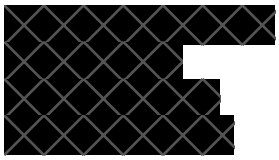

# INTRODUCTION

*The Scrutator* is a pastime of a schizophrenic Newfoundlander of my close acquaintance who likes to pretend to himself – whether as a purely literary conceit or under actual delusion, it might be difficult for a stranger to say – that he is the editor of a popular and influential little periodical in highly successful imitation of Joseph Addison's eighteenth-century *Spectator*, with which he was much impressed during his final year of high school at what many people (they mostly attended it, I think) considered to have been, in its time, the best institution of its kind in Newfoundland. This emulation at first was dedicated to personal satire of a few of those of his fellow boarders at St. Bonaventure's College whom he found (or at least who found him) uncongenial, so that the earliest issues are not being offered here, but he never quite got over the encouragement offered by two of his teachers on their finding he could do something well. As the person, under God,

chiefly responsible for his well-being, I hold the copyright in all his work, and have been trying to make that work more widely known, as I (perhaps with some bias) firmly believe it deserves.

Vincent Colin Burke

Port au Port East, Nfld.

THE SCRUTATOR

No. 9

I received the following letter some time ago but remain at a loss for a satisfactory answer and have obtained the writer's permission to seek aid from such of the public as read my modest periodical.

S.

Sculpin Head

Fortune Bay, Nfld.

October 6, 1964

The Scrutator

Dear Sir:

Having read an issue or two of your periodical and judged therefrom what sort of matter you consider making an issue of, I think that you may be able to understand and clarify one of my own problems.

Were this paragraph omitted, or, rather, not inserted, you might wonder that an

outport as obscure as this could provide anyone with sufficient education to write such a letter as this or that anyone with such an education should remain in an outport so obscure. In which event, you would be tacking about in the wrong breeze, for I am not at all educated but have merely acquired some taste for good grammar and a certain flair for expression, by the reading of many English novels left over from the late century and left to me by a relative who lived here before the settlement had become as unimportant in itself as it has nearly always been to the rest of the world. Since I have never been able to make a cent through them, these acquirements can scarcely be part of a decent education – though when I was younger, an educated man was regarded as apart from, if not above, the ordinary affairs of practical life, being led out beyond them as it were. Which, since I am a retired fisherman, is not the point I considered worthy of your attention.

My problem, or at least a cause of concern to those about me and the source from which my problem arises, is that I am a misanthrope. My friends have never quite succeeded in convincing me that this is a mark of insanity, for they have failed to make it plain whether the madness consists in hating mankind for the reasons I consider adequate or in not loving it in spite of them, but they did

manage to arouse sufficient interest in the question to induce me to seek a more expert opinion. I have a nephew in New York who for some time had insisted that, having spent much of my life searching the ocean, I should see some skyscrapers for a change, and when I accepted his invitation I asked him to make me an appointment with a reputable psychiatrist.

Upon arriving in New York, however, I began to think the appointment unnecessary and that my friends were simply behind the times, as frequently asserted by Canadians and other foreigners. Still, I was there, and there seemed little point in going back without making sure. And as a gentleman always does his best to conform to the customs of any land he visits, I proceeded to be – gentlemanly.

I was doing rather well, I flatter myself, when I happened to exchange civilities with a young Negro. Immediately, I was surrounded by a score of sturdy young (white) men sternly inquiring the nature of the grudge I bear Negroes, while a number of darkies of various shades stood by singing, “We shall overcome.” They did, of course, after a while, but I can’t see that it was much to sing about.

Sir, for many years I've served aboard schooners and trawlers and such and never – or, at any rate, rarely – failed to give respect where respect was due, but

looking up to a man because of the colour of his skin is something I cannot grasp. And certainly, if people are going to let themselves be steered by television advertisers and such (as I seem to have read somewhere) into placing undue emphasis on the importance of a good suntan, one would expect them to accord the possessors of this somewhat easily attained status symbol (I trust the term is correct?) at least the right to be disliked. Be all that as it may, considering that any psychiatrist living in New York who had failed to acquire both money and inclination to move elsewhere, could be of little help to a mere misanthrope, I returned home.

However, since my trouble, if any, must stem from a total misunderstanding of the human race, this lack of contact with reality would extend to the incident described above, so really I am no better off than when I started. If you, who seem to have some skill with words, could explain the whole thing to me, I should be extremely grateful, for, sir, I am sorely puzzled.

Robert J. Mainwaring

THE SCRUTATOR

No. 10

The following article by Mr. Lemmifiju M'larki, the noted African journalist, is reprinted here by the kind permission of *Controversial!* magazine. The article has no title; Mr. M'larki in his youth suffered much at the hands of the aristocratic Englishmen who controlled the part of Africa in which he grew up, so that he cannot now tolerate anything with a title. Mr. M'larki has recently become an American citizen.

S.

It is time that the Catholic church assumed a mature attitude toward one of the major exigencies of our age – the problem of population expansion. If members of our population continue to expand at the present rate, there will be, well within the next three million years, a serious shortage of cloth on this planet. Something must be done!

And the church cannot, fortunately, be content to deceive itself with the naive assumption that by the year 3,001,964 there will have been discovered a method of converting the air molecules immediately surrounding one's body into a kind of protective aura or force field (such things, like vacation jaunts to other planets, belong in the realm of science fiction; modern technology simply has not progressed that far), for the problem already exists for the individual – whose right of free choice cannot be ignored – who is finding it increasingly difficult to clothe his growing bulk in a manner agreeable to the capricious eye of fashion, or, rather, popular habit.

Which is only part of the problem; aside from the inconvenience it causes indirectly, fat is itself unfashionable today. Our age, not content with the superficial, rationalistic viewpoint of outdated Greek and medieval philosophers – who studied, no matter how thoroughly, only the matter and form of which man is composed – is an age of concern for the whole man, an age therefore in which physical fitness is exceedingly important. And while a comparatively stout man may be actually much stronger and more nimble than many of his slimmer brothers, the sad fact is that by modern standards he really does not appear to be. There is, then, a definite need for what one eminent cartoonist has called girth

control.

The church is much to be thanked for its constant stand against the vomitorium, for the methods invented by science to circumvent this position have turned out to be considerably more civilized and comfortable, but certainly the intentions behind its obstinacy were scarcely laudable, springing from exaggerated respect for human reason and being based solely on the natural law, which the church itself admits to be only a part (the foundation) of the supernatural law and life of the church. And there is only the difference of a preposition, which counts for little in modern grammar, between "a part of" and "apart from."

The opposition of modern opinion to the stagnant convictions of the Catholic church is firmly founded on, among other things, two basic rights of man: the right of every man to decide which foods shall nourish his own body, and the right of every man to control the circumstances of personal communion, the safeguarding of these principles being Dr. Renis Stone's only interest in developing his pill, which as is well known, does not prevent digestion (exit the church's main objection) but merely delays this process until the waste material has been disposed of. Thus man may now enter into personal union with his

gastronomic system without any inhibiting fear of results.

If, as the church has maintained for, I believe, quite some time, the primary purpose of the act of eating is the nourishment of the body, then it would seem that anything at all in the nature of a waste disposal process is already a generous concession to human weakness and ignorance as well as to a healthy enjoyment of animal pleasure, I admit. But this attitude is merely begging the question. Consider the matter reasonably: If the whole gastronomic process were eliminated, together with the appetites which activate it, what would man lose by it? Only the pleasure of eating, for his body would experience no pain whatever, not even the slightest discomfort, throughout the course of its dissolution. Clearly, then, the end of nature's institution of an ingestion process is the superaddition of pleasure.

In a sense, of course, the nourishment of the body is the primary purpose of eating, for one must first live if one is to have the pleasure of eating. But the pleasure of eating being, as just shown, first in importance, one may enjoy it even though the function coming first in time is not performed, just as an athlete who has any sense will, upon severely straining something and thus frustrating the primary purpose of exercise – the development of physical strength – continue

lifting weights, or whatever, in order to strengthen his will, a necessary and nobler concomitant of physical exercise.

Of course, the Church is not going to achieve a balanced opinion by listening to prejudiced "authorities" but by intelligent and sympathetic dialogue with people who have to live with the problem. An ascetic like the Cure of Ars or St. Simon Stylites could scarcely comprehend, much less impartially judge, the dilemma of the modern businessman who in his favorite restaurant suddenly finds himself confronted by a well-prepared meal. Such a person might sometimes almost wish that he had such problems.

However, we are optimistic. It seems likely that the Church, so fond of tradition, may well adopt a policy which, after all, dates back to the Roman Empire within which the Church itself began. We would caution the Church, however, to adhere to the practice of adopting only such well-established innovations, and not to become involved with the absurd trends of thought of modern upstarts, of which type the late Robin Hood is so lamentable an example.

# THE SCRUTATOR

## No. 11

People are trying harder and harder to enjoy themselves. It is becoming harder and harder, for one's self is a difficult thing to enjoy. The term "self-conscious" is rightly considered synonymous with "wretched".

Anyone interested in the philosophy of this may read G.K. Chesterton, from whom I have borrowed the idea to vent my spite on my contemporaries because I am too self-conscious to enjoy the dances which, they say, give them so much pleasure.

Chesterton, in an essay on frivolity, has pointed out that one cannot enjoy a dance without taking it seriously. One must feel, for the moment at least, that the stars themselves are dancing to the same tune. He says the old heathens believed this literally and consequently danced as no man has danced since.

It may be said, and probably has been, that a person who does not enjoy dancing does not enjoy life. This is the point. This is, at least, my point: that

dancing and life have much in common and that one cannot thoroughly enjoy a dance that does not reflect one's attitude toward life.

It is no accident, I think, that the most energetic dances, with the most rigid yet challenging patterns, that I know, were developed by the clannish denizens of rugged Scotland.

And the dances that we still find Newfoundlanders enjoy, now and then, allot each couple an independent orbit within a defined system.

But the simple way of life of the Highlanders and the Newfoundlanders is going; we no longer dive together in the sea of Earth’s fruitfulness, each admiring the treasures the other finds and helping the other only when the tide threatens to overwhelm him.

Modern society is more complicated, and its members are more dependent on each other than ever were the clansmen of Scotland.

But one would never deduce this from mere observation of those engaged in the activity that shakes the modern dance floor. The dancers gyrate as though there were not another person in the room, no one with whose their motions clash, no eye to be offended by the disorder.

If there is a thing on earth more beautiful than the female form, it is, it is trite

to say, a multiplicity of feminine forms. But only when one can perceive them all at the same time. In the same way is a tree dancing in the breeze beautiful, and several trees more so, but four trees dancing simultaneously in each of the four winds would be a sight to freeze the soul.

It is an offence against the Platonic.

It is, I think, significant that those who dance so, are of the generation that has been brought up to believe in the freedom and independence of the individual and to realize fully that they cannot live unless they acquire money by holding a job which is by definition the service of another.

They may be said to dance in the East and West winds at the same time.

They work, not to supply the needs of others, but to provide for their own enjoyment, or at least pleasure. They dance, not to give pleasure to others or to create a poetry of motion, but simply to enjoy dancing. (And some of them do; dancing, even without a pattern, can be fun, just as life, even without good government, can be worth living. Provided one doesn't think too much.) They dance without a pattern and live without a purpose. In both cases, the means is held to justify the end.

Their motions seem wild and uninhibited, but anyone who is not distracted by

this, may perceive that their expressions are frequently those of confirmed introverts. They are enjoying themselves.

On the only occasion on which I attempted this rather frantic diversion, I observed an expression which I hesitated to call selfish, encase the face of one of my partners. Fortunately, there was no likelihood of her noticing the curiosity that must have been evident in mine. I think she would have said she was enjoying herself.

