

THE CONCEPT OF COMMANDMENT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

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THE FOLLOWING pages are intended as a prolegomenon to the study of "commandment" (*entolē* and *entellesthai*) in the fourth Gospel.¹ They attempt to synthesize at least a part of the theological material available to St. John in writing his passages on the "commandment" given to Christ by the Father and on the "new commandment" that marks the economy of the new covenant.

The basis for the study is the LXX, since it is upon the Greek text of the *OT* that St. John would draw for his vocabulary in making use of *OT* concepts. The study has, however, not been restricted to the Greek text, and this for two reasons. The first lies in the relationship of those parts of the LXX, which are pertinent for our study, to the Masoretic text (MT). The study of the concept of "commandment" as represented by *entolē* is almost wholly a study of the Deuteronomic literature; now, the LXX version of the key book, Deuteronomy (Dt) itself, is for purposes of this study an accurate translation, reflecting not only the text but the theology as well of the Hebrew book, except, to some extent, in one important particular (the translation of the Hebrew singular *mišwā* by the Greek plural *entolai*). This close relationship of translation to original has justified the use made here of secondary literature based upon and referring to the MT. The second reason lies in the availability of the Hebrew text of the *OT* to St. John: while the presence, among St. John's relatively few explicit citations of the *OT*, of eight which depend on the Hebrew text and not on the LXX² does not prove that he had access to the whole Hebrew text, it does show that we must at least take into account the one important

¹ In their original form they were part of a dissertation entitled *The Concept of "Commandment" (Entolē) in the Old Testament: Prolegomenon to a Study of the Fourth Gospel*, submitted at Woodstock College in the spring of 1958.

² Cf. T. W. Manson, "The Old Testament in the Teaching of Jesus," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 34 (1951-52) 328-31. These eight citations are, in fact, the majority of those which are not free reminiscences untraceable to any one passage of the *OT*.

divergence in vocabulary,³ mentioned above, between the Hebrew and the Greek Dt in synthesizing the "Deuteronomic theology" available to St. John.

The division into sections of the following essay is that suggested by the *OT* material itself. But since this essay, though saying nothing further about St. John, is nonetheless intended as source material for the understanding of his Gospel, it may help the reader to point out that the major part of the essay, concerned with *entolē* as law and with the themes that center about this concept, can be related to the "new commandment" (Jn 13:34; 15:12) and to the "commandments" which Christ received from the Father and which are the exemplar of His own commandments to the disciples (Jn 14:15,21; 15:10). The remarks on prophetic inspiration, towards the end of the essay, can be related to the "command" of Jn 12:49-50. Jn 10:18 cannot readily be related to either of these two categories.⁴

THE VOCABULARY

The Greek words *entellesthai* (to command) and *entolē* (commandment), adopted by the translators of the LXX as preferred terms, are not in themselves, according to the evidence of classical Greek and the papyri, technical terms, that is, limited to use, or even favored for use, in particular relationships or situations. In the LXX they correspond in sense to their usual Hebrew equivalents, *šiwwâ* and *mišwâ*, whose fundamental and constant meanings are "to command, decree, lay a charge upon" and "command, commission, law" respectively. The problem, of course, is to know what overtones the terms *entellesthai* and *entolē* may have had for the Jewish reader with his instinctive feeling for *šiwwâ* and *mišwâ*. The following pages on the

³ That the divergence in thought is, in addition, less great than the divergence in word, and that to take into account the Hebrew text is simply to fill out what is clearly indicated though less fully expressed in the LXX, and not to construct an artificial pastiche of elements from the MT and LXX, will emerge at the proper place.

⁴ Any text involving *entolē* or *entellesthai* will be translated from the LXX. Other citations are taken, unless otherwise indicated, from the Smith-Goodspeed Chicago translation. The numbering of the Psalms follows that of the Hebrew Bible, not the LXX, because that is the practice of the commentaries to which reference will be made. Similarly, for those chapters of Jeremiah which are differently numbered in the Hebrew Bible and in the LXX, the chapter in the Hebrew Bible will be given first, and then, in parentheses, the chapter in the LXX.

word *entolē* in general, on its accretions of meaning in Dt and Ps 119, and on the themes associated with the term, have as their ultimate goal, in a sense, to synthesize precisely the overtones of *entolē* for a Jew like St. John and thus to explicitate the total meaning of the word for him.

A word, first, on *šiwwâ-entellesthai*.⁵ It is applied to commands or orders issued by men (this from the earliest books on), but especially to those of God. It is used of God to express the authority and power He exercises in His manifold relationships to the world: as Lord of nature and history, as Lord over the lives of individuals (of the prophets in particular⁶) and of nations. It is most prominent, however, in His relations with the chosen people in the sphere of law, signifying Him as lawgiver, immediate or ultimate, for Israel.

What is the quality of the exercise of divine power and authority, as expressed in *šiwwâ-entellesthai*? The divine "commanding" must be considered separately as it is directly addressed to men and as it concerns nature and history. (By "history" is meant the complexus of actions which makes up the "historical events" of a period, or the actions of individuals as forming part of the larger complexus. With regard to individual men, "history" is an impersonal or suprapersonal process, in which God uses their actions for His own ulterior and hidden purposes.) When the *OT* uses the verb "command," among others, to express God's relationship to nature and to history, is it simply using metaphor to express that which cannot be conceptualized? To put the question in this manner, however, supposes a philosophical conception of the spirituality of God which is not present in the *OT*. Not that the *OT* fails to understand that God is, in fact, "spiritual," that He

⁵ Always for the Hebrew *šiwwâ*. The latter, however, is represented in the LXX by a number of verbs, of which only *prostassein* and *epitassein* occur with any frequency. I have been unable to see any significance in this occasional divergence and would regard these other Greek verbs as undifferentiated synonyms of *entellesthai*. For another view, cf. André Pelletier, S.J., "Le vocabulaire du commandement dans le Pentateuque des LXX et dans le Nouveau Testament," *Recherches de science religieuse* 41 (1953) 519-24; "L'Attentat au droit du pauvre dans le Pentateuque des LXX," *ibid.* 42 (1954) 523-27.

⁶ God orders the prophets to perform certain symbolic actions (Jer 13:5, 6; Ez 12:7; 24:18, where a second *šiwwâ* is translated by *epitassein*; 37:7, 10) and to communicate messages to Israel (Za 1:6; Jer 1:7, 17; 51[28]:59; Ez 24:18). In a few instances the verb *entellesthai* seems to be a synonym for, or to express an aspect of, the prophetic vocation itself: Jer 1:7, 17; 14:14; 23:32. These last texts will be discussed towards the close of the present essay.

transcends the whole created order, and that He is "God and not a man" (Hos 11:9; cf. Nm 23:19; Is 31:3), or that in speaking of God men do use metaphor and symbol and that their language is not capable of expressing adequately what God is. The *OT* does understand all this, yet its language is more than poetic embellishment. The anthropomorphisms serve the central concern of the *OT* in speaking of God: not His spirituality but His character as the living and personal God.⁷ God's "commanding" of nature and historical forces expresses both His absolute transcendence, that can create and govern the universe and guide events by a "word," and also the fact that He is the dynamic reality that stands behind all created beings and acts in them all.⁸

As for God's "commanding" of men in the form of law, the quality of the divine will in this context depends largely on the character of "law" itself. We are not concerned, however, with determining the quality of God's "commanding" wherever "law" is its object, but only where law is represented by *mišwâ-entolē*. A study of all the attitudes to "law" in the *OT* might conceivably show that the action of "commanding" was conceived as different in quality by various writers. Its quality when its complement is *mišwâ-entolē* will emerge from the discussion of the latter. Provisionally, it is enough to say that in its legal use "*Entellesthai* is the verb . . . in which the act of commanding is expressed with more of moral authority than of arbitrary demand or constraint."⁹

Entolē is the term used by the LXX in all but eight instances to translate the Hebrew noun *mišwâ*.¹⁰ The consistency in the other direction is even greater, though it may not appear so at first sight. Where human commands are in question, *entolē* only twice translates a different Hebrew noun; where the command is of divine origin, there

⁷ Cf. W. Eichrodt, *Theologie des Alten Testaments* 1 (5th ed.; Göttingen, 1957) 96–104; E. Jacob, *Théologie de l'Ancien Testament* (Neuchâtel, 1955) pp. 28–32.

⁸ Cf. G. E. Wright, *The Old Testament against Its Environment* (Studies in Biblical Theology 2; London, 1952) p. 36, on the Hebrew view of nature as endowed with psychic life. If nature be conceived in this fashion in the *OT*, then God's "commands" would indeed be conceived as commands, that is, as issued to beings in some way capable of perceiving them.

⁹ Pelletier, "Le vocabulaire" (supra n. 5) p. 520.

¹⁰ For the statistics, cf. Sheldon H. Blank, "The LXX Renderings of Old Testament Terms for Law," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 7 (1930) 259–83.

are twenty-three such instances, but in sixteen of these *entolē* translates a single poetic synonym of *mišwâ*, viz., *piqqudim*, in Ps 119.

More significant than these statistics is that *mišwâ-entolē* is predominantly a religious word. It signifies a human command for the first time in 1 Kings and occurs thereafter, with this meaning, chiefly in the narrative books. In the vast majority of texts the *entolē* is of divine origin. Contrary, however, to what we might expect from seeing the variety of divine relationships to creation that are expressed through *entellesthai*, the divine *entolē* is associated almost exclusively with the divine law for men: that is, it embodies a divine word of command that has validity in a recurring situation and therefore, unless a new command intervenes, for all time.¹¹ The term "law" includes here not only the moral law but also social and ritual legislation, or, in more general terms (since the Israelites do not seem to have distinguished very sharply between the religious and the profane, the cultic and the noncultic¹²), the revelation of the divine will as obliging the Israelite in every aspect of his existence.¹³ This is not to say that *entolē* or even the plural *entolai* necessarily embrace on every occasion the whole of this revelation.

A study of *entolē* in the first four books of the Pentateuch shows several uses of the term.¹⁴ It is often used in enumerations of terms for law, piled up without any technical differentiation,¹⁵ as in Gn 26:5,

¹¹ On the characteristics of the legal word as opposed to the prophetic word, cf. Oskar Grether, *Name und Wort Gottes im Alten Testament* (Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 64; Giessen, 1934) pp. 111–15.

¹² Cf. M. Noth, *Die Gesetze im Pentateuch*, in his *Gesammelte Studien zum Alten Testament* (Munich, 1957) p. 68.

¹³ The "revelation" of the divine will: because the laws are presented in the OT as revealed or at least as sanctioned by God and would be so accepted by the NT writers.

¹⁴ For detailed evidence of the statements made in this paragraph I must refer to the dissertation mentioned supra n. 1.

¹⁵ On the various terms for law in Hebrew, cf. H. Cazelles, "Loi Israélite," *Supplément au Dictionnaire de la Bible* 5, 497–530; for the diverse LXX equivalents, cf. Blank, *art. cit.* It is enough to note that *lôrâ* in the present MT "always means law, instruction, teaching, oral or written" (J. van der Ploeg, "Studies in Hebrew Law," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 12 [1950] 252; cf. W. Gutbrod, "Nomos," *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament* 4, 1038, on the insufficiency of etymology for determining the meaning of the word). The LXX *nomos* is said at times to narrow the meaning of *lôrâ* too much; in excuse of the LXX it may be said that at the time of the translation the juridical aspect of *lôrâ* absorbed most attention in teaching. In any event, "teaching" is, in turn, too vague a rendering, for *lôrâ* has the note of "authority imposing obligation" (Alfons Deissler, *Psalm 119* [118]

where the phrases "Abraham heeded my voice and kept my orders, my commands and laws" indicate simply the completeness of Abraham's obedience.¹⁶ *Entolē* also occurs in isolation from the other legal terms. In these contexts, in keeping with the generic character and nonlegal, moral origin of the term and of the Hebrew word *mišwā* which it translates,¹⁷ the stress is on the relation to God of what is commanded, on the fact of being commanded and of being an authoritative communication of the divine will, rather than on the object commanded.¹⁸ This personalist quality of *entolē* is underlined by its use as a parallel to God's "instruction" (*tōrā-nomos*) in Ex 16:28 and 24:12, and as an equivalent of God's "words" (*dēbārīm-logoi*).¹⁹ These several aspects of *entolē* can be seen fully developed in Dt and in the Deuteronomic literature, especially Ps 119.

THE DEUTERONOMIC USE OF ENTOLĒ

Dt and the literature influenced by it, especially Ps 119, are the source beyond all others for an understanding of *mišwā-entolē*. It is

und seine Theologie [Munich, 1955] p. 76) or at least of the "normative." "Instruction" is perhaps the best general translation, since it implies an authoritative communication and yet embraces more than law in the modern positivistic and narrow sense of the word. The terms *krima* (*krisis*) and *dikaiōma*—"orders" ("prescriptions") and "decisions" respectively—correspond to *mišpāṭ* and *hōq*, these latter being both of juridical origin (Cazelles, *art. cit.*, col. 499).

¹⁶ The enumerations of legal terms are regarded as a sign of Deuteronomic influence or editing; on Gn 26:5, cf. J. Skinner, *Genesis* (International Critical Commentary; 2nd ed.; Edinburgh, 1930) p. 364.

¹⁷ The term *mišwā* has no special meaning in Hebrew, that is, it did not originate in a special situation and then develop from a technical term into a more general meaning. It is moral in origin, in the sense that it simply expresses the will of an authority (Cazelles, *art. cit.*, col. 501). It is thus more apt than *hōq* or *mišpāṭ*—which are specialized, at least in their origin—for expressing the will of God *sine addito* and for characterizing the special types of law precisely in so far as these are of divine origin.

¹⁸ Cf., e.g., Ex 15:26; 16:28; 24:12; Lv 22:31-33; cf. particularly the parallel phrases, "if you hear the voice of the Lord your God and do what is pleasing in His sight and give ear to His commandments," in Ex 15:26; the motive given in Lv 22:31: "I am Yahweh," and the reference to the liberation from Egypt in v. 33; the reason given in Nm 15:30-31 why the deliberate violation of the commandments is unforgivable: "For it is the Lord whom he outrages."

¹⁹ Like *mišwā*, *dābār* (its LXX equivalents are *logos* and *rhēma*) is not legal in origin. In pre-Deuteronomic times, *dēbārīm* as a legal term was restricted to the "Deca-logue," and the stress was on the revelation character of this Decalogue (cf. Grether, *op. cit.*, pp. 80-83). In Dt the use of *dābār* will be broadened (*ibid.*, pp. 120-26), but it is notable that the word does not occur in enumerations of terms for law, although the verb "speak" does occur in connection with these latter.

here primarily that we can pass beyond the sense of the term as determined in the abstract or etymologically and gain some insight into the "idea" which the word carried concretely and by historical association.

