

QUESTION 108

The Contents of the New Law

Next we have to consider what is contained in the New Law. And on this topic there are four questions: (1) Should the New Law command or prohibit certain exterior works? (2) Does the New Law adequately command or prohibit exterior acts? (3) Does the New Law appropriately direct men with respect to interior acts? (4) Is it appropriate for the New Law to add counsels over and beyond its precepts?

Article 1

Should the New Law command or prohibit any exterior acts?

It seems that the New Law should not command or prohibit any exterior acts:

Objection 1: The New Law is the Gospel of the kingdom—this according to Matthew 24:14 (“This Gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world”). But the kingdom of God consists not in exterior acts, but only in interior acts—this according to Luke 17:21 (“The kingdom of God is within you”) and Romans 14:17 (“The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but justice and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit”). Therefore, the New Law should not command or prohibit any exterior acts.

Objection 2: As Romans 8:2 says, the New Law is “the Law of the Spirit.” But as 2 Corinthians 3:17 says, “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.” But there is no freedom where man is obligated to do or to avoid certain exterior works. Therefore, the New Law does not contain any commands or prohibitions with respect to exterior acts.

Objection 3: All exterior acts are thought of as involving the hand, just as interior acts involve the mind. But the difference posited between the New Law and the Old Law is that “the Old Law restrains the hand and the New Law restrains the mind.” Therefore, in the New Law prohibitions and precepts ought to be posited not with respect to exterior acts, but only with respect to interior acts.

But contrary to this: Through the New Law men are made children of the light; hence, John 12:36 says, “Believe in the light, in order that you might be children of the light.” But it is fitting for children of the light to do works of light and to cast aside works of darkness—this according to Ephesians 5:8 (“You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of the light”). Therefore, the New Law should prohibit some exterior works and should command others.

I respond: As has been explained (q. 106, a. 1), the New Law is principally the grace of the Holy Spirit, which is manifested in faith working through love. But men attain this grace through the Son of God made man; for grace filled His humanity in the first instance, and from there it flowed to us. Hence, John 1:14 says, “The Word was made flesh,” and later adds, “He was full of grace and of truth,” and further on, “Of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace.” Later on, John 1:17 adds, “Grace and truth were made by Christ.”

And so it is appropriate that (a) the grace flowing from the incarnate Word comes down to us through certain exterior and sensible things and that (b) from this interior grace, through which the flesh is made subject to the spirit, certain sensible works are produced.

So, then, there are two possible ways for exterior works to involve grace.

First, they lead us in a some way to grace. These are the works of the sacraments instituted under the New Law, such as Baptism, the Eucharist, and others of this sort.

Second, there are the exterior works produced by the prompting of grace. And among these works there is a distinction to be noted.

For some of them have a necessary agreement with or necessary opposition to the interior grace that

consists in faith working through love. Exterior works of this sort are commanded or prohibited in the New Law. For instance, the confession of one's faith is commanded and the denial of one's faith is prohibited. For Matthew 10:22-23 says, "If anyone acknowledges me before men, I will likewise acknowledge him before my Father. But if anyone denies me before men, I will likewise deny him before my Father."

By contrast, there are other works that do not have a necessary opposition to or agreement with faith operating through love. Such works were not commanded or prohibited in the New Law at the first institution of the Law; instead, the Lawgiver, viz., Christ, has left them up to each individual, to the extent that he is charged with the responsibility. And so with respect to such works, each individual is free to determine what is expedient for him to do or to avoid, and each individual who has responsibility for others (*praesidens*) is free to direct his subordinates with regard to what they should do or avoid in the case of such works. Hence, in this respect the Law of the Gospel is also called a 'law of freedom', since the Old Law determined many things and left few things to be determined by the freedom of men.

Reply to objection 1: The kingdom of God consists principally in interior acts, but, as a result, all the things without which interior acts cannot exist are likewise relevant to the kingdom of God. For instance, if the kingdom of God is interior justice and peace and spiritual joy, then all the exterior acts which are incompatible with justice or peace or spiritual joy must be incompatible with the kingdom of God. And so all such acts have to be forbidden in the kingdom of God.