And this is, presumably, the generation that knows more than any before it of the mutual dependence of the units that make up their universe, and should, therefore, most fully appreciate the joy of moving with the music of the spheres. But the sound that accompanies these dances is in no way akin to this harmony. I am moved to quote, not Chesterton this time, but a man of St. Jacques who was asked what, in his opinion, was killing the rabbits on St. Jacques Island.

"Well, sir, I'm no astronomer, but if you ask me, I thinks 'tis a bloody *howl."*

# THE SCRUTATOR

## No. 12

In his introduction to *The Screwtape Letters,* a report on diabolic strategy in the modern world, C.S. Lewis says that because the knowledge might be dangerous in the wrong hands, he has no intention of revealing how he obtained those letters, or of providing the key to the script in which they are written.

Challenged by this statement and intrigued by a reference in one of the letters, to the devils' Philological Arm, which seeks to establish the use of certain words in a certain way, I have done extensive research on the subject.

What one man can do, another can imitate. I was successful, and have come upon what is apparently a lecture given in one of the departmental schools. I cannot say for certain when the lecture was presented, for, as Mr. Lewis pointed out, Hell does not have the same chronology as we do.

Mr. Lewis need not have worried about the script's falling into the wrong hands. It takes the patience of a saint to figure out the foul stuff even when it is

deciphered, and I have as yet unlocked only a small portion of the lecture, and that in the middle of it. There is no particular order in the speech, as there is no order in Hell.

What I have got so far, follows.

"*Xmas.* Always get people to use that word whenever you can. X as used here is really a Greek letter, the first in the Greek word for Christ. But most people don't know that. And to many it is also a mathematical symbol signifying the unknown quantity. Since we are doing our best – our worst; sorry – to make Him an unknown quantity, frequent use of this word among humans is peculiarly fitting. Abbreviation for the sake of convenience, especially to avoid such a slight inconvenience, is a good subtle beginning for indifference.

"*Angel*. Get them to use this word to describe children and good-looking women. Make them forget that angels are terrible beings who are keeping us from (directly) tearing their confounded world apart. (Our art department is working miracles – Aghh, give me water – in this field.) Of course, many have forgotten that already, but we might as well keep at it till we make the very idea of angels look silly, and, incidentally, the idea of Us, as well. When people think of fallen angels, they will think of fallen infants. What this sort of treatment will do to the

phrase ‘King of Angels’ will, of course, be obvious to anyone who’s been following.

“*Senior citizens*. A beautiful term. People hate the idea of getting rid of old people – or pretend to – but there's absolutely nothing wrong with providing homes for senior citizens, especially for those who want them. (And the parents of those who want to provide them, would usually just as soon have them provided.) And then, through the curious way in which their puny minds work, we can get them feeling that since the term is not nice, there must be something wrong with the fact of being an old person. A minor step in the great drive toward euthanasia, but when you want to make savages of these weaklings, every little helps.

“*Ist.* That little syllable is extremely useful. Even the longer word ‘ravisher’, supposed to be a euphemism, sounds more violent than ‘rapist’. Call a man a rapist and you make him sound like an almost gentle person who ought to be persuaded that rapism is an outmoded school of thought, rather than a brutal criminal who should be punished. A word like ‘raper’, now, which sounds violent enough to be considered unprintable, would play the devil with this image.

“*Heavenly* and *divine*. Have them used for trifles that are neither.

“*Pedestrian* and *driver*. Make anything that involves the slightest effort seem

dull, by using a long word to describe a simple action. Make people who are too lazy to walk seem energetic by use of a short, quick-sounding word like ‘driver’. Actually, of course, it takes precious little drive to sit back and manipulate the controls of an automobile.

“*Humorous*. The word should be used whenever there is the slightest excuse to apply it to any intelligent writing. This will make people equate intelligence with humour, and demand to be amused by anyone who tries to instruct them. If we work this properly, we can make it necessary for anyone aware of the situation to resort to humorous writing to protest it effectively. Another beneficial effect will be that anyone whose humour adds point to serious thought, such as G.K. Chesterton, can be dismissed as just another humorous writer.

“*Society*. Vague term very useful where ‘state’ would evoke screams against ‘totalitarianism’ and ‘other people’ a shrug.

“*Unpractical*. Encourage use of this. Impractical people are usually vague, harmless types with the scattered redeeming virtue, but the word ‘unpractical’ has a ‘hardheaded’ sound which gives the impression of persons deliberately and competently doing things the wrong way.

“*Human* and *humane*. If you can get enough fools raising a stink about the

painful killing of baby animals being ‘inhumane’, it could be a great help in making them forget that the painless – if indeed it is so – killing of baby humans is inhuman. A human word user, incidentally, has pointed out the subtlety, as it appears to some humans, of our substituting ‘baby seal’ for ‘whitecoat’. We must prevent them from perceiving the reverse effect of using the word ‘fetus’.

“*Beard*. This short word still sounds masculine. A phrase like ‘facial hair’, by introducing extra syllables, makes the thing itself seem like an excrescence rather than a natural adornment.

# THE SCRUTATOR

## No. 13

Every now and then one reads an article deploring the impersonality of modern life, or rather of the performance of so many of those functions deemed necessary for the provision of what are called the conveniences of modern life. But it seems to me that if people choose to play the part of cog in a great machine, we show greater respect for their personality by humoring this fancy and not treating them as human beings or demanding personal reaction. For it is really looking at a girl as at a machine to expect her face to light up and her whole being to brighten with joy, automatically, at the entrance of every man and woman who finds it convenient to make use of the bank where our economy forces her to work.

In this it would appear that I am being much more liberal than St. Paul, who said that slaves should be subject to their masters. The spirit of his advice has, I think, been widely misinterpreted, being used as an argument in support of slavery as an institution, which in his time needed little if any support, continuing

in the Western culture until late in the nineteenth century. For St. Paul was not concerned with changing the social structure but rather with preaching Christ and Him crucified, as are most of the priests of the Church today. And, overlooking a point or two too common to be readily observable to a product of the system, slavery appeared to be as good a cross as any.

But it has always been the proud boast of Christianity, or at least of Catholicism, that form of Christianity with which I am most familiar, that Christ does not ask us to suffer anything that He has not Himself already endured. Now, He did endure the punishment inflicted on runaway slaves by the Roman Empire at its cruellest, and the hunger and thirst facing any man who works with a modern company with nothing to fall back on should he be tempted to exercise his independence. And there is no evidence that He ever took on the yoke of slavery or worked for a company, although these were available in His day, though not necessarily in His country (as far as I know). It can also, of course, be pointed out that there is no evidence that He did not; though it is generally assumed that He spent the first thirty years of His life as a carpenter, the normal career for a man of His time who had been born the son of a carpenter.

Perhaps this is why the Gospels are silent about the early life of Christ: that

freedom is in the very heart and blood of a man, and a man who needs the finger of God to point it out to him, might just as well be a slave.

Considered purely as practical advice, however, St. Paul's is precisely the sort that Spartacus – who, being a leader of parts, must have been a shrewd psychologist in his own way – might have asked the slaves of Rome to follow during the six months immediately preceding the revolt that he led. For there is no reason to suppose that the slaves of St. Paul's time were, in general, treated any worse than the majority of North American industrial and office workers. Rome had learned a lesson – and, I believe the historians say, remembered it – from what the ignoble modern worker would probably call Spartacus's great campaign for better working conditions.

This could have been St. Paul's point, though, as I say, I doubt it: that it is showing a remarkable lack of the sense of proportion, to grumpily thump a dinner plate on the table when the head of him who claims the right to make him meal of you if he chooses, is a little closer to hand; or to feel cut to the quick when the master grouchily disowns your pleasant "Good morning," while neglecting to stab him to the heart for owning your whole life.

There is no reason why it should have been more difficult for an astute Greek

slave to put a certain imperceptible (to his master, who would not be looking for it, but not to his fellow slaves) irony into his most submissive bow, than for a skilful reporter to instil a subtle vein of mockery into an apparently straightforward account of some minor process in the modern system of life. Or a slave might make a sudden supercilious grimace that might be attributed as much to the master's bad breath (even in those days, such matters probably offered scope for criticism) as to the presence of an unwashed fellow slave. By such means can a man, even if he is a slave, salvage a modicum of self-respect, or at least of self-esteem, that allows him to compromise with what is in the circumstances, the most comfortable and secure way of life available to him.

For there are two elements of which slavery, properly understood, is compounded – and one of them is that the slave has compounded with it. Enforced servitude and absolute acceptance of it, are what the Scholastic philosopher would call the matter and form of the degradation. When one of these is missing, it leaves room for self-deception.

In our case, of course, it is the second element that is missing.

For the difference between the slave auction and the modern labor market is that the modern worker is made to choose his master, and to call this, freedom.

# THE SCRUTATOR

## No. 14

An American sociologist has remarked (about four years ago) that it would seem "a serious mistake to exclude the opposite sex from most of one's waking hours, at least in contemporary American culture."

What this means, as far as one is able to make sense of it, is that the relationship between the sexes, if it is not to get out of hand altogether, requires healthy doses of that familiarity which breeds contempt – which is not, perish the thought, that "well-bred contempt" which girls of a certain age feel for their male contemporaries.

He is right, of course. One can't have the junior executive going down on one knee every time he wants his secretary to take a letter. Not efficient.

This jettisoning of romance and mystery in order to meet the petty exigencies of industrial life -- which is all that can be signified by the phrase "contemporary American culture" – is doubtless one of the "large aims" G.K. Chesterton was

against when he wrote his essay “Two Stubborn Pieces of Iron”, when co-education was being proposed in England.

An American anthropologist has remarked too (a bit more recently) that the quality of romance seems to be lacking also in the simpler societies where a man and his wife work together as an economic unit. The delicate attentions one associates with the romantic attitude are not found there, either.

The “little” things are missing.

But it may be that in such a society, Romance is no little thing but rather too big to be readily seen. Most of us who advocate a return to such a life are instantly dismissed as hopeless Romantics, are we not?

Whatever the fact may be, there is an immense difference in theory. One atmosphere is neutral at worst; Romance, if it must provide its own food, can breathe there. The other atmosphere is polluted.

And in the one case, I strongly suspect, Romance does literally provide its own food: where the man breaks the ground and the woman enfolds the seed in the womb of Earth; where the woman offers the food she has prepared, to be completed by the mystery of fire provided through the strength of man; where the gentler adorns the table that the stronger may eat with dignity; there indeed we

may hear the echo: “and the two become one flesh.” It may be so; but the answer is locked within their souls, where neither thieves break in nor anthropologist may pry. Having, as it were, the solid fare of Romance, including privacy, they might well disdain the dainty trifles required to tickle the palates of those who are never hungry.

And, of course, the purpose of an industrial society is to make sure that no one is ever hungry for anything.

In earlier ages, the leisured, or idle, classes, from whom we derive our notions of Romance, had their material goods provided directly by others, whose lives also supplied them with food for thought when they felt the need. These people considered themselves the head of society working as a unit, more or less, and this arrangement put them in an excellent position for contemplating the body. “Put that jewel in a wider setting,” said those of subtler thought and finer feeling, “or I shall snatch it.” And those who were really thieves at heart made off with the setting as well, and enjoyed the jewel all the better.

The industrial way of life provides no proper context for individual living. This is illustrated in the fact that one's moral guard – what some call inhibition – is let down a bit when one visits a city after living in the country, or even a smaller city.