Deuteronomy

To achieve such insight, we can limit the discussion to those texts in which *entolē* occurs in isolation from other legal terms.²⁰ For practical purposes, *entolē* is the only term for "law" that is so used in isolation.²¹ It may be said that not only is *mišwâ-entolē* a favorite term of Dt, but "the whole spirit of Deuteronomy is expressed by this term."²²

The first occurrence of *entolē* in isolation from other legal terms is in 7:9. The passage 7:7-11 gives the reason for the election of Israel, viz., God's love for Israel and His will to keep the oath He swore to their fathers. It is thus in a context of God's love, election, and covenant that 7:9 stands. Verse 9 is, in fact, a repetition of a central thought of the covenant narratives (cf. Ex 20:6 and Dt 5:10), a thought to be repeated often in the Psalms: "You will realize that the Lord your God, *He* is God, the faithful God who keeps His covenant and His gracious good will unto a thousand generations toward those who love Him and observe His commandments." *Entolai* signifies the covenant obligations undertaken by Israel, and therefore essentially the Decalogue. The observance of the *entolai* is an act of love: the *entolai* are conceived here as being the personal will of Yahweh, observed simply because they are an expression of His will. Primarily moral content (the Decalogue), personal will of the covenant God, bond of love between God and Israel, are the notes of *entolai* in this passage.

8:1-6, on God's testing of Israel in the desert, has *entolai* three

²⁰ Where *entolē* occurs in enumerations of legal terms, it is usually a synonym of the other terms. In a few passages—4:1-2; 5:28-31; 6:1; 6:24-25; 7:11—it can be argued that the word has the same fullness of meaning as when it occurs by itself.

²¹ *Krisis* does not occur alone except with the meaning of "judgment" or "decision" (in a case) or "justice" (of God: 1:17b; 10:18). *Krima* occurs alone only once and then it means "justice" (32:41). *Prostagma* likewise occurs only once, as a translation of *mišwâ* (5:10). Finally, *dikaiōma* occurs alone three times in the plural, in the sense of "laws" (4:6; 6:24; 7:12), and in a fourth text it is paralleled with *lōrā* in a poetic passage. With *dikaiōma* in these passages are associated a number of important Deuteronomic themes, but, in comparison with the number and importance of the texts in which *entolē* occurs alone, these texts with *dikaiōma* are secondary and noncharacteristic.

²² Van der Ploeg, *art. cit.*, p. 258.

times (vv. 1, 2, 6). Before discussing these texts, however, we must look at a point raised by 8:1, a point essential for a grasp of the full significance of *entolē* in Dt. In 8:1 ("You shall keep all the commandments which I order you today to put into practice . . .") the Hebrew text has the singular *mišwâ*. But here and in a number of other passages in Dt,²³ the LXX has either missed the point of the Hebrew singular or has preferred to regard it as a collective singular. The singular, however, signifies more than a collective. To appreciate this fact, a word must be said about Dt as a whole.

Dt is a book whose great theme is unity, a unity on several levels or in several spheres. The unity of the people of God, their unification as the holy people, is the main goal of the Deuteronomic writer, and in the achievement of this goal the unity of sanctuary plays an important role.²⁴ In another sphere, there is a conception of the divine revelation and of the divine will which emphasizes the unity of each of these. The emphasis on the unity of the divine will may be seen on two levels. Dt is, first of all, in Eichrodt's terms, not a real codex of law nor a collection of precepts, but an instruction on law, parenetic in tone, using the language of the heart and conscience rather than juridical terminology. To this unity created by the style and tone, there is added an inner unity, that of the Deuteronomic conception of law itself. For Dt, all of the law expresses the life-giving will of the covenant God; all of the law is a revelation of the divine will.²⁵ Dt is, in fact, taken as a whole, more of a prophetic book than a law book.²⁶

These various aspects of unity find expression in "conceptual generalizations which appear for the first time in Deuteronomy."²⁷ Among these are *dābār* and *mišwâ-entolē*. The plural *d'bārīm-logoi* (*rhēmata*) is used of threats and promises connected with the law (cf. 4:30; 30:1) and of the law together with its promises and threats

²³ A list of all such passages in Dt and in the LXX as a whole is given by Blank, *art. cit.*, p. 263, n. 8.

²⁴ Cf. Gerhard von Rad, *Das Gottesvolk im Deuteronomium* (Stuttgart, 1929) chap. 3.

²⁵ Cf. Eichrodt, *op. cit.* 1, 47-48.

²⁶ Cf. Otto Procksch, *Theologie des Alten Testaments* (Gütersloh, 1950) pp. 228, 562; O. Grether, *op. cit.*, pp. 120-26, especially p. 123. The prophetic character of the law in Dt is consciously expressed: Moses is the first (18:15-18) and greatest (34:10-12) of the prophets.

²⁷ G. von Rad, *Studies in Deuteronomy* (Studies in Biblical Theology 9; London, 1953) p. 70.

(cf. 1:1; 31:1; 32:46). But in addition the singular *dābār-logos* expresses the law in its totality together with the promises and threats which form an inseparable whole with the law from the Deuteronomic viewpoint. The LXX understood and preserved in its translation this important aspect of Deuteronomic thought in the three passages in which it finds expression: 4:2; 30:14; 32:47. The point of the singular *dābār* for Dt, however, is not merely that there has been a synthesis of the legalist and prophetic senses of "word" for stylistic or even for pedagogical purposes, but that divine revelation itself is a unified thing. "The word of God (30.14) which is set forth in the individual commandments of Deuteronomy is, as a revelation, an integral whole."²⁸

Entolē in Deuteronomy has a similar history. The plural signifies at times particular commandments or laws (15:5; 16:12), at other times the whole law (8:11 and other formulas of enumeration). But the singular as well is used of the whole law—a viewpoint which is preserved in the LXX only in 30:11–14 (a text, however, which is regarded as one of the most important for the Deuteronomic attitude to the law of God).²⁹ Like *rhēma* which replaces *entolē* in v. 14, *entolē* is here not to be taken as a collective noun, summing up the multiple precepts of the law but not giving them anything more than a nominal unity. Dt presents rather "God's commandment as an indissoluble whole, however many be the individual 'words' in which it is set forth"; Dt "likes to use the term 'commandment' to express the essence of the whole law, in order to put Yahweh's commanding will in the foreground."³⁰ The parallelism, in fact the identity, of *entolē* and *dābār* shows further that *entolē*, like *dābār*, embraces not only the commandments as such, but also the promises and threats which are inseparable from them. In the Deuteronomic conception of *entolē*, the prophetic and legalist viewpoints have been fully united. In 30:11–14 we see once again the personal character of *entolē* from the side of its author, i.e., the stress laid on the personal will of God. There emerges, too, the character of *entolē* (the "legal" word of God

²⁸ Procksch, *op. cit.*, p. 470; cf. Grether, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

²⁹ Cf. Grether, *op. cit.*, p. 125; A. Robert, "Le Yahvisme de Prov. X.1—XXII.16; XXV—XXIX," in *Mémorial Lagrange* (Paris, 1940) p. 171; Procksch, "Logos," *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament* 4, 98.

³⁰ Procksch, *Theologie* (supra n. 26) pp. 227, 470.

in the full sense which we have just observed) as a revelation of God (*dābār*), possessing the quality of immediacy which "word" implies. There emerges, finally, the "interior" character of *entolē*: the focus of interest is not the objective content of law (the particular law for the particular situation, or even law in general, ruling the varied circumstances of life), but the will of God embracing not only the outward circumstances and actions of man, but much more the inner springs of his action, rooted in his "heart" and will. The will of God laying claim to the will of man—that is what *entolē* expresses.

To return to 8:1-6: this passage shows that, despite the absolute and unconditioned quality of the divine will, the *entolai* are nonetheless addressed to man's free will (cf. v. 1: the promises); they lay claim not only on man's outward action, but on his "heart," i.e., his interior disposition, his total engagement in the purpose which determines God's *entolai* (v. 2); they are, in some undefined measure, a revelation of the divine manner of acting, of God's "ways" (v. 6). The pericope 8:1-6 ends, as pericopes often begin or end in Dt, with an enumeration of legal terms. The next passage to be considered, chap. 11, begins with such an enumeration.

Chap. 11 is made up of a recall of some of Israel's experiences (vv. 1-7), promises and warnings (8-17), and a conclusion (18-32) which takes up the themes of 6:6 ff. and terminates not only chap. 11 but the whole of the second introductory discourse (4:41-11:32). Apart from the congeries of legal terms in 11:1 and 11:32, the chapter is dominated, as far as words for the divine will are concerned, by *entolai*, which occurs in vv. 8, 13, 22, 27 (in vv. 8 and 22 the Hebrew has the singular, *mišwā*). Only in v. 18 is there a variant, and there we find *rhēmata* for *entolai*; we have already seen the close kinship of *dābār* and *mišwā* in Dt (cf. above on these two words and cf. 30:11-14). It is vv. 13 and 22 that show us a new side of the Deuteronomic *entolē*.

²¹ We may note here, without entering into detail, that 11:22 and the other passages which have the plural *entolai*, in isolation, for the Hebrew singular *mišwā* (6:25; 8:1; 11:8; 15:5; 17:20; 19:9; 27:1; 26:13a is narrower in scope, referring to only certain of the laws) are all concerned with the fulfilment of God's promises to Israel. All are passages of broad sweep, dealing with ideas central to Dt, using the promises to secure whole-souled acceptance of the divine commandments. It is not amiss, then, to see in the Hebrew *mišwā* of these passages something of the same scope and concentrated fulness of meaning that are found in the *mišwā-entolē* of 30:11-14.

“If you truly obey all His commandments, which I prescribe to you today: to love the Lord your God and to serve Him with your whole heart and your whole soul . . .” (11:13). “If you truly heed all these commandments [Hebrew: this whole commandment] which I order you today to observe: to love the Lord your God and to walk in all His ways and to cleave to Him. . .” (11:22).³¹

To understand these passages, it should be noted that the presentation of the divine will in Dt is not haphazard. It rather follows a definite order: the fundamental imperative of love (6:5), with its prolongation in the following of God’s ways (11:22), is first presented, and only thereafter the multiple practical determinations of the life which God intends that those who love Him should lead (12:1—26:15). But this outward structure is the translation of something more fundamental. There is an inner unity in the law considered in its objective content, and this unity is mirrored in 11:13 and 11:22. The unity of the law is not static nor is it of the conceptual order, consisting, e.g., in the completeness of the picture it presents of the ideal human life: the Deuteronomic law is not a complete code, nor does Israelite law, in any of its presentations (covenant code, holiness code, etc.), envisage a humanistic ideal in the Greek sense. The unity is created rather by the love of God, which leads man to submit himself wholly to the divine will (i.e., to God), to be at God’s disposition for whatever He may command, to dedicate all his powers to the service of God, a service which has the character of a *Nachfolge*, a following of God. We have spoken several times before of the personal character of *entolē* in the sense of the stress it lays upon the divine authority. Now, considered even in its objective content, the *entolai* are, from God’s viewpoint and from man’s, eminently personal. Man’s attention is focused not upon himself but upon God, yet simultaneously it is the innermost springs of man’s personal action that are claimed by the divine law: love of God, attachment to Him, and the *Nachfolge*, all have this double personal reference.

Besides the interior unity of the *entolai*, there emerges also, from 11:13 and 11:22, the inner diversity of the *entolai*, the analogical character of *entolē* in its various spheres. For, the love of God—when this is, as it is in Dt, more than a synonym of obedience—cannot be the object of *entolē* in precisely the same way as can, e.g., not stealing

one's neighbor's goods. Yet love is the object of *entolē*. It is not merely urged upon man; God obliges him to it no less than to the social and cultic laws—in fact more so, for love is conceived as the source of obedience to all other law. But this point will be discussed at some length later in this essay.

In 13:5 the focus of attention is on the true God, as opposed to all the pseudo gods. Man is to turn to Him in love (v. 4) and attachment and in fear (which may not be identified with obedience, any more than love is: love and fear are the springs of action, though they themselves too are elsewhere the object of *entolē*), and from this love and fear or reverence flows obedience to the divine commandments, the hearing and the heeding of His voice. In all of this, man but "follows after God." A new element in this exhortation is the idea of "hearing His voice," which enhances the character of immediacy which we have already seen *entolē* to have. It confirms, too, what other passages have brought to the fore: that the primary stress in *entolē* is on God who commands, not on the material content of what is commanded. The phrase "It is the Lord you shall follow" clarifies the meaning of "walk in His ways." The scope of the *entolai* in 13:5 is somewhat narrower than in 11:13 and 11:22, inasmuch as they do not here include love and reverence, the motives, but refer to the ordinances which man is to obey because he does love and reverence God. But if the scope of the *entolai* is materially somewhat narrower, the character of *entolē* emerges in full clarity.

The remaining passages do not introduce any new elements into our knowledge of the quality of *entolē* (13:19; 15:5; 17:19–20; 19:9; 28:1, 9, 15). But two passages nonetheless suggest further comment. 26:17–18 speaks of the covenant and of its essential significance for Israel and for God respectively. In v. 17 we read that Israel has obtained Yahweh for its God, provided they walk in His ways and observe His laws and judgments (*dikaiōmata kai krimata*). According to v. 18, God has taken Israel for His people, one that will observe His commandments. The viewpoint in v. 17 is that of man; in v. 18, that of God. The difference in terms for law suggests, in this context, that these too are being viewed from two different standpoints: from man's point of view, God's will consists of various kinds of ordinances (though these indeed are all one in that they come from God), from God's

viewpoint they are all alike, all His "commandments."³² We need not attempt to extend this distinction to the other passages we have been considering. But it can legitimately be said that in these other passages the author of Dt does usually view things from God's standpoint—an affirmation justified by the vocabulary we have seen associated with the *entolai*.

In 30:6–10, finally, there is introduced, not a new note into the concept of *entolē*, but a new dimension into the relationship between God who commands and man who stands under God's commandment. After the exile "the Lord will purify your heart and the hearts of your posterity so that you may love the Lord your God with your whole heart and your whole soul You shall turn and obey the voice of the Lord your God and keep His commandments." God is not only the redeemer who led Israel out of Egypt and made known His will to them. He will also be the redeemer who shall free man from his sinfulness and make it possible for him to love God fully and dedicate himself completely to Him in obedience to His commandments.

By way of summary: *Entolē*, which by its origin and generic significance is suited to express the divine will with primary emphasis given to the authority of God, can express either individual laws or the whole of the law. In the latter case, the plural often occurs, but the singular too is used for the whole law thirteen times in Dt—though only once in the LXX translation of these passages. We may, and shall in dealing with the themes that focus upon *entolē*, stress and regard as central this usage of the singular *entolē* for the whole of the law. Two reasons justify this procedure. First, the *NT* writers had, as part of their background, the Hebrew Bible as well as the LXX, and significant differences between the two must be taken into account. Second, even within the LXX Dt, though the singular *entolē* as embracing the whole law occurs only once, the value of this unique occurrence for the theology of the LXX Dt is heightened when the importance of the

³² The Hebrew text has, in v. 17, *mišvōt* (untranslated in the LXX) as well as *huggōt* and *mišpāṭm*. But for the interpretation proposed, the presence of *entolai* in the LXX, along with *dikaiōmata* and *krimata*, would not make any difference. The point being made is not that in the enumeration of (*entolai*) *dikaiōmata* and *krimata* a distinct type of law corresponds to each term, but rather that in v. 17 the various terms are used to indicate the total content of the law, whereas from the viewpoint of God, in v. 18, everything is said in speaking simply of "commandments."

passage in which it is found, the parallelism of *entolē* with the singular *rhēma* in 30:14, and the seeking after conceptual unities in Dt are all taken into account.

