

LETTERS TO EDITORS YOU LIKELY MISSED:

THE EDITORS DIDN'T PUBLISH THEM

Headline in The Western Star, April 19 (Page 16): “Women help sustain vibrant economy: premier.” At last! Women have advanced from strength to strength, from being the reason men strove to thrive, as many did indeed thrive, on their own farms or in their own workshops, to being the reason men lapsed into labour for an even larger economy not yet vibrant enough then to be deemed worthy of feminine effort, and now, finally, to dedicating themselves in truly unselfish, magnificent generosity to a cause even more noble than they are: they help sustain a vibrant economy, for no lesser reason than that the superb concord of all its pure and strong vibrations is pre-eminently lovely to behold, surpassing the womanly integrity and sweetly personal seemliness of any female human a mere man ever admired. Splendid! Simply splendid! Is this the zenith for which feminism strove, or has progress further heights to gain? I’m all agog for even more!

To The Western Star, 08/04/13:

Religion might have more to do with “fracking” – the hydraulic fracturing of shale rock to extract oil; much condemned by some environmentalists – than supporters or opponents of either may suppose: Calvinism, long dominant in the West, taught that doing good deeds doesn’t gain us a good destiny; we can hope only for permanent good luck from an irrationally arbitrary God compared with whom random evolution might well make perfect sense; what happens to us matters far more than what we do. Logically, therefore, according to Calvinism, our deserving to get somewhere by walking or bicycling and our failing to deserve getting anywhere in a motor vehicle would be equally without effect in the grand scheme of things, even if ordinary human reason strongly suggested that people deserve the effects of what they do, and that we do our walking or bicycling but no one actually does the moving of motor vehicles – rather, someone by doing relatively very little only invites that moving only to occur – so no one can deserve to benefit from it; so far as men may judge, no one deserves to benefit from what merely happens. Does anyone really want our deserving what we deserve to be without effect in the grand scheme of things? As opposed to the “grant schemes” of governments?

Being glad thus to gain against our deserving, I submit, is almost pure Calvinism, which also taught that being rich largely foretells a good final outcome to life. The fracking frackers, who get rich from fuelling us, are therefore very likely crypto-Calvinists, or at least quite as thoroughly heretical with regard to natural justice. The practical way to oppose them, therefore, would be to try to support ourselves

by doing deeds which actually feed and clothe us – a Pope said “agriculture is the highest art” – and by defending with our own deeds our own land as serving our own purposes, instead of trying to get the right things to happen in an economic “system” maintained mostly by and for fracking frackers, where even basic production only occurs more than people actually do it.

Fracking itself is far more something induced to happen in the ground than actually done there, and therefore is entirely consistent with “driving” – it doesn’t take much “drive” – a motor vehicle to a meeting to protest against fracking.

Catholics who did the latter here April 7 might have been better employed, even for their own purpose, in praying, at a Divine Mercy service held at the same time in a neighboring parish, for profound changes of heart in the fracking frackers, and in any in our government whom the fracking frackers may control, against whom otherwise any sort of secular protest probably is utterly powerless.

Dear Editor: One principle on which one might base an argument against contraception is that one ought not to use for any base purpose a means ordinarily directed to a noble purpose. That would evince a gross insensitivity which would actually be immoral in a serious matter. Coition is ordinarily directed to perpetuating the human race, so that one ought to direct it to base purposes only if one believes that that purpose itself is more or less trivial. It may be deemed a noble purpose if it entails providing for the possibility of men’s continuing, or maybe only beginning, to enjoy the performance of justice, especially if people believe, or maybe are only prepared to gamble, that enjoyment of justice is worthy even of our striving most unsuccessfully for it. (I find that latter notion particularly attractive, but maybe that’s just me.) Some may believe that assisting Evolution to advance is the noblest achievement to which we may aspire, and that even that is not a particularly noble one but only one that we are unable to avoid – if Evolution is strictly matter blindly trying endlessly to complicate itself, which I understand is the “orthodox” Evolutionist doctrine.

If perpetuating mankind so as to promote justice or evolution is truly a noble purpose, then one ought not to use for base purposes the means ordinarily directed to it. But selfishly seeking merely physical or even a highly emotional, pleasure as if pleasure, unlike justice (or Evolution?), were its own warrant, is a base purpose,

and even “generously” satisfying another person’s “need” for that would not be much better.