One sees a lovely young woman, and, naturally knowing nothing of her aims and aspirations as a person, one seeks instinctively to picture that loveliness engaged in something worthy of it. And of all the vast number of activities available in a modern city, there is, quite frankly, only one that springs thus to mind. The squire's comely milkmaid of Fielding's age was surely never so vulnerable as the executive's secretary of today. If she were, it was because, having much, she aspired to too much more; not because the little she thought she had was taken from her.

There is no poetry in industrial life; none, at least, that is not found better elsewhere. The tree and the factory are both instances of multiple production; but only one is a miracle; one is merely mass production; the other produces something one could take to Mass.

We have as yet, so far as I know, no modern poet to proclaim:

"It is not growing long a factory
In bulk doth make man better be."

Heaven help those who need a poet to proclaim it. For, as Jonson's lines seem to hint, a tree is a very good thing to be if one is not a man to begin with. The word *tree* as it appears there, strikes the mind as suddenly as does sometimes an

older birch, bare on a hill against the sky, looking as if, like fingers kissed and spread in salute, it had sprung there now in the dead of winter.

One would not want to be a factory, though, a mere facade for the working of one's internal organs.

The word *tree* means something marvellous to all men; the same tree may mean in concept various things to different men, but for all men it has a common image. Seeing a leaf or a twig will recall that image; perceiving a shoe does not call to our mind's eye the vision of the shoe factory, and it is just as well.

For what should it mean? Would we perceive at the top of this pyramid a benevolent Pharaoh, a warped but wonderful G.K.C. who declares that the armoring of the Foot is a task to which a host of squires may cheerfully devote their lives? For factory production requires as many men for one shoe as it does for a hundred. Would we behold men ceaselessly devising, welding, and constructing endless machines in the hope that one of these may one day be pure enough, as their own hands are not, to touch their feet – from a long way off? Would we see men gladly narrowing their minds and lives to one separate thing that the aggregate performance of all may make a composite agreeable in theory to some mind that might light on earth in its scanning of the universe? What

would we see?

Industrial imagery does not lend itself to the swift grasp of ideas; like the air, it suffers from a superfluity of ingredients.

Even those things over which we as individuals still exercise some direct control, communicate no meaning between us. What, in the name of sacred sanity, does a girl mean by wearing a mini-skirt? I had thought I summed the matter up when I had said, “A girl who dresses thus either wants all men to admire her legs or expects all men to ignore them; in the first case, I don't think much of her; in the second, she doesn't think much of me”, but the theory seemed somehow unsatisfactory, and I then perceived that I had made a mistake. I had overlooked a possibility: that she did it without thinking. Now, the purpose of clothing, properly understood, is twofold; clothing is meant to conceal and to present; more philosophically, to veil the matter and to reveal the form. Like Sir Lancelot, who was not pure enough to gaze upon the Grail, we may yet deserve to see that it is there. It is my opinion that the “female human form divine” should be either fully veiled or fully revealed; integrity demands it. In the meantime, the image cannot be assimilated whole; and divided it can neither nourish nor intoxicate.

That the spirit may not suffer indigestion, therefore, we must, as painlessly as

possible, amputate its appetite. Which is always done with less fuss and bother when the animal is young.

This approach is evident in modern teaching itself, not only in certain circumstances of it. For children are being taught, earlier and earlier, to appreciate the beauties of poetry; where poetry was once itself a means of appreciating beauty, which children never used to need. They are shown how the poet achieves his effect, the cause of it being, I must assume, taken for granted – which is precisely what the poet, if he is worth reading at all, was trying to prevent. This teaching of technique may be very good, as far as it goes; but it is like the action of the king who, wanting to be sure his family would not lose the throne for want of weapons to defend it, brought his son up to be a blacksmith.

This attitude pervades modern industrial life: If you can secure the means, the end must follow; money would be nothing without it. Thus, we hear many young women speak of marriage as if it were an end in itself. It is simple logic: “I, a woman, have got myself a man. Men make women happy. Ergo...” And he’d better do it, too. But he can’t do it just by being a man; she’s had them about her for some time; he means well enough, but he is also a means to a means; and she can’t make him do it just by being a woman; he wouldn’t mind so much, if she

could; she's got to nag a bit.

Now, they are going to work round to this eventually, no doubt; but Mr. Chesterton suggested, and I for one agree, that the longer it can be put off, the better. A shape wrought when the iron was hot is not easily altered, and probably will not break even during the coldness that can occur in marriage. I have heard that the metaphor really does apply here; it has been said that the young persons from a school for their sex only, take as long as six months to learn to really concentrate on their work in a co-educational university. I may be wrong, but it is my impression that most of those who attend this particular university, at least, do so in order to earn a comfortable living in an industrial society; they approach literature, history, and philosophy with much the same attitude that their parents once took to the potato yard or the dory; and this majority, with these healthy instincts and their own inner vision of romance, are for the most part from co-educational high schools. If the others are vulnerable, these, I think, do the damage. The cultivated sensitivity must be blunted; the personalities are still malleable; and what replaces it, if anything, is not a better thing. Separate classes continued at university would refine this sensibility even further and root it even deeper, in those who really need it, and would do the rest no harm. ("Refining", in

the male, consists in exaggerating his coarseness to the point where even he can become aware of it when he meets a girl.)

But when a young man thus educated finds that one of these curious and delightful creatures is interested in him, not merely for a bluntly different point of view on a common topic of conversation, but because he, out of a crowd of men only slightly different one from another, is both unique and remarkable, for entirely sound and contradictory reasons; when, having left university for a place where he can do some good in the world as they both perceive it, he invites her to dinner at a place they both deem appropriate, to be paid for with part of the first allotment of merely financial reward for doing this good, and she accepts and joyously and carefully prepares for it until the last minute; when he is suddenly told that he must work late this evening; why, then he may well ask why the hell this is so. And he will be told; and it will be hell, for it will not look to him like a really good reason; he has not been informed, until now, how contemporary American society operates.

It is better that he does not ask. Other young Quixotes, their heads filled with idealistic rubbish less pernicious, have risen from their fallen steeds to tinker with the bricks; but if the windmill should fall, they have nothing to put in its place –

except, it seems, a phallic image – supposing they survive the crash; in their desire for a decent society, they must endure a frustration best described by a figure of speech which is found in the Bible. (Sirach, Chapter 20.)

We must, indeed, spare him if we can. Therefore it is that many companies insist that their employees be clean-shaven; it is but one more subtle and effective way of denying the truth that any man who wants something of a woman should approach her like Birnam wood coming to Dunsinane.

# THE SCRUTATOR

## No. 15

Formality, that essential element in democratic relations, is perhaps nowhere more needed and less evident than on the North American continent.

Formality, after all, is a respect for the shape of things. Form, by verbal definition, is their "inner shape".

"Why are you so formal?" the arch young lady asks her male companion. The best reply, if he can speak at all, is (very courteously) "Why are you so shapely?" It is a mystery. Formality is a bridge, not a barrier.

As for formality's being needed in a democracy, in the Great Book of Profound Thought and Solemn Whimsy it is written:

"If you would walk only among equals, seek not that all men go bareheaded, for some are bald, but rather that each man wear a crown."

The most pernicious attitude current today, is that anything may be altered to suit the present whim, need, or urge, of the nominal possessor. People have

forgotten that things were made only to be brought to the altar. The rest is up to God.

And in this amorphous welding of the world into who knows what, it has become very easy for people to forget the difference between fact and manufacture. A car coming toward one, for instance, is generally regarded as a fact, not merely as a person wearing an iron suit several sizes too big. And the person operating the car does not see walkers as persons on the same level with himself, or even inferiors opposing himself; in those less industrialized parts of the continent where people can still walk on the road without being taken to court for it, they are mostly regarded as inferior facts obstructing the progress of the greater one that happens to be taking the "driver" where he is going. It is a convenient point of view. Where there is still some respect left for the shape of things, however, a man can still stop a car.

A man, worthy of the name, who finds himself directly influenced by a force of personality, will oppose it on principle. If he considers it an impersonal force and manifestly irresistible, it is merely prudence, and no shame, to bend before it that he may not be broken for no good cause. Our only excuse is that we do not know what we are doing. But someone must. If there is no Devil, therefore, we

shall have to invent one.

It is my opinion, privately, that there is one; the main objection to the Devil is that he postulates the existence of angels. I, on the other hand, rather like the idea – of angels, presiding over the shape of things. And I have the notion that casual reference, in the Summa Theologica or in Aristotle, to the "intelligences", made by an author who had at least a considered opinion that they exist, is rather like our own reference to Scott or Conrad or some other author we have never met: one does not know him personally, but one can recognize the style. And if there are angels, remember, St. Thomas went beyond them once or twice. He may have gone through them or past them, but he did go into ecstacy of contemplation.

There certainly seems to be some force that protects boys from the dangers of risks they have the heart to take but not the mind to take seriously; there is also, I rather think, a force that protects men in the first flush of growth in civilization – the rustic state, if you like that term. There is in both cases a sense of guardianship being withdrawn as the thing protected becomes capable of taking care of itself. It is when man takes charge of his own destiny that it begins to go downhill. It is in those societies where man has the leisure to make a real and positive virtue out of the formerly necessary devotion to woman, that sexual perversions really become

manifest.

There has long been a school of thought holding that all civilization is a perversion of man's nature. When he has no freedom of choice but that available within the framework of a social organization that could be changed for the better, then I think that this is so. Chesterton, I believe, said that creation is a story written by God and we are the characters in it. It would seem that man is acquiring the ability to tell his own story – to God, who already knows it. (Imagine telling the story of *The Man Who Was Thursday*, word for word, to a stout gentleman on a train and then finding out the man was Chesterton.) It may be a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying precious little; or it may be a tale just as full of sound and fury, with the main difference that it is not told entirely by idiots, a long, grim tale echoing with triumph and disaster and culminating in man's belief in a happy ending; the ending would be almost another story. But most people seem satisfied with the current purr-version.

Man still goes to the same old end, but he goes more complacently. At least, some men do. The old Newfoundland fisherman, lost off the Grand Banks, his dory unable to get back to an old schooner that just sank anyway, doubtless suffered somewhat in his last agony; but that is what agonies are for; seeing his

wife and children left without means of support except the aid of kindly people who are facing the same fate but who are not himself, he may even be tempted to curse God before he dies. But he has a clear idea of what he is dying for: to support his wife and children. He may not have had to fish for this particular boat or captain; but somebody had to catch the fish.

The modern average man, however, uses precisely the same things to comfort him through every sort of suffering except the purely physical, or even the risk of it, and to justify every kind of dishonour except that of working hard with his hands. And don't start denigrating hard work unless you've tried it; ten to one you haven't. When I first heard the modern version of the Way of the Cross which shows us Christ in our neighbours, and noticed (though I've forgotten them since) some of the crosses the author saw some people bearing, I said to myself, "That fellow's never carried a load of wood." If he had, he'd be more inclined to pity Christ, who couldn't even stop to rest.

But the modern salesman who spends most of his life (for the sake of the wife and kids, of course) selling people things they don't need and didn't particularly want, till he got going on them, and gets himself smashed to bits on the highway, what does he die for? He has taken a greater risk than the poor dumb fisherman;

God may be tempted to curse him. And if I, not formally but yet effectively prohibited from fending for myself at the moment, and trying by this twofold means to maintain the middle way between emptiness and bursting, get knocked over on my way to the post office with it, by a person who is too lazy to walk half that distance but just happens now to be going a little further in rather a hurry, what then do I die for? The sins of many, as well as many sins?

Purpose, if we are to find any, is to be found in the world around us, not in what other persons, working together in various ways for all kinds of reasons, are doing to it.