This whole law, expressed by *entolē*, is the personal will of the covenant God; as such, it is one and unified. It is unified, too, in its objective content: it is not simply a collection of unrelated precepts; the primary obligation it lays upon man is to love God and cleave to Him and to reverence Him. From this love and reverence come the following of God and obedience to His commandments. The following of God is conceived in terms of the Decalogue (the code in chaps. 12–26 is an application of the great principles of the Decalogue to existing circumstances and to recurring situations). The *entolai* are in some sense a revelation of God Himself (His commandments reveal something about what He is). They are part of His salvific relationship to man. In brief: the *entolē* expresses the fact that the life-giving will of the personal God lays claim to the whole of man's being, a claim which man is to affirm for himself with inward love and reverence as well as with outward conformity to God's precepts. The *entolē* has for its inmost significance to unite man to God, to make him "follow Yahweh."

Psalm 119

A survey of the use of *entolē* in the Psalms amounts almost entirely to a discussion of its use in Ps 119. Apart from this Psalm the word occurs only six times (four times for *mišwā*, twice for *piqqudīm*).

In Ps 19:9 *entolē* is used, in the singular, in a very broad sense and as a parallel to several other words for law, beginning with *tōrā*.³³ "The 'law' embraces the self-witnessing of God, the revelation of His will in history, but also the corresponding human attitude in the presence of the divine revelation (the 'fear of God'). In it is revealed the educative and salvific will of God."³⁴ Of the *entolē*, i.e., the whole of the *tōrā* as having God's authority behind it, it is said: "the commandment of God is luminous, illumining the eyes." In Ps 78:7 *entolai* is paralleled with the great deeds of God and refers only to the preceptive parts of

³³ We shall continue to use the Hebrew word *tōrā* rather than its LXX equivalent, *nomos*, because of the latter's overtones (after St. Paul).

³⁴ Artur Weiser, *Die Psalmen* (Das Alte Testament deutsch 14–15; 4th ed.; Göttingen, 1955) p. 136.

the *tôrâ*, the obligations of the covenant. In Ps 89:32 *entolai*, parallel to other legal terms, again refers to obligations, since obedience is there the point at issue; in Ps 103:18 *entolai* has the same sense (cf. the parallelism with "covenant"). The viewpoint is different in Ps 111:7, though the content of the commandments is partially the same (cf. "covenant" in vv. 5 and 9). Here God's *entolai* are paralleled with the "works of His hand," and they are considered in themselves and in the quality of "fidelity" which marks them. This fidelity or reliability—he who follows them cannot go astray—has a further aspect which is explained in the next verse: they not only abide forever, but God is said to fulfil them truly and honestly. It is clear from this last that *entolai* includes not only the prescriptions of God but also the promises and threats associated with them. *Entolai* is used in the inclusive Deuteronomic sense: it has a prophetic as well as a legal side, it is both "law" and "gospel" at once. Ps 112:1, finally, uses *entolai* in a general way to include all the precepts of God. The parallelism with "fears the Lord" shows that the term *entolai* stresses the fact that the precepts are the divine will; it is the fruitfulness of submission to God that the Psalm praises.

Often associated with Ps 119 and with its companion piece, Ps 19, is the picture of a schoolmaster or pious scholar bent over the Book in his study. In the Psalm have been seen the beginnings, at least, of the attitude of late Judaism to the law, in which the law becomes an independent and self-sufficient entity, standing even between man and God.⁸⁵ The limitations of such a view of the Psalm have, however, always been recognized. Kirkpatrick has pointed out that

This great "Psalm of the Law" is based upon the prophetic (Ezra ix.11) presentation of the Law in the Book of Deuteronomy, with the spirit and language of which its author's mind was saturated. It represents the religious ideas of Deuteronomy developed in the communion of a devout soul with God. It is the fruit of that diligent study of the Law which is enjoined in Deut. vi.1-9, a beginning of the fulfillment of the promise of an inward and spiritual knowledge of it which was proclaimed by Jeremiah (xxxi.33 ff.). The Psalmist is one whose earnest desire and steadfast purpose it is to make God's Law the governing principle of his conduct, to surrender all self-willed thoughts and aims, to subordinate his whole

⁸⁵ Cf. Deissler's review, *op. cit.*, pp. 54-66, of the interpretation of Ps 119 during the last fifty years.

life to the supremely perfect Will of God, with unquestioning faith in His all-embracing Providence and unailing love.³⁶

And of *tôrâ*—the first “legal” word met with in the Psalm, and to which all the other words are related—Kirkpatrick says: “Here, as in Pss. i and xix, it must be taken in its widest sense, as synonymous with the ‘word’ of Jehovah (Is. i. 10; ii. 3), to include all Divine revelation as the guide of life, prophetic exhortation as well as priestly direction, the sum of an Israelite’s duty.”³⁷ Deissler goes even further and shows that the Psalmist finds God’s *tôrâ*, or instruction, not only in the timeless Decalogue or in the legal tradition or in the directions of prophets and wisdom teachers, but also in history itself as directed by God. In the Psalm the word of history and the word of explicit teaching are not simply juxtaposed; they are intrinsically related and belong together, not only because they both come from the mouth of the one God, but because, as revelation itself shows, both are related in the mind and in the plan of God.³⁸ This emphasis on the word of God justifies Deissler in saying: “Our Psalm is . . . not a psalm about the law but a psalm about the word of God,” where “word” embraces all of God’s activity *ad extra*.³⁹ Against this background and in this context, we may expect that *entolē* too will have meanings beyond “precept” in the narrow sense of the word.

In view of the strong Deuteronomic influence on Ps 119, there is no need to analyze all the instances of *entolē*. We shall only call attention briefly to two points: the formal character of *entolē*, and its scope. As for its formal character, what we have already seen to be peculiar to *entolē* is confirmed, but in a new manner. We have seen that *entolē* usually focuses attention upon the will of God rather than upon the content of His precepts; it stresses that His commandments are an utterance of divine authority, a communication of His personal will, and a revelation of His “ways.” These characteristics are confirmed and, if anything, even more emphasized in Ps 119, for there we find *entolai* occurring in phrases which elsewhere apply to God Himself. Thus, in v. 6, “gaze upon thy commandments,” where elsewhere we would have “gaze upon Yahweh” (cf. Is 5:12; 22:8, 11); “gaze” means

³⁶ A. K. Kirkpatrick, *The Book of Psalms* (Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges; Cambridge, 1903) p. 700.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 703.

³⁸ Cf. Deissler, *op. cit.*, p. 297.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 293.

more than simply "look at," for it carries an emotional overtone and might be translated "gaze with concern," i.e., with desire to share, to participate in. Another such substitution brings out even more strongly the "personal" relation of the commandments to God: in v. 19 we find the phrase "hide not thy commandments from me" for the phrase—frequent in Dt, the prophets, wisdom literature, and the Psalms—"hide not thy face [i.e., thyself] from me." Again, there is the phrase "I am concerned about thy commandments" or "I seek thy commandments" in v. 45 (also v. 94; elsewhere, with a legal term, only in 1 Chr 28:8 and Ezr 7:10) for the usual and frequent "to seek the Lord" (cf. Ps 119:2, 10). In v. 87, finally, "to desert the commandments" occurs instead of the prophetic and especially the Jeremian phrase "to desert the Lord."

Our previous analysis of *entolē* brought out its "personal" character from another viewpoint too, in relation, that is, not to God but to man to whom God's commandments are addressed: they lay claim upon his heart, his interior disposition, and not merely upon his outward action. This facet of *entolē*, expressed in Dt both in the appeal for love and reverence and especially in the prediction of divine purification of man's heart in Dt 30:6–10, is given new and more forceful expression in Ps 119. In v. 73 the Psalmist prays: "Make me to understand, and I shall learn thy commandments" (cf. also vv. 7 and 71, and the divine "teaching" in v. 12). The "teaching," as v. 73 shows, refers to more than the historic act of communication of the divine will in the law. It is an actual or present being-taught by God, and the teaching implies not only the granting of theoretical insight into the meaning of the divine will but the aiding of man in the practice of the commandments.⁴⁰

The second point that concerns us is the scope of *entolē*. At times it signifies the Mosaic law in general, as in v. 98. At other times the Deuteronomic usage of *entolai* to include the promises as well as the precepts is clearly present, as in v. 66: "I have trusted in your commandments." A high point in the OT use of *mišwâ-entolē* is reached in v. 96: "To all perfection I saw there was a limit; (but) your commandment is exceedingly wide." Kirkpatrick interprets the verse thus: "The sum of earthly things is limited, Jehovah's law is infi-

⁴⁰ Cf. Deissler, *op. cit.*, pp. 103, 174.

nite,"⁴¹ but does not say in what way it is infinite. Zorell interprets: "Everything that men praise as 'perfect' is limited; God's revelation is a fountain of inexhaustible knowledge, grace, and salvation";⁴² but there is nothing in the context to suggest such an interpretation. Robert,⁴³ and Deissler after him but in greater detail, have shown that the Psalmist, working "anthologically," as is his custom, has taken up in v. 96a a thought which occurs in Job, especially Jb 28:3. Against this background, the "limit of perfection" of which the Psalmist speaks is the limit to man's knowledge of creature and Creator (Deissler translates v. 96a thus: "Für alle (Erkenntnis-) Vollendung sah ich eine Grenze"). Job had continued with the thought that God's wisdom knows no limits. The Psalmist substitutes *entolē* (singular) for "wisdom" (cf. above, the substitutions of *entolē* for "the Lord"). He clearly understands *entolē* in a very comprehensive sense. "Wisdom" signifies "the divine ordering power that rules the cosmos and human history";⁴⁴ *mišwâ-entolē* is therefore "thy commanding word," and includes the creative word, the "commands" that create and form history, and the moral law.

ENTOLĒ AS LAW: THE THEMES

Entolē and Covenant

The analysis of the texts showed us that the divine *entolē* is addressed to Israel almost exclusively in the form of law. The most fundamental fact about law throughout the OT is that it issues from the God of the covenant ("God of Israel") and can be properly understood only in the framework of covenant and ultimately of election.⁴⁵ When the laws claim to be of divine origin (explicitly, e.g., at the beginning of the

⁴¹ Kirkpatrick, *op. cit.*, p. 720.

⁴² F. Zorell, *Psalterium ex Hebraeo Latinum* (Rome, 1928) p. 219.

⁴³ A. Robert, "Le Psaume CXIX et les sapientiaux," *Revue biblique* 48 (1939) 10.

⁴⁴ Deissler, *op. cit.*, pp. 196-97. F. Nötscher, *Die Psalmen* (Echter Bibel; Würzburg, 1947) p. 247, and Heinrich Herkenne, *Das Buch der Psalmen* (Bonner Bibel 2/5; Bonn, 1936) p. 392, seem to be thinking along the same lines as Deissler.

⁴⁵ This statement, valid for the OT taken as a whole, does not mean that the association of law and covenant is equally strong in all strains of OT thought. Eichrodt (*op. cit.* 3 [2nd ed.; Berlin, 1948] 77) points out, e.g., how in the priestly tradition the divine will to sanctify man is closely linked with His creative will and thus tends to be independent of the existence of the "people" (which owes its origin to the covenant) and to become an absolute and universal will for man as such. M. Noth, *Die Gesetze im Pentateuch*, Parts 3 and 4, claims a much more complete dissociation of law and covenant in the postexilic period.

Decalogue, Ex 20:2, in the formulas of the holiness code, and in the apodictic laws in general; implicitly, e.g., in the structure of Dt, where Moses speaks as prophet, as mediator between God and the people), this is not a transcendental claim based on an essential and timeless relation of human nature to God (as in the unwritten laws of Zeus in the *Antigone*, and in the Western tradition of natural law). It is an historical claim: the law is the will of the God of the covenant.⁴⁶

This connection between the law and the events of the desert and Sinai is clearly and constantly stated. There is, e.g., the introduction to the Decalogue (Ex 20:2): "I am the Lord your God, who led you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."⁴⁷ In Leviticus there is the frequent reminder of this same liberation and of the Egyptian past (Lv 18:3; 19:34,36; 22:32 f.; 25:38,42,55; 26:13,45); the recurring "I am Yahweh" has the same significance. In Dt, besides the lengthier expositions in the discourses (cf., e.g., 4:32-38), there is the frequent grounding of particular laws with a reminder of the Egyptian slavery and Yahweh's liberation. These reminders are not only an incentive to humane conduct towards others; they also call to mind the source of the law and of its obligation (Dt 13:6, 11; 15:15; 20:1; 23:5; 24:9, 18; 25:17). Deserving of special notice in this connection are the festal calendars.⁴⁸ It is unnecessary to cite chapter and verse to prove that the connection between covenant and Israelite law is verified in particular, and especially, of *entolē*. Dt not only gives pre-eminence to *entolē* but is particularly concerned to relate Israel's life under law to the enduring covenant.

Up to this point we have simply the fact of a relationship between *entolē* and covenant. How are we to conceive of this relationship? Is it enough to say that God showed His favor to Israel and promised it land, "life," and posterity, and that Israel, in return, is to obey all His laws? In other words, that law and covenant are related only extrinsically, in that both have God for their source? This view contains an

⁴⁶ Cf. van der Ploeg, *art. cit.*, p. 423; R. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* 1 (tr. K. Grobel; New York, 1951) 260.

⁴⁷ Thus the LXX. But W. Zimmerli has shown in his essay, "Ich bin Jahwe," in *Geschichte und Altes Testament* (= *Festschrift A. Alt*; Tübingen, 1953), that this is the true sense of the original text.

⁴⁸ On the calendars cf. Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Gottesdienst in Israel: Studien zur Geschichte des Laubhüttenfestes* (Beiträge zur evangelischen Theologie 19; Munich, 1954); and the remarks of Noth, *op. cit.*, pp. 37-38.

inadequate appreciation of the significance of the law, and indeed is misleading. It implies that the law is, for Israel, simply a perduring test of fidelity and, for all that Israel might know, quite arbitrary. To avoid this last conclusion, one appeals to the natural-law character of the Decalogue, the fundamental law of Israel. But this, we have seen, is not the Israelite viewpoint on the foundation of their law. If the *OT* outlook on law and on life as lived in the framework of the law is not to be caricatured, we must penetrate more deeply into the relationship between covenant and law. The key to this relationship lies in a third concept, that of election. It is this that gives the covenant and ultimately the law their context and significance.

According to the picture presented to us in Dt,⁴⁹ God first chose the patriarchs, with whom He then made a covenant (Dt 4:31) and to whom He gave promises (Dt 1:8; 6:10, etc.), and later He chose Israel. It was out of fidelity to His covenant with, and His promises to, the fathers that He chose Israel. This fidelity assures the permanence of the election; associated with this fidelity and even antecedent to it (as the ground of His free choice) is the goodness (*hesed*) of God, which assures that He will do more than simply carry out His part in the relationship of election: He will pardon Israel when it fails to do its part.⁵⁰ The election is, then, "the initial act by which Yahweh enters into relationship with His people, and the permanent reality which guarantees the continuance of the bond."⁵¹

What, precisely, is the meaning of election? Vriezen, in his recent study, explains that the general sense of the word "elect" (*bāḥar*, *erwählen*), present in all its uses, is: to determine or dispose of something. The motives, of course, by which one is governed in actually making use of the person or thing one has at one's disposal, may differ widely. In the religious vocabulary of the *OT*, however, the stress is placed on God's love as the motive of election; Israel has no inherent value which could motivate God's action (cf. Dt 7:7-8; 9:24). A

⁴⁹ Kurt Galling, *Die Erwählungstraditionen Israels* (Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 48; Giessen, 1948), gives an extended analysis of the two traditions of election: the patriarchal and the exodal. Add the dissents and refinements of Th. C. Vriezen, *Die Erwählung Israels nach dem Alten Testament* (Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments 24; Zurich, 1953) pp. 78 ff.