Contraceptive coition, therefore, is akin to using a wine glass for drinking 7-Up, thus expressing boorish ingratitude for the far greater gift of wine (from a generous God, or from Evolution as mere matter blindly trying endlessly to complicate itself?). For believing Catholics, for whom their bodies ought to be temples of the Holy Spirit, a better example might be that of using a consecrated chalice to drink but ordinary wine.

Dear Editor: Your editorial Feb. 14 says it is important to establish full-day kindergarten in this province, both for the sake of children’s education and for parents’ peace of mind in most families, since in most families neither parent is at home but both work all day. You all but said, “Damn the cost; we really need this.”

It seems not to have occurred to you that your comments could easily be paraphrased thus: “We really need everyone who might possibly be available, to concentrate on serving employers in business or on learning how to do that, no matter how increasingly our being able to pay for that will require more of the same.”

That occurred to me. But then, I believe that an “education” which doesn’t enable people to teach anything worthwhile to their own children – except, of course, the crucially vital importance of “going to school” – is not education at all but only animal-training. It has to make parenthood seem an uninteresting hobby and a frivolous vocation, which may be why businessperson Cathy Bennett figures Newfoundland needs to attract young families already started outside our province.

Dear Editor: I suppose the real point of Randy Simms’s column Jan. 19 which insists that our next lieutenant-governor should be a woman is that such an appointment would recognize officially that women are well worthy to be lieutenant-governors. God help the poor society which is only beginning to acknowledge that! For it is beginning to forget, or has already much forgotten, that a (good) woman’s simply being herself, without anyone needing her to be, in

addition, a governor, politician, motor mechanic, or a government-employed school teacher, or a newspaper employee, is the main purpose of humanity's existence. Saying a woman deserves to be lieutenant-governor amounts to saying Sheila Copps is worthy to be John Crosbie. When Ms. Copps admits that, I will begin to give rather more thought to Mr. Simms's modern and "liberating" view of womankind which runs counter to what men have either merely assumed universally or actually experienced individually all down the ages.

Political life is a duty to be imposed, preferably on the reluctant, rather than a prerogative to be sought as the self-promotional seek it today. That is why the medieval rules of royal succession wisely imposed the royal duty – enforcing the people's customs – upon males far more often than on women; in the Middle Ages what Thomas Aquinas called "royal government" ruled mostly a people whom we should call far more self-governing than we are now; I've seen it suggested that democracies do not impose civic duties upon women but oligarchies indulge them with excessive privilege.

Dear Editor: Ed Smith's column Dec. 22 suggested that society in Canada is healthier than in the United States, at least with regard to shooting massacres and gun control, because we Canadians more properly respect the principle that "the rights of the many should take precedence over the few or the one." But that principle is not an absolute standard for "social health" and certainly not for essential justice. If it were, then those few who launched a lifeboat from a sinking ship would have no right at all to keep out of it the far more many of their fellows who, being all strong swimmers, wanted to insist that all the shipwrecked should remain in the ocean until only enough of them survived to occupy the lifeboat without sinking it.

The real truth in Mr. Smith's guide to social health is that it is far better for many than for only a few to deserve what is good by doing what is good: that persons deserve the effects of what they do is the real criterion of essential justice, applying equally to the many and the few, who in fact are usually thus classified on various grounds of vastly unequal merit. The many are "entitled" otherwise to thrive at the expense of others only so far as they can bamboozle the others into believing it.

More to the point of Mr. Smith's column, they most deserve protection who do their protecting; these ought to establish their own government to regulate, not to usurp, their protecting themselves and those they ought to protect. Perhaps many in Canada become police chiefly to enjoy that "privilege," so that their main

motive is not purely “public” safety; it scarcely can be so when police in self-defence shoot axe-wielding lunatics whose blows could be blocked with a shield. If there are weapons with which ordinary citizens worthy of citizenship ought not to defend themselves, then “their” police and “their” military ought never to use such weapons to defend those citizens – unless all concerned are thereby declaring that the citizens thus protected are more valuable to their protectors than to themselves, or at least more valuable to their “society” than to themselves. The latter position denies the natural fact that a society’s members are that society and that it subsists only in them. The ordinary citizen may not delegate a right he does not have, and what he has the right to revoke he ought to possess the actual means to revoke; the main difference between the two societies might be that Americans act on this view of civic authority without stating it clearly enough for Canadians to stop overlooking it.

Dear Editor: Dara Squires’s column Jan. 9 suggests a woman may legitimately change her mind about, and so deny her previously given consent to, “having sex” even when her partner is fully entrenched in coition. This is supposed to teach responsibility? It seems to me to insist that bad decisions ought not to entail inconvenience or even hardship, which I suggest is contrary to experience and even contradicts an abstract and obvious truth.

