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BURKE TO BASICS:  
THE SCIENCE OF MORALITY; CATHOLIC BELIEFS

By

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INTRODUCTION

To deserve to enjoy, you have to enjoy deserving. You might not see at once exactly how much sense that makes, but as we go along, you may find that at least it helps make sense of much else, as G.K. Chesterton said about belief in God. I first read Chesterton during my first year of high school; “The Blue Cross,” his first Father Brown story, was part of our Grade Nine literature course here in Newfoundland in those years long past. During my first year at the boarding school I began attending three months before my fourteenth birthday, I used to

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read at the Gosling Memorial Library in St. John's, hundreds of miles from my family, between school and chapel prayers before supper, to let the words of Father Brown stories soak into me and to dwell upon those words to keep me from dissolving in tears of homesickness while my fellow boarders and a Christian Brother said the Rosary. Two years later, well settled at St. Bonaventure's, I read "The Shop of Ghosts: A Good Dream" about the lastingness of Christmas. That "inspired" an essay in which I described seeing Chesterton himself in a modern department store just before Christmas, his having his cloak caught in the store's revolving door, and my recovering it for myself – ah, the presumption of youth! But I seem to remember that Brother Duffy gave me a good mark for it. That was the year I actually began to like writing essays. The year after that, I got acquainted with Addison, Steele, Swift and Pope, and wrote some satire, encouraged by Brother J.P. Keane and Brother (now Father) Kevin B. Molloy. Three years after that, a "spoiled priest" and failed schoolteacher who had come to condemn his nearly four months as a warehouse clerk catering to mechanized mining and who was most reluctant to go back there, I sought an appointment with the editor of western Newfoundland's daily newspaper, essays in hand, looking to be hired as a weekly columnist – ah, the presumption of

(relative) youth! However, on approaching the newspaper building, I requested Mr. Chesterton's intercession in the matter. Cal Holloway said he'd look at the essays. He did, and he called the bus station from which I was to leave Corner Brook for Port au Port, and asked me to see him again; he needed a reporter and would hire me on three months' probation at \$60 a week, increased after probation to \$65, of which for some months I paid each week \$20 for board, put \$20 in the bank, and put \$20 in my pocket. It was, in September of 1966, the start of a career I enjoyed until I decided I really wanted to marry a certain woman, and then I no longer enjoyed being a wage-slave to a national newspaper chain which had bought out the independent owners of only two papers.

That's enough about me. But if you're looking for a lot more Chesterton further on, you won't find much more than a scattered allusion. I took to heart in (much) later life Chesterton's emphasizing the importance of rightly reasoning, of finding valid principles and arguing logically from them. The principles from which I start in my first essay here are absolutely self-evidently true, or at least self-evidently worth adopting unless someone can prove them false, and it seems to me that arguing logically from them will prove beyond reasonable doubt that living in accord with natural justice itself necessarily requires the kind of life

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which Chesterton tried to teach for all of his writing life. That may be the best return now that I can make to Chesterton for all I have read in the more than twenty volumes of his work which I possess. Standing on his shoulders (or maybe sitting in his shade), perhaps I see clearly the elements of assumptions neglected now which everyone in his age probably took for granted.

I

THE NATURAL BASIS OF NATURAL LAW

Several, or more, articles on the natural law in issues of *The New Oxford Review* during 2012, written by learned persons with academic degrees, utterly overlooked the two or three self-evident principles which one can clearly see upon reflection as upholding almost the entire framework of traditional morals: Persons deserve the effects of what they do; No one can be judge in his own case; and The servant is not greater than his master. These are scientific observations which anyone can make without specialized training: scientific, though not made with a microscope, because we make them directly with the human understanding with which every scientist confirms or denies empirical findings; all of us ought to be “ordinarily expert” in such moral science: expert enough, that is, to confirm or deny what “specialists” in this science can clearly explain to us: expert enough at

least to understand sound reasoning even when we need another to conduct it.

One might feel inclined to say also it is self-evident that no process can be more important than its purpose, but attending to a well-founded protest can dissuade one from thus dogmatically adding to the list. However that may be, whether we hold that our existence ought to serve a good purpose or that our pursuing a good purpose mainly serves to make us good, the purpose of human existence, so far as natural reason can discover it, seems to be that beings made of matter should see realities not made of matter and reflect them fittingly in matter to ennoble matter itself through its own performance of justice, so that the material creation should in at least a part of it deserve to be conscious of deserving to enjoy what is good – or else to endure what it must incur if rejecting what is good.

Rational application of those simple principles will in every instance uphold the whole framework of traditional morality. Men's not being allowed to judge themselves worthy to marry requires us to submit to the judgement of a woman. Anyone's desire to be a parent must be submitted to the judgement of another, who will be required to take up parental responsibilities on which a prospective spouse may default. People who do what makes people parents deserve to be

parents and to incur all the duties, including keeping their children alive, to which their doing what makes people parents will naturally give rise.

Our “animal servants” called sperm and ovum may not unite unless their masters have themselves so united as to enable it: no *in vitro* fertilization. Actually doing what is just is a process more important than even perpetuating the possibility of justice, which latter, more than simply doing what is just, is coition’s purpose, so that, although one (actually of course two) might legitimately perform the process from motives other than a desire to achieve that purpose, no one can legitimately share in it so as to frustrate that purpose. Even coition not intended at least to celebrate humanity’s being able to serve that purpose will be wrong: lovers must never actually rejoice that any current and specific marital act cannot result in generation. That not every marital act will naturally result in generation does not allow for fun without fertility so much as it allows the cultivation of the virtue (since virtue is a habit) of chastity in habitually doing what ought to generate children.

No one may divorce unless he or she had specifically invoked a “right” to divorce when making the marriage itself: If its makers make it permanent by

vowing marriage until death, they cannot unmake it without time-travel. Any reason warranting death for the marriage warrants death for an offending spouse.

People who deal death deserve death. That applies not only to murderers but also to those who want to execute murderers, when those murderers do not themselves see that killing deserves death or do not see that they authorized the state of which they are citizens to execute murderers. A murderer's being executed must be entirely the effect of his own doing: in his having seen what murder merits and in his having approved in principle – before he tried to wriggle out of it – the state's inflicting fair forfeit.

There is more, especially on how the principles of desert apply to economics, in other essays. Meanwhile, I'd appreciate confirmation or refutation of this argument for God's existence, which so far seems to me, though I feel a bit uneasy, as if it might work: That people deserve their deeds' effects deserves to be true: that truth deserves to be the reality it is. But nothing deserves to be itself if it was created by another. Therefore justice either is self-existent or is an attribute of the self-existent, which is what philosophers call God. I really have a feeling that the logic goes wrong somehow, and would appreciate being corrected by anyone who sees how to do it.

