying, *For this is the covenant that I will set up with the house of Israel: I will put my laws in their minds and write them upon their hearts*.<sup>5</sup> Therefore the New Law is an inward law.

REPLY: As Aristotle says, *it is plain that each thing can be identified with its predominant characteristic*.<sup>6</sup> Now it is the grace of the Holy Spirit,<sup>d</sup> given through faith in Christ,<sup>e</sup> which is predominant in the law of the New Covenant, and that in which its whole power consists. So before all else the New Law is the very grace of the Holy Spirit, given to those who believe in Christ. This is quite clear from Paul's words, *What then becomes of your boasting? It is excluded. By what law? That of works? No; but by the law of faith*;<sup>7</sup> for he calls the very grace of faith *law*. And still more clearly he says later, *The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death*.<sup>8</sup> So too Augustine says that *as the law of works was written on tables of stone, so the law of faith is written in the hearts of the faithful*.<sup>9</sup> And elsewhere in the same book he says, *What are the laws of God written by God himself in our hearts, if not the very presence of the Holy Spirit*?<sup>10</sup>

There do however belong to the New Law certain elements which in a way dispose us for the grace of the Holy Spirit, and some which are concerned with its exercise. These may be considered secondary in the New Law, and Christ's faithful had to be instructed about them both orally and in writing, both as regards matters of faith and as regards actions. Hence the New Law is first and foremost an inward law, and secondarily a written law.

Hence: 1. There is nothing in the written text<sup>f</sup> of the Gospel except what is concerned with the grace of the Holy Spirit, either by disposing us for it or by providing directions for the exercise of this grace. Thus as regards our minds, we are disposed by faith, through which the grace of the Holy Spirit is bestowed; here belongs everything in the Gospel which is concerned to manifest Christ's divinity or his humanity. As regards our attitudes and attachments, again, the Gospel contains teaching about the contempt of the world, by which man becomes open to the grace of the Holy Spirit; for *the world*—that is, lovers of the world—*cannot receive the Holy Spirit*.<sup>11</sup> On the other hand, the grace of the Spirit is exercised in

realized through the personal act and virtue of faith. Grace is the origin of, not the reward for, faith. For the different senses of *per*, cf 1a. 36, 3.

<sup>f</sup>St Thomas's answer shows that he considers the Gospel primarily as reality and life, and only secondarily as written text, 'Scripture'.

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## SUMMA THEOLOGIAE, 1a2ae. 106, 2

gratiæ est in operibus virtutum, ad quæ multipliciter Scriptura Novi Testamenti homines exhortatur.

2. Ad secundum dicendum quod dupliciter est aliquid inditum homini. Uno modo, pertinens ad naturam humanam, et sic lex naturalis est lex indita homini. Alio modo est aliquid inditum homini quasi naturæ superadditum per gratiæ donum, et hoc modo lex nova est indita homini, non solum indicans quid sit faciendum, sed etiam adjuvans ad implendum.

3. Ad tertium dicendum quod nullus unquam habuit gratiam Spiritus sancti nisi per fidem Christi explicitam vel implicitam. Per fidem autem Christi pertinet homo ad Novum Testamentum. Unde quibuscumque fuit lex gratiæ indita secundum hoc ad Novum Testamentum pertinebant.

*articulus 2. utrum lex nova justificet*

AD SECUNDUM sic proceditur:<sup>1</sup> 1. Videtur quod lex nova non justificet. Nullus enim justificatur, nisi legi Dei obediat, secundum illud ad *Heb.*, *Factus est, scilicet Christus, omnibus obtemperantibus sibi causa salutis æternæ.*<sup>2</sup> Sed Evangelium non semper hoc operatur quod homines ei obediant; dicitur enim *Rom.*, *Non omnes obediunt Evangelio.*<sup>3</sup> Ergo lex nova non justificat.

