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### St. Paul: Liberty and Law

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# PERSPECTIVES

*Stanislas Lyonnet, S.J.*

## ST. PAUL: LIBERTY AND LAW

ST. PAUL'S assertion admits no compromise: The Christian vocation is a vocation to liberty. The Christian is a son, not a hireling, not a slave. "You have been called to liberty, brethren," he writes to the Galatians. And again: "If you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law" (5:13, 18). These proclamations, and others like them, were a source of scandal, not only to the Jews, but even to some of the first Christians. That St. Paul found himself the object of latent hostility, or at least of a painful lack of understanding, from the very beginning of his missionary activity at Antioch about the year 50 until, it would seem, his last days, was mainly, if not solely, due to his attitude toward the Law and to his preaching of Christian liberty.<sup>1</sup> It is this attitude that in our own day continues to alienate those Jews who are sincerely drawn to the person of Christ. True, when circumstances required it, he could make himself all things to all men, even a Jew to the Jews in order to win them (see 1 Cor 9:20)<sup>2</sup> but, as the second chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians indicates, he was unyielding whenever the principle of Christian liberty was at stake. For him it was no secondary doctrine, no side issue; the whole religion of Christ was in the balance.

But it is necessary to understand the precise nature of the liberty he preached. His controversy with the Judaizers, especially in the Epistles to the Galatians and to the Romans, gave him ample opportunity to set forth his ideas as completely as he wished, but his reflections, worked

1. Among the many indications of this opposition to be found in St. Paul's letters, there is the moving plea of Phil 1:15-17, and the anxiety that beset the Apostle as he was about to hand over to the mother church in Jerusalem the collection he had so tirelessly gathered among the churches of the diaspora (see Rom 15:25-31).

2. There is no reason, therefore, to doubt the account of Timothy's circumcision (see Ac 16:3) nor that of St. Paul's compliance in Jerusalem with the wishes of St. James (see 21:24).

out as they were in very particular historical circumstances, might seem to deal with problems now out of date. Still, I am persuaded that, with a little attention, a doctrine can be extracted from St. Paul's arguments that has undeniable validity and importance for our own day. This doctrine might be summed up in these words: The Christian who is led by the Holy Spirit, and precisely to the extent that he is led by the Spirit, finds himself freed, in Christ, from the Law of Moses; he is freed from it not only as the Law of Moses, but as law. He is delivered from any law that constrains or coerces (I do not say *binds*) him from without; yet, this in no way makes him an amoral being, outside the realm of good and bad.

Perfectly coherent, this doctrine is, despite appearances, clear and simple as well. It is one that Catholic tradition repeats unceasingly, particularly in the wake of St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas, to mention only those two Doctors of the Church. If this doctrine of freedom always seems new to us, it is because in everyday life we are apt to forget it.

#### DELIVERANCE FROM LAW

WHEN he speaks of law, St. Paul obviously has in mind, above all, that Law which for him and for his Jewish contemporaries was uniquely worthy of the title, the legislation given on Mount Sinai. To measure the offense his statements must needs have given to his fellow Jews, we only have to recall the veneration, the honor, with which they surrounded the Torah. Having in their minds become identified with the divine wisdom, the Law itself could proclaim:

*"Before all ages, in the beginning, He created me,  
and through all ages I shall not cease to be. . . .*

*Come to me, all you that yearn for me,  
and be filled with my fruits. . . .*

*He who eats of me will hunger still,  
he who drinks of me will thirst for more;  
He who obeys me will not be put to shame,  
he who serves me will never fail."*

*All this is true of the book of the Most High's covenant  
the Law which Moses commanded us. . . .*

(Ecclus 24:9, 18, 20-22)

The Law was the word of God, the water that slakes all thirst, the life-giving bread, the vine laden with delectable fruit; in it were hidden the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. In short, the Law held the place St. John and St. Paul were rightly to announce as that of the Christ.<sup>3</sup>

But from this Law the Christian has been delivered, St. Paul unequivocally declares: "You are not under the Law but under grace" (Rom 6:14). A wife is bound to her husband as long as he is alive, but, when he dies, is completely free from the law that bound her to him, so that she is not an adulteress if she marries another. In like manner the Christian, united to Christ dead and risen, is dead to the Law, delivered from it, no longer its subject (see Rom 7:1-6). But had the Law no role to play in the history of the chosen people? Indeed, but it was the thankless one of a jailer, or of a pedagogue, the slave whose task it was, not to teach the children, but to lead them to their teacher (see Gal 3:23-24). Beyond this, St. Paul paradoxically asserts that the Law, which the Jews revere as the source of life, has been imposed by God on man to bring him death. The economy of the Law was not that of a blessing but of a curse (see Gal 3:10).

"What then was the Law?" he asks in the Epistle to the Galatians (3:19), and his answer is that it was given to make room for transgression. This was a shocking statement, even for Christian readers, and well-meaning copyists very soon tried to soften its harshness.<sup>4</sup> In spite of the context, many ancient commentators, both Greek and Latin, interpreted the Apostle as saying that the Law had been enacted to repress, reduce, or curb transgressions, but this is an impossible subterfuge.<sup>5</sup> The text is concerned with provoking transgressions, not with repressing them.

Is this an extravagance? Is it a paradox? Not at all! It is true that the Epistle to the Romans offers a more carefully worked out argument

3. This theme is found throughout St. John's Gospel, also in Col 2:3. Father Joseph Bonsirven, S.J., aptly remarks that a Christian reading the writings of the rabbis gains the impression that the Law is to them what Christ is to him. (See "Judaïsme Palestinien au temps de Jésus Christ," *Dictionnaire de la bible, Supplément*, IV, 1185.)

4. The Chester Beatty Papyrus, oldest witness of the direct tradition, has a text from which the word "transgression" has disappeared: "Why then the law of works until the offspring should come . . . ?" Others interpret this sentence differently: "Why then the law of works? It was enacted until the offspring should come. . . ."

5. Among the ancient commentators are such outstanding ones as St. Chrysostom, Theodoret, St. Jerome, and Pelagius.

(see Rom 5:20-21; 7:5-23). There the Apostle's thought acquires a richness and balance that the impassioned, polemic tones of his earlier Letter to the Galatians prevented him from reaching. His teaching, however, remains unchanged. What is more, the dialectic of Romans brings out St. Paul's idea with even greater precision. Emancipation from the Law is one of the essential links, indeed, the final one, of his argument: Freed from sin, from death, and from the flesh, the Christian cannot be saved unless he is also freed from the Law; only this final liberation will dispossess sin of its power, its dominion over man: "Sin shall not have dominion over you, since you are not under the Law, but under grace" (Rom 6:14). To be under the Law, then, is the same as to be under the domination of sin: Never before had St. Paul been so incisive.