⁵⁰ Cf. Dt 4:31, and the remarks of H. Cazelles, review of E. Jacob, *Théologie de l'Ancien Testament*, in *Vetus Testamentum* 6 (1956) 328.

⁵¹ Jacob, *op. cit.*, pp. 163-64.

second idea which attaches to the verb "elect" in its concrete use is that of commissioning, of appointing to a task. Election is always purposeful; one is elected in order to achieve a definite goal. Election also implies, indeed, a separation, but separation is only the negative side of election and is subordinate to the aspect of purpose. Vriezen sums up thus: "Election, in the full sense of the word, is a word with a nucleus (*Kern*) and two quite distinct subordinate ideas (*Nebengedanken*): one who is elected is thus one whom God, with a definite motive, removes from a crowd and commissions with a determinate task."⁶²

What is the purpose of the divine election of Israel, according to Dt? "You are a people consecrated to the Lord your God, and the Lord your God has chosen you to be His very own people from among all the nations on the face of the earth" (7:6). "The Lord has taken you today to be His very own people . . . to be a people consecrated to the Lord your God."⁶³ Israel's destiny, then, is to be a holy people, that is, a people consecrated to God, belonging to Him as a people peculiarly His own. Because of this destiny, the covenant, in which the election is concretized, is not a static relationship but rather the genetic principle of Israel's history, that is, of Israel's effort—made, indeed, in no unswerving or unflagging or unambiguous fashion—to co-operate with God in the realization of His purposes. "Co-operate with God": for in the covenant Israel's active role, though not on a plane with that of God,⁶⁴ is nonetheless completely necessary in order to establish that

⁶² Vriezen, *op. cit.*, pp. 41–42.

⁶³ Dt 26:18–19. Only in these two passages and in 14:2 do we find together the two important terms 'am qādōš (*laos hagios*—holy people) and s'gullō (*laos periousios*—[people of] possession); the former occurs again, in Dt, only in 14:21 and 28:9, the latter not at all. Another important related term in Dt is *nah'elō* (*laos eglēros*—[people of] inheritance); it is applied to the people in 4:20; 9:26; and 9:29.

⁶⁴ The covenant, like the election, is due solely to God's free initiative. Nor can it be said that once God made the covenant and Israel accepted it, His position of superiority in this relationship was in any way weakened. "Covenant," like any other term applied to God, can only be applied analogously. "This term was borrowed from the realm of law and given a special theological application. . . . In this case covenant is no longer a legal compact between human beings, but a device for explaining the meaning and nature of Israel's election" (Wright, *op. cit.*, pp. 54–55). This kind of treaty or covenant between superior and inferior was not peculiar to Israel: cf. George E. Mendenhall, "Covenant Forms in Israelite Tradition," *Biblical Archaeologist* 17 (1954) 50–76. Cf. also the remarks of Jacob, *op. cit.*, p. 176, on the advantages of using a term of juridical origin for a central aspect of Israelite religion.

relationship of mutual belonging which sums up the covenant and constitutes (for Dt) Israel's task within the covenant: "Today you have taken God for your God . . . and the Lord has taken you today for His own people" (Dt 26:17-18).

It is true, of course, that by God's election and covenant Israel already *is* a consecrated people, God's special possession; such a status could only, indeed, be His free gift, it could only be a status conferred by God, not one achieved by purely human effort. From this point of view the law is a *sign* of Israel's consecration and special relationship to God,⁵⁶ and obedience a *response* to an already existing relationship.⁵⁶ But this consecration does not imply any holiness inherent in Israel; Dt is quite clear on this; cf., e.g., 9:4 ff.; 5:29. The holiness given Israel in the election and covenant is precisely that of a vocation.⁵⁷ Israel's holiness is thus not only a gift but also, and primarily, a project; "holy people" states not only a fact but a program. Israel must become what it is.

It is in this light that the *entolai* (the personal will of the covenant God) and especially the *entolē* (of 30:11-14), which is the unity of all the *entolai* and thus the center and summation of Dt, assume their full meaning. The Deuteronomic *entolē* is the creative and redemptive pattern, revealed by God, for Israel's existence as His holy people. Here the unity which we have seen the Deuteronomic *entolē* to possess (a unity of origin in the divine will and a unity of structure) acquires a new dimension: a unity of end and purpose.

To describe the *entolē* in this fashion is to say that Israel's national security, prosperity, and possession of the land were not the primary purpose of the law, but that holiness was. God's election had, indeed, meant "political" freedom for the seminomadic tribes that came out of Egypt, and this liberation was deeply, ineradicably impressed upon Israel's historical memory. God has rescued them from servitude to

⁵⁶ Cf. von Rad, *Gottesvolk*, pp. 25-26.

⁵⁶ Cf. G. E. Wright, *Deuteronomy* (Interpreter's Bible 2; New York-Nashville, 1953) p. 488 on Dt 26:6-19.

⁵⁷ Cf. Vriezen, *op. cit.*, p. 57. André Neher, in his recent books on the prophets, has insisted strongly on the idea of a divine task given to man and to be undertaken in co-operation with God, as being essential for a correct understanding of the Hebrew *b'rit* (*dīathēkē*-covenant); cf., e.g., his *L'Essence du prophétisme* (Paris, 1955) pp. 117-18; his *Amos: Contribution à l'étude du prophétisme* (Paris, 1950) pp. 45-48 (on the covenant as a sharing of responsibilities) and pp. 242-44.

men, and from the disaggregation and chaos of their life in Egypt; the law, by ordering their life, gave them justice and security, and by pre-empting their service for God, put a seal upon their freedom. The Decalogue was their "bill of rights"; on this level, the law was a continuation of their liberation from Egypt and creative of "life," both in the sense that justice and security were a natural product of obedience to law and in the sense that God attached material prosperity to obedience.⁵⁸ On the other hand, Israel's "bill of rights" was also, and primarily, their obligations to God in the covenant.⁵⁹ And Israel was often to become conscious, in the course of her history, that her religious obligations and her national aims were not in tensionless harmony.⁶⁰ As for Dt, the destruction of the nation is clearly envisaged as a real possibility; God's will and purposes are, therefore, primary, and it is by her attitude to these that Israel stands or falls.

It follows from this that the strong stress laid in Dt on prosperity and "long life in the land" does not mean that these goods are the primary aim of the law. Dt is addressed to a nation whose recent history was "six centuries wasted in sin and constant apostasy";⁶¹ cf. Dt *passim*. This people had not only to be exhorted to love and fear God and to make of themselves a holy people; they had also to be enticed by the prospect of material well-being.⁶² It was only through complete and inward obedience that they could gradually come to understand the purposes of God and enter into them (cf. Dt 29:2-9).

The primary significance of the Deuteronomic *entolē* is, then, that it is a pattern of life intended to make of Israel a holy people.⁶³ This

⁵⁸ "Bill of rights": J. Coert Rylaarsdam, *Exodus* (Interpreter's Bible 1, Introduction to the Book of Exodus) p. 843.

⁵⁹ Cf. George E. Mendenhall, "Ancient Oriental and Biblical Law," *Biblical Archaeologist* 17 (1954) 30; "Covenant Forms," *ibid.*, pp. 62-64.

⁶⁰ Cf. Walther Eichrodt, *Man in the Old Testament* (Studies in Biblical Theology 4; London, 1951) pp. 40-44, on Israel's religious development resulting from the opposition between her religious convictions and her national ambitions.

⁶¹ Von Rad, *Studies in Deuteronomy* (supra n. 27) p. 70.

⁶² In any view this material well-being came from God, and von Rad is justified in saying that no materialistic spirit has crept into Dt: "Jahwes Segen ist irdisch, aber nicht weltlich" (*Gottesvolk*, pp. 41-42).

⁶³ The word "pattern" may be misleading. It does not mean a formula nor a guide to be automatically followed (like a dressmaker's pattern) nor a complete outline of what to do on each occasion. To present Israel with a "pattern" in any of these senses would be to favor concentration on outward observances, which Dt precisely does not do. By "pattern"

can be shown in a positive manner in Dt; we cannot, however, expect to find it stated in so many words, for Dt is not a theological tract but an exhortation aiming at action and concentrating, therefore, on proposing those motives that will stir men to action.

To be "holy" means, negatively, to be separated, free, from all evil and defilement. This is precisely the effect which Dt intends certain of the laws to have. This is particularly true of laws against idolatry; cf. especially 4:15-20, where the prohibition is set in direct relation with the purpose of Israel's election: "Yahweh has brought you out of the iron furnace, Egypt, that you might become the people of His inheritance" (*Bible de Jérusalem*). The same aim of removing evil from the midst is attributed to other laws as well: e.g., murder (19:13) and false witness (19:19).

The more important positive side of Israel's holiness is given varied expression. We may distinguish two major facets of this holiness. The first is the communion with God to be achieved through mutual love: "That man's vocation is to love God is the secret revealed by the covenant to all who adhere to it."⁶⁴ The second element is that of *Nachfolge*, of following after God. This latter aspect of Israel's holiness will engage our attention later on—from a different viewpoint, but nonetheless completing, clearly enough, what is said in this section. It may seem that we have omitted from our consideration of "holiness" in Dt an important third aspect, that of the Israelite's *hesed* towards his fellow men in the covenant. Actually it has not been omitted; in

here is meant simply that the broad outlines of how the holy people is to live are revealed to Israel. There are, as will be pointed out in the text, two main points in this revelation: love as the fundamental motive or dynamic inner principle (this includes the reverence expressed in "fear") and the following of God's ways as the specifically Israelite "form" of life ("form" as giving the inner shape and peculiarly Israelite quality of religious life). The Decalogue is perhaps more justifiably called a "pattern," in a stricter use of the word, but it should be observed that the Decalogue is merely a sketch of God's "ways," a set of broad fundamental principles needing application. It is in terms of principles and applications that Dt conceives the relation between the Decalogue and the code, as is implied in Dt 5:22 ff., where the people receive the Decalogue directly from God, but the "statutes and ordinances" indirectly through Moses (cf. Wright, *Deuteronomy*, on the passage). We shall henceforth freely use "pattern," "principle," "form," either of the *entolē* as a totality or, as the context will indicate, of the commandment of love or the following of God in particular.

⁶⁴ Neher, *L'Essence du prophétisme* (supra n. 57) p. 116.

Dt fraternal love⁶⁵ is presented as a reflection on the human level of God's love and *hesed* towards Israel, and it is under the rubric of *Nachfolge* that we envisage it. For the moment, then, let us return to love as part of Israel's holiness, and ask what it means that love should be the object or content of *entolē* and what this signifies for our understanding of *entolē*.

That love for God should be the object of *entolē* seems to many to be impossible; they see in the command to love "a juridical caricature of love for God, which cannot be extorted from man by a legal imperative."⁶⁶ This objection can be a legitimate one. Often it is not, namely, when love is thought of in primarily emotional terms. It is indeed true that "to love" (*'āhēb-agapein*) has in Dt a strong affective note,⁶⁷ which is emphasized in the use of "to cleave to" (*dābaq-e.g., proskollasthai*) as a synonym. But the close link between love and observance of the commandments shows that Dt puts primary stress on the voluntary character of this love. However, even if we set aside, as being secondary, the emotional aspects of love for God, nonetheless as long as we distinguish love, as an interior attitude of active self-surrender, both from the outward manifestations of love itself and from other interior attitudes, such as reverential fear, the problem in some sort remains: How can such an attitude be commanded?

Two aspects of love must be reconciled. It is free (certainly when it has God for its object) and therefore can be required of man by God. On the other hand, love is a mode of existing, a function of man's total life, not an isolated, rootless will-act. If love, then, is "commanded," it cannot be commanded the way, for example, that an exterior act can be required. Fundamental inner attitudes, such as love, are essentially responses to values which make themselves known to man in one or other fashion. It is true that the presence and strength and

⁶⁵ The commandment of fraternal love (Lv 19:18) does not appear in Dt, but "the omission . . . is only accidental, especially since the motive of brotherly love is so basic and prominent in the exposition of the law" (Wright, *Deuteronomy*, p. 401).

⁶⁶ The objection is thus formulated by Eichrodt, *Theologie* (supra n. 7) 1, 49. For an example of this outlook, cf. G. Quell on love in the OT (*TWNT* 1, 20-34; translated into English by J. Coates, *Love* [Bible Key Words from Kittel's *TWNT* 1; London, 1949]; cf. p. 7 of the English version).

⁶⁷ Cf. Quell, *art. cit.*, pp. 1-4 (English ed.); W. Thomas, "The Root *ahēb* 'love' in Hebrew," *ZATW* 56 (1938) 57-64.

genuinity of these responses can be tested by the criterion of works and specifically, in the case of love for God, of "keeping the commandments." It is true, in addition, that such responses can be objectified and grouped with exterior actions, even with the most superficial *actus humani*, under the common rubric of moral action. But they are in themselves not identical with such exterior actions. Being vital, though free, responses, they depend, if they are authentic, on a man's whole outlook; they express, each in its own way (love, reverence, fidelity, truthfulness), the orientation of his personality.

All this is obvious enough. It is mentioned here only as a background against which to appreciate the thought of Dt. The Deuteronomist presents the great fundamental attitudes of love and reverential fear as the response which man owes to the saving love and power of God the Lord (cf. chap. 6 as a whole).⁶⁸ Love is indeed "commanded" ("Thou shalt"), but it is not commanded in the same sense that the avoidance of idolatry, e.g., is commanded. The prohibition against idolatry can be given specific legal forms (specifying which acts are idolatrous, etc.) and sanctions. Love as such cannot, but only the works which proceed, or ought to proceed, from love.

Again, Dt "commands" the love of God, but it does not intend to awaken love by commanding it. Love is awakened by the experience of being loved, and Dt dwells, for this reason, on the intensity and generosity of God's love for Israel. The purpose of the "command" is to recall man to his responsibility and to rouse him to the need of removing the obstacles within himself which stand in the way of his proper response to God. But the response itself flows from insight into the great love and goodness of God for Israel.⁶⁹

These considerations show that love can be "commanded" without its unique character being betrayed—provided that we do not understand "commandment" in too narrowly legalistic a fashion. Nonetheless, given the influence which words exert upon our concepts, it would

⁶⁸ This statement can be applied to almost all of *OT* moral preaching: the Pentateuch, prophets, Psalms (though not the wisdom literature), but Dt stresses the "response" character of obedience more than other *OT* books. Cf., e.g., the long historical introduction (chaps. 1-3) and the conclusions drawn from this history in chap. 4. Notable also is the fact that the Sabbath commandment in Dt 5:15 is given a *heilsgeschichtlich* meaning, whereas Ex 20:11 grounds it in the "rest" of God after creation.

⁶⁹ Cf. Eichrodt, *Theologie* (supra n. 7) 3, 33.

certainly be better if we could find a term which does not have the juridical connotations of "command." Even the somewhat awkward "imperative of love" seems preferable and we shall use it from now on.