## II

### WHY AND HOW MODERNS NEGLECT JUSTICE IN ECONOMICS

“What doth it profit a man to perform all righteousness but suffer the loss of his soul?” That very much sums up an attitude in relatively modern times which might have resulted in a religion’s indirectly encouraging materialist Evolutionism far more than “science” ever discredited religion. That religious attitude, though indeed “modern,” long preceded Darwin’s discoveries, which G.K. Chesterton said an existing philosophic materialism merely seized upon as its “scientific” confirmation. For many had deduced from John Calvin’s doctrine, more or less logically, that one can indeed perform all righteousness and yet suffer the loss of his soul; this later encouraged indifference to correcting someone who did wrong and a willingness instead to “let him go to Hell his own way” or, if he were otherwise predestined, to be put in Heaven without ever doing

anything right, just because God chose and was able to do that with him. And if he were sufficiently prosperous in a strictly material sense, that would be a really good sign that God had so chosen. All men were thoroughly unjust because of their first parents' first injustice. Applying (perhaps not formally valid) logic: Calvinism makes God appear to me to be unreasonable. But Evolutionist materialism disparages the faculty of reason, except so far as it can validate Evolutionist materialism. Therefore Calvinism tends to support Evolutionist materialism. Anyway, both allow me to do as I please in actual fact, provided it works, so it doesn't much matter which of these I do believe.

Justice being therefore in practical terms irrelevant, at least to those who mostly dominated a system increasingly capitalist and industrial, why would everyone bother to remember for all this time the self-evident principle which is a primary element of justice and to reason out in detail its proper and logically necessary implications for human behaviour and economic activity in particular which affords so much ease and comfort in ignorance and neglect of that principle and those implications? For they are very much in opposition to some money-making customs currently common which men in the Middle Ages would

naturally have eschewed as illogical at best and some of which they might have painfully punished as gravely wrong.

That principle with many practical implications is “Persons deserve the effects of what they do,” expressed also though less comprehensively as “Things belong to those who make them,” in which form particularly it prohibits several economic practices prominent at present. These include “owning shares” in businesses and hiring the making of goods for sale by persons not the makers.

Someone who “invests” in a business without being a partner in it does not buy that business but is lending money to its owners, for which he is entitled only to repayment with interest or continuing interest while the loan continues. The interest ought not to depend on the results others produce with what they borrowed; its rate ought to be fixed when the money is borrowed.

Someone hiring another to make something which the hirer sells, denies that only makers ought to own and only the owners ought to sell goods; people with productive skills and energy should not have to compete for employment by people with money; people with money ought to be obliged to compete at lending to the productive.

People ought not to “buy and sell money”: investing in currencies is wrong. Money is meant to buy something else: currency exchange ought to be permitted only to someone buying something more conveniently available to a foreign currency; money ought to be mainly the medium of exchange for neighbours doing together what they cannot do separately.

No one really deserves what factory owners pay for fuel-powered machines to produce, for no one does such production; it results from a combination of mechanical and chemical causes, inanimate, which others had assembled and the working out of which the “operators” only initiate and supervise without performing much in the way of actual deeds – since “doing” means intentionally moving, and in these cases the one intending the movements is not the cause of them and the causes do not intend anything, nor does the “operator” much share physically in the causing, as a person needing food from another might share in the other’s farming by doing something the farmer needs for, or at least while, farming.

A government which does not yet find it feasible to forbid outright such economic practices as those already mentioned which are demonstrably unjust

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ought at least to show it knows the difference between the kind of regulating which is meant to palliate and a kind intended to promote.

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### III

#### MORAL REASONING AND ECONOMICS

Since the primary principle of justice, whether economic or any other kind, is that what people deserve are their deeds' effects, people can deserve food, clothing, shelter or essential recreation only by doing what produces at least one such necessity and by sharing thus in producing the others. It is not justice but charity which would give those things to people who need them but do not produce any of them; or else it is simply unjust for people to procure them by other methods. At least one Pope said in an encyclical that practising charity is not the function of the state, whose duty is enforcing justice. If charity were within the state's purview, then its duty would not be to practice charity on behalf of its citizens but only to punish citizens who refused to practice it. The state ought not to deprive people of goods or money when they have done nothing to deserve

such deprivation, as many exploiters of “the economy” indeed deserve deprivation. In any case, where theft is indeed justifiable, as the Catholic Church says it can be, the citizen ought to do it for himself and justify his deed in open court; the government ought not to do it for him, and especially not without anyone having to go to court.

Now, someone seeing himself justified in thieving because the economic environment where others wrongly thrive afforded him no opportunity actually to do the providing of needed things might well decide to resist effectively and fairly, with force such as they themselves employ, police called to arrest him, so that he could be fairly sure of presenting his argument in the courts instead of letting the police seize from him at gunpoint and return without laying charges (as embarrassed store owners exploiting unjust opportunities might prefer) the food he “stole.” (That food ought to be enough to preserve life without wholly gratifying appetite.) He might even feel justified later, if all the courts ruled against him, in resisting to the death any police sent after him, so as to make the police genuinely consider whether they were justly enforcing laws affording them the relative prosperity they enjoyed.

Citizens endorsing positions suggested here might choose to establish and obey a “regulatory framework for economic activity” that forbade anyone not doing the provision of food, clothing or shelter to sell goods or services to anyone not doing the provision of food, clothing or shelter, except for selling goods or services to lawyers, clergy, or members of the medical profession. That would not necessarily keep farmers from building computers in their spare time during the winter months, or necessarily keep people who even specialized in producing computers from convincing farmers and house-builders and tailors that having computers must be useful or entertaining or both.

That things belong to those who produce them demands at the very least that producers own and owners produce, and that both be so far as is feasible the same, with the producers and the owners of a good, as a very minimum requirement, roughly equal in number. If it takes twenty people to produce a(n electric) motor vehicle from scratch, then twenty or thirty, but certainly not forty, should own it jointly, or at worst one owner should serve with it twenty or thirty regular paying passengers.

