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# XXIV.7 On laws of perfection in religion

- The Spirit of Law - Book XXIV. On laws in their relation with religion, considered in its doctrines and in itself -

Publication date: vendredi 7 septembre 2018

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Human laws made to speak to the mind must give precepts and not guidance ; religion, made to speak to the heart, should give much guidance and few precepts.

When, for example, religion prescribes rules, not for the good but for the best, not for what is good but for what is perfect, it is appropriate that they be guidance and not laws, for perfection is not relevant to the universality of men or things. Besides, if it imposes laws, there will have to be an infinite number of others to see that the first ones are observed. Celibacy was counseled by Christianity ; once it was made into a law for a certain order of men, new ones were required every day to oblige the men to observe that one. [\[1\]](#) The legislator wore himself out ; he wore out society getting men to execute by precept what those who love perfection would have executed as guidance.

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[\[1\]](#) See *Bibliothèque des auteurs ecclésiastiques du Ve siècle*, vol. V by Mr. [Louis] Dupin.