We may now ask whether this discussion of the imperative of love and of its meaning in Dt has advanced our understanding of the Deuteronomic *entolē*. It seems that it has. The pattern of life which the *entolē* reveals to Israel is already a great gift, by the mere fact that it insures the abiding presence of God among His people (4:7) and a manner of life built upon just foundations (4:8). Now, however, with the inclusion of the imperative of love, the *entolē* becomes an even more precious gift. For it reveals that the fundamental theme in God's relation to man is His permanent desire for intimate communion with man, and thereby it removes, in the most radical manner possible, all fear on man's part of arbitrary rejection by God. This new revelation increases, of course, the seriousness of the Israelite's vocation: he now understands that the will of God can be fully carried out only if obedience is the expression of a love uniting him to God who has loved him first. At the same time, however, the imperative of love prevents the Israelite's existence from degenerating into a crushing and chaotic multiplicity of lifeless external actions, and thus it simplifies his situation before God.

What is more important: in the imperative of love, law is carried into the heart to become a transforming force. The Deuteronomic *entolē* is, in the divine intention, "redemptive." This word, as applied to law, may seem unjustified. But if properly understood, it can be legitimately used. The sense is not that law itself could effect any kind of holiness; no norm of action can, not even the "new *entolē*" of St. John. And Israel's history was to show well enough that the law alone, however perfect, was not enough of a stimulus to overcome man's hardness of heart. For that to happen, the law of love had to become the law of the Spirit.

The sense of "redemptive," then, as applied to law is simply that in the divine intention the law is a prolongation of God's saving action in the Exodus and a means of realizing His redemptive purpose in Israel and ultimately, through Israel, in the whole world.⁷⁰ Here, of

⁷⁰ It is only with Second Isaiah that Israel's mission to the whole of mankind comes to the fore (cf. Vriezen, *op. cit.*, pp. 64-72).

course, we must think of God's "salvation" at the Exodus as being more than something of the natural or political order. Redemption "from" something appears usually, it is true, only in the generic reference to the liberation from enslavement in Egypt. But something of a higher order is everywhere implicit. Consider, for example, Nm 15:39-41, which concerns the Israelite wearing a hem on his garments to remind him of the law. Here it is said that the purpose of the *entolai* and the effect of obedience will be the sundering of man's solidarity with his own evil desires, which lead him from God, and with all outside of himself that is profane, and communion, instead, with God who liberated him from Egypt that He might become his God. Dt's insistence on laws against idolatry may be read as a similar commentary on the redemptive character of the law; for Dt here merely reflects Israel's past history: her natural tendency, always breaking out anew, to fall back into subjection to false gods and to the corruption that went with their worship.

To appreciate properly, therefore, the *OT* attitude towards the law, it has to be read, not in the light of St. Paul's statement: "It [the Law] was enacted on account of transgressions [i.e., to provoke them],"⁷¹ but in the light of his other statement: "the Law indeed is holy and the commandment holy and just and good" (Rom 7:12). The law could not indeed achieve its own purpose, and therefore it is linked with judgment. But it is not on this account to be opposed radically to "gospel," i.e., to grace and promise. Law for the *OT*, and for Dt in particular, is a part, or a prolongation, of gospel. So much so that the "law" of the *NT* is, from one point of view at least, a fulfilling and perfecting of the old law.⁷²

⁷¹ Gal 3:19. On the interpretation given the text here, cf. S. Lyonnet, S.J., *Liberté chrétienne et loi de l'Esprit selon s. Paul* (reprinted from *Christus* 4 [October, 1954]) 3-4; this interpretation, whether correct for St. Paul or not, serves to emphasize a contrast between two views of law and to situate the Deuteronomic view.

⁷² Cf. Jn 1:16-17. The opposition between law and gospel, law and promise, depends very largely on the Pauline problematic of the law and thus, ultimately, on the Judaic idea of the law which Paul fought and in which the law had become self-sufficient. In older Israelite thought, on the contrary, law and promise or gospel are inseparable; the law, no less than the promises, is a gift, a grace, a proof of God's gracious mercy. This does not mean that while the initial response to the gift of promise-and-law is one of gratitude, it does not become further differentiated as a sense of responsibility toward the preceptive will of God. Undoubtedly, too, there came to the Israelite some of the same sense of insufficiency before the demands of the divine will which Paul expresses in Rom 7. Such a com-

Our findings may be summarized as follows. Law, for the *OT*, directly expresses the will of the God of the covenant. This does not mean, however, that law is to be regarded purely as a condition, arbitrary in its stipulations, of God's fulfilment of His promises. There is an inner necessity in the law. But it is grounded, not a priori in the demands of a humanitarian ideal nor in a determination of what human nature requires for its perfection, but in Israel's vocation and in the purpose to which the acceptance of that vocation, in the covenant, committed it. Israel's vocation was to be a holy people, a people belonging entirely to God. In this light the Deuteronomic *entolē* (cf. 30:11-14) may be defined or described as the creative and redemptive pattern, revealed by God, for Israel's existence as His holy people. This holiness demanded, negatively, a separation of Israel from all evil and, on the positive side, a communion with God in mutual love, a "following after Yahweh," and a certain kind of "life." We have touched briefly upon the first of these positive aspects, in so far as the problem arises of how love can be the object of *entolē*, of a "command."

Entolē as Revelation of What God Is

The second aspect of Israel's vocation is that it is called to "sanctity." The term "sanctity" is used here, not in the broad inclusive sense it had in the discussion of Israel's election ("holy people"), but in the narrower sense of "likeness to God."⁷⁸ To detail the content of this "likeness" would not, however, increase our understanding of *entolē* except on its material side, adding further particulars to the picture. In order to penetrate more deeply into the formal structure and relationships of the *OT entolē*, let us rather concentrate on what is implied in making likeness to God the object of commandment. The necessary implication is that in willing man's likeness to Himself, God's will in the law becomes a revelation of what He Himself is, no less than of what He wills man to be. In fact, because law tells man

plex response is inevitable and is ultimately founded in what God and man are: God is both Lord and Saviour, man both servant and saved. But it is an oversimplification to link God as Lord exclusively with law and God as Saviour exclusively with the promises. For God may be said to be most "Lord" when He is "Saviour," and to become man's Saviour, at least in part, in the very exercise of His Lordship in the law.

⁷⁸ Cf. Neher, *L'Essence du prophétisme* (supra n. 57) p. 158.

what he is to be, it also tells man what God is, for "God's will is born of His character."⁷⁴

The call to likeness is explicit in the priestly law, where the "royal priesthood and consecrated nation" of Ex 19:6 is taken up in the divine summons: "Be ye holy, for I, the Lord your God, am holy" (Lv 19:2 LXX):

The priestly law in the holiness code . . . presents the total dedication to God's commandments as the process of molding human nature according to the divine being. The holy God not only wills to separate His elect from the world for His service by "sanctifying" them (this is the usual meaning of holiness as affirmed of men); He desires, too, to see mirrored in a holy people that spotless purity of His being which distinguishes Him from the sinful uncleanness of man's way of life. The step is here taken from a community of will to a community of being, and thereby the will to conformity with the divine model is made the ultimate motive of moral action. This conformity alone can make man belong, in full reality, to the divine sphere.⁷⁵

The same understanding of man being called to become like God and of law, consequently, as a revelation of what God is, is contained in Dt, especially in the recurring phrase, "to walk in the ways of Yahweh."

In saying that the law reveals what God is, it is not a new revelation that is meant, a revelation not already given in the election and covenant. The law, rather, prolongs the revelation made in the election and covenant, while showing that God revealed Himself in order to be imitated by men. The election-revelation is summed up in Ex 34:6-7, a text quoted in many parts of the OT, especially in the Psalms: "Yahweh, Yahweh, a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abundant in *hesed* [gracious loyalty to the covenanted promises] and fidelity, keeping *hesed* for thousands, forgiving iniquity and rebellion and sin."⁷⁶ It is these fundamental qualities of God as

⁷⁴ H. H. Rowley, *The Biblical Doctrine of Election* (London, 1950) p. 57.

⁷⁵ Eichrodt, *Theologie* (supra n. 7) 3, 77; cf. 1, 59, 135. Neher, *L'Essence du prophétisme*, pp. 158-60, develops the thought that for the OT sanctity is more even than moral purity: it demands a fundamental attitude, and a corresponding quality of life, which reproduce on a creaturely level the two characteristics which most radically define God's relationship to the world, viz., immanence and transcendence.

⁷⁶ The translation is from G. E. Wright, *God Who Acts: Biblical Theology as Recital* (Studies in Biblical Theology 8; London, 1952) p. 85.

He shows Himself in sacred history which are further "revealed" in the law, and primarily—let it be said once and for all—in the Decalogue (cf. the conjunction of Decalogue and "way" in Dt 5:33). It is possible in this context to see the fuller significance of some of the passages of Dt in which, as motivation for the observance of particular laws, the Israelite is reminded that he was in slavery and God brought him out of Egypt; what is ultimately meant by such reminders is not only that the Israelite is to be grateful and to do to others as he has been done by, but also that he is to imitate the God to whom he belongs and who has shown Himself merciful and gracious and faithful to His own, compassionate toward the downtrodden and oppressed, a savior and a liberator.⁷⁷

What may be called the classical Deuteronomic expression of this conception of *entolē* as a revelation of God is the phrase already referred to, "to walk in the ways of Yahweh" (Dt 8:6; 10:12; 11:22; 19:9; 26:17; 28:9; 30:16). To walk in or follow the ways of Yahweh means to walk in the paths He assigns to men, *hodos* (way) being practically a synonym for *entolē*.⁷⁸ But it also means to walk in the ways which God Himself has gone and still goes. The two cannot be separated. The link between them is clear in Ps 25, where vv. 4, 8, and 9 refer to the ways men are to go, and v. 10 to the ways of God Himself. The language used in vv. 8–10 (LXX) is significant: "Kind and upright is the Lord; there He shall direct the sinner upon the way. He shall make the humble walk in justice, He shall teach the humble His way. All the ways of the Lord are mercy and fidelity [or: truth] towards those who seek His covenant and testimonies." The significance lies in the fact that we have here an echo of the passage cited above from Ex 34, and thus, in the phrase "ways of the Lord," we are referred back to the "wandering" in the desert. In other words, here, as often elsewhere—in Dt certainly, as we shall show in a moment—"to walk in the ways of Yahweh" is equivalent to the more direct "to follow Yahweh," and carries with it the overtones and echoes of

⁷⁷ Cf. Dt 10:17–19; 15:12–16; 24:17–18. The motive clauses as a whole have been recently analyzed by B. Gemser, "The Importance of the Motive Clauses in Old Testament Law," *Congress Volume: Supplements to Vetus Testamentum* 1, (Leiden, 1953) 50–66.

⁷⁸ Cf. W. Michaelis, "Hodos," *TWNT* 5, 51, 56; and the expression "the way which the Lord your God has commanded you" (Ex 32:8; Dt 9:12, 16; 11:28; 13:6; 31:29).

Israel's desert experience, which Jeremiah evokes in a moving passage: "I remember the affection of your youth, the love of your betrothal; you followed me in the desert, upon the unsown land."⁷⁹

The reference to the desert is not simply literary ornament. It is in the Exodus and in the wilderness marches that the vocabulary of the way originates. In those years God went before Israel, and Israel followed Him in the literal, spatial sense of the word. But these "ways" in the literal sense expressed and embodied the plans and intentions of God together with His manner of acting toward Israel as the merciful, faithful, saving, educating God; it is these intentions and this manner of acting that are meant by the "ways of God" in the transferred sense of the words. The interconnection of all these ways of God and men emerges clearly and forcefully in Dt 8:2-6 (LXX):

Remember that whole way which the Lord your God made you traverse in the desert [the way of God, the leader, and of the people following Him: in the literal sense] that He might humble you and test you and know your heart [His ways of dealing with Israel], whether you would keep His *entolai* or not. . . . Know in your heart, then, that the Lord your God corrects you as a father corrects his son [God's ways with Israel], and keep the *entolai* of the Lord your God so as to walk in all His ways [the *entolai* are God's ways for men, their revealed mode of existence] and to fear Him.⁸⁰

The polyvalence of the concept "way" and its historical background and abiding historical overtones are well summed up by Guillet:

In this historical context [of the Exodus] the ways of God are not only His general intentions. Once in history Yahweh revealed with dazzling clarity what His ways were: for forty years He led His people on a journey of His own. Without the perduring memory of this journey in the footsteps of God, the Israelite, in speaking of the "ways of God," would have evoked in his hearer only abstractions and human constructs. The ways of God would, perhaps, have been the inner aspirations of conscience, or the obligations imposed by the social milieu. Perhaps they would even have had a certain grandeur. But they would always have been ways of men. Because his ancestors really followed the ways of God, because the Yahweh

⁷⁹ Jer 2:2, translated from the *Bible de Jérusalem*. Cf. the *BJ* notes on the passage, and, on whether "betrothal" ought rather to be "espousals," cf. C. Wiéner, "'Fiançailles' ou 'épousailles,'? (*Jér. II.2*)," *Recherches de science religieuse* 44 (1956) 403-7.

⁸⁰ Cf. A. Kushke, "Die Menschenwege und der Weg Gottes im Alten Testament," *Studia theologica* 5 (1951) 106-18. It is notable that in Michaelis' article there is no hint that the ways of God Himself and the ways He bids men follow in any way correspond.

of the Exodus continues to be the shepherd of Israel, the Israelite can no longer think of the ways of God without his historical experience more or less consciously giving the words a quality of realism: he can no longer dissociate his personal conduct from the revelation of God in history.⁸¹

The preceding section yielded the conclusion that the Deuteronomic *entolē* must be understood as something more than "commandment" in a legalistic sense (even though the word "legalistic" is not used here pejoratively). It is the communication to Israel of a complete mode of life, whose foundation—the love of God—lies too deep to be adequately comprehended in terms of positive law. This first conclusion concerned essentially the significance of *entolē* for man.

In this section a new dimension of *entolē* has emerged, as the latter is viewed rather in relation to God. We noted, first, a viewpoint which Dt shares with Leviticus, namely, that God's *entolai* reveal what God is, and that man is, consequently, called to imitation of God. In Dt, however, there are two additional factors which lead us beyond this first general observation. The first of these is that the content of the *entolē* is best expressed—over and above the fundamental imperative of love—by the phrase, "to walk in the ways of Yahweh," which gives to the Israelite mode of life a quality of intimate personal relationship to God, while implying also that this "mode of life" is also somehow God's own. The second factor is the specifically Deuteronomic summons "to remain in communion with the history of the people."⁸² The Deuteronomic *entolē*, due to its identification with the "ways of Yahweh" and to its relation to God's historical revelation-in-action, synthesizes the two fundamental elements out of which the Pentateuch is woven: God's revelation of His being, and His revelation of His will.⁸³

⁸¹ J. Guillet, *Thèmes bibliques* (Théologie 18; Paris, 1951) pp. 18–19.

⁸² Von Rad, *Gottesvolk* (supra n. 24) p. 5.

⁸³ On this aspect of the growth of the Pentateuch, cf. A. Weiser, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament* (2nd ed.; Göttingen, 1955) pp. 71–73. Since the *Wesensoffenbarung* of God in the OT is essentially in the framework of salvation-history and therefore a revelation of His "grace" (it is His being in relation to men that He primarily reveals), Weiser is justified in saying of the Decalogue that it shows "die . . . Grundstruktur der inneren Verknüpfung von Gottes Gnade und Forderung" (*Die Psalmen* [supra n. 34] pp. 463–64). This puts briefly what we mean to say, in the last sentence of the text, about the Deuteronomic *entolē*.