Seeing clearly that the state’s sole concern is justice and that doing justice consists in allowing people to enjoy the benign effects of what they do and

preventing them from avoiding their deeds' baneful effects, keeps out of the state's jurisdiction any detriment which no one inflicts, including economic misfortune when no one's doing anything actually fosters it. When people are obliged to protect others from mere misfortune, as parents are obliged to protect their children, the state ought not to try to avert misfortune but rather to punish those who ought to have averted it from others but did not. (Seeking "success" in initiating or directing sequences of inorganic motion instead of doing vital deeds has become common enough for people to feel, without much thinking, that "it's what we do"; it then seems to them unremarkable that their government undertakes to regulate and remedy much of what merely happens, as far as or further than it deals with conduct genuinely human.) So far as people have a duty to avert misfortune from themselves, however, the misfortune itself might well be deemed an adequate penalty for neglect of that particular duty. Otherwise, misfortune may be deemed fitting for people to face with one of two praiseworthy attitudes: they might choose to endure hardship as just punishment for offences which the state had failed to detect and punish or which lay outside the reach of written laws, or they might choose to rejoice in enduring it as emphasizing to themselves that, no matter how bad conditions might be, they themselves have not

been so unjust as to deserve these: this view might possibly be, for people who really see that being unjust is worse than suffering any harm, a considerable consolation. For example, people who felt real shame at the prospect of having to accept assistance from the government might well scorn the suggestion that by rejecting such assistance they would be failing in responsibility for their families; they might argue that “needing” such assistance ought to be regarded as a fitting penalty for being willing to take it, or for tolerating an economic system and a way of life in general which appeared to excuse or to necessitate making “government assistance” available for “those who through no fault of their own” cannot provide for themselves, and they might argue that “social assistance” ought therefore to be advocated as an abasement, perhaps to be assigned upon a court finding of social unworthiness in the prospective recipient, or else upheld as an honour which also a court would rule deserved. (Any decision regarding a claim between citizen and government ought to be rendered by a court of law, since neither citizens nor governments may judge their own cases.) For the real challenge to the right-thinking may be not so much an obligation to live as justly as is possible in unjust conditions as a duty to tackle such conditions head-on and by opposing end them. Or die trying.

IV

DOMESTIC ECONOMY: THE ONLY PROPER KIND

Since what a person deserves are the effects of what he does, his natural purpose in life is to deserve the highest mode of existence that his kind can naturally attain. (Since grace builds on nature, man's supernatural destiny as a Christian will include his doing this.) The highest existence naturally attainable by creatures composed of matter and that part not made of matter with which we see reason, that makes our matter what we are, is to remain bodily alive while identifying with realities beyond the bodily and delighting in these and any innocuous joys and pleasures incidental to engagement with lasting worth; actually doing what actually sustains life – what keeps together our matter and our part not made of it – is both necessary and sufficient for us properly to enjoy our being alive and our relishing whatever else we might gain by doing. Some might

deem this unduly restrictive, but it can also dispel illusions we might heed (to our detriment) of being obliged to do more, even to survive, than our own deeds of planting and harvesting food or of directly making clothing or shelter for ourselves and any who fairly share our doing by supplying similarly something we need. It is better to deserve what we need even than to possess and enjoy it, which latter is all that people do when their goods are produced by mechanical and chemical causes arranged to bear upon one another intermediately.

The next best thing to keeping oneself (literally) alive to truths permanently real, is to keep the race of man itself (literally) alive to them. After that, man's duty is to extend as widely as he can, in as dense a concentration as he can achieve, among creatures near him, the relation between deeds and deserving, dealing with the lower creation in all the various ways not diminishing it, to meet his own needs and legitimate desires, advancing among the things made of matter a union not made of it. One man alone could never do justice to that august privilege; that is why men and women marry to have children: the family propagates in matter power to perceive and perform what is deserved. That is partly because the lower creation can thus "find" (have bestowed upon it) its highest fulfilment – or its deepest "degradation" – in humans' using it to deserve

what they deserve by doing what they do; it is why indeed “agriculture is the highest art”: it raises matter’s lowest mode – inanimate earth – to the highest of merely material measures. Since justice should inhabit all the earth through humans’ performing it fully in as many places as possible – this duty, when properly done variously, will largely leave some places to themselves – there devolves upon the family especially a decently diverse density of related duties: couples generating prospective doers of just deeds ought themselves to supply, from or on their own real property, the things most proper to that purpose, such as food, clothing and instruction. Thus dedicating political territory to fruitful justice (“doing justice to it”) would entail maintaining it in sustainable service to human deserving, at the highest level at which the local environment itself would flourish without radical alteration; this in turn would give the territory a population sufficient to defend it with deeds instead of “inviting activation of arms inanimate” against enemies. That would be a population, moreover, of growers, herders, and makers offering sufficient market for suppliers of goods less than strictly necessary.

The family’s chief worth is that it can fulfill both the main modes of sharing essential justice available to mankind: in it, humans can keep themselves alive as

separate persons by doing separately what they can for themselves and they equally can do together what needs more than one to do it for more than one; they perpetuate together mankind's being able to deserve what it deserves by doing what it does; the family therefore is mankind fully constituted: its source and its summit, so far as mere nature can supply. One human remains himself by doing what deserves his being so, and being glad of that privilege, and family deserves to be itself by both doing justice and perpetuating the possibility of justice, so as to be both mankind's generative unit and its productive unit; whatever families need, families ought to produce: if families really need computers or devices generating electricity for computers or other machines ("generating" electricity is a living action done with machines and not, instead, chiefly by them; the latter is not generation but only production), then a family must be able to make a living by making these or at least by making components of them; what a family cannot make, mankind does not need, except for buildings like churches or courthouses to be constructed by groups of families for use by groups of families. There ought to be no "economically productive corporations": any corporations there are ought strictly to be governing bodies or organizations earning only what they strictly need to serve purposes strictly charitable. Being permanently conscious of that

kind of sanely severe order all about one and of being obliged to serve as an objective reality the highest ideal conceivable to natural man may even be necessary to prevent much in the way of modern mental distress, especially if one in the midst of that order bore mainly in mind the pattern of actual deeds instead of being mostly in a muddle about whether one's own motives or those of others were really worthy of our ideal; the beauty of being able to admire actions done by others is that we can conceive of their having the noblest motives for doing these, without our necessarily being contradicted (especially by those others). Also, being mentally ready to forgo, as not deserving it, much that otherwise we might unfittingly gain, might help lend us the courage to endure a graver misfortune when that was undeserved (so far as we could judge our own case).

The family is “the basic unit of society” not as one component among many similar and mainly reciprocating which the whole comprises, but as the society itself subsisting in each family: a framework of families for every family. Each family must share in doing anything another family does for it, by providing something the other family needs to do that; only thus can it deserve what the other family produces. That is one of the chief things a family must do to be a family.