By contrast, acts that are related neutrally to interior justice and peace and spiritual joy, e.g., eating this or that food, are such that the kingdom of God does not consist in them. And this is why the Apostle prefaces [the reference to justice and peace and joy] by saying, "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink."

Reply to objection 2: According to the Philosophers in *Metaphysics* 1, "the free is what is a cause of itself." Therefore, someone acts freely when he acts 'from himself' (*ex seipso*). Now when a man does something from a habit that agrees with his nature, he does it from himself, since a habit inclines one in the manner of a nature. By contrast, if the habit ran contrary to his nature, then the man would not act insofar as it is he himself, but instead he would act in accord with a certain corruption that had supervened on him. Therefore, since the grace of the Holy Spirit is like an interior habit infused into us and inclining us toward acting uprightly, it makes us do freely those things that agree with grace and to avoid those things that are contrary to grace.

Thus, there are two senses in which the New Law is called a 'law of freedom':

First, because it does not restrict us in doing or avoiding things except for those that are of themselves (*de se*) either necessary for salvation or incompatible with salvation; these things fall under a either a commandment of the Law or a prohibition of the Law.

Second, because it makes us fulfill even these precepts or prohibitions freely, insofar as we fulfill them because of the interior prompting of grace.

It is for these two reasons that the New Law is called a "law of perfect freedom" (James 1:25).

Reply to objection 3: In restraining the mind from disordered movements, the New Law must also restrain the hand from disordered acts, since these acts are the effects of interior movements.

Article 2

Does the New Law give adequate direction to exterior acts?

It seems that the New Law does not give adequate direction to exterior acts:

Objection 1: The New Law seems principally to involve faith working through love—this

according to Galatians 5:6 (“In Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor lack of circumcision counts for anything; rather, it is faith that works through love”). But the New Law made explicit certain beliefs (*credenda*) that were not explicit in the Old Law, e.g., the belief in the Trinity. Therefore, it should likewise have added some exterior moral acts that had not been specified in the Old Law.

Objection 2: As was explained above (q. 102, a. 4), under the Old Law it was not only sacraments that were instituted, but also sacred things. But under the New Law, even if certain sacraments have been instituted, still, no sacred things seem to have been instituted by our Lord—e.g., things having to do with the sanctification of a temple or of vases, or even things having to do with the celebration of sacred feasts. Therefore, the New Law has not given adequate direction concerning exteriors.

Objection 3: Just as under the Old Law there were certain observances involving ministers of God, so too there were certain observances that involved the people—as was explained above (q. 102, a. 6) when the ceremonial precepts of the Old Law were being discussed. But under the New Law certain observances seem to have been handed down to the ministers of God, as is clear from Matthew 10:9 (“Do not take with you gold or silver or money in your wallets,” and so on, along with the other things that follow in that place and other things that are said in Luke 9 and 10). Therefore, there should have also been some observances involving the lay faithful (*populus fidelis*) instituted under the New Law.

Objection 4: In the Old Law there were judicial precepts in addition to the moral and ceremonial precepts. But no judicial precepts are handed down in the New Law. Therefore, the New Law did not give adequate direction to exterior works.

But contrary to this: In Matthew 7:24, “Everyone who hears my words and keeps them is like a wise man who built his house on rock.” But the wise builder did not overlook anything that was necessary for his building. Therefore, everything that involves salvation is adequately set down in the sayings of Christ.

I respond: As has been explained (a. 1), in the case of exterior acts the New Law should command or prohibit only (a) acts through which grace is introduced or (b) acts which necessarily involve the correct use of grace.