If it is true that people deserve the effects of what they do, then people who do what is “bad” deserve what is “bad”; people who cause physical or emotional discomfort deserve physical or emotional discomfort, even if they are women “having sex” who discommode their partners by changing their minds about it after or during the fact, and people who do what is wrong deserve to have done to them what would be wrong if they had not done wrong. Neglect of this truth constitutes the lack of spiritual meaning in modern life which Bill Pardy of your community editorial board regretted in your paper not long ago, for that truth is essential to life’s having a valid spiritual meaning.

That people deserve their deeds’ effects clearly means that people who do what makes people parents deserve to be parents, so that inviting someone to “have sex” ought to convey to him or her the ultimate compliment: that he or she is well worthy to generate children so as to perpetuate the possibility that people will continue the performance of justice. That is because justice, which is persons’ getting what they deserve, is ultimately worth experiencing for its own sake;

“mere” pleasure, even the sexual kind, ought “only” to underline our approval of what is finally worthy. Pleasure is worth enjoying; justice is worth admiring. Women’s being fertile only a few days each month is much misunderstood these days: What it really means is that lovers are allowed to enjoy trying more often than they are obliged to succeed, which strikes me as a great generosity of Nature – if even Nature were all there is, which I don’t believe.

Our whole society habitually neglects the obvious truth that we deserve our deeds’ effects, largely because we have come not to rely upon what we do but to depend on what we only allow to happen, as when, for instance, no one does our vehicles’ moving but “drivers” only invite it to occur. Modern parents’ not seeing that truth and its many implications for practical life which it is especially parents’ duty to teach children, might be what keeps modern parenthood from being mentally stimulating enough for the diligent intelligent.

Dear Editor: “More work needed to end stigma surrounding HIV: activists.” It seems to me that it should be easier to remove the stigma surrounding HIV if the activists widened their focus somewhat to include removing the stigma surrounding herpes, syphilis and gonorrhoea, since many people not medical experts seem to believe that all of these, together with HIV, have a similar source in activity which ought to be wholly enjoyable. Education is the key!

Dear Editor: The guest editorial Dec. 8 from the Toronto Star, headlined “Royal succession rules need to be changed,” called G.K. Chesterton to mind – again. He would have pointed out that, for one thing, rules don’t need change; people need rules; what rules need are reasons. The editorial didn’t refer to any reason for having the current rule in the first place, and Chesterton pointed out at least once that if you don’t know the reason for a rule, you are virtually incompetent to comment upon it. One of the real reasons for the current rule requiring a male if at all possible was that originally a coronation was virtually conscription to lead the army, not just send it, into close physical combat, from which G.K. said women tend to shrink – not so much out of fear as from disgust (too much like rape? he didn’t say that explicitly). Now, of course, women soldiers use firearms like real men instead of doing for themselves the deeds which actually kill or hurt, but has anyone realized that real gender equality, once women are allowed in the army, would require the government to conscript them in equal numbers with men if it decided conscription was necessary? Or are some humans still deemed more equal

than other humans, as G.K. would gladly have agreed that women are? Letting women off obligations imposed on men might be one reason the Catholic Church doesn't require women to be priests: has anyone compared the number of women saints whom that Church has canonized with the number of men who "made it" without needing to be priests? This latter comment was prompted by a less recent guest editorial called "the stained glass ceiling." (G.K. once said also that when women start doing what traditionally had been men's work, in 99 cases out of 100 the men should leave off; that means that when women take up trades to nurture machines instead of babies, there'll probably be nothing for men to do but sell contraceptives door-to-door at night.)

Dear Editor: A guest editorial in your paper Nov. 23 lamented our highway system's being "inadequate for modern travel." What I lament, and what anyone with a dust of sanity would almost certainly lament, is the grossly excessive and enormously abnormal amount of "modern" travel upon highways which otherwise are most probably perfectly adequate. The comment offered in that editorial is akin to saying our own bodies ought in safety and comfort for ourselves to accommodate cancer.