A source of scandal for the Jews, such assertions in turn run the opposite risk of leaving the modern Christian reader quite indifferent. He has never felt any strong attachment for the Law of Moses; he finds it quite normal not to be obliged to observe its complicated ritual or its profusion of observances—as circumcision, the minute prescriptions for keeping the Sabbath, for preparing food, or for contacts with the pagan world—which, as far as he can see, have no real religious value. As a matter of fact, had St. Paul intended no more than the Christian's deliverance from these obligations, his statements would hardly raise problems. Nor would they offer any great interest for the man of today. But so understood, they would be a caricature of his true teaching. Granting that such an interpretation has been seriously defended,<sup>6</sup> the context of the Epistle to the Romans, if not that to the Galatians, is so clearly opposed to it that no exegete dreams of proposing it.

Under the term "law," St. Paul certainly includes that part of the Mosaic legislation which concerns the moral life in its strict sense; in fact, the Epistle to the Romans speaks of no other aspect of the Law but the moral one. As for the seventh chapter, where the question is expressly treated, everyone must at least see with Father Huby

6. Occasionally, an interpretation of this kind is implied in formulas that are ambiguous; for example, that St. Paul rejects the Old Law *in its positive aspects*, but not the moral law as founded on man's nature. We shall see that, in a certain sense, this is quite correct; but the Law of Moses made no such distinction, and neither did St. Paul.

that, if St. Paul has the Law of Moses in mind, it is "not in its ritual and ceremonial positions" that he considers it, "but in its permanent moral content."<sup>7</sup> In other words, he is concerned with the Law of Moses as a positive expression of the natural law. Besides, St. Paul is explicit: The "law of sin and of death"<sup>8</sup>—that is, the Law that provokes sin and leads to death—from which, he proclaims, we are free (see 8:2) is clearly designated by means of one of the precepts of the Decalogue: "I did not know sin save through the Law. For I had not known lust unless the Law had said: 'Thou shalt not lust'" (7:7).

Let us press this passage further. The English and Latin translations: "Thou shalt not lust," *Non concupisces*, may suggest that the Apostle has a particular commandment in mind, the one that prohibits carnal desires. This would be a serious mistake. Not only is the context of Exodus 20:17 or of Deuteronomy 5:21, from which this prohibition is taken, utterly opposed to such an interpretation, but in the Septuagint, the Greek word *epithumein*, whether in its verbal or substantive form, hardly ever evokes the idea of carnal desire. What the commandment forbids, in the most general sense, is the craving for what belongs to another, whether it be his house, his wife, his slave, his ox or ass, or anything else that he owns.<sup>9</sup> In much the same way, Ecclesiasticus sums up the whole Jewish Law in the one precept: "Avoid all evil" (17:12). For Ben Sirach, this precept seems to epitomize not only the legislation of Sinai but all the expressions of God's will that have been given to man since his creation, expressions that have their synthesis in a unique law and covenant.<sup>10</sup>

7. Joseph Huby, S.J., *Saint Paul, épître aux romains* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1957), p. 234. "No allusion is made either to circumcision or to the other rites of Judaism" (*ibid.*, p. 231).

8. See Rom 8:2: "The law of the Spirit [giving] life in Christ Jesus has delivered me from the law of sin and of death."

9. "You shall not covet, *epithumein* (Hebrew: *hmd*), your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male or female slave, nor his ox or ass, nor anything else that belongs to him" (Ex 20:17). Again: "You shall not covet, *epithumein* (*hmd*), your neighbor's wife. You shall not desire, *epithumein* (*'wb*), your neighbor's house or field, nor his male or female slave, nor his ox or ass, nor anything that belongs to him" (Deut 5:21). Likewise, the place named *Kibrot-hattaavah*, the Graves of Greed, *epithumia* (*'wb*), recalls the episode of the quail and the divine punishment inflicted upon "the greedy, *epithumētēs* (*'wb*) people" (see Num 11:34; 33:17).

10. Some commentators distinguish between two sections in this passage of Ben Sirach. The first (see 17:1-8) treats of creation, while in the second (see 17:9-11)

It is not surprising, then, that St. Paul in turn should choose an all-embracing formula, one that could be applied to every divine command and, indeed, contains them all, even the prohibition imposed upon our first parents, the prototype of all others. In his desire to describe how man becomes conscious of sin, to describe, too, the essential role played by law in this process, he spontaneously thinks of the biblical description of the sin that became the pattern of all our sins; all succeeding generations of men unfailingly share in it and reproduce it again and again in their own lives.<sup>11</sup> Many have noticed that more than one detail in this seventh chapter of Romans is in some way reminiscent of the third chapter of Genesis.<sup>12</sup> In any case, keeping in mind the narrative of Genesis may help throw light on a passage that is at first sight enigmatic, and suddenly clarify it.

Adam and Eve are living in a state of familiarity with God, when the serpent comes upon the scene and succeeds in persuading them that they will be like gods if they taste of the tree of the knowledge

"the author apparently passes from man in general to the Hebrew people in particular." (These words are those of Joseph Bonsirven, S.J., in his edition of *La Sainte Bible du Chanoine Crampon*, Paris: Desclée, 1952.) To judge by his wording, Father Bonsirven does not seem to adopt this particular point of view. In any case, the transition is imperceptible. Verse 9, while certainly referring to the Law of Moses, probably alludes (as Dom Calmet noted long ago) to the two trees in the garden of Eden: "He has set before them *knowledge*, a law of life as their inheritance." On the other hand, verse 6, recalling the precept given to Adam, says: "Good and evil He shows them"—a phrasing that practically reproduces the words of Moses when summing up the Law of Sinai: "I have set before you life and death, the good and the evil" (Deut 30:15, 19, according to the Septuagint). Cf. Huby, *op. cit.*, p. 600.

11. See Rom 5:12, and this writer's notes in the *Bible de Jérusalem*. (A brief English résumé of Father Lyonnet's interpretation of this much-discussed verse can be found in "Original Sin and Romans 5:12-14," *Theology Digest*, V, 1, Winter 1957, pp. 54-57 [Translator].) In the seventh chapter of Romans, it is not St. Paul's aim to describe the sin of Adam for its own sake; he is not writing as a historian, but as a theologian. His source of information, however, is not psychological introspection, as many have supposed, but the Old Testament.