Another of the chief things the family must do is teach each of its members what one needs to know and do to be part of a family: how a family ought to support itself and how its members ought to regard and treat one another: that is, how to work together applying the truth that people deserve their deeds' effects. Most of mankind ought chiefly to bear more or less permanently in mind when not concentrating on some specific application, that man must try to “fulfil all justice” by both producing and generating and that men not mainly doing these must at least celebrate or defend doing them.

Parents' original instruction to their offspring ought perhaps to be that one ought not to wait to be instructed in the demands of justice but eagerly seek on one's own initiative to learn the nature of deeds and their effects and which of these are worthy. Parents ought to emphasize to children that farming and fishing, the deeds which most provide most food, are best worth doing, since food is inherently necessary to human life, while need for clothing and shelter mostly arises from external circumstance, so that indeed “agriculture is the noblest art.” Choosing a trade ought not so much to depend on one's own tastes as upon whether farmers or fishers need one to ply that trade. If one's taste and one's duty actually coincide, as they often might, that is just one's good luck.

It is perhaps also just one's good luck if someone with whom one "falls in love" is also admirable for dedication to the duty of generating prospective performers of what people ought to deserve. That is the quality one ought most to seek in a prospective spouse, since coition – the proof of marital love – ought always to convey approval of one's partner's worthiness to be a parent, even when it cannot actually generate progeny; marital love consists at least in desiring thus to approve. Contraception necessarily annuls such approval. Also, it should be easier, psychologically, for couples to lend themselves together to sublime duty than for someone selfish by nature to accommodate another's precise preference in optional pleasure; persons considering "serious relationships" should consider with the "significant other" whether they together like or admire something really permanent.

V

FEMINISM AND FRIVOLITY

A “doctrinaire” Feminist may laugh most heartily at many things genuinely funny, but yet we may find that merely playful arguments against Feminist attitudes or supporting “Sexist” ones will leave her cold. I do mean cold. Even toward friends who approve of almost everything about her except perhaps that lack of playfulness and who do not much object to that but rather find it fascinating. This is that kind of argument.

G.K. Chesterton suggested that those whose arguments appeal to the head only and not also to the heart – that is, perhaps, men who do not brook their opponents taking them lightly, no matter how respectful the opponents might be of their actual position – are “men of violence”: men, I think he meant, whose arguments sound forceful because the men themselves enjoy employing force. Chesterton’s suggestion would be consistent with Hans Urs von Balthasar’s urging, mentioned

in *First Things* magazine, that Catholics first present their beliefs as alive with beauty before trying to defend them as true. For, as the movie *Secondhand Lions* suggests, an ideal's being "worth believing in" can be as important as its actually being true; facts can be true without being "worth believing in." That there are "racial" differences among humans is a fact not worth centering our lives around it, not "worth believing in." I shall argue here that it is possible and even reasonable to deem "Sexism," even if it is not "factual" in holding that the division of mankind into woman and men is far more than a trivial detail like racial coloration, can be "worth believing in even if it isn't true" – until someone actually proves it false, which might be difficult. Anyway, trying to compel acceptance of what one cannot prove conclusively puts sensible people off, whether one is a male chauvinist pig or a Feminist.

We who oppose "unisex feminism," if that is what we do, ought therefore perhaps to do in such a case what we would do if someone should ask us to prove that persons deserve their deeds' effects: we ought not to try to treat our position as a conclusion but rather show that conclusions drawn from it are plausible, or at least interesting, or that at least the arguments themselves are plausible and entertaining: Because the kind of thing made of matter which can enjoy deserving

what it deserves by what it does exists in the two aspects we call sexes, it can generate “more of itself” so that the physical universe can continue almost indefinitely to revolve around reality far superior, in kind and not only in degree, to the universe itself. If one sees that that hypothesis is not yet disproved but rather one can deem it “worth believing in,” one might then entertain some further suppositions.

We might, for instance, plausibly (more or less) suppose human males are meant mostly for “getting done what they have to do” and that the human female generally carries to completion what the males initiate. The only material support for this particular hypothesis might seem to be that this is the way of human generation, though we might also “reason” that since the very foundation for continuance of worthy activity is laid in this manner, it might be “fitting” if people conducted more or less along similar lines much other worthy activity more or less related to that or providing an atmosphere in which people would very largely “celebrate generation” even when not actually generating progeny. Men’s and women’s conducting themselves thus might be especially appropriate where initial performance demanded concentrated energy of effort and briefly sustained but close attention and carrying the process through required chiefly the

kind of care which tranquil benevolence might best provide. Thus, in general, perhaps, men should plow and woman plant, men should reap and woman cook, men should sew leather (which requires effort) and woman sew soft cloth, men should nail pieces of wood together and woman should choose and hang curtains: men should do what demands strength and energy briefly concentrated and woman what takes time and continued consideration. A father ought to tell his children what they ought to know, because he must, and their mother should make sure they absorb and remember it – and he remembers it – because it is good for them and mostly ought to please them. Maybe sometimes we must depart from this pattern, but (mostly) perhaps we ought not to prefer departing from it.

Perhaps we could support that theory further by presenting what admittedly is but another theory: humans should do some things because they are what they are, and should do other things which help us to become who we ought to be, and these two motivations are so equally essential that no one human can equally emphasize both while giving each the emphasis it deserves; each therefore should have its own identifiable half of humanity stressing its importance even more than that particular half stresses the complementary aspect. We might almost deem that teaching what is right is more necessary to a man than being a good father, in a

sense in which it is not true that bringing up children to be good is more important than being a good mother; also, in that sense, it may be more necessary for fathers to be good at something besides fatherhood than for a mother to be good at “more than motherhood.” Perhaps women’s being (when they are) who they ought to be is what the Catholic male priest should offer God in the Mass, even more than people’s doing (when we do) what is right; maybe a woman’s “seeing her own goodness” is less parlous than a man’s deeming himself good.