"The Commandments of Life" (Bar 3:9)

One of the characteristic marks of *OT* thought is the connecting of "life" with the will of God as expressed in the law.⁸⁴ That "life" should be associated with *entolē* is, then, to be expected. Nevertheless, since this association provides one of the major contexts of *entolē*, both *entolē* and "life" being so central to *Dt*, it deserves some notice if our study is to touch on the major themes connected with the *entolē*.

"Life" in the *OT* is far too large and complicated a subject to venture into here for its own sake. Instead, let us ask simply: What does "life" mean as an effect of the *entolē*, first in *Dt* and then in our second major source on *entolē*, viz., Ps 119?

In *Dt* the result of obedience to the will of God in the law is expressed in several ways: "that it may be well with you" (4:40; 5:16; 6:3,18; etc.); "that you may prolong your days in the land which the Lord gives you" (4:40; 5:16, 33; 11:9; etc.); "that the Lord may bless you" (14:29; 23:20; cf. 1:11; 7:13; 15:8; etc.). In many of the phrases about the land *Dt* insists that it is an "inheritance" (4:21, 38; 12:9; 15:4; etc.). A further modality of the possession of the land is that this possession is a "rest" after the wilderness marches and the conquest (3:20; 12:9, 10; 25:19). The primarily material character of the prosperity which obedience will bring to Israel emerges quite unequivocally in the list of blessings in chap. 28.

Dt does not reflect on the precise relationship that exists between obedience and these manifold material results. It does not raise the objection which the Israelite knew as well as any one else: that the just do not always prosper and the wicked often do. However, it can be argued that for *Dt*, from its particular viewpoint, the objection is not valid. *Dt* addresses the people as a whole, precisely as a people,⁸⁵ and it is convinced that if the whole people were to be loyal to God and to become truly a holy people, all this prosperity would come to pass, God's promises would be fulfilled. Even the individual, for whom the promise of "length of days" seems necessarily intended, will enjoy this blessing only if the whole people is loyal, just as, in turn, his individual

⁸⁴ Cf. von Rad, "Gerechtigkeit' und 'Leben' in den Psalmen," in *Festschrift A. Bertholet* (Tübingen, 1950) p. 427.

⁸⁵ Cf. von Rad, *Gottesvolk* (supra n. 24) pp. 6-7, on the "inheritance" and the "rest" as the possession of the people as a whole; also his remarks on p. 15, especially n. 3.

sin is an infection that must be purged out lest the whole community suffer (cf. Dt 13:5; 17:7; 19:10; 21:23; 24:6).

The state of prosperity which Israel's complete loyalty would inaugurate is a state of affairs that can be realized in this life, on this earth. For the Deuteronomist, there can be no objection on the grounds of the laws of nature. Nature is entirely subject to God and placed by Him in the service of His alliance with Israel.⁸⁶ It may be said, then, that the relation between obedience and material prosperity is not a problem for Dt: if Israel is loyal, God will keep His promises. This view of the link between prosperity and obedience is not extreme naïveté nor is it the unscrupulous rhetoric of one enamored of law and determined to win acceptance of it. The prophets share the same view, even in noneschatological passages. Cf. Is 48:18: "If you had only been attentive to my commandments! Like a river would have been your prosperity and your righteousness like the waves of the sea."⁸⁷

Is the Deuteronomic view of "life"—it must be kept in mind that we are speaking of "life" in the couple "commandments and life"—limited to a "long and happy life in the land of inheritance"? Some texts seem to suggest that something of a higher order is meant. In Dt 32:47 we read: "for this [the law] is by no means too trivial a thing for you to do; on the contrary it means your life"; and in 8:3: "to show you that man does not live only by bread but that man lives by everything that comes forth from the mouth of God." There is danger, however, of reading into these texts ideas which are actually strange to them. It would be difficult to show that in 32:47 we have anything more than a variation on 30:15,19, where the Israelite hears the law read to him and is placed before a decision of life or death. In this latter text the "life" is that of which Dt continually speaks: the life of the people in the Promised Land, and the "death" is that sketched graphically in the curses of 28:15–68 and in the exile prediction of 4:25–39. The context of the words cited from Dt 32:47 makes it especially difficult to read into "life" anything more than we find elsewhere; for the text continues: "(it means your life) and for this very reason

⁸⁶ Cf. remarks of Wright, *Deuteronomy* (supra n. 56) on 11:13–17 (p. 405) and on chap. 28 (pp. 493–94).

⁸⁷ Translated from *Bible de Jérusalem*; cf. remarks of Eichrodt, *Man in the Old Testament* (supra n. 60) p. 50.

you shall live long in the land into which you are crossing the Jordan for conquest." Do not "life" and "live" here refer to the same reality?

In Dt 8:3 it is tempting to see two kinds of life referred to, but does the text actually mean more than that the life of the Israelite—his material life and prosperity—depends not only on having bread to eat but on obedience to the word of God? But however this text be taken, it is safe to say that there is very little evidence in Dt for seeing in the term "life" anything of a different order than what we have already referred to. This, of course, does *not* mean that Dt does not know of a higher life than the material! All that has been said of the Israelite's vocation to love God and to imitate Him shows this. But our question here has been only: What is the significance of the term "life" in the couple, commandments and life?

When we turn to Ps 119, we are in a quite different atmosphere.⁸⁸ The Psalm is an expression of individual piety, although it may be assumed to be representative of what other men of the time felt.⁸⁹ The composers of Pss 1 and 19 must have had rather much the same attitude to the law as the composer of 119; as must, too, the man who prays in Ps 40:9: "To do thy will, my God, is my pleasure, and I carry your law in my heart" (Weiser), or the man who is described in Ps 37:31. What, then, is the link between law and "life" in Ps 119?

"In them [your ordinances] you gave me life" (Ps 119:93). Here we have a sentence very similar to that of Lv 18:5: "In them you shall live." Is the sense the same? Undoubtedly, the "life" which the Psalmist has received in time of danger (v. 92) or prays for in similar

⁸⁸ For the conception of "life" in the wisdom literature (with references to Psalms), cf. Ernst Schmitt, *Leben in den Weisheitsbüchern Job, Sprüche und Jesus Sirach* (Freiburger Theologische Studien 66; Freiburg, 1954); A. Robert, "Le Yahvisme . . .," in *Mémorial Lagrange; idem*, "L'Idée de Sagesse dans le livre des Proverbes" (Cours polycopié de l'Institut Catholique de Paris) pp. 77–80. Von Rad's essay, "Gerechtigkeit" (supra n. 84) is limited to Psalms which suggest the hope of life after death, and does not touch the law-Psalms.

⁸⁹ In discussing Ps 119 we do not restrict ourselves to those verses which contain the word *entolē*. *Entolē* is in this Psalm one of a number of generally synonymous terms for divine revelation; these terms are, indeed, not always synonymously used and their extension differs considerably in many verses—a fact which must be respected, but in discussing the relation of law and life in the Psalm, there can be no objection in principle to making use of verses whose terms are synonymous with *entolē*. For Ps 119 as an expression of private piety, i.e., of its noncultic *Sitz im Leben*, cf. Deissler's discussion, *op. cit.*, pp. 281–87.

circumstances (vv. 17, 18, 117, 174) is a continued physical existence upon earth. Yet these very petitions show that "life" has a higher meaning as well: "In accordance with thy kindness (*hesed*) revive me, that I may observe the decrees of thy mouth" (v. 88). This continued physical existence is also a life whose structure and significance are determined by obedience to the will of God. The *tôrâ* is the great gift of God (v. 29), and the petitions of v. 144 ("Thy decrees are eternally right [*š'dāqâ*]. Give me understanding that I may live!") and of v. 10 ("I seek thee with my whole heart; let me not wander from thy *entolai*!") show clearly that for the Psalmist "'to have life' means . . . not only earthly existence but also that higher interior life of moral union with God who encounters man in the law, which alone makes life truly worth living to the writer."⁹⁰ To return to v. 93, we can say that in Ps 119 "life" means not only continuing physical existence, which, in the experience of the Psalmist, itself comes to him due to his obedience to the divine will (v. 92, etc.), but an interior life consisting in the knowledge and fulfilment of that will.

Upon this foundation, derived from the verses which speak explicitly of law and life, we can construct a fuller picture of what life means for the Psalmist, that inner life which flows from the fulfilment of the divine will or, more accurately, which is the fulfilment of the divine will: a life according to the divine will is its own reward (v. 112). This is not a colorless life, the grey existence of the letter-bound Pharisee. For the Psalmist, the commandments of God are the source of delight and deepest joy (vv. 16, 143); the laws of God have become for him "songs . . . in the house of my pilgrimage" (v. 54), his light (v. 105), honey in his mouth (v. 103), and water for his parched spirit (v. 131), a treasure more precious than any earthly riches (vv. 14, 72, 127).

The *tôrâ* (and *tôrâ* means for Ps 119, as was noted above, the whole of divine revelation; it corresponds to the *entolē* of Dt) is a great and marvelous world of its own (vv. 18, 129), and in it the Psalmist finds freedom of soul, an enlargement and flowering of his spirit.⁹¹ The word

⁹⁰ Deissler, *ibid.*, p. 240.

⁹¹ Vv. 32, 45. For verse 32b ("du machst weit mein Herz") Deissler points out such parallels as Ps 4:2, 8; Is 50:51; Neh 8:10; 1 K 5:9, and comments: "Wahrscheinlich hat unser schriftkundiger Verfasser alle diese Bedeutungen im Auge und meint mit der 'Weite,' die Jahwe seinem Herzen schenkt, Befreiung, Freude, Zuversicht und Einsicht zugleich" (*op. cit.*, p. 129).

used in v. 45 and translated in English as "at large" (Deissler: "Dann werde ich dahinschreiten *in freier Weite*, denn um deine Ordnungen kümmerge ich mich." LXX: *platismos*) is an adjective used substantively. In this form it does not appear elsewhere in the Psalter but is used to describe the Promised Land in Ex 3:8. Given this identification, or implication of identity, of the *tôrâ* and the Promised Land, it is not surprising to find the Psalmist adopting the great Deuteronomic word "inheritance" and applying it to the *tôrâ*: "Your testimonies are my inheritance forever, they are the joy of my heart" (v. 111, *Bible de Jérusalem*). "Instead of the Promised Land the revelation of Yahweh's will has become his true *nahalah* and the pledge of covenant loyalty. For him the fulfilment of the commandments is no longer primarily the condition for securing earthly blessing nor even . . . the gifts of salvation; it is the divine instruction that, as such, becomes the essential covenant gift."⁹² Thus, with the interiorization of the concept of life and the identification of true life with the joyful, liberating fulfilment of the divine will, the vocabulary associated throughout Israelite history with the Promised Land has also been interiorized.

Two further Deuteronomic themes have been called upon and submitted to this same process of interiorization. The wisdom, which in Dt 4:6 was attributed to Israel because they possessed so good a law, now becomes a wisdom flowing from the fulfilment of the law (vv. 98-100, 104, 130). In Dt 4:7 the law had been the sign of God's salvific presence among His people; in Ps 119:151 the commandments, with their "truth" (*'emet*), are the locus and medium of God's salvific presence in the soul of the Psalmist: "Thou art near, O Lord, and all thy commandments are truth."⁹³

In this transformation of Deuteronomic themes it can be said that Dt has been carried to its logical conclusion and at the same time fulfilled. It has been carried to its logical conclusion: in Dt the law itself had been interiorized, when the root of all obedience was placed in the heart with the imperative of love, and obedience was made a matter of the imitation of God. The law was thus in its whole tendency a

⁹² Deissler, *op. cit.*, p. 210.

⁹³ On *'emet* as an attribute of law, cf. I. de la Potterie, S.J., "De sensu vocis *'emet* in Vetere Testamento," *Verbum domini* 27 (1949) 351-54. In Ps 119:151 de la Potterie thinks that the ideas of unshakableness (*firmitas*) and protection are both present, and approves Herkenne's version "Schütztreue." Cf. also Deissler on vv. 142, 151, 160.

medium of communion between God and man. At the same time, however, the reward of obedience, the "life" which the law purported to help man achieve, had been limited to physical life and material well-being. Such life and prosperity, whenever approximated in Israel's history, had proved rather an incentive to "forget Yahweh" than a stimulus of gratitude;⁹⁴ and the prophets had to preach that such prosperity was safe only in the eschatological period when all "Israel"—the spiritual Israel—would have turned to God. During the present life, God alone must be the goal of man's striving. In applying to God Himself and to His will the Deuteronomic "inheritance" and the vocabulary of the Promised Land, and in attaching to God and His will the power of emotional attraction which such words as "inheritance" exerted upon the Israelite soul, Ps 119 was carrying out the real intention of Dt, which was to lead Israel to "love the Lord your God with all your mind and all your heart and all your strength." At the same time Dt has been fulfilled: the Deuteronomic *entolē*—the *tôrâ* of Ps 119—has proved to be for the Psalmist a truly "creative and redemptive pattern of life."

The Existential Quality of the Legal Entolē

The adjective "existential," as applied to the divine *entolē* in the law, might signify that the divine will lays claim upon the whole of man's life, in its least details as well as in its broad outlines; that the creative and liberating form and pattern which the *entolē* reveals absorbs human activity in all its ramifications.⁹⁵ Here, however, we use "existential" rather to characterize the "here and now" quality which attaches to the *entolē*. This aspect of the *entolē* finds its expression, in Dt, in the "today" which is a leitmotiv of this book and gives a particular coloring to its major themes of election, covenant, and *entolē*.

Dt is presented as a speech of Moses to the people, and the "today" is, in the first instance, the day on which he expounds the Deuteronomic *tôrâ*. Dt is, on the other hand, not intended to be a purely historical record; it is also exhortation addressed to the "today" of its readers and hearers. "Hearers" is, indeed, the proper word; for "Deuteronomy

⁹⁴ Cf. Eichrodt, *Man in the Old Testament* (supra n. 60) pp. 45–51, especially p. 47.

⁹⁵ Cf. André Neher, *Amos* (supra n. 57) pp. 241–42; Eichrodt, *Man in the Old Testament*, pp. 24–27.

in its present form is undoubtedly a literary production, but it still bears the stamp of a cultic form that has exercised an extraordinary influence on its style."⁹⁶ The cultic form in question is that of a feast of covenant renewal, for which Dt itself, in fact, makes provision (Dt 30:9-13). Thus the "today" on which Moses speaks becomes the "today" of each cultic renewal of the covenant.⁹⁷

This cultic renewal is not to be imagined simply as a reading of Dt, much as we read the Gospel in the church today. For the Israelite, as for the peoples of the ancient Near East generally, cult took the form of dramatic presentation, so that the Deuteronomic "today" can be called the "today" of "cultic actualization."⁹⁸

It is important not to misunderstand the nature of the "actualization," of "making present" the historical events of Sinai. The cultic drama was more than a stage play (as we might stage a play portraying the signing of the Declaration of Independence), but it was also something quite other than a renewal effected magically by virtue of the sacred words and actions themselves, such as is found in renewal rites of the ancient Near East outside of Israel.⁹⁹ The cult was the locus of the renewal of the covenant, but the renewal was effected in faith, by

⁹⁶ Von Rad, *Studies in Deuteronomy* (supra n. 27) pp. 14-15. Cf. also his *Das formgeschichtliche Problem des Hexateuch* (Stuttgart, 1938; now in *Gesammelte Studien zum Alten Testament* [Theologische Bücherei 8; Munich, 1958]), where he points out in detail the cultic relationships of the fourfold division of Dt.