12. So Methodius of Olympia (see *De Resurrectione* II, 1-8), Theodore of Mopsuestia, Severian of Gabala, Theodoret, and Gennadius of Constantinople, among the early writers; Cajetan, in the sixteenth century, and Lietzmann, Lagrange, and many others, among the moderns. Even among those who reject this interpretation, a good number concede that St. Paul took the Genesis account as his model. In his recent commentary, F. J. Leenhardt, too, writes that the affinity between verses 7-12 and Genesis 3 shows that the Apostle built his scenery with Adam in the background. (See *L'épître de Saint Paul aux Romains*, Neuchâtel, 1957, p. 100.) See also Peter Bläser, *Das Gesetz bei Paulus* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1941), p. 115, n. 77, and A. Feuillet who speaks of "features obviously borrowed from the scene of Adam's and Eve's disobedience in paradise, a fault which in some way was the prototype of all that followed" (*Lumière et Vie*, XIV, 1954, 222). Cf. Huby, *op. cit.*, pp. 601-604.



of good and evil. Suddenly, the fruit, which has become the means of securing this divine privilege, seems to Eve's eyes an unknown delight. The Bible brings this out emphatically: "The woman saw that the tree was good for food, pleasing to the eyes, and desirable for the knowledge it would give" (Gen 3:6).<sup>13</sup> But hardly have they violated God's command, when they find themselves reduced to nakedness, stripped of everything that previously constituted their happiness; once, they were God's friends but now they hide from Him, fear Him, and flee from Him. They have been forever driven from the garden, that is, from intimacy with God, and the cherubim with the flaming sword henceforth forbid them and their descendants to enter. Unless God Himself mercifully intervenes, the way that leads to the tree of life—of that life which belongs to God alone, and to those who are united to Him—is forever shut. Now God's command was unquestionably good, spiritual, divine. It is not the command but the serpent who is responsible for all the world's ills. And yet, according to the biblical account, the command did play a role; the serpent used it to induce our first parents to disobedience. Though it was intended to preserve life in them, in reality it became a cause or, at least, an occasion of death.

Such, I think, is the precise point St. Paul is trying to make in the much discussed passage of his Epistle to the Romans. There is only one change in the cast of characters: Sin, personified, plays the part of the serpent.<sup>14</sup>

"What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? By no means! Yet I did not know sin save through the Law. For I had not known<sup>15</sup> lust unless the Law had said: 'Thou shalt not lust!' But sin, having thus found an occasion, worked in me by means of the commandment all manner of lust, for without the Law, sin was dead" (Rom 7:7-8).

13. The Hebrew terms translated here by "pleasing" and "desirable" (*'wb* and *ymd*) are the same one finds in the expression "graves of greed or craving" and in the prohibition of the Decalogue: "Thou shalt not covet, not lust." (See above, note 9.)

14. Diodorus of Tarsus said as much when he wrote: "He seems to call the devil sin." (*Pauluskommentare aus der Griechischen Kirche*, ed. Karl Staab, Münster: Aschendorff, 1932, p. 87.) One might compare Rom 5:12: "Through one man sin entered into the world and through sin death" with Wis 2:24: "By the envy of the devil, death entered the world."

15. "Known" in the pregnant biblical sense of spiritual experience.

It was dead like a dormant snake, Father Huby comments almost in spite of himself, so strongly does the Genesis account impose itself upon his mind.<sup>16</sup> Even more in accordance with St. Paul's text, sin was dead as is *nekros*, a powerless corpse. St. Paul continues: "Once upon a time I was living without law" (7:9). This was truer of Adam than of any other man, of Adam and Eve before the sin-serpent wormed itself into them, as it were, creating in them that partnership of guilt which consisted in their desire to be like gods, a desire embodied in their longing for a taste of the forbidden tree.

Making the necessary allowances, these words of St. Paul could be applied to any circumcised Jew or baptized Christian, and in a certain sense to every human being, in so far as he has not yet, by a first free act, ordered his being to its last end.<sup>17</sup> "But," the Apostle continues, "when the commandment came, sin revived, *anezēsen*"; heretofore a lifeless body, *nekros*, it rose up, *ana*, a living thing, *ezēsen*, "and I died," that is, I lost that eminently divine privilege of life. "And the commandment that was unto life was discovered in my case to be unto death. For sin having taken occasion from the commandment, deceived me"—as the serpent deceived Eve<sup>18</sup>—"and through it killed me" (Rom 7:9-11). For St. Paul, then, just as for the authors of Genesis 3 and Wisdom 2:24, the one responsible for death is neither the Law nor its Author, but the serpent or the devil or sin. The conclusion is obvious: "The Law indeed is holy and the commandment holy and just and good" (7:12).

How are we then to explain God's strange conduct? If He desires nothing but life, why give man a law that, in fact, will lead him to death? Having asked this question, St. Paul immediately provides

16. In his commentary, Father Huby abandons Father Lagrange's explanation and adopts what is called the "historical interpretation." As a matter of fact, the interpretation I adopt is no less historical; one must, however, begin history, as does Scripture, with man's creation and not merely with his sin (see Huby, *op. cit.*, pp. 605-607). By his thesis, St. Paul apparently also wished to combat the Jewish concept that, according to the Palestinian Targum, attributes Adam's "justice" to the observation of the Law, identified there with the tree of life.

17. See *Summa Theol.* I-II, q. 89, a. 6, c. (Quotations from the *Summa* are taken from the translation of the Fathers of the English Dominican Province, New York: Benziger, 1947 [Translator].)

18. See Gen 3:13. Surely, St. Paul is alluding to this verse in 2 Cor 11:3 and 1 Tim 2:14, and in both cases he uses *exapatān*, the same composite verb used in Rom 7:11, rather than the simple *apatān* of the Septuagint.

the answer: "Did then that which is good become death to me? By no means! But sin, that it might be manifest as sin, worked death for me through that which is good, in order that sin by reason of the commandment might become immeasurably sinful" (7:13), in other words, that sin might exercise its full power as sin by means of the commandment.