The theory also that male humans almost exclusively should endure endeavouring what must entail effort and women ought most to enjoy being benevolent, may support a hypothesis that men ought chiefly if not exclusively to inflict any obligatory punishments both in the home and for the state. That might be because those who inflict what must be endured deserve also to bear what they inflict, and an identifiable branch of humanity which in general did not inflict but rather refreshed ought not, ordinarily, to feel physically what ought to be inflicted; women can show their own courage by bearing because of their benevolence those misfortunes, like great pain in childbirth, which no one actually inflicts but which occur only because a process proceeds; some might emphasize that thus assigning to one sex exclusively the obligation to endure hurtful effort and inflict

what injustice must incur should remind us all mostly that in a state of “original justice” there would be no such burden for anyone and that such an originally perfect existence is worth approximating so far as possible, if only in and for that half of humanity which for that reason men might accurately call their “better half.” (Even the hot anger at another’s wrongdoing which anesthetizes the pain of inflicting pain ought not negate pity, at least if one is Christian, for the self marred by its doing wrong, so perhaps the sexes ought to “specialize” also in these attitudes to keep them suitably strong generally.) One could suggest also that if such theories are “worth believing in” even while unproved, this might help render both halves of humanity as strong and almost as well-balanced as if each were itself the whole, especially if it is true that children derive their attitudes mostly from that parent who is of the opposite sex. Theorizing of this kind can suggest that if men are meant mostly to perform what is strictly obligatory, then it is women who ought to be admired mainly for being who they ought to be, and that even if it is chiefly men who make such logic-chopping “ethereal” distinctions, their tending even to do that might be the only thing which best enables them to be interested in others almost purely as persons more than as

doers of what they want done. Also, approval or scorn from persons worthy to be who they are can much affect men's doing well even what is in itself obligatory.

Further, if men's duties were mainly disciplinary and women's dedication more mainly developmental of "personship", then men ought to restrict themselves to insisting on such restrictions as they can prove by strict logic from self-evident principles to be strictly obligatory, and they ought to be vastly vigilant against whatever another mere male might recommend as furthering "personal growth," especially if his own "personal growth" as a captain of complicated commerce is mainly what he has in mind; that might derive chiefly from his mother's ambition that he manage many others for their own good; even a good woman should attend personally to helping "personship" flourish in only relatively few at a time; preferably these would be her own children and their father.

"Male chauvinists" might proffer these "rational deductions" not as obliging anyone but as allowing a pastime to people who might say with Oscar Wilde, "Give us the luxuries of life and we will dispense with the necessities." Feminism might find that frivolity difficult to forbid while preaching diversity, but still might try, for while such "sexism" lingered anywhere, it must disturb Diversities

by suggesting Sexists are more interesting and have more fun. Capitalists have a similar motive to destroy that Distributism which advocates “distributing” resources from which we might produce wealth rather than everyone’s sharing wealth which relatively few produce.

“Sexism,” according to the theory offered here is not an “oppressive ideology” which “patriarchy” had invented but rather an almost universal recreation of those most ordinary men and women who enjoy playing. We might suspect, indeed, that feminists who insist on everyone’s believing what some may deem mostly a fiction regarding “gender oppression” have themselves embraced that doctrine chiefly because they are largely incapable of being playful at least in the sense of enjoying most of mankind’s ordinary games, like those played on boards or with cards, and perhaps also because they take too seriously most of the written or dramatized fictions which constitute their chief recreation. Or, if males, they may take too seriously the theoretical reasoning, as opposed to the mostly sound practical judgement in specific situations, of women who never indulge in pastimes truly light-hearted. God help me, though, I very much fear that but for a medication which effectively suppresses most of the emotions, while leaving intellect and instincts more or less intact, I would by now be thoroughly in love

with someone whose good judgment and sound character I much admire but whom I suspect of severe unfrivolity, especially regarding Feminism. For I suspect, too, that for women capable of playfulness, being “feminist” is only another game they like to play against men.

VI

MANNERS, MEANING, AND MARRIAGE

That the feminine is to free men from “Fate,” where “Fate” is sexual automatism, might well seem “worth believing in,” since it might be enough to justify matter’s existing if only one man alone kept even briefly himself alive and aware of his deserving life and that awareness: even the “preservation of our kind” is not so necessary to the perfection of the physical universe as our kind’s having already existed apparently was. If, therefore, the function of the human male is to perform what is minimally obligatory, he ought to remain always aware that no woman is ever a mere aspect of that: every woman is a generous addition thereto, so that we ought to be thoroughly grateful for that expansiveness even if it does entail some expensiveness.

Woman's function may be said to be embodying choice, or choosiness, in the form, perhaps, of being moved far more by her own feelings than any man ought to be, at least to the extent that her feelings build upon, instead of being opposed to, rational perceptions and the logical implications of these. Thus, a woman might simply "feel" that it is "nice" to have flowers growing in a cemetery, because it is fitting that we adorn the graves of our dead as an expression of hope that the lives they lived were in the final analysis beautifully worthy. A man might then respond that it is not fitting for a lesser form of life to thrive above dead bodies of human beings, but rather that it is fitting that such lesser beauties should die often to adorn briefly and repeatedly the places where those bodies lie. The man and the woman could then together rationally oppose with solid logic and strong feeling the sort of "Philistine" who would insist that every graveyard should be barren of all but headstones and perpetually short grass. The woman might also, against both these men, defend decorating graves with plastic flowers, which are not flowers but plastic, as representing financial sacrifice from poor people. The sexes might vie proudly in upholding respectively the authority of perception and the prerogatives of being passionate; men, virtually forbidden to refrain from keeping only one human (the man himself) alive and deserving

necessary good, ought to encourage woman to foster the flourishing of all of which rational thought does not actually disapprove. Men wanting to share that “original benevolence” of justice, ought to enable their women to render it present; women should help perform the obligatory so far as needed to let men avail of their benevolence, which, rather than male or even female lustfulness, ought to be the main motive for human generation. It almost exclusively might be seen as warranting femininity in mankind: mere men can readily supply almost anything but that disinterested benevolence which wants others to enjoy whatever in justice they can: “If you supply not that generosity to our necessities, ma’am, we really have no need of you, for then you might as well be a man.” And that is much what occurs in current sexual equality.

Sexual equality, for many moderns, means that women are entitled as much as are men to untrammelled sexual enjoyment. And they are – if one overlooks the truth that men themselves are not entitled to that but have only behaved, though not perhaps in all ages, as if they were. The error suggests that men’s gift for honouring what is good in itself – as the good found in pleasure self-evidently is – needs correction by woman’s emphasizing what is “good for the person”: things good in themselves are not necessarily worth seeking for their own sake; men’s

assuming that they must be so is a misdirection of “male objectivity”: a warning against overvaluing that attribute even if it be well “worth believing in” to some extent. The very fact that woman can with such “fickle capriciousness” decide against “having sex” with someone patently to her taste and liking whom she had been “leading on,” that he is later “unfairly” (in the view of “reasonable” males) convicted of rape, ought to be proof enough to a logical mind that women are not ordinarily the fatalistic slaves of their own physical urges that men might too complacently appear.