Because we are able to obtain grace only through Christ and not on our own, our Lord Himself instituted by Himself the sacraments through which we obtain grace, viz., Baptism, the Eucharist, the Ordination of ministers of the New Law (by appointing the apostles and the seventy-two disciples), Penance, and indissoluble Matrimony. He also promised Confirmation through the mission of the Holy Spirit. In addition, we read that, by His institution, the apostles cured the sick by anointing them with oil (Mark 6:13). These are the sacraments of the New Law.

Now the correct use of grace occurs through works of charity. Insofar as such works have a necessary connection with virtue, they pertain to the moral precepts, which were also handed down in the Old Law. Hence, on this score, it was not appropriate for the New Law to add anything to the Old Law with respect to exterior acts. On the other hand, as was explained above (q. 99. 4), the specification of exterior works in relation to the worship of God pertains to the ceremonial precepts of the Law, whereas the specification of such works in relation to one’s neighbor pertains to the judicial precepts. And so, since these specifications are not in themselves necessarily connected with interior grace, which the New Law consists in, they do not fall under a precept of the New Law, but are instead left up to human discretion. Some of these specifications are left up to the lower ranks and have to do with each individual taken one by one, whereas others are left up to temporal or spiritual authorities (*praelati*) and have to do with the common welfare.

So, then, the only exterior works that the New Law ought to determine by commands and prohibitions are (a) the sacraments and (b) moral precepts that of themselves involve the essence (*ratio*)

of virtue, e.g., ‘Do not kill’, ‘Do not steal’, and others of this sort.

Reply to objection 1: The things that pertain to faith lie beyond human reason; hence, we are unable to arrive at them except through grace. And so when a more abundant grace comes along, more beliefs need to be made clear.

By contrast, we are directed to the works of the virtues by our rational nature, which, as was explained above (q. 19, a. 3 and q. 63, a. 2), is a measure (*regula*) of human action. And so in the case of these works there is no need for any precepts to be given beyond the moral precepts of the Law, which come from the dictate of reason.

Reply to objection 2: The grace given in the sacraments of the New Law is from Christ alone, and so the sacraments had to be instituted by Him.

By contrast, no grace is given in the sacred things, e.g., in the consecration of a temple or of an altar or of other things of this sort, or even in the very celebration of solemn feasts. And so because such things do not have a necessary relation to interior grace, our Lord left it up to the faithful to institute them by their own choice.

Reply to objection 3: Our Lord gave the precepts in question to the apostles not as ceremonial observances, but as moral statutes. There are two possible ways to understand this.

First, according to Augustine in *De Consensu Evangelistarum*, they were given not as precepts, but as permissions (*concessionones*). For instance, he permitted them to undertake the role of preaching without a wallet or a staff or other things of this sort, since they had the authority to receive the necessities of life from those to whom they preached; this is why he added, “For the laborer is deserving of his food.” However, one who has the role of preaching does not sin, but instead goes beyond his duty (*supererogat*), if, as Paul did, he brings along with him what he will live on and does not receive supplies from those to whom he preaches the Gospel.

The second way to understand these precepts, following the explanation of other saints, is that they are temporary statutes given to the apostles for that time during which they were being sent forth to preach in Judea before Christ’s passion. For the disciples, still like little ones under Christ’s care, needed to receive special instructions from Christ, in the way that subordinates need instructions from their superiors—and this mainly because they had to practice little by little at abandoning temporal cares, so that they might thereby become fit for preaching the Gospel throughout the whole world. And given that the status of the Old Law still persisted and that they had not yet attained the perfect freedom of the Spirit, it is not surprising that our Lord instituted certain determinate modes of living. When the passion was imminent, He abrogated these statutes, since the disciples had by that time been adequately trained through them. Hence, at Luke 22:35-36 our Lord said, “When I sent you without a sack or wallet or shoes, were you lacking anything?” And they replied, “No.” And then He said to them, “But now let one who has a sack take it, and the same with a wallet.” For the time of perfect freedom was already imminent, and so they were left entirely to their own judgment in those matters that did not of themselves have a necessary connection with virtue.