The decisive word has been spoken. According to the Jews, the Law conferred life, but a law as such, even if it proposed the most sublime ideal, could not transform a creature of flesh into a spiritual being, alive with the very life of God. If this were possible, it would mean that man has no need of being saved, that he can actually save himself! Far from conferring life, far from destroying or even repressing and curbing the death-bearing power of sin in man, the purpose of the Law is, as it were, to permit sin to exercise all its virulence but, in so doing, to bring itself out into the open and unmask itself. The Law does not take sin away, rather does it reveal to man his sinful state.<sup>19</sup> Thus in the garden, when the serpent induced the woman, who looked upon him as a sincere friend and counselor, to violate the divine command, he showed his true colors: The most dangerous of enemies, the supreme sinner—a liar and a murderer, St. John calls him (see 8:44)—one who had turned from God, he now turns others from Him who is life.

Let us note in the margin that, properly speaking, law does not provoke sin, but transgression. Undoubtedly, we are accustomed to identifying the two concepts and to defining sin as a violation of a divine law, in order to accentuate its religious aspect, upon which the Bible is so insistent. St. Paul, more than anyone else, considers sin an opposition to God, but usually takes care not to confuse it with simple transgression. In this, he is faithful to the teaching of Genesis which places the sin of Adam and Eve not so much in the act of disobedience to God's command, but beyond it, in their desire to be like God. Thus the serpent, without having transgressed any formal precept, nevertheless sinned the most grievously; of the three personalities portrayed, he is the most severely punished and the only one cursed.

St. Paul looks upon transgression as the expression, the exteriori-

19. "By the works of the law no human being shall be justified before Him, for through law comes the recognition of sin" (Rom 3:20).

zation, of a much more radical evil, *hamartia*: an evil power personified, which is often reduced to mere carnal concupiscence, but which in reality more nearly corresponds to that deeply rooted egoism by which man, since original sin, orders everything to himself instead of ordering himself to God and to others. St. Augustine calls it self-love, architect of the City of Evil, and St. Paul plainly, "hostility to God" (Rom 8:7).<sup>20</sup> It is this "sin" that must be destroyed in us, and left to itself law is incapable of the task. But by permitting "transgression," law enables sin to reveal its true identity and man, schooled by his painful experience, to have recourse to the one Saviour. This is the way St. Paul understands the role of law, a role indispensable, ultimately beneficent and salutary. But this role is not the privilege of a particular code, not even that of Moses; rather does it fall to any law that is truly law, to any norm that is imposed on man's conscience from without. Consequently, it is from the "rule of law" as such that St. Paul declares the Christian freed.

#### THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT

Is THE Christian, then, a man without law, a creature beyond the realm of good and evil? St. Paul clearly foresaw this objection and his answer was a flat denial of its validity: "What then? Are we to sin because we are not under the Law but under grace? By no means!" (Rom 6:15). Indeed, nothing could more openly contradict the teaching of all his epistles, and if it seemed logical to draw such a conclusion from the premises I have established, then I should certainly have erred in the course of establishing them. Now, this apparent conflict must be resolved. The eighth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, taking up again the line of thought that had been sketched out in the Letter to the Galatians, furnishes, I believe, all the elements of a solution. The most authoritative interpreters of

20. Following entirely different lines of investigation, Father Gilleman reaches the same conclusion: "In the case of sin, the transgression of law formally specifies the sin, but its malice derives from its infidelity to charity. . . . This transgression is only the moral and exterior aspect of an actual disorder in our power of loving." Similarly, "moral obedience to law is rather the exterior aspect, the necessary mediation of our authentic and profound life which is love, so that moral life can be defined only by reference to charity." (Gerard Gilleman, S.J., *The Primacy of Charity in Moral Theology*, trans. William F. Ryan, S.J., and André Vachon, S.J., Westminster: Newman, 1959, p. 279.)

Catholic tradition, in the face of this difficulty, have been content to repeat St. Paul's statements without attempting to mitigate them. In a matter so delicate, I shall be allowed to refer to these authorities, particularly to St. Thomas, who, in his commentary on the Epistles of St. Paul, recorded the ultimate expression of his thought.<sup>21</sup>

Chapters 5, 6, and 7 of the Epistle to the Romans have set forth the conditions necessary for the Christian to be saved: deliverance from sin, from death, from the flesh, and the final but no less indispensable deliverance, that from the Law. They demonstrate that each successive deliverance is acquired for the Christian in Christ, and in Him alone. Hence, chapter 8 can begin with a cry of triumph: "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus!" St. Paul states the reason precisely: "For the law of the Spirit, [giving] life in Christ Jesus, has delivered me from the law of sin and of death" (8:1-2). Thus man is delivered from that Law which, according to the incontestable testimony of the Bible, had been the instrument of sin and death, by something that St. Paul (surprisingly, to say the least) also calls a law: the law of the life-giving Spirit. What does this mean? Can Christ have been satisfied with substituting for the Law of Moses another code, more perfect or less complicated perhaps, but of the same nature, which would therefore keep the Christian under legal rule? This would contradict all that has gone before. Only a moment ago, St. Paul had opposed to the Law of Moses not another law, but grace: If sin no longer exercises its dominion over you, he explains, it is because "you are not under the Law but under grace" (Rom 6:14). Has he changed his mind? Not at all! His choice of expression has changed, but not his thinking.

Tradition, furthermore, has not failed to grasp his line of thought. St. Thomas, for example, sums it all up so clearly and succinctly that there is no room for ambiguity: "The law of the Spirit," he writes in his commentary on Romans 8, "is what we call the New Law"—an observation to be kept in mind if we are to understand properly those passages of the *Summa Theologica* and the *Summa Contra*

21. This is particularly true of the commentary on Romans, which was the only one St. Thomas had time to finish. The rest, from 1 Cor 7:14 (or, more precisely, from 10:1) is a transcript of Brother Reginald, reflecting courses given between 1259 and 1265 at the papal court in Orvieto.

*Gentiles* in which the Angelic Doctor expounds the "New Law" as a theologian. He continues: "Now the law of the Spirit is identified either with the person of the Holy Spirit or with the activity of that same Spirit in us." Lest anyone misunderstand the meaning he intends to convey by these words, he adds a comparison with the Old Law, recalling that just previously "the Apostle said of it that it was spiritual."<sup>22</sup> It is spiritual, St. Thomas explains, in the sense that it is "given by the Holy Spirit."

The "law of the Spirit," then, does not differ from the Law of Moses—and a fortiori from all nonrevealed law, even if looked upon as the expression of the divine will—merely because it proposes a loftier ideal and imposes greater demands. Nor does it differ because it offers salvation at a bargain, as if Christ had replaced the unbearable yoke of the Law of Sinai with an "easy morality," which would be a scandal, indeed. No, the law of the Spirit is radically different by its very nature. It is not just a code, not even one "given by the Holy Spirit," but a law "produced in us by the Holy Spirit"; not a simple norm of actions outside us, but something that no legal code as such can possibly be: a new, inner, source of spiritual energy.