Margaret Thibeault's statement (Letters, Oct. 15) that democracy means granting our neighbours freedom to have different values, beliefs and behaviour from our own, is mistaken. Democracy means government by the people ("demos") as a people. Individuals' constituting a people requires them to have the same principles. What Ms. Thibeault describes seems to me simply anarchy, which I fear persons like her would like imposed on all peoples, in a "'democratic' world state," as opposed to distinctive democracies for different peoples. (However, Aristotle defined "democracy," or so I have read, as people governing themselves as they pleased; his word for people's governing themselves as they ought was "polity.") Also, we don't "grant" rights to others; what we must do is refrain from infringing on the rights they already have. Chief among these are the right to gain what they desire by doing what will naturally produce it and the right to punish any who agree with them in condemning certain purposes or certain methods and in setting suitable penalties for transgressions. Most modern democracy is mostly democratic in suppressing those two rights, and in suppressing discussion of them as I somewhat suspect you might.

Do the people who object to Fr. Benedict Groeschel's comments about young seducers in some clerical sex-abuse cases ("The real victims are—the priests?" Newsmakers, Sept. 17) deem those remarks "so wrong" just because they are "so insensitive" or can they actually claim the statements are false? And if they can, why don't they? It would be far more effective, at least to a logical thinker. But if it is likely that accusing Fr. Groeschel of lying in this instance would leave his accusers open to libel suits, then it is reasonable to suppose that many are outraged at the possibility that some priests might not have been so terribly exploitative as they are painted. Anyway, whatever happened to all those "teenagers' raging hormones" we hear so much about when discussing contraception? Do they magically disappear when a young homosexual male is alone with a mature specimen of his sex who is of all exploiters probably the least likely to "out" the young experimenter to the latter's parents? Or is all the propaganda which encourages even the young to "celebrate gay identity" just so much horse manure? But maybe it's just that the general condemnation of priests as exploiters leaves little room to excuse seducers whom those condemning the priests would much prefer to excuse.

Willi Boepple's letter April 23 said "there are no 'rights' in nature; they are granted by human societies in exchange for fulfilling certain responsibilities." That is incorrect: Humans have by nature all the rights which can logically be deduced from the primary principle that persons deserve the effects of what they do. Almost all solid morality is based upon that principle's implications. Human experience has not found any other animal to be capable of considering either that principle or its implications; that is why the other animals we know have not the rights which humans have.

Dear Editor: That the same human nervous system is used to register both physical or merely emotional revulsion and moral outrage seems to confuse the heck out of far too many. Thus, what ought to be strictly moral outrage at illicit sexual conduct incites some people to label all pornography, for instance, or even any normal sexual activity, as "disgusting." The truth is that most of our occasions for sexual misconduct are (morally) harmful because ordinarily they are quite "appropriately" (in a sense) attractive to normal physical and emotional appetites even when conscience disapproves.

And then, of course, we have people like Corner Brook City Councillor Gary Kelly who seem to think disliking the smell of burnt tobacco amounts to the moral outrage that justifies making real laws, or like those in our provincial government who pass laws (against smoking, for example) which they don't dare require their real police to enforce.

However, I don't get much upset by frivolous objections, like Mr. Kelly's, to smoking, because there is a moral objection to it which disinclines me to defend smoking. That moral objection is that it is wrong to seek a physical sensation for its own sake, or because one simply can't help oneself, which is what I think must be the case with most smokers. One ought to seek such sensations, ordinarily produced by wine or maybe a good cigar, only as an enhancement of a higher pleasure like the enjoyment of good conversation in good company, very much as physical sexual sensation ought to enhance one's joy in generating children. Because opponents of smoking seem not even to have conceived of that kind of objection, I usually ignore the whole fuss. But since the licit enjoyment of at least a good cigar is possible, and there is also the possibility that smoking could sometimes calm one's nerves when one might badly need them calmed, I don't wholeheartedly favour forbidding smoking

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So Supreme Court judges are reluctant to apply the word "child" to the, um, normal contents of the human womb. But if using that word "could be implying humanity" in the, um, object to which it refers, then the Criminal already clearly does that. It distinctly calls the, um, most common resident of the human womb a "child" in the section which says when unborn creatures become human "within the meaning of this Act." I feel certain that this section, far from withholding legal protection from children in the womb, was meant simply to guarantee legal

protection to the child when he has fully emerged alive even if he has emerged after only three or weeks within and then is not yet deemed in fact human. Factually human or not, he would be a “human being within the meaning of this act” even if only by way of legal fiction safeguarding “animal rights” in the exceptional case of an “animal” who would surely become human in fact if kept alive long enough. if People who cannot see that the section ought to be thus interpreted are simply perverse or simply thick-headed. MP Stephen Woodworth himself, with whom this point was discussed while he was campaigning to define when a child becomes human, is among those thus thick-headed. Legislators were pro-life, at least in public, when that particular piece of legislation was first passed and the law then punished abortion.