Reply to objection 4: Likewise, the judicial precepts, considered in themselves, have a necessary connection with virtue only with respect to the general nature of justice and not with respect to the particular specifications. And so our Lord left it up to those who were going to have spiritual or temporal care of others to specify the judicial precepts. However, as will be noted below (a. 3), He did explain certain of the judicial precepts of the Old Law because of the Pharisees’ defective interpretations of them.

Article 3

Does the New Law give man adequate direction with respect to interior acts?

It seems that the New Law does not give man adequate direction with respect to interior acts:

Objection 1: There are ten precepts of the Decalogue ordering man toward God and neighbor. But our Lord brought only three of them to perfection, viz., the prohibition of homicide, the prohibition of adultery, and the prohibition of bearing false witness (*periurium*). Therefore, it seems that He gave man inadequate direction by failing to bring the other precepts to perfection.

Objection 2: In the Gospel our Lord gave no direction concerning the judicial precepts except for those having to do with divorce, the punishment of retaliation, and the persecution of enemies. But as was explained above (q. 105), there were many other judicial precepts in the Old Law. Therefore, in this respect He gave inadequate direction to the lives of men.

Objection 3: In the Old Law there were ceremonial precepts in addition to the moral and judicial precepts. Our Lord gave no direction at all concerning ceremonial precepts. Therefore, it seems that He has given inadequate direction.

Objection 4: Having a good interior disposition of mind involves a man's not doing good works for the sake of temporal ends. But there are many temporal goods other than human respect, and there are likewise many good works other than fasting, almsgiving, and praying. Therefore, it was inappropriate for our Lord to teach, concerning just these three good works, that we ought to avoid the glory of human respect, without mentioning any other earthly goods.

Objection 5: It is naturally instilled in man that he should be solicitous about those things that are necessary for him to live, a solicitude that other animals also share in common with man; hence, Proverbs 6:6-8 says, "Go to the ant, O sluggard, and consider her ways She prepares her food in the summer and stores up provisions in a harvest." But every precept that is given in opposition to an inclination of nature is evil, since it is contrary to the natural law. Therefore, it seems inappropriate for our Lord to have prohibited solicitude about food and clothing.

Objection 6: No act of virtue should be prohibited. But judgment is an act of justice—this according to Psalm 93:15 ("..... until justice be turned into judgment"). Therefore, it seems inappropriate for our Lord to have prohibited judgment.

And so it seems that the New Law has given inadequate direction with respect to interior acts.

But contrary to this: In *De Sermone Domine in Monte* Augustine says, "Notice that when He said, 'Whoever hears these words of mine', this is a sufficient indication that our Lord's sermon is complete, containing all the precepts by which the Christian life is shaped."

I respond: As is clear from the passage cited from Augustine, our Lord's Sermon on the Mount contains a comprehensive instruction for the Christian life in which the interior movements of man are perfectly directed. For after declaring beatitude to be the end and commending the authority of the apostles, through whom the doctrine of the Gospel was to be promulgated (Luke 6:12-17), He gives directions for the interior movements of man, first with respect to oneself and then with respect to one's neighbor.

As regards oneself, He does this in two ways, corresponding to man's two interior movements with respect to action (*de agendis*), viz., (a) willing the action and (b) intending the end. Hence, he first directs man's willing of an action in accord with the different precepts of the Law. More specifically, He directs that one should abstain not only from exterior works that are evil in themselves (*secundum se mala*), but from evil interior acts of will as well, and also from occasions for evil acts of will. He then directs man's intentions, teaching that in the good acts we do, we should seek neither human glory nor worldly riches, i.e., we should not seek to build up our treasure on earth.

Now after this He directs man's interior movement with respect to his neighbor. More specifically he directs that we should not pass judgment rashly or unjustly or presumptuously; nor, on the other hand, should we be remiss toward our neighbor in such a way that we entrust him with sacred things when he is unworthy.