Our Lord gave His life for the fact that His world is worth appreciating, and for His love of those He made that they might appreciate it. There were so many little things He could have changed that would thus have eased His suffering, which He not only refrained from changing but, possibly, held in existence as far as He could with His human intellect and will, even without the Beatific Vision to guide and console Him. We may not change anything unless we are sure it will be a far better thing. Water may be changed to wine, and wine into His Blood, but even in the hands of Christ, it might seem, a small iron spike should not melt like butter.

# THE SCRUTATOR

## No. 16

Much of the thinking concerning sex education these days, though possibly as pure as the various thinkers claim for it, is far from clear.

For instance, there are those who say that sex should be taught at school to prevent unhealthy repression, and insist on birth control as well because repression is impossible.

Others claim as their reason, that parents are neglecting their responsibility or are not qualified to fulfil it properly; while refusing to consider having religion taught in the schools, because, they say piously, this is the responsibility of the parents and if it is not fulfilled as it should be, God will see to the parents and will make due allowance for the children – if there is a God. But anyone who is a parent knows enough about sex for purely practical reasons; it does not follow in the same way that he knows enough about religion for any purpose.

There is a further difficulty, of course, similar to the one involved in teaching

religion: that the various *sects* may claim discrimination in the schools which are supposed to be open to all. This will result in either the subject's being eliminated altogether, or in its being taught as "comparative sex" with a view to making the students comparatively sexual, as they may be taught comparative religion to make them comparatively religious. Obviously, this approach is not sufficiently comprehensive; how can a teacher be impartial on either subject and still be able to impart enough knowledge to enable the students to make an intelligent choice? Either he has not enough for himself, or he is prejudiced. There are two ways to deal with this.

Either we should have sex taught by eunuchs and religion by yoga experts brainwashed to a mild form of bitter atheism, which, while it might be good for the students, would be rather rough on the teacher; or we should allow every school of thought on these matters, sufficient time during the school day to make converts. In the case of religion, at least, the term would be converts.

There is only one practical approach to the latter solution: providing separate schools for each religion and each sex, including the two normal ones. This is desirable.

For even the teaching of grammar can have something to do with both

subjects, indirectly; the teacher could mention in passing that God Himself speaks in the universe through two voices: the active voice and the passive voice, and that those two, heard somehow in everything, sound most clearly in their personification by man and woman; that these are meant to portray, imperfectly, Deus Agens and Deus Donans, God the Doer and God the Giver; and that as they are two in one flesh, so God is both in one Being. Both parents must teach the child that he is a child of God, Who is beyond. Boys taught separately by male teachers can hardly help but acquire the masculine view of life; they come to know that men do those things that cause change: the tough, destructive things that must be done, like chopping trees and breaking ground and killing animals; that they must be prepared to face and influence things and atmospheres at once more important and more delicate, more purely cantankerous and less practically inclined, than they are; and that all these things, in their rough way, provide an undeniable satisfaction.

This is the coarse male view that sees everything as an object. It is certainly the traditional male attitude toward sex; which some people are stupid enough to object to. A man sees things, and women, from either his own point of view or that of another man who has a better right to it. A road construction worker

returning home with his fellows in the open back of a truck, for instance, may well see every woman on the way as a bit of goods, and he freely and openly offers his estimation of her as a bit of goods; he would be frightfully embarrassed and the object of half-horrified mirth, if she should appear to hear him. (He always talks about women, not sex.) But if they should pass the wife of one of them, he will say, not "Well, that's a fine piece of stuff," but rather "Some piece of stuff you got there, b'y," and the husband will heartily agree. The distinction is an important one, and to overlook it is a grave breach of etiquette, more serious than the other, which is merely bad luck. This man, however, does not look upon the woman particularly as a person, for he knows not only that the husband has a far better right to this point of view, but also that even he is hardly up to it. Her personality is a sacred thing, to be protected by her sex. But today, it is more likely to be her own sex who would give it away.

To teach the lesson that she is not an object, but a person, is the prerogative of the individual woman, not the right and duty of the sex as a whole. For she is not merely a person; she is this person; which is the whole point of personality. Those women who say that all women are persons and let the matter rest there, are making to men a generalization that no sane man would attempt. That some

women are telling man that woman is a person, is doubtless due to their being unable to find any men worth convincing that this woman is a person. Not as the work of a lifetime, anyway. Their trouble, did they but know it, is that the men they know, according to their own dimmed masculine lights, do treat them as just another person.

The same truth is illustrated in a smaller aspect of the same thing: girls in separate schools, I have read, are much more concerned with clothing than are those who attend the co-educational institutions. This is because a woman, in this matter, has always needed enough concern for two. But this function has been largely usurped by another force: the rules of industrial etiquette. The full effect of this will depend upon the man's personality, his capacity for detachment, and so forth; but no man who really does publicly submit to a member of his own easy going sex in such a personal matter, is going to offer much of a challenge to a woman in the privacy of her home. In fact, he frequently does not know that there is supposed to be any such conflict, but lounges about the house, a happy slob, having blissfully assumed at home the independence he dares not assert outside. "For only a very timid sort of man is not afraid of women." This is why the feminists are out to reform the world: those who were meant to bring the world

crashing in around them, are failing them miserably, being too busy with biology to bother with sex – like one who should ride a bull into Elfland: the animal will get you there if the twilight border does not happen to fade back as you approach, as it did in Lord Dunsany's story, and if it does not, you are just as sure by walking softly; if you are doubtful, the unicorn is a better steed.

Speaking of Elfland, they are the most attractive women, who actually do appear to be looking out from a world more real than the one we stand on; they have a deep sense of the shape of things; I do not know whether those who believe that industry and commerce are things more real than their own person, are ever of their number; I think rather it is the force of their enchantment that has made industry and commerce serve the domestic purpose for as long as these have been doing. Their gaze is like a concentrated spiritual light – man's natural desire for a spotlight of any kind may contribute to their attraction – and they never see what men, keeping themselves in the dark as much as possible, do to make sure that this lustre is not dimmed. But the shapes of the things they do see, like marriage, the husband, and the home, are the forms of real things; though they may be wrong in assuming that these have any connection with other things that happen to be real at the same time. The people who are really dangerous are

those who believe in the reality of the shapes their own minds impose on things.

The latter attitude is implicit in one of the arguments provided for those who practice birth control; people who consider that their marriage is in danger unless it includes rather more sex than would seem at first glance to be called for, are said to be acting in good conscience if after weighing all the factors involved, they decide that contraception is in order. While they are still capable of weighing factors, however, the situation is not much beyond their control. Those who think so, are treating as a part of external reality, not merely their own desires but also their current mental attitude toward these desires. Which is getting more complicated than sex has any right to be. Raw, elemental whatyoumaycallit doesn't work that way. Mere lust can be circumvented, if you're quick enough, by turning to something else, preferably some other physical activity; mere consideration of the less sensitive abstractions involved in the matter can keep you awake nearly all night, almost without temptation in the moral sense, if you're writing an essay on it and want your thinking to be clear but don't feel up to sitting twenty-four consecutive hours with pen and paper. The two factors combined, with the short fuse of an intensely personal relationship, are, no doubt, dynamite; but there is no need to sit about watching the fuse burn down. On the

other hand, of course, there are sometimes difficulties in the way of going for a long walk late at night; the industrial way of life is sympathetic to hardly any natural proceeding.

There is also, I admit, the argument that some sort of long term protection is needed for those who honestly fight the good fight and lose; but in that case they are like the trapeze artist who will not perform without a net: they cannot be sure, if the performance fails, that they have really given of their best. This is why those who are determined not to have children and are in no way responsible for the Church's position, still somehow feel in advance the burden of responsibility; they will not be able to say, "With all humble respect, Lord, I really tried not to supply the body, and I'm sure I didn't create the soul."

The trouble with adopting this view, that the marriage act is intended primarily to bring life into the world, is that it forces one to consider the condition of the world, and makes one responsible for enough of the world to raise a family on; one can't have their happiness depending on one's ability to please someone else.

It is easier to say, "Look, son, we know it's a hard world, and we did our best to spare you, but the Church wouldn't let us; you'll just have to make the best of it, same as we've all got to," or "The world has always been a hard place to live

in; you're lucky we got you here at all to enjoy the good things that are in it and have a chance at heaven later."

The history teacher can do something to counteract this negative attitude. He can refer, for instance, to the conflict between Rome and Carthage and point out an interesting parallel: how the Romans, who honored the gods and relied chiefly on agriculture even if they did have slaves to do the work, fought beyond defeat to destroy Carthage which, devoted to trade, sacrificed in devil worship the lives of hundreds of children for the preservation of their great empire; how, for at least this reason, a certain Roman orator can be excused for ending all his speeches with the phrase "Carthage must be destroyed!" I had to read Chesterton's *The Everlasting Man* to find that out: it wasn't in any history book we had at school; the only mental image given there, that I remember, was that of poor old underdog Hannibal scooting about on an elephant with Romans to right of him, Romans to left of him, etc., like a modern captain of commerce seeking our sympathy in his last desperate fight against financial odds he had ignored mountains to encounter.

This teacher, then, could point out that the evil that ruled Carthage is now embracing continents, and that to come to grips with that evil, one must be

continent; that to change a society for the better, one must be single or at least single-minded. He could end his own lessons with the cry *Delenda est Carthago*!

And the mathematics teacher could show, in his own imaginative way, that no part of life should be considered greater than the sum of its experience.

In short, there is nothing at all wrong with the Catholic view of sex education: that it is chiefly a matter of context and if you have context enough, you need say "sex" only once, in explaining that it should be used primarily for the procreation of life. This takes care of all the other problems; like women's objection to being left out of the things that men consider important. It would eliminate all the complexes, traumas, and whatnots, connected with fear of sexual inadequacy: one can always feel reasonably confident of being able to scare up enough energy for a child or two, sooner or later. As for all these perversions and things – the idea that evil is worth knowing, is what got us into this mess in the first place; see Genesis.

Of course, there is always someone who even now will say that all this is very well but "it lacks the quality of immediate contact with specifics of contemporary reality." But even at this late stage I do not throw up my hands in despair and walk away in a burning rage. I do not even use a certain Anglo-Saxon term to

"present a suggested unviable course of action or improbable avenue of escape from existential circumstances," though many men would. "My dear fellow," I say to him quite reasonably – I am always reasonable – "if you will give me five minutes of your time and a stout stick, I can give you some immediate contact that you will not soon forget; for myself, I have had enough, of one kind or another, and I am at the moment appealing to your intelligence; or is that not a specific of contemporary reality?" He does not discuss this point; he has not the time; he has to go tell the road worker's son about sex.

I can conceive of no objection to the Church's position on the subject, except the statement, possibly of fact, that people cannot live up to it. But if this is so in the individual's own life, which is where it matters, he will find it out soon enough; and if it is really true, the knowledge may disappoint, but it cannot harm him.

A boy brought up to this ideal and believing in the sacredness of the home, who may chance to carry into adolescence the naive assumption that sex occurs only when pregnancy results, may at last fall prey to his own dreams and foul himself with that sin particularly associated with troubled youth, but at least his dreams are not foul to begin with; he can be tempted, as Chesterton said of St.

Francis, only by a sacrament.

There is no reason why this ideal should not be taught to all persons, whether they are Catholic or not; when its adherents fall short of it, as they will now and then, this may or may not be a sin, depending on the circumstances and their convictions; but the worst its opponents will be able to say of them, is that they have come down to earth.

THE SCRUTATOR

No. 17

# CONCERNING THE SABBATH OBSERVANCE

When you hear a man shouting about the freedom of his soul, you may with some assurance assume that it is the only freedom he has left.