There are mainly two ways a woman can teach a man – and usually only one woman at a time can thus teach any man, and one man will be as many as she can teach at one time – the real worth of being benevolently unselfish. One is to let herself unselfishly cater to his desires, essentially themselves quite selfish, hoping he will wake to and reciprocate her generosity. The other is expounding verbally the theoretical value of their both contributing to the embodiment of that benevolence in justice which lets things made of matter appreciate its beauty as one of “the only things worth believing in even if they aren’t [proven] true.” That way might be safer than the other, both more likely to “work” and less likely to do real and lasting harm to the woman’s heart: she can found her marriage on a

theory both spouses endorse instead of sacrificing her whole self to presenting her theory, and show her prospective husband that the thing bigger than both of them to which they can give themselves and in which give themselves to each other, is a genuine reality genuinely higher than their bodies or the bodily expression of even a desire fully personal of two persons for each other.

Women wanting to live as “equal to men” – that is, as if they were not more than men – must live without men, or at least without those men who want life with a woman as “something extra,” a life higher than men could enjoy in company merely male. That is to say, women who want men in their lives ought, ideally, or at least in the main, to be “defenceless females”: they ought to choose mainly to depend on their own men, or on generously manly comrades of their own men, to defend their lives and their honour – and they ought to insist that these be well-trained and fiercely effective defenders who prefer to fight fair and who will severely punish any foes they might defeat despite those foes’ having brought unfairness into fighting. However, if men who directly attack women are by definition not fighting fairly, the women may perhaps respond with equal inequity by using weapons not ordinarily fitting to foes eager to do fairly their own fighting; that is to say, women whom men attack might well be justified in

shooting with firearms, a combat method in which much of the really deadly work only “occurs” more than a fighter actually does it and which therefore may indeed be suitable for those to use who ordinarily rely on vicarious defence, which males ought ordinarily to disdain.

Women who endorse the idea of men dying to defend them in their “embodying the ultimate extra element of pure benevolence (and benevolent purity) in human life” should be prepared to sleep always with one man and to dance sometimes with all of them with whom they are acquainted. For dancing ought to mean when both sexes share it that any purely personal pleasantness one finds in a member of the other sex should warrant their doing together what ought to be enjoyable in and of itself, irrespective of personal preference, so that a man and woman dancing as a pair ought to express thereby their approving each other, in strictly abstract principle, as prospective partners for (marital, of course) coition: if one of them is already married or engaged, their dancing thus in public, or as part of a group, ought to proclaim to all present that they are content to confine themselves to that approval-in-principle and have no intention further to proceed upon it, even if their attitudes convey that they might be tempted much thereto.

Such are the ordinary attitudes men might ordinarily expect of themselves and of women in an ordinary society of men and women. There may be some, especially among the women, who constitute in their lives legitimate exceptions to those attitudes; if so, perhaps that should derive from such a woman's desiring to pursue a course itself exceptionally worthy and worthily exceptional rather than to enjoy simply regarding herself as excepted from "ordinary" rules because ordinarily the "making" of rules is "oppressive" to a "free spirit."

Naturally, any man who had a normal upbringing will address any woman, if "only" a store cashier for whose good looks and youthful pleasantness he is incidentally most grateful, in the conscious hope that she shares the views expounded here or with regret that modern (co-)education probably kept them from occurring to her even unconsciously, although she herself may seem much gratified by the kind of manners to which they gave rise.

## VII

### INDUSTRIALISTS OR MECHANICS?

Clarity demands a specific adjective for many of the methods of production which now we call “industrial.” For “industrial” means “applying energy to produce material goods,” and it ought to be evident that living energies are what medieval men, who were perhaps more energetic than most of their successors have been, would have called a far “nobler” sort – more “worthy”; “worth more” in the moral sense – than those derived only from the “unfolding of the universe” so far as that universe is inanimate, even if it “unfolds” much in the interest of modern businessmen: there are “industrial” methods by which men actually do their producing, even when they produce for others to own without the producers actually owning even intermediately what they produce, and there are “industrial” methods which consist chiefly and almost exclusively in inducing merely

mechanical events to occur in arrangements of merely inanimate matter without anyone doing much of anything at all more than a bare minimum of initiation. This latter species of industrial application of energy we ought to label specifically as “eventical,” or “eventific,” or somehow similarly, so that when we hear the Amish, at least, objecting to what so far they presumably have called “industrial” processes, no one ought to have any real doubt about the particular kind of “industry” they ought to have in mind. For the Amish themselves are especially “industrious” groups of individuals; they ought to embrace production methods which while employing an “inanimate” energy yet need that “fuel” to be generated by actual deeds of individuals who are alive; “industry” need not be exclusively, or even at all, the preserve of commercial corporate collectivism; any individual might own an efficient generator of electricity he could work with his own unmechanical and muscular arms and legs, extending by his own deed his own vitality which itself is in part electrical, so that he is giving of what he actually has and then in truth “generating” electricity as “combining” rivers with turbines does not; and any individual might hire himself out to work such a machine to heat and light a house of any family he happened to like or respect. That would be a more “Distributist” arrangement than what some seek in asking

that “public” utilities assign all families what power they need for the ordinary household “independently” to become profitably productive; it would entail actual, rather than conferred or granted, widespread ownership of the means of production – when using electricity was really one of the necessary means, one without which medieval men managed well to be highly productive in their own manner. For the “Industrial Revolution” which followed after the destruction of the medieval guilds by grasping aristocrats was in fact, one seems to have read, an “eventifist” unpopular uprising of commercialism largely Calvinist in spirit against the genuine industriousness of individuals and their families. (The October & issue of *Maclean’s* magazine has an apparently instructive article on the monetary cost, which is the kind of expenditure now most important, which seems currently to be the outcome of failing to forgo eventific processes and maintaining what looks a lot like collectivist corporate commercialism.)