If St. Paul applies the term "law" to this spiritual energy, rather than the term "grace" that he uses elsewhere (see Rom 6:14), he most probably does it because of Jeremiah's prophecy (also mentioned in this context by St. Thomas) announcing a new covenant, the "New Testament." For the prophet, too, speaks of law: "This is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel. . . . I will place my law within them, and write it upon their hearts" (31:33). Every time the Angelic Doctor refers to this "New Testament," he does so in the same terms: "It is God's way to act in the interior of the soul, and it was thus that the New Testament was given, since it consists in the inpouring of the Holy Spirit." Again: "It is the Holy Spirit Himself who is the New Testament, inasmuch as He works in us the love that is the fulness of the Law."<sup>23</sup> For the Church and for her liturgy, too, the promulgation of the New Law does not date from the Sermon on the Mount, but from the day of Pentecost when the "finger of the Father's right hand," *digitus paternae dexteræ*, wrote His law in the hearts of men; the code of the

22. In Rom 7:14 St. Paul qualified the Old Law as *pneumatikos*.

23. In *Hebr.*, cap. 8, lect. 2; In 2 *Cor.*, cap. 3, lect. 2.

Old Law given on Sinai finds its counterpart, not in a new code, but in the giving of the Holy Spirit.<sup>24</sup> In the beautiful words of Cardinal Seripando, it is this Spirit that the Christian "receives to take the Law's place."<sup>25</sup>

No need, therefore, to fear a breakdown of moral responsibility. The Christian who receives the Holy Spirit as an active force within him or, in words that mean the same, who receives this activity of the Spirit, becomes capable of "walking according to the Spirit," that is, walking in conformity with what the Old Law, "spiritual" though it was, demanded of him in vain. This is why St. Paul, after proclaiming man's deliverance by the law of the Spirit, thanks to the redemptive work of Christ, can attribute to that work the following aim: "in order that the justification of the Law"—that justification which the Law wished but could not obtain from the creatures of flesh that we were—"might be fulfilled in us" (Rom 8:4). Mark the nuance of fullness suggested by the verb "fulfill," as when a prophecy is fulfilled in its accomplishment, or a type in its antitype.<sup>26</sup> "Fulfill" here is in the passive, so conscious is St. Paul that this "fulfillment," while remaining a free act of man, is even more truly an act of God, an act of the Spirit who is at work in man.

From this fundamental doctrine everything else flows, notably the fact that Christian morality is of necessity founded on love, as St. Paul, following his Master, teaches: "The whole Law is fulfilled in one word: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Gal 5:14). "He who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the Law. . . . If there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. . . . Love therefore is the fulfillment of the Law" (Rom 13:8-10). The reason is that love is not first of all a norm of conduct, but a dynamic force. As St. Thomas notes, it is

24. See Joseph Lécuyer, "Pentecôte et loi nouvelle," *La vie spirituelle*, XXV (May 1953), 471-490; also Jean Daniélou, S.J., *The Bible and the Liturgy* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1956), pp. 330-332.

25. In Rom. 8:2: *Haec lex Spiritus vitae est Dei Spiritus, quem humana mens legis vice accipit*. As is well known, far from being unreliable as a theologian, Seripando was created a cardinal in order that he might preside over the sessions of the Council of Trent as a legate, replacing Cardinal Cervini who had become Pope Marcellus II. (See Hubert Jedin, *Papal Legate at the Council of Trent, Cardinal Seripando*, London: Herder 1947, pp. 562-577.)

26. See Albert Descamps, *Les justes et la justice dan les évangiles et le christianisme primitif* (Louvain: Université catholique, 1950), pp. 112-113.

precisely because the Law, as a law, was not love that it could not justify man: "Consequently it was necessary to give us a law of the Spirit, who by producing love within us, could give us life."<sup>27</sup>

Under these conditions, it is easy to see that a Christian, that is, a man led by the Holy Spirit,<sup>28</sup> can at the same time be freed from every external law—"not be under the Law"—and yet lead a perfect moral and virtuous life. St. Paul makes this abundantly clear in the Epistle to the Galatians, shortly after he has reduced the whole Law to love: "Walk in the Spirit, and you will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh" (Gal 5:16). Nothing could be more obvious, he explains, since these are two antagonistic principles: If you follow one, you cannot but oppose the other. "If you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law." In fact, what need would you have of law? A spiritual man knows perfectly well what is carnal and, if he is spiritual, he will fly from it as by instinct, fly from "immorality, uncleanness, licentiousness, idolatry, witchcrafts, enmities, contentions, jealousies, anger, quarrels, factions, parties, envies, murders, drunkenness, carousings, and suchlike" (5:19-21).

To be guilty of such misdeeds would clearly indicate that one is not led by the Spirit. "Concerning these things I warn you, as I have warned you, that they who do such things will not attain the kingdom of God" (5:21). But these misdeeds you will not commit once you are spiritual. The fruits you will produce then will be those of the Spirit. Perhaps it would be better to say "the fruit," since there is really only one with many facets: "Charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, modesty, continency" (5:22), in brief, the whole procession of Christian virtues. For St. Paul they are nothing but so many expressions of charity:

Charity is patient, is kind; charity does not envy, is not pretentious, is not puffed up, is not ambitious, is not self-seeking, is not provoked; thinks no evil, does not rejoice over wickedness, but rejoices with the truth; bears with all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

(1 Cor 13:4-7)

27. In 2 Cor., cap. 3, lect. 2. Likewise, St. Augustine's *Dilige et quod vis fac*, "Love and do what you will," seems to be, at first sight, a practical principle of conduct concerning fraternal love. (See J. Gallay, *Recherches de Science Religieuse*, 1955, pp. 545-555.)

28. In Rom 8:14 St. Paul gives this definition of a son of God: "Whoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."



Since he has no need, then, for a law to constrain him from without, the Christian, led by the Spirit, fulfills every law in the full liberty of the sons of God.