In normal circumstances, we take that, at least, for granted; and we are right to do so, for God granted it to us when He made us men.

This, I think, is the reason for the "new morality": that God is more tolerant than men, or at least less swift to punish, in matters of rebellion. We object to the authority of the Church in spiritual matters because we are subject in all others to authorities whom we dare not oppose, who will cause the wrath of our sins to be visited at once upon the heads of the next generation, and we feel vaguely that we ought to object to something.

I wonder (it is a whimsical thought), do modern production managers spend

their time in Purgatory as assistant managers to some vast and benevolent Angel in charge of human reproduction?

It seems to me that the Church, in withdrawing its authority from such matters as attending Mass and refraining from work on Sunday, would remove one of the best excuses we have for perfectly legitimate rebellion. For the Church's precepts serve their real purpose, I would say, not in ensuring that people go to Mass a certain number of times a year, but rather by affirming the sanctity of the Sabbath, established to keep the primacy of God firmly fixed in the minds of men.

That "the Sabbath was made for man" does not mean merely that God wanted him to have a holiday; people have forgotten that all holidays were once holy days: sacred to something greater than men, they were immovable; but the men themselves were movable, like David before the Ark of the Covenant; dancing requires as firm a basis as does a syllogism. That one's life-work is not so firm a foundation, is rather a modern concept.

The Old Testament keeps making the point that His people are constantly forgetting their God and being severely punished for this. A rebel can repent and be forgiven; after all, rebellion is, in a way, the ultimate recognition of authority. But anyone who can forget God in the first place, is not likely to remember Him

without a stiff reminder.

Now, in Old Testament days, when things were going well, the average person was in danger of forgetting God through being taken up with the details of his own affairs. Today, we are in danger of forgetting God through being caught up in the affairs of others, even without knowing the details.

Most of the things we do are done because somebody else wants them done. Nobody uses a whip on us, it is true, but that is chiefly because nobody has to. We have no choice, we tell ourselves, and we work when we are told to work. Oh, we may decide what hours we will work, to some extent, but we don't decide which hours. Somebody else does. God, indirectly? Has He changed His attitude toward the Sabbath, then, or does the same attitude apply in different circumstances?

For there are those who would say that modern conditions of affluence and leisure give us ample opportunity to think about God, which is all He really wanted, so that we can make our own Sabbath on one of whatever days we have off during the week. But the truth is, that the easier a job is for our bodies, the more it demands of our minds or souls. A person with an easy job is likely to be so concerned with keeping it that he will not think to consider whether God ever wanted him to have it.

A man digging a ditch with pick and shovel, on the other hand, has only to get his back used to the work and he can tranquilly think about God all week if he wants. If he should decide that God's will for him lies elsewhere, he will soon be out of the ditch.

But if the purpose of the Sabbath is to have us do God's will because it is His will and for no other reason, then the Sabbath, while it need not be Sunday, must at least be every seventh day under one name or the other. And that, as things stand, is still going to interfere with somebody's plans.

The people of the Old Testament were forbidden to work on the Sabbath at providing things they really needed; we work on things that nobody really needs, simply because there are so many of them, and we think we have a better right to be excused.

That God allowed a man to take his ox out of a pit on the Sabbath, merely shows His concern for the ox, an attribute that many have forgotten simply because they themselves no longer feel it.

The Sabbath was instituted to keep man from making God in his image, to manifest the fact of His Personality, which man, made partly for that purpose, sometimes fails to do.

A man who was there, at least, could see that the ox needed help, whatever his motive for giving it. But the Catholic worker who is told that the preparation of a certain product must be accomplished, at least in part, by work to be done on a Sunday, does not always know why this is so; he does not even ask, but believes it implicitly on the word of the person who told him, even though this person is not the Pope. Mere common sense would tell him that the reason is, usually, not that someone is in need and must buy the product at once but rather that someone else is greedy and wants to sell it soon.

But if the Pope tells this same Catholic that it is necessary for him not to practice birth control (especially since it isn't just for practice), then he wants to know the reason why, and he wants to know it now, even though he may well be determined to find it is not good enough. He does not seem to realize that the Pope, being only infallible and not omniscient, might very well not know all the reasons either, but only be doing his job, like the rest of us.

Not having a distinct line drawn between the will of God and the will of men, a man under pressure will normally let the latter supersede the former. But if the Church should tell him plainly that it is a mortal sin to work on Sunday unless he can clearly perceive, in the natural order of things, a serious necessity, usually

physical and generally not his own, then a wall between the two has been built for him, and he will most likely put his back to it. At which point, grateful in the depths of his soul for this God-given moment of irresponsibility, he will snap his fingers in his employer's face and they will both be better for it.

It seems hardly likely that the all-wise Father of men, in forming a series of great and awful commandments, should include among them an admonition that really does not matter so much. Our moral code does not approve of worshipping false gods to secure an important contract with heathens, no matter how many may be fed as a result. And while in some circles it may be considered a shrewd stroke of worldly wisdom to advance in business by making love to the boss's wife, especially if she is pretty, it is improbable that dispensations from the sixth commandment will ever be made for such special occasions. Even lying about a temporarily more fortunate colleague is less admired than it is practiced. We ought, I think, to be extremely careful about the sort of exceptions we make in these matters. God does not say, "Honour your father and your mother when you have ascertained that they really deserve it," nor does He say, "Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day unless some pipsqueak like thyself says not to bother."

God has not burdened us with many tasks. All but two of the ten commandments merely forbid things which are bad for us. But it seems to me that those two things He wants us to do, had better be done when He asks about them.

It was probably because they realized this that some Protestant denominations have been so strict about the Sabbath observance, banning even innocent amusements. They had no Pope to indicate where they might safely stop.

The "positive" approach to duty is being adopted here and there in industry and commerce today, with considerable success. For there are those who say that when a man brought up believing that all men are free and equal, reaches a certain level of comfort and can look about him, he begins to resent being told "Do this" and "Now do this." So that those who are fairly well paid and cannot easily be overworked, should be given more responsibility and opportunity of choice where their work is concerned. Where St. Augustine said, "Love God and do what you will," the modern employer says, "Love the company and do what you will," and is applauded for giving his employees more freedom.

This being the case, it would seem more than ever important that the company itself should be made to recognize the will of God. An industrial society should be able to accommodate itself to the Sabbath observance; physical inability to do so

would seem to be an indication of God's will concerning industrial societies.

For there is good scientific evidence for the case that, in the physical sense at least, the chief product of industrial society is a screen of smoke to obscure and efface the tapestry worked by God.

# THE SCRUTATOR

## No. 18

There are two great forces that are both capable of pervading every other aspect of life, including the other great one.

In all societies so far, one or the other has been subordinated to the other, at least in theory.

These two forces are sex and religion.

There is a third force, which is not so much concerned with life but seeks to rule lives. It will use the other two and anything else available, before it destroys itself.

This force is called Pride. It leads a man to destruction in two ways: either he destroys all to feed his pride, or his pride makes him try to feed all, so that some at least must starve when he should weary or die; he thinks either that he is more than other mortals, or that he is more than mortal. The first, really, is more of a man than the other. But both are dangerous: the first to other men, the second to all men.

The second form of pride is the harder to recognize, for it frequently has the same effect as mere childish vanity; it is either vanity or a deep and subtle egoism instead, that boasts of petty triumphs over one who does not really care, to one who has no choice but listen. But who shall say which it is?

What is the motive of the Lamb in Mervyn Peake's story *Boy in Darkness*? Pride, or vanity? It has been said – in the preface of a book it appeared in – that this story may be taken as "a scathing satire on Christianity" or a "memorable creation of life on this planet after an H-bomb war" or a "descent into the blackness of man's soul." To me that story is merely itself; it simply says, to paraphrase what Chesterton said of the Christmas pantomime, that "it is bad for us to be here."

This expresses my feeling about an industrial society, which is now creeping into Newfoundland and around me. This society is now seeking to preserve what was once its natural context, which seems to me the wrong approach: it should be the cities that we preserve, here and there, for the benefit of those who really think they need them, and as an example to the children of the rest.

The only city that has any real justification for its existence is a capital city; other cities are built by the wrong kind of capitalists, most of whom want the

comfort of sitting about, without the obligations incurred by assuming a throne. Let us but establish a real capital city, and those capitalists who in themselves are a danger to us, would destroy each other trying to be king, or would at least become the king's problem.

For the really proud man says that he is capable of all the stern duties of rulership; in fact, the more stern he can be, the better he likes it; the more the people see of his stern, the better for them.

The other fellow, more numerous, wants merely to do well for himself while still thinking well of himself; for, devoting his life to a job he seems to consider essential to the general welfare, he also joins service clubs.

The proud man does not thus flatter himself; he does not feel the need; he knows he is doing you a favor to let you serve him – if you are the sort that will.

The effect on you is the same in either case. Perhaps many of those who control our lives to such an extent – even to that extent of providing expensive "escape machines" to prevent us from walking out, in any sense of that term – are merely vain men, because the real masters need all the Pride for themselves. (Pride is sometimes said to be cold comfort.) And the highest compliment our society can offer any method, is to say that it "gets results."

Mervyn Peake's Lamb, though it goes beyond artificial symbolism to assume an identity of its own, does remind me of two other things: a character in fiction and a type in reality. Its outward appearance resembles, in description at least, that of Jonas Witherby in Taylor Caldwell's *Testimony of Two Men*, and its spirit is that of the publisher  who, upon reading these papers, would say, not "Who does he think he is? When I am God I shall send him to hell, but only "That fellow would make a good reporter."

The difference is just a matter of degree.

*Delenda est Carthago*!

THE SCRUTATOR

No. 19

The following letter arrived recently in the mail. It is unsigned, but curious.

S.

Sir:

In all fairness, I must, first of all, state that I have some doubts about the usefulness of what, for reasons best known to yourself, you call your periodical. Spasmodical would be a better term.

Judging from the consistency of treatment and style, I am strongly inclined to believe that those articles which purport to be the work of contributors, are, to be blunt about it, mere forgeries.

But I belong to an organization sworn to use all just means to its end, no matter how hopeless or ridiculous they may appear at first, or prove to be eventually.

This end, sir, is the abolition of capital punishment.

The means do not include the use of allies who, while seeming to work with

us, have entirely different motives, as it must seem, and whose inconsistencies would expose our cause to ridicule such as I, wrongly I hope, suspect you of employing.

First, then, we have nothing to do with those who favour both abolition of capital punishment and liberalization, as they call it, of laws forbidding abortion.

Now, these people may very well be thoroughly consistent. Pontius Pilate, for instance, began by releasing Barabbas, a destroyer of life, and finished by killing Jesus Christ, the Giver of Life. This is probably the most inexorably consistent act in history, though Pilate is not remembered as a particularly consistent person, and might have been founded logically on two firm basic principles: that there is no inherent order in nature to which human acts must conform ("What is truth?"), and that the state and its representatives have absolute and arbitrary power over the lives of its citizens ("Do you not know that I have power to crucify you and that I have power to set you free?") without any reference to guilt or innocence in these lives.

It is not for me to judge the subjective guilt of any man. If it were, then must I say: "I find no cause of ridicule in these just men. I will therefore sneer at them a bit and let them go."

But they are not men whom we, believing as we do in the sacredness of human life, want as allies.

And while the basic attitude is consistent, there are discrepancies in detail.

For instance, there are those who argue that capital punishment should be abolished, because of the danger of executing innocent men convicted without really sufficient proof; while maintaining that abortion is all right, because no one has proved that the unborn child is human. ("Your guess is as good as mine," the austere jury foreman said solemnly. "Better flip a coin, your honour.")