⁹⁷ The question of how often there actually was such a renewal, in pre-exilic times, is of course a difficult one; cf. Wright, *Deuteronomy* (supra n. 56) pp. 512-13; but also Kraus, *Gottesdienst in Israel* (supra n. 48) sec. B, chap. 5, and Albrecht Alt, *Die Ursprünge des israelitischen Rechts*, in his *Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel* 1 (Munich, 1953) 325 ff. But whether the cultic renewal occurred frequently or not does not affect our analysis of the significance of the "today," since the Israelite (and the Christian: cf. R. A. F. MacKenzie, S.J., "The Messianism of Deuteronomy," *CBQ* 19 [1957] 299-305) who read Dt or heard it read, no less than the Israelite who assisted at the cultic renewal of the covenant, was invited to regard the "today" as addressed to himself.

⁹⁸ Cf. Kraus, *Gottesdienst in Israel* (supra n. 48) pp. 122-28, 53; and his *Die Königsherrschaft Gottes im Alten Testament* (Tübingen, 1951) *passim*.

⁹⁹ Cf. Kraus, *Gottesdienst in Israel*, pp. 122 ff. Artur Weiser's description of the cultic theophany in his introduction to *Die Psalmen* (supra n. 34; cf. also his "Zur Frage nach den Beziehungen der Psalmen zum Kult: Die Darstellung der Theophanie in den Psalmen und in Festkult," in *Festschrift für A. Bertholet*, pp. 513-31) has suggested to at least one critic the kind of magical renewal referred to: cf. J. Guillet, *RSR* 43 (1955) 423-24 (review of Kraus, *Gottesdienst in Israel*).

a meeting of two wills: God offering His covenant and man accepting it. The offering of the covenant to Israel was a timeless action, not in the sense that myth is timeless (myth does not record a historic fact but mirrors the destiny of man; of any myth it can be said: "This never happened, but always is"¹⁰⁰), but in the sense that God's action was intended to affect, was valid for, every generation. The events of Sinai were "today" for each generation in Israel and for each individual Israelite, because God was equally present to each.

"Today," then, ever anew God chooses Israel (Dt 5:3), and Israel becomes the people of God (27:9); "today" Israel crosses the Jordan (9:1) and is given the Promised Land (9:3). "Today" God reveals once again His will, the vital and liberating principle which will effectively make of Israel a holy people, God's possession and God's inheritance. And "today," finally, Israel must accept or reject this form and pattern of her life, knowing, as she makes her choice, that it is a decision between life and death.¹⁰¹

That this "today" of Dt is seriously and realistically meant, and not a simple rhetorical flourish, is clear from Dt 29:2-9: "Although you have seen all that the Lord did before your eyes in the land of Egypt to Pharaoh and all his courtiers and all his land, the great tests which you saw with your own eyes, the signs and those great portents, yet to this day the Lord has not given you a mind to understand, nor eyes to discern nor ears to hear. . . ." ¹⁰² Each Israelite can say, and say each time that he hears or reads the Deuteronomic message, that he has not understood what God has done and that he has not fully shared in the great purpose of God: to make of Israel a holy people. To him, then, God's revelation is addressed as on the first day. Each

¹⁰⁰ Sallustius, apropos of the Atthis myth, cited in Heinrich Schlier, "Das Neue Testament und der Mythos," *Hochland* 48 (1956) 206.

¹⁰¹ Dt 30:15-20. The alternatives set before the people, seen in sharpest form here (life or death) but occurring throughout Dt in one or other shape (cf. 7:12 and 8:19; 11:13, 16; 11:22; 26:16-19; 28), are one of the areas in which the Deuteronomist and the prophets think along similar lines. Cf. Neher, *Amos* (supra n. 57) pp. 108-16: "Le schéma deutéronomique du choix," especially p. 113 for the parallels in Amos.

¹⁰² Chaps. 28-29 do not seem to have been part of Dt in its first form; cf. Wright, *Deuteronomy* (supra n. 56) p. 317, for a conservative view. In any case, these chapters do not change the thought of the previous chapters but simply stress the covenant idea which is fundamental to the whole of Dt.

moment of the Israelite's existence possesses, in relation to the will of God, a quality of uniqueness and vital decision.¹⁰³

From what we have said in the last three paragraphs, it is clear that the Deuteronomic stress on the contemporaneity of historical events does not volatilize history, destroy its character as *ephapax*, or turn it into myth. God both transcends history and is the God of *hesed* and *'emet* (cf. Dt 7:9). Therefore, the covenant, though made once, was made with every generation. The Israelite is not to act *as if* he were in the situation of Moses' followers; before God that *is* his situation.

In somewhat analogous fashion, the uniqueness of the decision before which the Deuteronomic *entolē* sets the Israelite at each moment of his existence does not destroy the abiding validity of the Decalogue. The Decalogue projects the structure of an existence in which the great motivating forces are the love and imitation of God. But since this structure is never fully achieved by the individual, it needs to be ever newly adopted as one's own and its purpose approved and accepted.

What, then, does the "today" tell us of the Deuteronomic *entolē*, in relation to the Israelite and in relation to God? For the Israelite it reveals the importance and decisiveness of each act of obedience to the *entolē*, each effort to make it his own vital life-form. The generation and the individual must share in the building up of the holy people through history. They cannot take refuge from their responsibility in a given and permanent order of things behind which God has, as it were, retreated, nor erect the law into a protective barrier between themselves and God.¹⁰⁴ The *entolē*, in the light of the "today," is seen, from a new point of view, as a mode of the presence of God to man.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ The Deuteronomic "today" effects a certain interiorization of historical events and may well have provided the model for the "today" of Ps 95:7 (which is postexilic; cf. E. Podechard, *Le Psautier 2* [Lyons, 1955] 151), especially since the phrasing of Ps 95:8 is closer to Dt 6:16 than to Ex 17:1-7 or Nm 20:2-13. Ps 95 has, however, advanced further in the process of interiorization than Dt. For Dt, the Exodus, etc., have not become types of personal spiritual experience, as in Ps 95; in Dt, these events have become interior only in the sense that to faith the real events have the same significance and immediacy as for those who experienced them in the flesh. Cf., on Ps 95:6-9, the remarks of Guillet, *Thèmes bibliques* (supra n. 81) p. 16.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Eichrodt, *Man in the Old Testament* (supra n. 60) pp. 25-27.

¹⁰⁵ It was said earlier that "in Ps 119:151, the commandments, with their 'truth' (*'emet*), are the locus and medium of God's salvific presence in the soul of the Psalmist."

The *entolē*, of course, in its fundamental content—the love and imitation of God in terms of the Decalogue—already guards against such an escape from personal commitment and responsibility. The “today” does not, then, introduce a properly new element into the *entolē*. It does bring out, however, the full significance and realism of the personal relationship which the *entolē*—when received into the heart and made the vital form and principle of existence—creates between man and God.

The *entolē* can also be regarded from the side of God, as something of and from Him. From this point of view the “today” confirms what was said above in speaking of the vocabulary of “commandment,” viz., that the contexts of *entellesthai* and *entolē* show that these terms stress the personal will of the God of the covenant and emphasize His authority present in His commandments. In addition, the “today” theme, by giving the legal *entolē*—even though the latter aims at creating a permanent structure of life—an aspect of the “ever new,” brings out the dynamic and active character of the divine *entellesthai*.

What we have been saying in this section may seem a modern “existentialist” reading of Dt, a piece of eisegesis. It is instructive, therefore, to see the writer of Ps 119 taking the attitude of a disciple in the presence of God who teaches him and speaks to him here and now through the pages of the Book (the *tôrâ* of Ps 119 is the written word of God: cf. the “anthological” construction of the whole Psalm). God spoke in the past, and this is recorded in the Book; yet He speaks now through the Book to the Psalmist. The latter’s “fundamental concern is to confront man with God who speaks.”¹⁰⁶ He turns es-

How does this differ from what has been said in the text above? In Ps 119 it is the existence of revelation which is the sign of God’s presence, together with its attribute of *’met*: the abiding and unchanging truth of the law, which gives the Psalmist certainty about what God’s will is and, consequently, an assurance that his own existence, in following the law, is not an illusion (cf. Ps 119:6, 31, 80, 116). In a word, it is the law in its objective existence and content that is the medium and pledge of God’s presence. From the viewpoint of the Deuteronomic “today,” however, it is rather in the decision and responsibility before God—which the *entolē* forces upon man—that the presence of God is grasped: not in the objective content of the divine will, but in the “commanding” of it by God here and now, in the inescapable personal relationship. Ps 119, in fact, knows also this kind of divine presence, as the text above goes on to point out. But this aspect of the presence of God emerges from the whole ethos of the Psalm rather than from the explicit testimony of v. 151.

¹⁰⁶ Deissler, *Psalm 119* (supra n. 15) p. 269.

pecially to Dt. Passages like Dt 4:1-9 and 6:1-7, on which the Psalmist has fed his soul, are for him "not a dead legacy from the past, but a living testimony of the covenant grace, here and now bestowed upon him, of the life-giving God."¹⁰⁷ The Psalmist is doing, in the sphere of the individual, what Dt had already done for all Israel: given the past new significance and power for the present.

Conclusions on the Deuteronomic Entolē and Entellesthai

At the risk of excessive repetition let us sum up the conclusions we have come to, in the course of this essay, on *entolē*. The Deuteronomic *entolē* (the singular noun, taken in its special and inclusive Deuteronomic sense) is the constructive and liberating principle, form, and pattern whereby Israel is to fulfil its vocation as the holy people of God. The first and fundamental content of this *entolē* is the imperative of love (this is the vital and dynamic principle of Israel's mode of life). Love flowers into the pursuit of likeness to God (this pursuit gives the specific note or "form" of Israel's existence), which likeness is sketched out for Israel in the Decalogue (this last thus becomes the hard bony structure, the pattern, of Israelite existence).

The "following of Yahweh" (the pursuit of the divine likeness) gives to Israel's existence a quality of intimate communion with God (the effective realization of the communion which love already implies and strives for). It also means that, from God's side, the *entolē* is a revelation of Himself.

The *entolē* is also a source of life, and in Ps 119 this life is finally seen to be, not a reward exterior to the *entolē* ("life" in Dt as prosperous material existence), but as the *entolē* itself, accepted and becoming what it was intended to be, viz., a vital and liberating force, a medium of communion and a source of the "knowledge of God" which is one of the fundamental aspirations of the OT (cf. Hos 2:22; Jer 31[38]:34).

The *entolē*, finally, as ever-new, as always of "today," becomes a mode of the presence of God to His people and an evidence of the dynamic and active quality of this presence.

From this study of *entolē* certain facets of *entellesthai* (as this verb is used in Dt and Ps 119, at least) come to light. Since *entolē* and *entellesthai* are but two aspects of the same thing, the object (*entolē*) giving

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 271.

us insight into the activity, we need merely apply what has been learned of *entolē*. Thus, the personal character of the divine *entellesthai* emerges clearly, as does its dynamic and active character.

Further, just as the *entolē* is the prolongation of God's grace and fidelity in the Exodus, so the *entellesthai*—the will of God establishing the law and bidding men obey it—is an activity of God's grace and fidelity. It is a "commanding" which is inspired by salvific love and which is, indeed, a function or aspect of the salvific will of God for Israel (and ultimately, through Israel, for the world: cf. Is 2:3). As it proceeds from love, so it aims at awaking a response of love, at creating a communion between God and men. It is the "commanding" of the unique and omnipotent Lord, but of a Lord who is also Father and Lover.

ENTELESTHAI IN THE PROPHETS

We have already adverted several times to the fact that *entolē*, used of God, is almost exclusively a word proper to Dt (including the Deuteronomic histories and other passages influenced by Dt) and to Ps 119. The verb *entellesthai* is inevitably more frequent; it translates the usual Hebrew word for "command" (*šiwwā*) and thus, even though the idea of commanding can be expressed in other ways, comes in for frequent use, especially in narrative passages and in the attribution of law to God as author.

In the prophets the situation is quite different. The noun *entolē* occurs only eight times, barring variant readings, and, except for Mal 2:1,4, always of the law of God, the "commandments."¹⁰⁸ What is more surprising, *entellesthai* likewise occurs rather infrequently, though very clearly there is ample opportunity for the prophets to make use of it if they wished. Twelve times it is used for God's authorship of the whole law or of some particular provision of the law.¹⁰⁹ This leaves about twenty-eight instances of the verb as used of God's relation to historical events or to the activity of the prophet himself. There is not even full consistency in the translation of *šiwwā* by *entellesthai*; *syntassein* is used several times in both Jeremiah and Isaiah (as it had often been used in the Pentateuch—though only

¹⁰⁸ Is 48:18; Bar 3:9; 4:13; Ez 18:21; Dn 3:29 GTh; 9:5 GTh; 9:6 Th.

¹⁰⁹ Jer 7:22, 23 (*bis*), 31; 11:4; 17:22; 19:5; 32(39):23; Bar 2:9, 28; Lam 1:10; Mal 1:4; Dn 3:30 GTh.

twice in Dt). Given this paucity of material, it would be pretentious to speak of a "theology" of *entellesthai* in the prophets. We shall simply point out two facts about the prophetic "word" and relate the few occurrences of *entellesthai* to these.

Entellesthai: God as Lord of History

The first fact we wish to note is that the prophets worked within the belief in the covenant. Eichrodt could place them, in his *Theologie des Alten Testaments*, among the "Organe des Bundes,"¹¹⁰ and Albright in a new Introduction to his *From the Stone Age to Christianity* recognizes the justice of Eichrodt's interpretation of the prophets.¹¹¹ This does not mean that the prophets simply accepted the covenant as it had been understood in the past or, especially, as it was understood by their contemporaries. In fact, the prophets, especially Jeremiah and Second Isaiah, preached that the old covenant would give way to a new one, modeled indeed on the old one and aiming at the old ideal (God and His people), but extended to all and interiorized.¹¹²

It is within this framework of covenant faith that those few instances of *entellesthai* which express God's power over and direction of history are to be understood. All these instances of *entellesthai* relate to God's punishment either of Israel or of the nations. The connection between the punishment and the violation of the covenant law is particularly clear in Jer 34(41):14-22. In v. 22 God says of the armies of Babylon: "Behold, I am issuing orders . . . and will bring them to this city; and they shall fight against it, and shall take it and burn it." The reason for the destruction is given in vv. 14-17 as the violation of the covenant law which ordered the release of Israelite slaves in the jubilee year. In Amos 6:11 and 9:3,4,9, the punishment of Israel is likewise "ordered"; the "sinners" who are to be punished (9:10; cf. 6:10: only a few will escape) are those who, as the whole of Amos' prophecy makes clear, have violated the Decalogue, and especially the law of justice. (Though avoiding the term *berit*, Amos clearly

¹¹⁰ Cf. also his remarks in the preface to the 5th ed. (1956) pp. vi-vii; and pp. 19-20 on the avoidance of the term *berit* in the prophets.