2. Præterea, Apostolus probat quod lex vetus non justificabat, quia ea adveniente prævaricatio crevit; dicitur enim *Rom.*, *Lex iram operatur; ubi enim non est lex, nec prævaricatio.*<sup>4</sup> Sed multo magis lex nova prævaricationem addidit; majori enim pœna est dignus qui post legem novam datam adhuc peccat, secundum illud *Heb.*, *Irritam quis faciens legem Moysi, sine ulla miseratione, duobus vel tribus testibus moritur; quanto magis putatis deteriora mereri supplicia, qui Filium Dei conculcaverit?* etc.<sup>5</sup> Ergo lex nova non justificat, sicut nec vetus.

3. Præterea, justificare est proprius effectus Dei, secundum illud ad *Rom.*, *Deus est qui justificat.*<sup>6</sup> Sed lex vetus fuit a Deo, sicut et lex nova. Ergo lex nova non magis justificat quam lex vetus.

SED CONTRA est quod Apostolus dicit ad *Rom.*, *Non erubesco Evangelium; virtus enim Dei est in salutem omni credenti.*<sup>7</sup> Non autem est salus nisi justificatis. Ergo lex Evangelii justificat.

RESPONSIO: Dicendum quod, sicut dictum est,<sup>8</sup> ad legem Evangelii duo pertinent. Unum quidem principaliter, scilicet ipsa gratia Spiritus sancti interius data, et quantum ad hoc nova lex justificat. Unde Augustinus dicit, *Ibi, scilicet in Veteri Testamento, lex extrinsecus est posita, qua injusti*

<sup>1</sup>cf *In Rom.* 10, 2. *In II Cor.* 3, 2<sup>2</sup>*Hebrews* 5, 9<sup>3</sup>*Romans* 10, 16<sup>4</sup>*Romans* 4, 15<sup>6</sup>*Hebrews* 10, 28 f.

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virtuous actions, to which the scriptures of the New Covenant exhort us in all sorts of ways.

2. Something can be inward to man in two ways. Firstly, with reference to human nature; in this sense the natural law is inward to man. Secondly, something may be inward to man as though added on to nature by the gift of grace. It is in this sense that the New Law is inward to man; it not only points out to him what he should do, but assists him actually to do it.

3. No one has ever had the grace of the Holy Spirit except by faith in Christ, whether this faith be explicit or implicit. Now by faith in Christ man belongs to the New Covenant. Hence anyone who received the law of grace inwardly by this very fact belonged to the New Covenant.

*article 2. does the New Law justify?\**

THE SECOND POINT:<sup>1</sup> 1. It seems that the New Law does not justify. For no one is justified unless he observes God's law: *He*—that is, Christ—*became the source of salvation to all who obey him.*<sup>2</sup> But the Gospel does not always effect men's obedience to it: *not all obey the Gospel.*<sup>3</sup> Therefore the New Law does not justify.

2. Paul shows in the epistle to the *Romans* that the Old Law did not justify, because when it came in transgression increased; as he says, *The law works wrath; where there is no law there is no transgression either.*<sup>4</sup> But the New Law increased transgression still further; for someone who sins even after the New Law has been given deserves heavier punishment: *Someone who violates the law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much worse punishment do you think a man deserves who has spurned the Son of God etc.*<sup>5</sup> Therefore the New Law does not justify, any more than the Old Law did.

3. Justification has God alone for its proper cause: *It is God who justifies.*<sup>6</sup> But the Old Law was from God just as the New Law is. Therefore the New Law is no more the cause of justification than the Old Law.

ON THE OTHER HAND, Paul says, *I am not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.*<sup>7</sup> Now it is only the justified who obtain salvation. Therefore the Gospel Law justifies.

REPLY: As was said earlier,<sup>8</sup> the Gospel Law involves two things. Primarily, it is the very grace of the Holy Spirit given inwardly. And in this respect the New Law does justify. As Augustine says, *There*—in the Old Covenant—*a law was set up externally, with which the unjust might be threatened;*

<sup>1</sup>Romans 8, 33<sup>2</sup>Romans 1, 16<sup>3</sup>art. 1<sup>4</sup>On justice and justification see Question 113 and Appendix 3.