Some would say that capital punishment must be abolished because we cannot know for certain that the murderer is really guilty in his soul. To this I say, the public conscience of the state has nothing to do with the private conscience of the individual. The insane individual is immune, not because he is not guilty – though he is not – but rather because he cannot, strictly, be a citizen; he is not competent to make an agreement with the state. Those who take that position, since they cannot exercise the omniscience of God Almighty in justice, want to adopt His infinite mercy as a public policy of their own.

And, of course, there are those who say that the government has the right to execute murderers, but it is a barbarous custom; it is simply more civilized not to

do it. They probably think that Damon and Pythias are just the ancient version of Alphonse and Gaston, or Mack ‘n’ Tosh. “And that frightful Nero, you know – so *rude* to those poor Christians.” Those who want merely to abolish corporal punishment in school speak with more fervor than they.

Those who argue so forget, or are trying to make us forget, that a government has no rights over any one citizen, but only duties to the rest. If it may kill, then it must kill. Can it be a greater crime to be a Canadian citizen than to kill one? Is it not sometimes the same thing? Or has the government been commuting death sentences in recent years, in the hope of avoiding civil war? One could, if one wished to be snide, wonder out loud why it is that so many politicians are against capital punishment. But the sneer would be unjustified; their manners in speaking of this matter are not usually those of men fighting for their lives – or anyone else's. There is usually no indication that any of these may be reflecting as he speaks, that a beloved brother-in-law may be on trial next year for the murder of a younger sister. Either these men are as gods without emotion, deciding what is good for us lesser beings, or they do not know what they are talking about.

The only defence of capital punishment, really, is founded on the argument that we use best against it: that human life is sacred and that one may kill only to

prevent the unjust taking of it. They say that those who kill otherwise, should be punished by death. Those who reason thus – it is reason, for a change – say that the victim had the right and the duty to kill his attacker, but when this could really be proved (beyond the shadow of a doubt) to anyone else's satisfaction, it was too late. Therefore, they say, the killer is supposed to be dead now, whether the other man had remained alive or not, and it is for society, whose duty it is to help the citizen with what he could not do for himself, to set that part of the record straight.

This may well be the motive behind the ancient idea of revenge: not to satisfy the feelings of the living only, but to complete the last task the dead man had set himself. For it is safe to assume that he tried it if he had a chance at all.

Not that revenge is the weakest of emotions, as someone has said in more or less this context. For revenge is not an independent emotion but derives its strength from that of some other emotion, and if that is only strong enough, revenge can be powerful.

It is, indeed, sometimes so powerful that Old Testament law – called "barbarous" today – did not consider the "avenger of blood" to be himself a murderer if one suspected of that crime were overtaken and slain before he

reached one of six “cities of refuge” where he would be safe until his time for trial. But if he pursued him into the city and killed him there, he was himself a murderer, even should his own victim prove to be guilty. (Apart from this, of course, execution required conviction on the evidence of two eyewitnesses.)

There is, I suppose, something to be said for the idea of retributive justice: one of the thieves crucified with Christ, could say it even then.

We do not happen to believe it, that's all.

Appeasing the feelings of some of the living, and taking the life of one more, will not restore the dead. The executioner has not the right and the motive of the victim himself. Since capital punishment is wrong, the executioner is a murderer. So then is the judge, and so are a few others. And the organization to which I belong, knows how to prevent murder.

# THE SCRUTATOR

## No. 20.

For the assertion of authority or the dispelling of ignorant presumption, there is nothing quite like the raising of an eyebrow.

There is nothing particularly highbrow about this. It is a fact of psychology. If, when Pharaoh demanded a wonder, Moses, instead of casting down his staff, had merely raised an eyebrow, there would have been no need for further wonders, though there may have been further need of the Lord's help.

But Moses was not at that time, his own master; he was doing what God had told him to do – God, Who alone is worthy of obedience. The raising of an eyebrow requires a certain measure of self-command, not to mention self-control. When it is not merely a reflex action, as when one is surprised, it requires reflection; the person who raises his eyebrows in surprise, is having them raised for him. To raise this sort of objection, one must see oneself as an object, the most important one available at the moment. And this should happen, most often, when

one is being treated as an object. It rarely occurs, in this particular sense, when one is merely an object of admiration, unless, as I say, it is self-admiration – permissible only in the same sense that one is an object formed by God.

The whole purpose of the eyebrow, indeed, is to preserve objectivity: to prevent us from being blinded by our own sweat. There is not, as far as I know, any corresponding natural safeguard within the soul, to prevent our inner vision from being obscured with the by-products of legitimate mental labor. Considering what we do to the world we were made to admire, therefore, I think it is high time we raised our eyebrows.

All of which does very little to explain why a certain girl has dark hair and equally dark *sourcils*, as the French more properly call them, that accentuate by contrast the smooth wide clearness of her brow, which is what brought the matter up in the first place. I dare say I shall never be a thorough-going Romantic. Even this last paragraph – at least – has been written with eyebrows raised. Have you, perchance, read it the same way?

THE SCRUTATOR

No. 21

Having an idle moment to spare, I thought I might do worse than share with my readers these concomitant philological attainments of the research required in the preparation of the twelfth issue of this modest periodical.

S.

*Abundance*. Originated from the custom in a remote English village in the Middle Ages, of celebrating a more than usually bountiful grain harvest, by a dance in which new-made buns were juggled with great skill and rapidity.

*Antiquity*. The days when people did not expect life to be easy, but persisted in enjoying it anyway. The tendency in modern times is to be pro-quitty rather than anti-quitty.

*Automobile*. Derived from words meaning self and moving. A machine for carrying a heavy ego.

*Baroque*. A lavish style that spent all its wealth on one shop.

*Cynicism*. From *sinny* and *schism*. The art of splitting every action into some kind or sin or evil.

*Cynic*. A symbolic corruption of *scenic*, to signify one for whom the view has gone sour.

*Fanatic*. Combination of fan and attic. One in whose mind the air is kept fresh by the constant circulation of one idea.

*Inversion*. Any up-ended point of view held at a given moment by a large number of those who should know better. Hence *inverse*, poetry which enjoys considerable temporary vogue among such persons and makes about as much sense from one end as the other. The *converse*, which claims to be good simply because everyone is against it, is just as true.

*Manager*. One responsible for the grey hairs of the modern worker. Formerly hyphenated.

*Optimistic*. A mystic whose optic is not all there.

*Parenthood*. A seal that can produce offspring without harping on the subject.

*Pessimist*. Corruption of pest in mist, a nuisance with a dim outlook.

*Politician*. Corrupt combination of *polly* and *tishn*, the sound of a stifled

sneeze; an instinctive repeater who thinks twice about everything.

*Procrastination*. I shall give the name of this country tomorrow.

THE SCRUTATOR

No. 22

The following letter is the first I have received in a long time, so long a time indeed that I had almost thought that the existence of my modest periodical had been forgotten.

S.

Clintonbourg

Nov. 2, 1982

Sir:

Meseemeth it be time that the men of this age, and in particular those who are Churchmen, took note of that noble promise which Our Lord did make to the high order of knighthood, through the apostle Peter, when he said that they who live by the sword shall die by the sword. For I deem that to be a promise also, and not a warning only, as shall be seen hereafter. The author Gilbert Chesterton, on whom be peace, hath said that there are sayings of Our Lord which have had light shed

on them by things that happened since he said them, and this, I deem, is one of these. For there are in use in this age vile arts of war, which could destroy the race of man and, before so doing, enslave the soul of man to Satan, the hater of our kind. And meseemeth now that the spirit of them that wielded best the sword is the answer to these vile arts, which without such answer will bring to naught the nobility that man may gain in warfare. For there were in the warfare of the knights of old two things that are needful to the dignity of man when he taketh part in war. And those two things are use of the body and risk of the body.

The body and the soul of man are each improved by joining of the two (indeed, the holy doctor Thomas Aquinas taught that the soul cannot start to exist without a body to which it is joined), and by their working well together. For it is through the body that the soul comes into contact with things outside itself and by that contact is led to God. And it is by means of the body that the being called man is able to move itself and also to move other beings. Thus is man given the power to imitate God, the First Mover of all things, and only thus may he do so. And meseemeth that the privilege of being able thus to move oneself and being able thus to move other beings is a privilege that should be upheld by being exercised in the highest acts of man. And I deem, as many deem, that one of the highest acts

of man is daring of death for a cause he values more than life.

Meseemeth it is but natural that when a man thus risks the loss of life, he should in the act itself of defence preserve intact that strange mode of life that is uniquely his, and not abdicate his dignity as mover. He should insist that if he dies, he dieth as a man. He should insist that if he fights for justice, a thing that he alone of all animals can comprehend, he will fight with all the dignity that as an animal he can command. He will deal in warfare with other men in a manner that proclaims him human, and rely on the strength and skill of body that God gave him for the moving of other things. To rely on strength that cometh from outside of living body is to throw back in the face of God the gifts of strength and skill. And so the elder knights of Christendom did well to scorn, though perchance it was not for that reason, the use of the longbow and the crossbow, and Holy Mother Church did well when for a time it did outlaw the latter.

When a man useth the bow in warfare, he calleth upon a force that belongeth not to living body and cometh from a source that is beneath the dignity of man, to settle a dispute between men. He calleth on a dead plant to settle a quarrel among living animals. And meseemeth that he sayeth, by thus doing, that his foe is less than man, for a man deserveth judgement by his equals or his betters. And he that

so judgeth another man is exercising that judgement which was forbidden by Our Lord when He said, "Judge not, that you may not be judged; condemn not, that you may not be condemned."

The use of the bow is permissible when one hunts animals for food, for the animal is below man as the plant is below the animal, and that form of life which serves as food for the animal may properly, when dead, serve man in making the animal into food for man. But a man is not to kill another man as if he were no more than beast. That is the judgement that Satan makes of men, and it cometh of pride alone, and he that useth thus a weapon to preserve animal life only, and not justice also, causeth by that weapon his own spiritual death. Thus Our Lord's words about dying by the weapon one useth are a warning when applied to use of other weapons than the sword.

The same principle applies to risking of the body. He that would deal death to another's body must dare the death of his own. Only thus can he be sure that he believeth fully in the cause for which he fights. He that fighteth fairly sayeth, in effect, that his life is not a thing of greater worth than is his enemy's, but that he fighteth for something else – freedom, the just claim of a prince for a throne, or a way of life – that is of greater worth than the life of him or of his foe. Thus he

recognizeth his enemy's right to fight for a way of thought that is different from his own.

To fight by a method that giveth advantage inherent, other than that given by strength or skill of body, is to say that an enemy is not worth fighting fairly but is to be killed as one destroyeth vermin. And to say that thing of other men is to speak as Satan speaketh, that in his pride doth verily see men as vermin. It is to exercise that judgement which was forbidden by Our Lord.