Lastly, He teaches us the manner in which the Gospel doctrine should be fulfilled, viz., by imploring God's help, by making the effort to enter through the narrow gate of perfect virtue, and by exercising caution in order that we not be corrupted by those who would seduce us (*a seductoribus*). And He teaches us that observing His commandments is necessary for virtue, and that it is not sufficient merely to make a confession of faith, or to work miracles, or merely to hear His word.

Reply to objection 1: Our Lord brought to perfection those precepts of the Law which the Scribes and Pharisees had an incorrect understanding of. This occurred mainly with respect to three precepts of the Law. For in the case of the prohibitions against adultery and homicide, they thought that the exterior act alone was prohibited, and not the interior desire. They believed this more with regard to homicide and adultery than with regard to stealing and bearing false witness, because the movement of anger that leads to homicide and the movement of concupiscence that leads to adultery seemed to them to be somehow in us by nature, whereas this was not the case with the desire to steal or to bear false witness.

Still, they had a false understanding of perjury. To be sure, they believed that bearing false witness is a sin, but they believed that taking oaths was desirable in itself and should frequently be done, since it seems to involve reverence for God. And so our Lord showed that the taking of oaths is not to be desired as a good, but that it is better to speak without oaths unless necessity compels one to.

Reply to objection 2: There were two ways in which the Scribes and the Pharisees were mistaken about the judicial precepts.

First, there were certain acts handed down as *permissible* in the Law of Moses which they took to be *righteous* in themselves, viz., divorcing one's wife and taking usurious interest from outsiders. And so our Lord prohibited divorcing one's wife (Matthew 5:32), along with the taking of usurious interest, saying "Lend without expecting something in return" (Luke 6:35).

The second way in which they were mistaken was in believing that certain things that the Old Law had directed to be done for the sake of justice were to be done out of either (a) an appetite for revenge or (b) a desire for temporal things or (c) a hatred of one's enemies. And this involved three precepts.

For they believed that the desire for revenge was licit because of the precept that had been given concerning retaliation as a punishment. However, this precept had been given to preserve justice and not so that a man might seek revenge. And so our Lord, in order to exclude this interpretation, teaches that a man's mind ought to be prepared so that, if necessary, he will be ready to suffer many things.

Again, they considered the movement of sense desire licit because of those judicial precepts in which, as was explained above (q. 105, a. 2, ad 9), the restitution of a thing that had been stolen (*restitutio rei ablatae*) had to be made along with something additional. Now the Law commanded this in order to maintain justice, and not in order to make room for greed (*cupiditas*). And so our Lord teaches that we should not demand what belongs to us out of greed, but that we should be ready, if necessary, to hand over even more.

Again, they believed that the impulse to hatred was licit because of those precepts of the Law that had been given about the killing of enemies. As was explained above (q. 105, a. 3, ad 4), the Law prescribed this in order to fulfill justice and not in order to fully satisfy one's hatred. And so our Lord teaches that we should have love for our enemies and that we should be ready, if necessary, even to do good to them.

As Augustine explains, these precepts are to be taken "as a preparation of the mind."

Reply to objection 3: It was fitting for the moral precepts to remain in their entirety under the New Law, since they involve the essence of virtue in themselves. The judicial precepts, on the other

hand, did not necessarily remain in the manner in which the Law specified; instead, it was left up to the judgment of men whether they should be specified in the same way or some other way. And so our Lord gave us adequate direction concerning these two kinds of precepts.

However, the observance of the ceremonial precepts was completely done away with because of the fulfillment of the reality. And so in His general teaching He did not give any direction with respect to precepts of this sort. However, in other places He shows that the entire corporeal worship which had been specified under the Law had to be changed into spiritual worship. This is clear from John 4:21-23, where He said, “The hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem, but true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth.”

Reply to objection 4: All worldly things fall under three headings, viz., honors, riches, and pleasures. This is in accord with 1 John 2:16, “All that is in the world is concupiscence of the flesh”—which has to do with pleasures of the flesh—“and concupiscence of the eyes”—which involves riches—“and pride of life”—which pertains to the ambition for fame and honor.