In the light of these explanations, it is surprising that Father Prat should find it "difficult to see [in St. Paul] a governing principle of moral teaching," or that he could have written this astonishing passage:

That is precisely the delicate—I was about to say the weak—point of Paul's moral teaching: After having completely done away with the Mosaic Law, he never says clearly with what he replaces it. . . . In seeing Paul intent on destroying the whole edifice of the ancient Law, without appearing to think of reconstructing it, we ask with anxiety where this work of demolition is going to stop, and on what foundation the obligation of the new dispensation is to rest.<sup>29</sup>

#### THE CODE OF CHRISTIAN LAWS

MORE than one reader will share Father Prat's perplexity, and his dilemma is not imaginary. There is no question but that the Christian religion involves certain positive laws. St. Paul himself does not hesitate to promulgate some, and they are often of a very precise nature. The morality of the New Testament, including that of the Apostle, has nothing in common with a "morality without obligation or sanction."<sup>30</sup> Upon the catechumen who asks for baptism the Church, in this resembling the Synagogue, fully intends to impose a code of morality that, though less complicated and more sublime, is nonetheless a code of laws. Besides, when we speak of the New Law as opposed to the Old, is it not of this aspect that we ordinarily think before and above all others?

Ordinarily perhaps; and, undoubtedly, it is this aspect that was in Father Prat's mind. But it was not, I think, in St. Paul's. True, on two different occasions he does speak of the "law of Christ" (Gal 6:2; 1 Cor 9:21),<sup>31</sup> but what he opposes to the Old Law is grace or the

29. See Ferdinand Prat, S.J., *The Theology of St. Paul*, trans. John L. Stoddard (New York: Benziger, 1934), II, 312.

30. On this particular aspect, see the excellent remarks of Gaston Salet in "La loi dans nos coeurs," *Nouvelle Revue Théologique*, LXXIX (1957), 449-462, 561-578.

31. What St. Paul means by this "law of Christ" ought to be sufficiently clear from what has just been said.

law of the Spirit which, as we have seen, comes to the same thing. Nor is this the approach of St. Thomas, who was certainly familiar with the classic opposition between the Old Law and the New. When seeking to define the latter, he is careful not to designate it primarily as a code of laws: "That which is preponderant [in it] is the grace of the Holy Ghost, which is given through faith in Christ. Consequently the New Law is chiefly the grace itself of the Holy Ghost, which is given to those who believe in Christ."<sup>32</sup> It is an unwritten law, he adds, and hence able to justify man. But to the extent that it is a code of written laws, to the extent that it contains the teachings of faith and moral precepts that govern human attitudes and acts, the New Law does not justify any more than did the Old Law since its nature is not different: It remains a norm of conduct, not a principle of activity. Thus, commenting on the Apostle's saying, "the letter kills" (2 Cor 3:6), the Angelic Doctor, in the steps of St. Augustine,<sup>33</sup> does not for a moment hesitate to write: "The letter denotes any writing that is external to man, even that of the moral precepts such as are contained in the Gospel. Wherefore the letter, even of the Gospel, would kill, unless there were the inward presence of the healing grace of faith."<sup>34</sup>

Even after the Protestant controversies the language remains unchanged. There is, for example, St. Robert Bellarmine whose comment on the Pauline opposition between the "law of works" and the "law of faith" (see Rom 3:27)<sup>35</sup> is no less faithful to St. Augustine's *De Spiritu et Littera*:

32. *Summa Theol.* I-II, q. 106, a. 1, c.

33. See St. Augustine, *De Spiritu et Littera*, chaps. 14, 17, 19, *passim* (PL 44:215-222).

34. *Summa Theol.* I-II, q. 106, a. 2, c. St. Thomas did not shrink from using the formula *sola fides*, so much abused later on. Commenting on 1 Tim 1:8: *Scimus quia bona est lex, si quis ea legitime utatur*, "We know that the Law is good, if a man uses it rightly," he explains that St. Paul has in mind the commandments of the Decalogue and intends to say that their legitimate use consists in not attributing to them what they do not contain. The Angelic Doctor writes: *Non est in eis spes justificationis, sed in sola fide*, "There is no hope of justification in them, but in faith alone," that is to say, *fides per caritatem operans*, "faith which works through charity" (Gal 5:6), of which he speaks so often. As a proof, he quotes precisely the famous verse of Rom 3:28: *Arbitramur enim justificari hominem per fidem sine operibus legis*, "We reckon that a man is justified by faith independently of the works of the Law" (see *In 1 Tim.*, lect. 3).

35. In Rom 3:27 St. Paul opposes the law that consists of performing works to the one that consists in believing. (See St. Augustine, *op. cit.*, chap. 13, PL 44:213-215.)

The law of faith is faith itself, which obtains the grace for action, whereas the law of works is satisfied with commanding the same.

The law of works is the letter which kills, and the law of faith is the Spirit who gives life.

From this it follows that not only the law of Moses, but even the law of Christ, to the extent that it commands something, is the law of works, whereas the law of faith is the spirit of faith, by which not only we who are Christians, but the patriarchs as well, and the prophets, and all just men, have obtained the free gift of God's grace, and, once justified by that grace, have kept the commandments of the law.<sup>36</sup>

Why, then, does the religion of Christ still require a code of laws? Why should there be kept, alongside the chief, unwritten element that justifies, another, written element that does not justify? If this state of affairs was strange in the old economy, does it not become incomprehensible in the economy of grace? Not at all!

The Pauline principle most certainly remains: "The Law is not made for the just, but for the unjust" (1 Tim 1:9). If all Christians were just, there would be no need to restrain them by laws. Law, as a rule, does not enter upon the scene except to repress an existing disorder. For example, as long as Christians received Communion frequently, the Church never thought of obligating them under pain of mortal sin to do so at least once a year.<sup>37</sup> But when fervor declined, she promulgated the precept of Easter Communion, in order to remind her faithful that it is impossible to possess divine life without being nourished by the flesh of the Christ. Even though all are subject to this law, it is really not directed to the fervent Christian who continues to receive Communion during the paschal season not, as St. Thomas puts it, because of the Lord's command, but because of that inner need which prompts him to communicate every Sunday or even every day of the year.<sup>38</sup> This does not imply that he is no longer bound by the precept but that, as long as he experiences this inner need—which is a fruit of the Holy Spirit leading him—he will

36. St. Robert Bellarmine, *De justificatione impii*, Liber I, caput XIX, *Opera Omnia* (Naples, 1856-62), IV, 492.

37. To cite but one example, it is said that in the thirteenth century the pious King of France, St. Louis, attended several Masses every day and recited the Office, but he only received Communion three times a year.