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*terrerentur; hic, scilicet in Novo Testamento, intrinsecus data est, qua justificarentur*<sup>9</sup>. Aliud pertinet ad legem Evangelii secundario, scilicet documenta fidei et praecepta ordinantia affectum humanum et humanos actus; et quantum ad hoc nova lex non justificat. Unde Apostolus dicit II ad *Cor.*, *Littera occidit, spiritus autem vivificat*,<sup>10</sup> et Augustinus exponit quod per litteram intelligitur quaelibet scriptura extra homines existens, etiam moralium praeceptorum, qualia continentur in Evangelio.<sup>11</sup> Unde etiam littera Evangelii occideret nisi adesset interius gratia fidei sanans.

1. Ad primum ergo dicendum quod illa objectio procedit de lege nova, non quantum ad id quod est principale in ipsa, sed quantum ad id quod est secundarium in ipsa, scilicet quantum ad documenta et praecepta exterius homini proposita, vel verbo vel scripto.

2. Ad secundum dicendum quod gratia Novi Testamenti, etsi adjuvet hominem ad non peccandum, non tamen ita confirmat in bono ut homo peccare non possit; hoc enim pertinet ad statum gloriae. Et ideo, si quis post acceptam gratiam Novi Testamenti peccaverit, majori poena est dignus, tanquam majoribus beneficiis ingratus et auxilio sibi dato non utens; nec tamen propter hoc dicitur quod lex nova *iram operatur*, quia, quantum est de se, sufficiens auxilium dat ad non peccandum.

3. Ad tertium dicendum quod legem novam et veterem unus Deus dedit, sed aliter et aliter; nam legem veterem dedit scriptam in tabulis lapideis, legem autem novam dedit scriptam *in tabulis cordis carnalibus*, ut Apostolus dicit.<sup>12</sup> Proinde, sicut Augustinus dicit, *Litteram istam extra hominem scriptam, et ministrationem mortis, et ministrationem damnationis Apostolus appellat; hanc autem, scilicet Novi Testamenti legem, ministrationem spiritus, et ministrationem iustitiae dicit, quia per donum Spiritus operamur iustitiam, et a praevagationis damnatione liberamur*.<sup>13</sup>

## articulus 3. utrum lex nova debuerit dari a principio mundi

AD TERTIUM sic proceditur:<sup>1</sup> Videtur quod lex nova debuerit dari a principio mundi. *Non enim est personarum acceptio apud Deum*, ut dicitur ad *Rom.*<sup>2</sup> Sed *omnes homines peccaverunt, et egent gloria Dei*, ut dicitur ad *Rom.*<sup>3</sup> Ergo a principio mundi lex Evangelii dari debuit, ut omnibus per eam subveniretur.

<sup>9</sup>De Spiritu et Littera 17. PL 44, 218<sup>11</sup>De Spiritu et Littera 14, 17. PL 44, 215, 219<sup>13</sup>De Spiritu et Littera 18. PL 44, 219<sup>1</sup>cf 1a2ae. 91, 5 ad 2<sup>2</sup>Romans 2, 11<sup>3</sup>Romans 3, 23<sup>10</sup>II Corinthians 3, 6<sup>12</sup>II Corinthians 3, 3

<sup>1</sup>It is difficult to imagine a purer and firmer expression of evangelical truth than this, though, starting from different philosophical presuppositions, someone might prefer to state the distinction between internal and external differently.