Meseemeth the danger of that judgement of Pride was avoided in large part, though not entirely, by the elder knights of Christendom, who scorned the use of weapons other than sword, mace, axe and lance. For these weapons took their danger from bodily strength and skill, and the users of them granted their foes equal chance to kill with equal means. And meseemeth that even the lance, which was by them judged a knightly weapon, was indeed a worthy one, though its danger came not from strength and skill of man only, but from the joined prowess of knight and horse. For meseemeth that use of horse in warfare is different from use of bow. The use of bow replaceth movement of man's body, but use of horse augmenteth it. It may be said that the horse, for that it lacketh intellect, is lower than man as the yew tree is below the beast in dignity, but I say that it is not

chiefly with his intellect that man doth fight, but with his living body, which he directeth by his intellect, and the horse is as much a living body as man is, for it hath senses and it moves itself from one place to another, which the tree from which a bow is made hath and doth not. And the body of the horse is nobler in such action than the body of man, for that the horse is stronger and more swift, being more specially formed for such movement. Thus is the dignity of man increased when he rideth a horse, but it is lessened when he useth a bow, for the bow does not move as a living being ought to move, but rather its movement that sends arrow is properly a return to rest that follows its being moved by him that liveth. Thus I find that the lance is a weapon worthy of a man and that the elder knights of Christendom lowered not their dignity in using it against other knights so armed. But if a knight should use a lance against another armed with only sword or mace, then he fighteth not as he ought. But that unfairness pertaineth to the risking of the body and not to the nature of the weapon itself. For any man who fighteth with a weapon taketh undue advantage if his foe hath not an equal weapon. A man who useth a weapon should not do so for the sake of gaining an advantage, for thus he diminisheth that risk unto his life which, as we have seen, he oweth to his foe as fellow man, but should use it for the sake of his upholding

of the dignity of man. For it is unseemly that direct contact of human bodies which ought occasion joy and lend to the enhancement of life, should be the cause of death. Death should rather be the result of contact with a thing already dead, such as the steel of sword. In dealing death, man should use a neutral instrument. But it is fitting that he should use an instrument of some kind, for that his body is formed to make improvement of its action by use of instruments. Thus the elder knights of Christendom did well to use the sword, the mace, the battle-axe, and the lance, and to scorn the use of bow and crossbow.

The elder knights of whom I speak were, however, as I have said, not without fault in their manner of warfare. They erred in this, that they had such small regard for their peasant bowmen that they allowed them to use a weapon deemed unworthy of a knight. That should not have been, for peasants are men as much as knights are and there should be upheld in them also the peculiar dignity of man. Nor should those knights have used the armour which gave them protection not held by those whom they deemed lesser men, that fought beside them or against them. For in this was the beginning of what habit of thought – which sayeth that some men are better than others – which leadeth to modern ways of waging war. Had the knights left off their armour to fight with no greater protection than the

meanest peasant, and had they insisted that all men, even peasants, use but knightly arms of war, then much of the horror that war today meaneth might have been avoided. But how should knight respect a foe who useth bow and arrow? And how should bowmen uncovered not scorn an enemy who weareth armour to protect him from the foeman's stroke?

The horror of modern warfare springeth from desire of warriors to have advantage over foes, coupled with ignoring or ignorance of loss of dignity in choice of weapon. For loss of dignity increaseth as advantage grows. Men used not the bow at first from proud desire to trade shafts on equal footing with other bowmen, but to gain advantage over horsemen or over men on foot with sword or spear. And how use of the bow lacketh dignity compared with that of sword or spear, we have already said. But the rifle giveth greater advantage than the bow, for that it sendeth its missiles with greater speed and power, and it alloweth the shooter to expose less of his body than doth the using of the bow. And the rifle showeth itself to be more ignoble than the bow, in that the force which sendeth the bullet cometh not from the rifle in itself, as force that moveth arrow comes from bow, but it is a force that comes from a mixture of substances, that the rifle merely containeth and directeth. Also, this force that driveth bullet cometh not of

a thing that remaineth as it was made, as sword and bow remain as they were made and are maintained as effective weapons by so remaining, but from the destruction into gases of a mixture of things solid which were mixed only that they might be thus violently dispersed. Thus the rifle useth force that dependeth not on form but on a loss of form. And loss of form is in itself an imperfection. Thus are risk of body and use of body reduced by use of firearms.

The reduction of dignity is greater when bombs are used. For at least the rifle keepeth its own form in the directing of power gained from loss of form, and it sendeth missile that need not change its form to be effective. For a bullet can kill or wound without destruction of itself. But killing done by bomb dependeth entirely on destruction of the bomb. It is not made to be used without changing form but to be used solely in a loss of form. And the use of a bomb, unless it be of the kind thrown by hand, bringeth the weapon even further from the use of the body. For the dropping of bombs from aeroplanes dependeth more on mental skill than skill or strength of body.

And in the use of nuclear bomb, man descendeth even lower as wielder of weapon. For the great destruction that this weapon giveth, dependeth on disruption of the very inner nature of matter, and it is of matter that the body of

man is formed. Thus man turneth against the foundation of his nature. Thus he departeth from his pride of place as mover made of matter.

And as the use of weaponry expandeth, so may the concept of foeman be extended, so that man descendeth also in his dignity as chooser of victim. For women, though they fought not in the armies of the elder knights of Christendom but were esteemed as mothers and comforters of warriors, may work well in munitions factories and may therefore be regarded as fitting targets of bombing when the factories are destroyed to prevent an enemy from being able to fight on equal terms. And even if the destruction of factories and the killing of factory workers is done to keep the enemy from gaining great advantage, yet the killing of women is abhorred by gallant men. It is the work of Satan in the world that maketh such dastardy to seem a thing of great necessity. And if men truly deem there is no great dishonour in slaying of other men without danger to themselves, they may then be led by Satan to believe that killing of the children of an enemy is good to do if fear of that great loss will keep the enemy from fighting. For the killing of a man who is at disadvantage and cannot help himself is like unto the killing of a child. And slayers of children are the worst of dastards, as all the brave believe. And it was to the slaying of children and others defenceless that the

first nuclear bomb was directed, and it is to such widespread slaughter of the harmless that its use seems still to be intended.

Meseemeth that baseness in the choice of weapon used is not of necessity allied with baseness in the manner of usage. For men may use unknightly weapons justly and with bravery when their foes are wielding equal weapons, and a base, unmanly warrior may use weapons which are full knightly in themselves for the killing of defenceless. But I deem the two oft likely to be joined, for evil of lesser degree leads oft to greater, and a greater form of evil oft draws lesser in its train. For men who take thought to the quality of their actions be likely to see even lesser evils that are in them, and men who take not often such thought be inclined to evil action, though it be action without malice.

Now, men of this age have given little thought to the lesser evil of which I have written, for the use of base weaponry hath come to be commonplace and there be few men in this age who be of knightly thoughtfulness. Therefore I deem it meet that the Church's teachers of theology should diligently inquire whether use of unknightly weapon be a moral evil. For if abandoning of bodily strength and skill be greatly against the will of God, the Church's confirming of that belief, which few now hold, may be the means of saving Earth from nuclear holocaust.

For if the Church should say that man may without offence to God use only weapons which depend on skill and strength of body, that belief will be taken up at once by many, and mankind may find a way of living with the sword that will lead to dying cleanly by the sword and not by foul disruption of the world's foundation. For if the men on one side of a war were determined under God to fight with knightly weapons only, methinks the ingenuity of warrior and man of science could devise a way of making effective that style of warfare, against other styles. For men may fashion dwellings underground where bombs be not effective, or may dwell in scattered villages to make bombing too costly, and they may devise in their dwellings and around them cunning hiding places whence a warrior with sword may leap amid gunbearing foemen with death-dealing suddenness, so that to conquer without fear an invader must destroy all dwellings and begin anew. Therefore would an invader, if the defenders be known to be sufficiently knightly in mind and heart, likewise forgo the use of weapons that deal death from a distance, that the defenders might forgo the use of hiding places and fight fairly in the open. For against a foe who useth weapons that give unfair advantage, the seemingly unknightly practice of killing suddenly from hiding would be, methinks, permissible; but not otherwise. And if all men of one country

should be trained in knightly thought and feeling, and used but knightly weapons, an invader of that country who used base weapons would not be able to consider himself conqueror, for the defenders, even though defeated, would despise the so-called conquerers. And that would foster great resistance.

It could have been the understanding of this truth that led Alexander the Great to cut the Gordian knot with his sword rather than seek to untie it. For the untying of the knot, according to the oracle, would place the fate of the world at the mercy of mere complexity of mind or even of mere cunning. Alexander's severing the knot with sword did not destine him to be conqueror of the world under the condition that had been stated, but only put him and other users of the sword upon an equal footing. For if a man deserves to defeat other, he must do it not through subtle trickery but with courage. And he must have the courage to wield the sword not only in hope of manly death by sword but also in despite of certain death, if it sometimes be so certain, by means more base and ugly, and more painful.

It may be that we must, as many martyrs did, embrace the cruellest of deaths rather than deny our nature as sons of God who made us bodily beings and movers made of matter. We must rely on Him to keep goodness alive in the world

or beyond it, rather than arrogate to ourselves the title of Keeper of Goodness and stoop to baseness of deed or implement for sake of survival intended so that the limited aspects of good for which we still stand will remain. To think that one can remain good in a general sense, or in a sense more worthy than another, despite the practice of a particular evil, is to share the pride of Satan. If it be God's will that men fight with knightly weapons only, then we must limit ourselves to use of these, no matter what weapons our enemies use or how effective these may be. In clinging to the sword we must not reject the Cross. For meseemeth that was the way in which Peter erred in using the sword against the captors of Our Lord.

Meseemeth it is likely that Peter used the sword in fierce resistance, so that he could make good his boast that he would die with Our Lord, by provoking the would-be captors to sudden killing with sword, that he and his Lord might escape the horrible death that the Lord foretold, which later came to Peter in his sainthood. For Peter was called to priesthood and to martyrdom, and the warrior's death was not for him.

Thus it may be said that Our Lord's words to Peter were not a warning, to those who should use violence, against a death by violence, but an invitation to die a worser death as a result of forgoing lawful use of violence. They were a

warning that those who use the sword to preserve a life that is outside the will of God will suffer their soul's death by that usage, and a promise that those who use the sword in accordance with His will shall die the quick, clean death that the sword may give. For not all of us are called to martyrdom, and if we wield the sword despite what seems the likelihood of our dying by worser weapons, it may well be that Our Lord will prevail upon our enemies to forsake the use of worser weaponry. For meseemeth that if men are to avoid dreadful slaughter of defenceless innocent by nuclear weaponry, they must return to use of knightly weapons only, for the use of weapon that giveth advantage by nature and not by wielding only, will lead naturally to use of weapon that giveth greater advantage, as there is little essential difference in these between one kind and another, but the exclusive use of knightly weapons is based on principles that all men can clearly understand and on which they can agree. Meseemeth it is the only rational approach to nuclear disarmament. Therefore I deem it necessary that doctors of the Church look closely at the morality of choice of weapons.

Meseemeth, however, that if men are to cleave to knightly usage in warfare, it will be necessary that the manner of life of their society as a whole be such that knightly men consider worth dying for. I shall have more to say about that in

another letter.

Sincerely your servant,

Colgrevaunce de Clintonbourg

THE SCRUTATOR

No. 23

The following letter, which follows the last I received, introduces itself.

S.

Clintonbourg

November 10, 1982

Sir:

I last wrote to you of the great need there is to examine the morality of choice of weapons in warfare, and I thank you now for your publishing of it. And now come I, if you will give me room, to speak of that society which would commend itself to defence by men of knightly usage. For if men say that a thing of value great in wartime is worthless during peace, I think they err. I think neither that peacetime life is so mean as to be unworthy of ideals cherished in war, nor that it is so great as to transcend the worth of such ideals. I say that men should live under that standard during peace which they follow forth in war. And meseemeth

that use of the body is so noble a practice as to command in peace that respect which I, for one, deem that it doth deserve in war. And with that respect cometh also a willingness to risk the body, though in a slower and less sudden way than that in which the knightly man doth risk his body in war. I wish it clearly seen that I put forward this opinion, not for fostering of a mean consistency to make warrior willing to chance his death, but because I believe it to be true. Though meseemeth desire for such consistency might cause knightly men of war to make demand that the principles by which they fight should be enshrined in that life of peace which they protect. I speak not to ennoble knighthood beyond worth, but to encourage men who study the ways of God to tell us whether knighthood doth deserve that great nobility that men have heretofore seen in it. For the means may not be more noble than the end.