38. To use St. Thomas's expression (see *Summa Theol.* I-II, q. 108, a. 1, c.).

in fact fulfill<sup>39</sup> the precept superabundantly, without even adverting to the fact. On the other hand, as soon as that inner need no longer makes itself felt, the law is there to constrain him and to warn him that he is no longer being led by the Spirit.

In such a case this law will play the same role for the Christian that the Law of Moses did for the Jew.<sup>40</sup> As a pedagogue to lead him to the Christ, it will not only act as a sort of substitute for the light no longer supplied by the Holy Spirit, but will, above all, help him to recognize his condition as a sinner—a condition which is by definition that of one who is no longer led by the Holy Spirit. And since, as we have seen, such a recognition is in St. Paul's judgment the first requirement for man's cure, it becomes evident that the law was made for sinners.

But the law is not without utility even for the just. Although he is in the state of grace, that is, led by the Holy Spirit, the Christian, as long as he remains on earth, possesses the Spirit only imperfectly, as a sort of pledge (see Rom 8:23; 2 Cor 1:22). As long as he lives in a mortal body, he is never so completely freed from sin and from the flesh that he cannot at any moment fall back under their domination. Now in this unstable situation, the external, the written law, objective norm of man's moral conduct, will help his conscience which is so easily clouded by his passions—for the flesh continues to struggle against the spirit (see Gal 5:17)—to distinguish unerringly the works of the flesh from the fruit of the Spirit, and not to confuse the inclinations of his own sin-wounded nature with the inner promptings of the Spirit. St. Paul does not consider it superfluous to remind his readers what it is that the Spirit suggests to the genuinely spiritual man, nor to add to his doctrinal discussions exhortations meant to govern their moral life. Until the Christian acquires full spiritualization in heaven, his liberty will remain imperfect, inchoative;<sup>41</sup> alongside the chief element of spiritualization, grace,

39. The Greek verb *plēroun*, "fulfill," must be given here the meaning I mentioned earlier.

40. As Father Huby puts it, the Christian, though freed from the Law, can by his own will call this freedom into question. "He can again live 'according to the flesh' (Rom 8:13), let sin reign in him (see 6:12); in doing so he is no longer under grace, but under the law. Then the law becomes again what it was for him before his union with Christ" (*op. cit.*, p. 233).

41. See Jean Mouroux, *The Christian Experience*, trans. George Lamb (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1954), pp. 138-139, 196-197.

alone able to justify, there will be a secondary element, no more able to justify than was the Old Law, but still indispensable for sinners, and by no means superfluous for the imperfectly just that we all are.<sup>42</sup>

Still, it is necessary that this secondary element remain secondary, and that it not imperceptibly tend to assume the role of the principal element, which is what happened to the Jewish Law in St. Paul's time. To ward off this ever-threatening danger, it is well to recall a basic principle which is only a corollary of the doctrine I have been setting forth till now, and which St. Thomas has succeeded in stating with his usual clarity: The external law may only be the expression of the interior law.

In his treatise on law in the *Summa Theologica*, St. Thomas asks if the New Law should command or prohibit external works, that is, if it should involve a code of positive laws. His reply begins by reaffirming the doctrine that the preponderant part of the New Law is the inner grace of the Holy Spirit. Works can be commanded only in virtue of a necessary relation to that inner grace. Either they will be works that put us in contact with the humanity of the Christ, from whom flows all grace, and are therefore necessary to produce in us the inner dynamism that is faith working through charity. Or they will be works that translate and give concrete expression to this inner dynamism. If works possess a necessary relationship to this inner energy, they are commanded or forbidden in the code of the New Law. If, on the other hand, they have no essential connection with the interior law, they are neither commanded nor forbidden in the New Law Christ and the apostles promulgated. They are left to the discretion of the legislator who can command or forbid them in every case in which concrete circumstances indicate that for a certain group of Christians, or for the whole Church, there exists a necessary connection with the interior law of love—in other words, whenever such works become in practice the necessary expression of that law.<sup>43</sup>

42. With Kierkegaard, and against Scheler and Kant, Father Gillon rightly remarks that human love, too, experiences the need to bind itself. Only through a bond does love become stable and in part escapes contingency; for a Catholic, love escapes contingency altogether through the sacrament of marriage. The "institution," far from being hostile to love, saves it. (See *Angelicum*, 1957, p. 257, n. 2.)

43. See *Summa Theol.* I-II, q. 108, a. 1. See also a. 2: *Rectus usus gratiae est per opera caritatis*, "The right use of grace is through the works of love."

One consequence of this link between love and law is that, for the Christian, any purely external violation of law, a violation that by definition is unrelated to the interior law, cannot be a genuine violation. The notion of "involuntary sin" which occupies so large a place in the Mosaic legislation—the sin-offerings of Leviticus were meant to expiate precisely offenses of that kind—carries no meaning for the Christian. Of course, a purely material sin can have tragic consequences, either because of the habits to which it gives rise or because of its social repercussions but it is not a fault, in the strict sense of the word, requiring forgiveness.

On the other hand, an observance devoid of love is also devoid of meaning. Anyone who attaches an independent value to mere observance will try to keep it up at any cost; he may even imagine that he is still obeying the law when he is in fact dodging or circumventing or "outwitting" it.<sup>44</sup> For the man who sees in the outward observance nothing but an expression of the inner law, such an attitude is unthinkable. Since the sole aim of external law is to safeguard the Christian's inner dynamism, it derives all its value from the latter, not the other way around. What is essential, then, is not the observance of this or that practice of penance but the spirit of penance, not this or that pious practice but the spirit of prayer, for the practice is required only for the purpose of preserving the spirit. Without neglecting the letter, the Christian is above all concerned with the spirit; he does not think that he can truly observe a law until he has fully grasped its significance, that is, until he has pondered the conditions under which a law will make concrete the inner prompting he does—or should—experience.<sup>45</sup>

44. The Gospel furnishes a typical example of outwitting the Law with regard to the Corban, "Something set apart for God" (see Mk 7:9-13). It has been said that, at times, the knowledge of the Law became "the knowledge of the means a just man may take in order to achieve his objectives without committing any fault against the Law." (Jacques Dupont, *Gnosis. La connaissance religieuse dans les épîtres de saint Paul*, Louvain: Université catholique, 1949, p. 256.) Some Christians entertain an attitude toward the law of abstinence, for example, that is not far removed from the one Father Dupont describes.