¹¹¹ W. F. Albright, *From the Stone Age to Christianity* (2nd ed. with a new Introduction; New York, 1957) pp. 16-17.

¹¹² Cf. Jacob, *Théologie de l'Ancien Testament* (supra n. 7) p. 175.

knows the special election of Israel, 3:2.) In Is 5:6 *entellesthai* occurs in the context of the vineyard song, with its reference to the sins of the chosen people. (Cf., further, Lam 1:18; 2:17.)

When *entellesthai* is used of the punishment of other peoples, the context usually suggests, as a justification of God's action, His lordship over all the nations and His right to pass judgment on them for their iniquities: cf. Is 13:4, 11; 23:11; 34:16b; Jer 47(29):7; 50(27):21. This theme of the universal lordship of Yahweh and His judgment on the nations was already part of the Yahwistic tradition.¹¹³ The punishment of the nations is thus related to the covenant God and is part of the theology of the covenant. A passage like Jer 12:14-16, however, suggests something further: that just as God's punishment of Israel was itself an instrument of grace, so His punishment of the nations was part of a salvific plan (the new, universal covenant) for them:

Thus says the Lord concerning all my evil neighbors, who encroach upon the heritage which I gave to my people Israel: "Behold, I am plucking them up from their land, and I will pluck up from their midst the house of Judah. But after I have plucked them up, I will restore them each to his own heritage, and each to his own land. And if they learn the ways of my people—to swear by my name, 'As the Lord lives!'—even as they once taught my people to swear by the Baal, they shall be built up into the midst of my people."¹¹⁴

So, too, in Isaiah there is to be a covenant for the nations (cf. 42:6), and salvation is promised to the "survivors of the nations" (45:20; cf. 45:14-25). The only passage with *entellesthai* in which the nations suffer for Israel's sake (here, in order to preserve Israel; often, elsewhere, because of crimes against Israel, as in the passage just cited from Jeremiah) is Na 1:14; in so acting, God is fulfilling His covenant promise to protect Israel.¹¹⁵

¹¹³ Cf. Weiser, *Die Psalmen* (supra n. 34) pp. 20-21 and especially p. 33.

¹¹⁴ W. Rudolph, *Jeremia* (Tübingen, 1947) p. 77, considers 12:15-17 to be a later addition, chiefly on the grounds that Jeremiah could not expect the nations to "learn the ways of my people" (v. 16), when he himself has so often condemned their ways. But Weiser, *Der Prophet Jeremia* 1 (Das Alte Testament deutsch 20; Göttingen, 1952) p. 113, has shown that the text can be properly interpreted and its authenticity maintained.

¹¹⁵ Cf. J. Leclercq, "Nahum," in Ph. Béguerie et al., *Etudes sur les prophètes d'Israël* (Lectio divina 14; Paris, 1954) pp. 85-90.

Entellesthai: The Prophetic Inspiration

There is another small group of texts, all in Jeremiah, in which it is possible that *entellesthai* is not merely a synonym for "speak (with authority)" but has a somewhat more specific and even more technical meaning. These texts all concern the relation of God to the prophet, and more particularly the inspiration of the prophet by God.

To appreciate the point of these texts, we must recall that in the common Israelite view history was *Heilsgeschichte*, formed and guided by God and, in particular, by the word of God.¹¹⁶ In this shaping of history the prophetic word played an important role, and we find attributed to it an irresistible power (cf., e.g., Is 9:7 and 2 Is 55:10-11). Because of its critical importance, the prophetic word *had* to be spoken. Does not this account for the fact that some, at least, of the prophets testify to a violence done them by God in order to make them, even against their will, His spokesmen to the world? This kind of experience seems hinted at in Amos 3:3-8 and 7:15.¹¹⁷ But it is Jeremiah who has in several passages given classical expression to this experience.

Jeremiah's vocation experience, unlike, e.g., Isaiah's, stands as a whole under the repeated divine imperative to go and "speak whatever I 'order' you" (1:7, 17). *Entellesthai* here signifies the divine inspiration, as v. 9 shows: "I put my words into your mouth"—inspiration that is also an imperative; "to inspire" seems a legitimate translation of the verb. This act of inspiration is not, as v. 9 might seem to imply, an act that takes place once and for all; the touching of Jeremiah's lips and the accompanying words are rather a symbol of his vocation. For 15:16 indicates that the divine words came to Jeremiah at divers times: "whenever your words presented themselves . . .," and there is no reason to doubt that the formula "the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah" refers to individual inspirations on different occasions.

Entellesthai-inspire would not deserve any particular attention, were it not that we find it also applied, in denial, to the false prophets:

¹¹⁶ Cf. Grether, *Name und Wort Gottes im Alten Testament* (supra n. 11) pp. 126-35; A. Robert, "Logos," *Supplément au Dictionnaire de la Bible* 5, 449-50.

¹¹⁷ For further possible instances cf. Eichrodt, *Theologie des Alten Testaments* (supra n. 7) 1, 226, n. 96. The hand of God is used as an image of the pressure of God's power in the inspiration of the prophet (Weiser, *Jeremia*, p. 139, note 3; cf. p. 61, note 1, on Jer 6:12). See also Johannes Hänel, *Das Erkennen Gottes bei den Schriftpropheten*, Sachregister s.v. "Zwang."

“I did not send them nor did I inspire them” (14:14; 23:32). This is the same formula used in 1:7 (in 1:17 the “send” has yielded to the imperative “go!”). In these three texts we seem to have a set phrase for the sending and inspiring of a prophet by God.

Entellesthai in this phrase may contain a further element: the “violence” or overwhelming constraint exercised by God in inspiring His spokesman. This aspect of constraint is not directly expressed in the vocation narrative of Jeremiah, though it is implied in the manner in which God’s answer effectively silences the prophet’s objection; for the repeated assurance of God’s presence and protection would indicate that Jeremiah’s doubts persist and that his acceptance of his mission is forced upon him. Such an interpretation agrees with the tenor of the whole scene: God does not argue Jeremiah into agreement; He commands him and then consoles him for a submission that has left all his doubts still alive. In other passages Jeremiah shows that there was not only rebellion in him (cf. 15:18) but also that whenever he tried to resist the inspiration, to keep the divine word within himself lest his preaching bring more trouble to him, the word was a burning fire within him, affecting even his body and breaking down his resistance, forcing him to speak, come what might (20:9).

Is there any reason for seeing this experience, which was apparently not an isolated one (cf. the phrasing of 20:7–9), in the *entellesthai* of the vocation scene? For an answer we turn to 23:29–32, one of the passages on the false prophets. There is a significant contrast within these few verses. In 23:29 the true inspiration of Yahweh is contrasted with the dreams of the false prophets. Yahweh’s word is like a fire and like a hammer that breaks the rocks in pieces—metaphors which may be taken to refer not only to the effectiveness of the spoken word upon its hearers but also to the word as it makes its presence known within the soul of the prophet himself, i.e., to inspiration.¹¹⁸ In contrast, God has neither sent nor inspired the false prophets (v. 32), i.e., their words are ineffective and they have not had the genuine inner experience of the true prophet (*entellesthai*!). In the light of this contrast, it would seem that *entellesthai* contains a like fulness of meaning in 1:7, 17.

Finally, the divine inspiration which *entellesthai* expresses not only constrains; it also consoles. In the vocation experience the command

¹¹⁸ Cf. Weiser, *Jeremia* (supra n. 114) p. 216; Rudolph, *Jeremia* (supra n. 114) p. 133.

to go and speak what he is inspired to speak is accompanied by the assurance of the divine presence and protection (1:8 and 19; cf. 15:20). In a later passage the word, which brings him so much sorrow and estrangement from men (15:10, 17-18), is also his food, his joy and delight (15:16*ab*); it could not be otherwise, for the divine inspiration was a sign of his own belonging to God (v. 16*c*).

The prophetic inspiration which Jeremiah expresses in *entellesthai* is thus both a constraint and a joy for the man who receives it, whose weak nature shrinks from the opposition that his message must bring to him, but who is overwhelmed by the joy of intimacy with God.

The Fundamental Structure of Prophetic Existence

We have examined *entellesthai* in the prophetic writings from two points of view. We have seen, first of all, that the *entellesthai* which expresses God's power over history is to be understood, concretely, in terms of the covenant: God's action is either a punishment of Israel for her infidelity or the exercise of God's fidelity to His covenant promises. It is the prophets who communicate this *entellesthai* of God or interpret events as being the effect of this divine "commanding." The position of the prophets is, from this point of view, analogous to that of Moses the lawgiver (who is portrayed as also the prophet par excellence: Dt 34:10). Both mediate between God and the people, the one communicating the *entolē* which is to be the formative force in Israel's history, the "idea" and dynamic principle of her development as people of God, the others (who hereby show themselves the servants of the covenant and the law) communicating the *entellesthai* which both molds and interprets historical events and shows God watching to see that His purposes with the chosen people are fulfilled.

There is, secondly, the *entellesthai* which is the divine prophetic inspiration itself, enlightening the prophet as to God's purpose in historical events and, if need be, forcing the prophet's rebellious or fearful will into service as God's spokesman.

These two considerations, on the position of the prophet in the covenanted order and on the use of *entellesthai* to express his personal and properly prophetic relationship to God, suggest a third observation. It is that in the life of the prophet the same pattern is discernible as in the history of Israel, the chosen people. The pattern is that of

election and "command." For the people: election and *entolē* (*entellesthai*); for the prophet: within, and subordinate to, this larger and abiding structure, election (= vocation) and *entellesthai* (= inspiration).

The comparison between the vocation ("calling") of the prophet and the election ("choosing") of Israel is rather obvious and has been made before.¹¹⁹ Its legitimacy and aptness would emerge with special clarity if we were to consider how the prophets mirror in their own life—as God demands of them—the kind of belonging to Him which is the purpose of the covenant.¹²⁰

The second point of comparison is between God's inspiring of the prophets (*entellesthai*) and His lawgiving to Israel and summons to obedience (both expressed by *entellesthai*). How does it happen that the relation of God to the prophet and His relation to Israel are expressed as parallel structures and even by the same verb?¹²¹ General considerations on the lordship of God over men would undoubtedly justify the parallelism and would certainly be congruous with OT thought, but sooner or later we would be forced back for explanation to the particular relationship which we have already seen to exist between the prophet and the people. The inspiring of the prophet is the action of God using man as His instrument to recall the people to the law and to their vocation. The *entellesthai* addressed to the prophet is ultimately an assurance to Israel that the God of election and covenant is ever present to His people, ever watchful over His purpose. It is a pledge that the *entellesthai* of Dt is always of "today" and may even be regarded as a prolongation of the *entellesthai* of the law.

CONCLUSION: THE UNITY OF THE DIVINE COMMANDS

A summary of the conclusions we have come to in the course of these pages is hardly necessary. By way of conclusion let us consider briefly,

¹¹⁹ Cf. Rowley, *Biblical Doctrine of Election* (supra n. 74) p. 108. Vriezen, *Erwählung* (supra n. 49) p. 45, apparently disagrees, but in fact his disagreement is not with the legitimacy of the parallel (cf. p. 45, note 2), but with the application to the prophets of the term "election" which the OT does not use of God's relation to them.

¹²⁰ Cf. Eichrodt, *Theologie des Alten Testaments* (supra n. 7) 1, 230–63; also Neher, *L'Essence du prophétisme* (supra n. 57) pp. 308–35.

¹²¹ The parallel does not, of course, depend simply on the use of the verb *entellesthai*. Just as the prophets are "called" (*nābi'*) or "sent" but never said to be "elected" and yet

instead, the relationship between the legal *entolē* and *entellesthai*, and the *entellesthai* just studied, i.e., as expressing God's power over history and as a quasi synonym for prophetic inspiration.

It has been pointed out that the legal and the prophetic word differ as the word spoken once, and valid for an ever-recurring situation, and the word spoken again and again in unique and unrepeated circumstances.¹²² It would be incorrect, however, to conclude from this quite justified distinction that the legal word or *entolē* is ahistorical or supra-historical. Law in Israel, as we have several times had occasion to point out, is not the expression of an ideal of human perfection, of a timeless *aretē*. It is the will of God, revealed to Israel because of the election, and embodying a purpose to be realized in history. The law thus becomes the basis of Israel's history, and her attitude to the law and to the divine will and purpose embodied in it will determine her destiny (the promises and threats clarify this relationship: cf. Dt 4:4, 20 f., 40; 5:30; 6:15 ff.; etc.).

If we turn to the prophets, we find that they are closely related to the law (as understood in the broad context just described). The deeper knowledge of God and the more penetrating revelation of the divine will and character, which mark the prophets,¹²³ are essentially a prolongation and clarification of the revelation God had made of Himself in election, covenant, and law. Similarly, the prophetic warnings were intended to recall Israel to the law. The prophets made known the divine guidance of history and showed that the misfortunes of Israel were not accidental and irrational events but a punishment for their infidelity. History was manifested as being at the service of God's intentions for Israel (and thus of the law) and for the nations, who are not only punished for their sins but educated so that they too might become part of God's people (cf. Jer 12:14-16) and receive His *tôrâ* (cf. Is 42:4). Thus it is within the framework of election and covenant (extended to the nations) and consequently of the law (understood in the large sense of the Deuteronomic *entolē* and *tôrâ*) that the

these three terms cover analogous realities, so too even where the term *entellesthai* is not used for prophetic inspiration, God's action in inspiring the prophets is nonetheless analogous to His "commanding" addressed to the people as a whole in the law. In both instances God exercises His lordship in the covenant.

¹²² Cf. Grether, *Name und Wort Gottes im Alten Testament* (supra n. 11) pp. 111-15.

¹²³ Cf. Eichrodt, *Theologie des Alten Testaments* (supra n. 7) 1, 227-36.

existence and inspiration of the prophets are historically to be understood.

History is, indeed, the common sphere of the divine *entolē-entell-esthai* in all its forms. But history cannot here be taken simply as a juxtaposition and sequence of events. It is history with a divine plan and purpose, *Heilsgeschichte*, and we are referred back, for the ultimate unity of the divine "commands," to the salvific will, revealed in the covenant and law and furthering its intentions through the instrumentality of the prophets.

The Psalmist who wrote Ps 119 has drawn together these threads of thought. It is not only the law, in its Deuteronomic fulness of meaning, that is his theme. He meditates, too, upon the "just judgments" of God: God's saving actions in Israelite history (cf. vv. 52, 62), when He made nature and the course of events serve His judgment (condemnation) upon the enemies of the chosen people. Transferring the theme to the sphere of the individual, he prays that these same "judgments" may come to save him in his need (cf. vv. 39, 43, 84, 175) and he waits upon the "word of power," the divine intervention in earthly affairs (cf. vv. 74, 81, 114, 123, 147). He knows, too, that this same judgment may be turned upon himself in condemnation (v. 120), as it had been turned upon the Israelite people.

All these rich conceptions—*tôrâ*, *mišpāṭim*, *š'dāqôt*, *dābār*—which are the varied expressions of the divine will, the Psalmist reduces to unity under the concept of *entolē*, the "commanding word" of God, in v. 96. The unity is not merely verbal but real. The commanding word of God—in nature, in history, in law—serves the "graciousness" (*hesed*) of God, extended now, as in the prophets, to all mankind ("all the earth is filled with thy *hesed*": v. 64), and it serves His salvific will (*š'dāqâ*: v. 142).