Meseemeth, then, that use of body and risk of losing body should be upheld in peacetime as in war. Meseemeth that men should be so grateful unto God for giving of a body to meet the needs of soul, that they would rather die than live by food obtained other than by use of living body, whether it be body of man or body of assisting animal. The body of man, that is the temple of the Holy Ghost, is of such dignity that only living body may be worthy to do it service. The food that

feeds the body, the clothing that protects it, or the roof that shelters it, is set to such high service that it deserves that it be got by living body under close attention of the soul.

Meseemeth it was from lack of high regard for dignity of body that men turned to use of enginery moved by power that is not of living body. For meseemeth there is a baseness in such usage, which like the baseness of the firearm or the bomb, is easily set forth. There are many kinds of fuel for engines moved by power that is not of living body, and the use of any of these is base. Indeed, the concept of fuel-powered enginery is in itself base, for an engine that uses fuel is moved by that which is less than itself, or by that which is worthy of higher usage. For an engine that useth petroleum as fuel useth it not as animal useth food, by making the food to be part of itself, as a horse taketh the plant life of grass to make the body of the grass to be a part of its own more noble form, of sentient body, or as a man taketh the lives of cattle to make their bodies part of his more noble form, of rational life. No, as a horse or a man voideth that part of grass or beef that it useth not, the engine voideth that part of which it hath made use. So that the petroleum-powered engine functions only by excreting, which I deem most ignoble. And the analogy is made more close when we take notice that

petroleum is of the bodies of long-dead animals and plants that have rotted under pressure to form excrement within the bowels of the world.

The use of electricity as fuel is also base, though in a different manner. For force electric is the power generated within the body, that enables men and animals to move. It is base to have that force to be generated by things that move not of themselves and therefore have it not by nature, and it is base to use that sacred force to enable an unliving thing to move in mockery of life. It is fitting that men and lower animals should share the same life force: the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from the master's table; but the bread of life should not be defiled by being made seem to animate that which never can approach the dignity of dogs. For dogs have souls, though they be but material souls, but an engine is moved from without and hath not within itself an immanent principle of motion and rest. Meseemeth that only a man who careth naught for the high dignity that God hath given him would use such inferior means of meeting bodily needs when means most fully noble are at hand, though use of such noble means may lead to that which some deem hardship. The alliance of living thing should be with living things, not with the unliving. In the traitorous alliance that many of this age have made, lies the seed of soul's destruction, for man’s hold upon the goodness that is

in this world is so uncertain that he should not presume himself to be above the need of even lesser goodness. He needeth every means that he can reach, to keep his mind and heart attuned to things of lasting value. And meseemeth men use fuel-powered enginery not for love of enginery in itself, but only for convenience and power. To man, the use of fuel-powered enginery is an escape from labour he deemeth over-hard or overlong, or it is the playing with a toy, or a demonstration of ingenuity. But the serving of our bodily needs is an end worthy of hard work, and man should rather admire the ingenuity of God, who maketh living things, not merely unliving things that move. Man tireth of the ingenuity of other men, except when skill of man is used in showing forth God's glory as manifested in the life of Nature, by painting and sculpture depicting living things, and even there men are more concerned with the subject and its representation than with the skill itself of the artist, which is but a means to the representation. But meseemeth that the skill and cunning of man may properly be used – when needed to an end that cannot be otherwise achieved, such as production of force electric for the supplying of X-ray emanations in medicine – in devising apparatus to produce electric force as a result of having its works wound up like a clock's or by a pedal arrangement. For in the use of such machines, force electric would be produced

by direct action of man or beast, which of itself hath force electric by nature and therefore properly may give rise to it in other things. For the use of such machines would still acknowledge man as foremost mover among things material. But even such machines would not be made for their own sake but rather for attainment of a higher purpose, and therefore such machinery is not of value in itself, but is ennobled by being used by man in seemly manner. For that which deriveth motion from a being that is higher than itself is ennobled thereby, as the soul of man is ennobled by being moved by God, but that which is moved by lesser than itself is thereby degraded. And machinery which is moved by internal combustion is thereby made ignoble, for the fuel by which it is made to move is not valued in itself but is only made to change the manner of its being so that it serves a purpose. And when man submits to being moved by a machine that moveth by internal combustion, his dignity is lessened, for he then is moved by a being that deriveth motion not from a principle that lieth within itself. But it taketh not from man's dignity that he be transported by animals, for animals are man’s equal, and sometimes his better, in the matter of locomotion straitly considered. The horse is far more noble in physical locomotion than is man, so that man draweth dignity from being moved by it. And the horse is ennobled in its being directed by a

higher animal, which reasons. When a man useth horse and carriage, we have the rational directing the sentient which draweth the inanimate which in turn beareth the rational. That, meseemeth, is the due order of things. But when a man useth a motor vehicle, we have the rational directing the inanimate which is powered by the disintegrant to move the rational, and that I deem to be ignoble.

Also, we see that men keep animals as pets, even when they have no need of practical use of them, and wealthy men with expensive motor vehicles to carry them still delight in the riding of the horse. Thus we see that man's relationship with other animals is a thing of lasting value. And meseemeth men should rather employ the things they love, than try to love the things they merely use, though even that is better than not loving. This is a principle that methinks the learned should consider.

The learned men of Holy Mother Church have considered well the due and proper order of things in the relation of man to man, and have spoken well against the partaking of other than man and wife in the act of procreation, and the Church has thus forbidden the generation of what the world calls test-tube babies. But meseemeth the time hath come for learned men of Holy Mother Church to consider more nearly the relation of man to lower animals. The holy doctor

Thomas Aquinas hath said that kindness toward animals is good practice for benevolence toward men. He could also have said that failure to respect the animality of beasts is good practice for dehumanizing of men. But kindness is not employment, and I think the learned should consider whether the ennobling of animals by employment is a matter of preference or of duty, and, if it be preference, whether it ought to be preferred. For we have reached an age in which men believe that Our Lord's words about a man's drawing his ox from a pit on the Sabbath were spoken from concern of the man's loss rather than from care for the ox's need for rescue. Our Lord did heal upon the Sabbath the man with the withered arm, not for need of having the man do bodily labour for him, but rather because He loved the man himself and pitied him for his infirmity. But Our Lord had spiritual work for the man to do, as a member of His Mystical Body. But even that was not so much because the Mystical Body had need of him as because he had need of the Mystical Body. Even thus, I deem, should we imitate the Lord in our relations with animals, to employ them for the doing of work by which we serve our needs, not so much because we have need of their assistance, but because animals need to partake in the life of man, that they may be sanctified, if one may speak so, by service to members of the Mystical Body, of which the

natural life of earth is symbol and servant. We should  not love them only because we use them, and later forsake them when more convenient means are found, but should rather continue to use them because we love them and desire our usage to ennoble them by making them part of the rational life of man. We should love them because we were given them to make enlarge our capacity for love and to help us to understand how God can love us and give us to share in His great Glory.

In like wise we should love our land not because we grow food from it, and later forsake the land when cheaper food comes otherwhence, but should continue growing food from it because we love it, as a man loveth woman not because she gives him children but desires children of her because he loves her.

In imitating the generosity of the love of God, we should in our thought raise all things above themselves, regarding land as if it liveth to suffer like a dog from rejection, and were sentient; animals as if they were equal in nature to natural man, and had a right to his dignity of labour, and men as if they are the sons of God, and worthy of intimate sharing in all aspects of their lives, which indeed the Lord hath made them. Thus should we do, and should eschew all dalliance with fuel-powered enginery which cannot enter into our life of emotions as animals can

so gladly do. It is impossible, methinks, for enginery to be thus raised above itself, for it hath no aspect of life that it can hold in common with that which is above it. For it neither groweth like a plant nor hath feelings like an animal.

Now, some men say that man is not capable of the love I deem he ought to have for that which is beneath him. The author George Orwell sayeth: "The nomad who walks or rides, with his baggage stowed on an oxcart, may suffer every kind of discomfort, but at least he is living while he is travelling; whereas for the passenger in an express or a luxury liner his journey is an interregnum, a kind of temporary death, and yet so long as the railways exist, one has got to go by train – or by car or by aeroplane....In order that one may enjoy primitive methods of travel, it is necessary that no other method should be available. No human being ever wants to do anything in a more cumbersome way than is necessary." Thus sayeth Orwell. But the Amish, the Mennonites, and the Hutterites have proven him in error. With all the methods of travel open to them, which have been made much faster and perhaps more luxurious than those of Orwell's day, they still travel by horse and plow with horses, because they deem that way of life to be the will of God. And if a man believeth the use of animal life to be divinely relevant to the kind of life he will live with God after the

resurrection of the body and the renewal of the earth, he can readily reject that easy way of physical life dependent on enginery which he then will deem a beginning of the death of the soul. For it is the life of man with animal and with hand-wielded tool that I deem most meet as means of preparation for the life of the world to come. For in that earthly life which I deem would make a proper place for animals, man can taste of the joy of physical action which will be his in a body glorified, and in frequent use of hand-wielded tool he can taste of that facility which will be his in body glorified. And I deem that those who give due honour to the human body in the world that is, will be most glorified of body in the world to come. For the soul dependeth on the body for the exercise of life, and it is in the performance of manual labour that man's body, as Orwell saith, truly liveth in action, and bodily work in the service of bodily need doth lead man more readily to consider of the glory of God. For when a man beareth heavy load of firewood on his shoulder, weight of burden causeth him be mindful of the ground on which he walks, that he giveth heed to the forms of smaller plants and roots, and stones, that are upon or near the path he treads, which are of God's designing and, like the sky above, worthy of some attention. And when he burneth the wood in winter, memory of bearing heavy burden will help him also to remember well

the strength and beauty of the tree that died to give comfort to him and his family. And when a farmer useth horse for ploughing, the hard work of guiding the plough doth help him, through underlining of tempered feeling, to remember later the condition of earth and sky together, since it is from both that growing of crops doth come, and this practical usage helpeth keep in mind that beauty or gloom of sky which otherwise might be forgotten or, which is worse, ignored.

Men who live exclusively by action of living bodies and not by fuel-powered enginery that maketh God-given distance lack meaning, are also made more intimate in their sharing of life with each other, as well as in sharing of life with lesser creatures, than those who use such enginery and who work from afar for the benefit of men they never see. They can see and touch, and pray with, and play with, those from whose work their well-being is derived, and can be grateful to them in person. And I deem that to be the way in which Our Lord doth want the members of His Body Mystical to live, that they may see most clearly the working of His Presence within the souls of each. It is in such personal knowledge of others that the soul of man rejoiceth. And since St. Paul asketh, “If you do not love your neighbour whom you see, how can you love God Whom you do not see?”, meseemeth it be well to ask, “If you love not your neighbour whom

you see, how can you love your neighbour whom you see not?"

Meseemeth that if a man loves his fellows enough to share his life most fully with them, in place and time of work and pleasure, and loveth animals enough to have them also help him in his work, and loveth local land enough to have it exclusively to feed him, then will he have much to fight for if war should come upon his country. He will have strength of love in heart, but also a completeness and integrity of vision in which his senses can embrace in a glance both greater things and lesser. It may be that there are those who need upholding by such vision to make them doughty warriors and diligent workers. I ask the learned men of Holy Mother Church to consider carefully whether men are entitled to such encouragement.

Sincerely your servant,

Colgrevaunce de Clintonbourg