Now the Law did not promise superfluous pleasures of the flesh; rather, it prohibited them. On the other hand, it did promise lofty honor and an abundance of riches; for with respect to the former, Deuteronomy 28:1 says, “If you listen to the voice of the Lord your God, He will exalt you above all the nations,” and with respect to the latter, it adds a little later, “He will make you abound with every kind of good.” The Jews understood these promises perversely (*prave*) to mean that they should serve God for the sake of these things as an end.

And so our Lord excluded this understanding. He taught, first of all, that the works of virtue should not be done for the sake of human glory. And He proposed three such works, which all the others fall under. For all the things that someone does to restrain himself in his sense desires fall under *fasting*; and whatever is done because of love of one’s neighbor falls under *almsgiving*; and all the things done for the sake of worshiping God fall under *prayer*. Now He posits these three works in particular because they are the principal ones and the ones through which men are especially wont to strive for glory.

Second, He taught that we should not set up riches as our end when He said, “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth” (Matthew 6:19).

Reply to objection 5: Our Lord did not prohibit necessary solicitude, but instead prohibited disordered solicitude. Now there are four types of disordered solicitude concerning temporal goods that should be avoided.

First, we should not take temporal goods as our end, and we should not serve God for the sake of necessary food and clothing. Hence, He says, “Do not store up for yourself treasures”

Second, we should not be solicitous about temporal goods in a way that involves our despairing of God’s help. Hence, our Lord says, “Your Father knows that you need all these things” (Matthew 6:32).

Third, our solicitude should not be presumptuous, as when a man becomes confident that he himself, through his own solicitude, can procure the necessities of life without God’s help. Our Lord rules this out by saying that a man cannot add to his own height (Matthew 6:27).

Fourth, a man anticipates the time of solicitude, so that he is solicitous at the present moment about what pertains to the cares of the future and not to the cares of the present moment. Hence, He says, “Do not be solicitous about tomorrow” (Matthew 6:34).

Reply to objection 6: Our Lord did not prohibit the sort of judgment that belongs to justice, without which what is sacred could not be taken away from those who are unworthy. Rather, He prohibits disordered judgment, as has been explained.

Article 4

Is it appropriate for certain determinate counsels to be proposed in the New Law?

It seems that it is inappropriate for certain determinate counsels (*consilia aliqua determinata*) to be proposed in the New Law:

Objection 1: As was explained when we talked about counsel (q. 14, a. 2), counsels are given about things that are expedient for an end. But it is not the case that the same things are expedient for everyone. Therefore, certain determinate counsels should not have been proposed for everyone.

Objection 2: Counsels are given with respect to a better good. But there are no determinate grades of better goods. Therefore, determinate counsels ought not to be given.

Objection 3: Counsels have to do with the perfection of a life. But obedience has to do with the perfection of a life. Therefore, it is inappropriate that in the Gospel a counsel is not given for obedience.

Objection 4: Among the precepts there are many that pertain to the perfection of a life, such as our Lord's saying, "Love your enemies," along with the precepts He gave to the apostles in Matthew 10. Therefore, it is inappropriate for counsels to be given in the New Law, both because not all of them are posited, and also because they are not distinct from the precepts.

But contrary to this: The counsels of a wise friend afford great assistance—this according to Proverbs 27:9 ("Ointments and various perfumes delight the heart, and the good counsels of a friend gladden the soul"). But Christ especially is wise and a friend. Therefore, His counsels have the greatest usefulness and are appropriate.

I respond: The difference between a counsel and a precept is that a precept implies necessity, whereas a counsel is left up to the choice of the one to whom it is given. And so it was appropriate that counsels should be added to the precepts in the New Law, which is a law of freedom, but not in the Old Law, which was a law of servitude. Therefore, the precepts of the New Law must be understood to have been given about things that are necessary for attaining the end of eternal beatitude, toward which the New Law directly leads one. By contrast, the counsels have to concern things through which a man is able to attain the end in question in a better and more expeditious manner.