As using the words like “eventific” for a kind of processes and “eventifist” for the attitude approving of them would provide clarity in thinking and writing, so repudiating “eventifism” might much restore sanity to our lives, or at least a kind of balance to economic performance, which then indeed would be performance rather than occurrences. For it is not at all necessary and may be not even

minimally sane that all “ordinary” households, or even almost all “ordinary” individuals, should supervise their own computerized print shops and (so to speak) their own telegraph offices (for which they must buy materials and essential energy, of which industrialists induce the production, from commercial corporations) without being at all able to draw upon a source of food they could call their own. It is not at all necessary, and may be insane, that every man should be his own motor-taxi driver, at inordinate expense, without even a minimal experience of the horse, which the equine species might through natural generation offer him virtually free of charge. Eschewing eventifism would put the mechanical back in the hands of those who G.K. Chesterton said can really savour the “romance” of the machine and therefore really enjoy operating and maintaining them and who therefore are always few in any normal society, where romance ordinarily consists in the actual deeds of ordinary men and women who do directly what sustains directly themselves and their own children. Let ordinary men and women write cursive longhand with their own skilled fingers and bring their own most legible handwriting, on special occasions, to the independent specialist in the print shop, whose equipment, computerized if he prefers, was provided and maintained by an independent maker and an independent mechanic,

and is run on electricity, if the printer prefers, which his apprentices really “generate” by operating with hands or feet or both a genuinely romantic mechanical device which modern technological “wizardry” might continually render ever more efficient, along with increasingly cost-effective energy-storage in ever better batteries. In a society where most grow their own food and where there are many who do that, the independent specialist in relatively exceptional production should be able to buy his sustenance fairly cheap and the ordinary producer where there are many of these ought to be able to pay the specialist whose own upkeep, of course, might be relatively expensive.

Then, of course, the ordinary man would see eventful “advanced military technology” for what it is, a modern mechanical dragon whose master a real warrior should challenge with a sword.

## VIII

### PRIESTS AND ECONOMICS

Catholic educators seem frequently to have praised the family more as source of priests, missionaries, nuns, and other similarly selfless “contributors to society” than as fount of further families to be society. But even the priesthood may be meant first to forgive family members for offences against family life, which may well be, as a pope suggested, the most difficult vocation in which to become holy. Family life therefore may be most akin to the martyrdom which fascinates, or used to fascinate, idealistic Catholic children, and so perhaps ought to be offered them chiefly in that light, representing that high defiance to the devil (and his dupes) which is essential today to Catholic family life, and perhaps especially, now, to Catholic priests realizing their duty to the family. Earlier essays have shown how family life and our society in general today go wrong economically,

and suggested a proper pattern, in a general sense, of legitimate economic operations, so that it may be one of the main duties now of Catholic pastors to offer good example by enduring first among and for their flocks the consequences of moral consistency in economics.

Since it is the chief duty of family members to do such deeds as will actually sustain their families, instead of maintaining only indirectly their existence by reason of having elicited occurrences, the Catholic priest perhaps should offer God in the Mass primarily the ordinary family's rightly fulfilling that normal duty. It is his duty and his privilege to be himself maintained by his parish's families' properly pursuing their duty; it may be his duty to go hungry if they choose to "thrive" after the current manner of most modern men; perhaps he ought to decline money his parishioners earned in serving Mammon rather than justice. Perhaps the various conferences of bishops ought to discuss with their priests the practicability of setting dates within a decade or so of which following such a suggestion will become firm clerical policy. At the very least, having to attend closely to specific and distinct moral standards in the wide realm of economics, would provide pastors with material other than sex, which now

perhaps seems susceptible to excessive emphasis that a temperate preacher should eschew, for homilies applicable to practical life.

Adopting such a “policy,” if indeed it were not sound Catholic social doctrine, might at least turn priests and parishioners from seeing their lives too much as a corporate enterprise needing direction from a chief executive officer, for they ought to work out their salvation in far more personal a fashion than “the global economy” might afford them even if that were, as it emphatically is not, a reflection or an aspect, or a universal instrument of the universal Church or world-wide operation of the Church’s laity. This new approach might also correct an impression some pastors may have that they are a kind of “branch managers” legitimately advancing their autonomy under a “diocesan CEO” who is entitled only to such episcopal influence over them as he can diplomatically achieve by tactful exercise in clerical politics. Obliging priests to live on what parishioners can actually produce by veritably doing production, might for a long while, until nearly everyone learned well to prosper thus, offer much helpful distraction from such clerical vanity and tend to weed out self-serving professionals from among the hardworking humble, which might be well worth while even if for a time only the bishop himself really remained thus.

Ambition to “rule the local church” or even to govern the church more widely might be due largely to a mother’s opinion that her son must deserve to direct others in holiness and to govern their worship if any other woman’s son deserves so much. (Women once preferred governing through men, and ruled then more surely – and more safely for themselves – than they can by taking power directly except where now those who rule, instead of truly governing free citizens, are managers of wellbeing, which is woman’s actual vocation.) But that would assume erroneously that priesthood is deserved, rather than direly needed, to begin with. That women of a certain generation have assumed some men deserve to be priests might be due to some priests, or some teaching nuns, having conducted themselves, very wrongly, as if they deserved their vocation, which might actually be true in the case of nuns but is not ordinarily true of men in religion and perhaps rarely true of men in religious authority. Believing that priests deserve the priesthood is like believing that the rich ought to be rich; both may be due largely to a lingering unconscious influence of Calvinism as discussed in an earlier essay, although even believing that the rich are rich for our sake, so as to “give us jobs,” which is bamboozlement when it works, is closer to the truth that priests are ordained at least as much for our good as for their own; they do not

deserve by being good men to be priests so much as they need to be priests in order to become good men; it may be that women perhaps are not crippled enough to need that crutch; that may be why it is important for a son to derive from his mother his notion of what it is to be a good person and for him to learn from his father chiefly that he ought to do what must be done and that, when necessary, he ought to be glad he can do only so much, as hardly any woman could ever be content with that. (It may be that men mainly are made, primarily by doing what they must, and women mostly become, preferably by enjoying what is best, who they ought to be.) A man accepting priesthood, or any other authority, ought to accept also its being always authoritative, especially to himself, and never personal, especially not for himself; authority is an obligation to function specifically rather than an opportunity generally to enjoy what one might prefer; the latter might be a privilege which most women, as not taking authority, are not obliged, and might be reluctant, to forgo, and possibly even ought not to forgo: it is possible even that some men's having become decent and effective priests was due at least in part to a fine feminine fancy, in mothers of at least one generation, for rearing at least one son whose soul must be "superior" to the more-than-half-ashamed sensual selfishness (selfish chiefly because she could not share in it) of a

clumsily carnal husband. That might support viewing human generation as subordinate to offering God mainly the lives of celibates rather than what might have been the highest act of religion if man had not Fallen and what is still, of all our natural offices, most worth a Mass.