45. See Gilleman, *op. cit.*, p. 279: "The Christian way of considering law as the exteriority of love and of the moral order shows that the substance of moral life is not obedience to law, but charity towards persons, the human superior, and God; obedience, however indispensable, is second to love. . . . This 'law of grace' (Rom 6:15) is no longer a heavy yoke imposed from the outside; it is required by charity as its necessary determination."

Another consequence of the relationship between love and law is that ordinarily the outward law will not provide the Christian with an ideal, the attainment of which could possibly satisfy him, but simply with a minimum below which the dynamism that constitutes him as a Christian will inevitably fail him. It is for this reason that the code of the New Law, while including a series of positive prescriptions and prohibitions, before all else offers the Christian a norm of a completely different nature: the imitation of the person of the Christ, particularly of His love, which in turn is a reflection of the love of the Father. This is an objective norm, for Christ is not the creation of man's imagination, but a historical personality whose life and deeds have been recorded for us in the Gospels.<sup>46</sup> In fact, St. Paul hardly knows another norm; following the example of Christ, who commanded His disciples to be perfect as their heavenly Father is perfect, St. Paul can only repeat to his faithful that they should contemplate Christ and imitate Him:

Be kind to one another, and merciful, generously forgiving one another, as also God in Christ has generously forgiven you. Be you, therefore, imitators of God, as very dear children and walk in love, as Christ also loved us and delivered Himself up for us.

(Eph 4:32-5:2)

And the whole morality of marriage is summed up in one command:

Just as the Church is subject to Christ, so also let wives be subject to their husbands in all things. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the Church, and delivered Himself up for her, that He might sanctify her.

(Eph 5:24-26)

The pious Jew, so zealous in his devotion to the Law, strove to know it better and better, so that he might observe its most minute details. The manual of the Qumran community provides that whenever there are found ten members, "let there be among them a man who studies the Law day and night, continually, for the improvement of all."<sup>47</sup> For a Christian, it is the person of the Christ who is the

46. See Salet, *loc. cit.*, p. 575; Gillon, *loc. cit.*, pp. 376-377.

47. 1QS vi 6-7. See Géza Vermès, *Discovery in the Judean Desert* (New York: Desclée, 1956), p. 143.

whole law, not only with regard to its principal element, the spirit of Christ imparted to him, but even with regard to its secondary element, which, in the magnificent words of Father de Foucauld, is finally brought back to the imitation of Christ: "Your rule? To follow me. Do what I would do. In everything, ask yourself what would our Lord have done. And do it. This is your only rule, but it is your absolute rule."<sup>48</sup>

A final consequence: When a Christian acts in this way, he is free, for "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom" (2 Cor 3:17). This is a theme dear to St. Augustine, but not less so to St. Thomas who writes:

A man who acts of his own accord, acts freely, but one who is impelled by another, is not free. He who avoids evil, not because it is evil, but because a precept of the Lord forbids it, is not free. On the other hand, he who avoids evil because it is evil, is free.<sup>49</sup> Now it is precisely this the Holy Spirit accomplishes, by inwardly equipping the soul with an inner dynamism. The result is that a man refrains from evil out of love, as though the divine law were commanding him, and thus he is free, not because he is not subject to the divine law, but because his inner dynamism makes him do what the divine law requires.<sup>50</sup>

In the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, when referring to the same Pauline adage on freedom, St. Thomas does not modify his language.<sup>51</sup> Silvester of Ferrara, too, comments:

The just are under the divine law, which binds them without constraining them, to the extent that they observe the precepts of the law in a fully free and voluntary manner, not constrained by fear of punishment or the order of a superior, as are the wicked, who would not observe what the

48. Charles de Foucauld, *Ecrits Spirituels*, p. 171. Cf. the practical commentary given by Father René Voillaume in "Message from Beni-Abbès" of February 23, 1950, in *Seeds of the Desert*, trans. Willard Hill (Chicago: Fides, 1955), pp. 102-103.

49. As we know, for St. Thomas sin is an offense against God only in so far as it is opposed to man's true welfare: *Non enim Deus a nobis offenditur nisi ex eo quod contra nostrum proprium bonum agimus.* (*Summa Contra Gentiles*, III, c. 122.)

50. In 2 Cor., cap. 3, lect. 3. ("His inner dynamism makes him do" is Father Lyonnet's interesting rendering of St. Thomas's: *Ex bono habitu inclinatur* [Translator].) See also *Summa Theol.* I-II, q. 108, a. 1, ad 2: "Since the grace of the Holy Ghost is like an interior habit bestowed on us and inclining us to act aright, it makes us do freely those things that are becoming to grace, and shun what is opposed to it."

51. See *Summa Contra Gentiles*, IV, c. 22.



law requires were there no divine command and did they not fear being punished for their transgression.<sup>52</sup>

### “GOVERNED BY GOD’S HAND”

At the conclusion of this essay, I cannot fail to mention the words St. John of the Cross inscribed on the summit of the mount of perfection: “There is no road here, for there is no law for the righteous man.”<sup>53</sup> Nor can we overlook the principle, so clearly formulated by St. Ignatius at the beginning of his *Constitutions*, that governs his entire legislative work: the primacy of “that inner law of love and charity which the Holy Spirit is wont to engrave within the heart.” This is a law that has no substitute, and it should be all-sufficient. Throughout the *Constitutions*, as he gives directives for the admission of candidates, the formation of young Jesuits for the apostolate, the choice of apostles and of their assignments, he is always quick to note that in all such matters the true guide will be “the holy unction of the divine wisdom,”<sup>54</sup> “only the unction of the Holy Spirit and that discretion the Lord is wont to impart to those who rely upon His divine majesty,”<sup>55</sup> or “the sovereign providence and direction of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>56</sup> And if he requires of his disciples more than human ability and endowments, if he requires, above all, intimacy with God, it is precisely so that they “may be governed by the divine hand.”<sup>57</sup> “Walk in the Spirit, and you will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh” (Gal 5:16).

52. Franciscus de Sylvestris Ferrariensis, *Comment. in Libros Quattuor contra Gentiles S. Thomae de Aquino*, lib. IV, cap. 22, 4.

53. *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*, Volume I of *The Works of St. John of the Cross*, trans. and ed. E. Allison Peers (Westminster: Newman, 1953), p. xxxii.

54. *Constitutiones*, Pars. I, cap. 2, n. 13.

55. *Ibid.*, Pars. IV, cap. 8, n. 8.

56. *Ibid.*, Pars. VII, cap. 2 F.

57. *Ibid.*, Pars. X, n. 2.