Now man is situated between the things of this world and the spiritual goods in which eternal beatitude consists, so that the more he clings to the one, the more he withdraws from the other, and vice versa. Therefore, someone who totally clings to the things of this world, in the sense that he sets them up as his end and takes them as the reasons for and measures of his actions, falls away entirely from spiritual goods. And so it is a disorder of this sort that is excluded by the precepts. However, a man need not totally cast off the things of the world in order to attain the end of eternal beatitude, since a man who makes use of the things of this world can attain eternal beatitude as long as he does not set them up as his end. And it is about this matter that the counsels of the Gospel are given.

Now as is clear from 1 John 2: 16, the goods of this world that are involved in the practice of human life are of three types, viz., (a) the riches of exterior goods, which pertain to the concupiscence of the eyes; (b) carnal pleasures, which pertain to the concupiscence of the flesh; and (c) and honors, which pertain to pride of life. The evangelical counsels involve giving up all three of these in their entirety, to the extent that this is possible. Every sort of religious life (*religio*) that professes the state of perfection is based on these three counsels. For wealth is given up through *poverty*, carnal pleasures are given up through *perpetual chastity*, and pride of life is given up through *obedience*.

Now when these three are observed absolutely speaking, then they pertain to the proposed counsels in an unqualified way. On the other hand, the observance of any of them in a special case involves the counsels in a qualified way, viz., in that particular case. For instance, if a man gives alms to someone who is poor when he is not obligated to do so, then he is following the counsel with respect to that deed.

Similarly, when someone abstains from carnal pleasures for a fixed period of time in order to make room for prayer, then he is following the counsel during that time. Similarly, when someone does not follow his own wishes with respect to some action that he could licitly perform, then he is following the counsel in that particular case—if, say, he does good to his enemies when he is not obligated to, or if he forgives an offense for which he could justly demand retribution (*vindicta*).

And in this way all the particular counsels fall under the three general and perfect counsels.

Reply to objection 1: The counsels mentioned above are of themselves expedient for everyone, but because some individuals lack the right disposition, it happens that the counsels are not expedient for a given individual, since his affections are not inclined toward them. And so when our Lord proposes the evangelical counsels, he always mentions the fitness of men for observing the counsels. For instance, when He is giving the counsel of perpetual poverty in Matthew 19:21, He begins by saying, “If you wish to be perfect,” and then He adds, “..... go and sell all that you have.” Similarly, when He was giving the counsel of perpetual chastity, after He had said, “There are eunuchs who have castrated themselves for the sake of the kingdom of heaven,” He immediately added, “Let him who can take it, take it.” Similarly, in 1 Corinthians 7:35 the Apostle, having given the counsel of virginity, says, “I am telling you this for your benefit, and not to set a trap for you.”

Reply to objection 2: It is not determinate just which particular goods are better in each case. But it is determinate which general goods are better simply and absolutely speaking. And, as has been explained, it is these goods that all the particular goods fall under.

Reply to objection 3: Our Lord is understood to have given the counsel of obedience when He said, “..... and let him follow me” (Matthew 16:24). We follow Him not only by imitating His works, but also by obeying His commandments—this according to John 10:27 (“My sheep listen to my voice and follow me”).

Reply to objection 4: If the things our Lord says about genuine love of enemies and other such things in Matthew 5 and Luke 6 are taken to refer to *the preparation of the mind*, then they are necessary for salvation—viz., that a man be ready to do good to his enemies and to do other things of this sort when necessity requires it. And in this sense they are counted as precepts.

On the other hand, as has been explained, it pertains to the counsels that a man should promptly do good to his enemies in actuality, where there is no special necessity for doing so.

Now as was explained above, the things that are posited in Matthew 10 and Luke 9 and 10 were certain precepts of discipline for that time, or certain permissions. And so they are not taken to be counsels.