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here—in the New Covenant—it is given internally, so that they may be justified by it.<sup>9</sup> The other, secondary, aspect of the Gospel Law is found in the testimonies of the faith and the commandments which order human attachments and human actions. In this respect the New Law does not justify. So Paul says, *The letter kills, but the spirit gives life.*<sup>10</sup> Augustine interpreting this says that by the *letter* is meant any written text external to man, even when it is concerned with moral precepts such as are found in the Gospel.<sup>11</sup> Thus even the Gospel letter kills unless the healing grace of faith is present within.<sup>b</sup>

Hence: 1. The argument here is based not on what is primary in the New Law but on what is secondary in it; that is to say, the testimonies and commandments proposed to man from without, either in speech or in writing.

2. The grace of the New Covenant, although it helps man not to sin, does not confirm him in good in such a way that he cannot sin: this belongs to the state of glory.<sup>c</sup> Therefore if someone should have sinned after receiving the grace of the New Covenant, he deserves a heavier punishment, as someone who is ungrateful for greater benefits and does not make use of the assistance he has been given. But this does not allow us to say that the New Law *works wrath*; for taken in itself, it provides assistance sufficient to avoid sin.

3. The same one God has been the giver of both the Old and the New Law, but not in the same way in each case. For he gave the Old Law in the form of something written on tables of stone, but the New Law he gave us as something written on *the tables of flesh in our hearts*,<sup>12</sup> as Paul puts it. Consequently, as Augustine says, *The Apostle calls that 'letter' written down externally to man a service of death and a service of condemnation. But this, that is to say the law of the New Covenant, he calls a service of the Spirit and a service of justice; for by the gift of the Spirit we work justice, and are set free from the condemnation due to transgression.*<sup>13</sup>

article 3. *should the New Law have been given from the beginning of the world?*<sup>a</sup>

THE THIRD POINT:<sup>1</sup> 1. It seems that the New Law should have been given from the beginning of the world. *For there is no respect of persons with God*, as *Romans* says.<sup>2</sup> But, as the same epistle says later, *all men have sinned and lack the glory of God.*<sup>3</sup> Therefore the Gospel Law should have been given from the beginning of the world, so that its help would have been available to all.

<sup>9</sup>Justification does not imply impeccability. cf 114, 9 below.

<sup>a</sup>St Thomas deals here with one aspect of the 'scandal of particularity'; why should so long a time have elapsed between the Creation (or the Fall) and the fullness of grace in Christ?



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## SUMMA THEOLOGIAE, 1a2ae. 106, 3

2. Præterea, sicut in diversis locis sunt diversi homines, ita etiam in diversis temporibus. Sed Deus, *qui vult omnes homines salvos fieri*, ut dicitur I ad *Tim.*,<sup>4</sup> mandavit Evangelium prædicari in omnibus locis, ut patet *Matt.* et *Marc.*<sup>5</sup> Ergo omnibus temporibus debuit adesse lex Evangelii, ita quod a principio mundi daretur.

3. Præterea, magis est necessaria homini salus spiritualis, quæ est æterna, quam salus corporalis, quæ est temporalis. Sed Deus ab initio mundi providit homini ea quæ sunt necessaria ad salutem corporalem, tradens ejus potestati omnia quæ erant propter hominem creata, ut patet *Gen.*<sup>6</sup> Ergo etiam lex nova, quæ maxime est necessaria ad salutem spiritualem, debuit hominibus a principio mundi dari.

SED CONTRA est quod Apostolus dicit, I ad *Cor.*,<sup>7</sup> *Non prius quod spirituale est, sed quod animale.* Sed lex nova est maxime spiritualis. Ergo lex nova non debuit a principio mundi dari.

RESPONSIO: Dicendum quod triplex ratio potest assignari quare lex nova non debuit dari a principio mundi. Quarum prima est, quia lex nova, sicut dictum est,<sup>8</sup> principaliter est gratia Spiritus sancti, quæ abundanter dari non debuit, antequam impedimentum peccati ab humano genere tolleretur, consummata redemptione per Christum. Unde dicitur *Joan.*, *Nondum erat Spiritus datus, quia Jesus nondum erat glorificatus.*<sup>9</sup> Et hanc rationem manifeste assignat Apostolus ad *Rom.*, ubi, postquam præmiserat de *lege spiritus vitæ*, subjungit, *Deus Filium suum mittens in similitudinem carnis peccati de peccato damnavit peccatum in carne, ut justificatio legis impleretur in nobis.*<sup>10</sup>

Secunda ratio potest assignari ex perfectione legis novæ: non enim aliquid ad perfectum adducitur statim a principio, sed quodam temporali successionis ordine, sicut aliquis prius fit puer et postmodum vir. Et hanc rationem assignat Apostolus ad *Gal.*, *Lex pædagogus noster fuit in Christo, ut ex fide justificemur; at ubi venit fides, jam non sumus sub pædagogo.*<sup>11</sup>

Tertia ratio sumitur ex hoc quod lex nova est lex gratiæ. Et ideo primo oportuit quod homo relinqueretur sibi in statu veteris legis ut in peccatum cadendo, suam infirmitatem cognoscens, recognosceret se gratia indigere. Et hanc rationem assignat Apostolus, ad *Rom.* dicens, *Lex subintravit, ut abundaret delictum. Ubi autem abundavit delictum, superabundavit et gratia.*<sup>12</sup>

<sup>4</sup>I Timothy 2, 4<sup>6</sup>Genesis 1, 26<sup>8</sup>art. 1<sup>10</sup>Romans 8, 2, 3-4<sup>12</sup>Romans 5, 20<sup>b</sup>Salus, health, salvation.<sup>5</sup>Matthew 28, 19. Mark 16, 15<sup>7</sup>I Corinthians 15, 46<sup>9</sup>John 7, 39<sup>11</sup>Galatians 3, 24

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#### THE LAW OF THE GOSPEL IN ITSELF

2. Just as different men are found in different places, so too at different times. But God, *who wishes all men to be saved*,<sup>4</sup> commanded that the Gospel should be preached in every place, as may be gathered from the conclusion of *Matthew* and of *Mark*.<sup>5</sup> Therefore the Gospel Law should have been found at all times, by being given from the beginning of the world.

3. Spiritual well-being,<sup>b</sup> which is eternal, is more necessary to man than bodily well-being, which is temporal. But from the beginning of the world God has provided man with what is necessary for his bodily well-being, subjecting to his authority everything which had been created on man's behalf, as we see from *Genesis*.<sup>6</sup> Therefore the New Law too, which is supremely necessary for spiritual well-being, should have been given from the beginning of the world.

ON THE OTHER HAND, Paul says, *Not what is spiritual is first, but what is physical*.<sup>7</sup> But the New Law is spiritual in the highest degree. Therefore the New Law should not have been given from the beginning of the world.

REPLY: Three reasons may be given to show why the New Law should not have been given from the beginning of the world. Firstly because, as was said above,<sup>8</sup> the New Law is first and foremost the grace of the Holy Spirit. This grace should not have been given in abundance before the removal of the impediment of sin from the human race, once redemption had been achieved in Christ; so we find in *John*, *The Spirit had not yet been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified*.<sup>9</sup> This is clearly the reason put forward by Paul, when, after speaking of *the law of the Spirit of life*, he goes on, *God, sending his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin condemned sin in the flesh, so that the justification of the law might be fulfilled in us*.<sup>10</sup>

The second reason may be found in the perfection of the New Law. For nothing is brought to perfection right at the very beginning, but rather in a certain temporal sequence; so one is first a boy, then becomes a man. This reason is given by Paul: *The law has been our tutor in Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor*.<sup>11</sup>

The third reason is that the New Law is a law of grace. So it was right that man should first be left to himself under the regime of the Old Law, in order that by falling into sin and conscious of his own weakness, he should recognize his need for grace. This reason is given by Paul, where he says, *The law came in that sin might abound; but where sin abounded, grace abounded still more*.<sup>12</sup>