Affirming the sense of order, psychological and in economics – economics ought to follow sound psychology instead of trying to alter psychology to fit fickle capitalism – which this and other essays have promoted, may well afford a solid footing from which men and women can dance together fantastically many extravagant dances (that always demand firm footing) especially if “they take themselves lightly” in a healthy atmosphere kept stable by “laws of gravity” which one might state thus: (1) Men mostly discover (rather than merely make) rules. (2) Women make exceptions to rules. (3) For humans readily to rule themselves rightly, there must be at least one exception to the second rule; if there were only one such, it might be that women, chiefly constituting “the priesthood of the laity,” are not ordainable as Catholic priests.

Such a sense of order, that to some might seem too pat and too routine, especially if they do not work at following it, might well permit, while the sense itself were strongly kept, of much well-meaning departure from the “regular” in

instances found after the fact to be truly exceptional and exceptionally well-intentioned, which the careful casuist could indeed excuse or even perhaps justify. But we should not issue beforehand licences for exceptionality, for, we have been warned by an exceptional man who deemed himself ordinary, the most middling would deem themselves most to deserve those licences. A person deeming herself exceptional whom others also find so, would be indeed a worthy exception to the rule.

It seems essential that people of the same Church should agree on what they deem the essentials of its shared life, so as to be essentially “of the same mind” even as God the Father as gladly giving Divinity and the Son as gratefully receiving that Divinity to be rightly his own, constitute that single mind of theirs who is the Holy Spirit, essential to their Divinity, in Whom they are “thoughts who think themselves.”

IX

FIREARMS CONTROL AND POLICE WORK

Since our deserving the effects of what we do is the main element of justice among men, any criminal law not flowing from that primary principle or upholding it will be strictly a criminal law and not a just law. A just law will defend our enjoying what good we gain by doing what is right or will enforce our enduring any deterrent we inflict which others do not deserve or which only the state may inflict on them as we and they together authorized it to inflict. The same principle demands even then that even the officers of that state, even if executing perfect justice, should be ready to dare a decent degree of danger in doing that duty: he who does detriment distinguishable from justice itself deserves that detriment, and all forms of detriment are thus distinguishable, so that a policeman using force to effect an arrest deserves that force of the same nature be used to

resist him. Whether anyone he is trying to arrest is actually entitled to resist him is quite another question, to be answered in court: all that the policeman may do, and it is what he must do, is fight fairly to get the matter into court. Fighting fairly, of course, means relying only on one's own personal bodily prowess when one's opponent relies only upon his – and the average policemen worth their salt ought to have more, and have it in higher quality, than most of those against whom they must enforce a just law. It means wielding a weapon which harms only by reason of someone's wielding it, when one's opponent confines himself to weaponry of that nature – and policemen ought to have more and better training than most of us, perhaps, in wielding such weapons or in warding with a shield, maybe, such strokes as another might make with one of these.

Perhaps we ordinary citizens might be entitled to resist any policeman trying to arrest us if that policeman cannot show by rational argument that the primary principle of justice – that we deserve our deeds' effects – warrants our state's imposing the law he is trying to enforce. If he cannot thus justify his taking us in, it might be that he is himself taken in by merely plausible politicians even if we mean only that he thereby receives sustenance through a "justice system" whose knottiness of mode and motive a working citizen could never untangle and to

which therefore he ought instead perhaps to apply the sharp edge of simple principle. For our “justice system,” especially for those who believe that the “system” itself is justice enough, may possibly, even though many actually do much that occurs in it, conceal and support another system – our system of economics. Much that takes place in that economy is hardly ever anyone’s actual doing but only something which people invite to occur, so that hardly anyone deserves to prosper, although most of us do prosper, from the system’s functioning; it seems to function more or less to our advantage through our own seeking within it to attain most of what we want that is available in our current circumstances as the system itself largely shapes them. That can be a far cry from doing genuine deeds that of their nature effect our purposes and from our deserving to effect these by deeds worth doing “for their own sake” in that they disclose justice to the earth. Therefore we may perhaps resist police, and also defy judges, who seek to enforce any law which forbids, or which upholds a way of life that circumscribes, our doing actual deeds that would gain us good without depriving others of what they deserved or inflicting on them what they did not deserve. A mind well informed ought readily to recognize such laws when it encounters them. That alone might well justify us in trying to engage in

“vexatious” philosophic discourse every jaded officer of the law who has occasion to address us in the course of his “duties.”

We might reasonably deem, perhaps, that a chief function of our police currently is to protect the industrial capitalist “way of ‘life’” more than, or maybe even instead of, protecting other citizens from injustice, and we might reasonably deem also perhaps, that the latter duty tends to overshadow what ought to be the chief aim of any real “justice system”: defending justice itself against the citizens themselves. For citizens ought to be able, and in justice they have an inalienable right, to protect themselves: we need a “system” not to protect us “when we are right” but to punish us “when we are wrong,” because no one is judge in his own case. People who cared rightly about justice – that is, about rendering what is due – would value even more than life their own and others’ deserving what they deserved by doing what they did. We really need the state only to judge between us when we disagree about how to apply to one another the standards of justice we have all agreed in finding them valid. But if the first element of justice is the deserving that arises out of deeds, then what may not be part of punishment for injustice ought not to be employed in opposing it. But shooting with a firearm is routinely permitted our police in their defending only themselves although we

never punish by shooting them even the most hardened criminals most properly convicted. This suggests that our police and those authorizing our police deem the lives of police, and the lives our police protect, more important than justice itself and that these therefore regard wrongly their relation to justice and our relations with one another, which we ought to regulate in the light of our deserving what we deserve. The suggestion is quite consistent with being content to be kept “alive” in comfort by a system instead of living with eager effort by one’s own deeds, content to leave life behind when one’s deeds no longer serve to keep one living.

A policeman (or anyone) does not in the ordinary sense deserve to defend his life (or anything) by shooting with a firearm, however much the kind of circumstances a sound mind rightly instructed would much deplore may oblige him (demeaningly) to use a firearm – against a suspect who himself has one. For no one actually does such shooting, but rather it is only an industrial event occurring in a mechanical “system”: what the shooter actually does is aim the firearm and press its trigger, perhaps after cocking its hammer, so that what he deserves is that the firearm be aimed, and perhaps cocked, and that its trigger be pressed; he deserves nothing more of that firearm and its contents; he does not do

the explosion of gunpowder which sends the bullet from the firearm, and he certainly does not do the bullet's moving toward the objective he chose for it, as a policeman reacting in a normal manner would actually do the swinging of his baton at a resisting suspect's head or the suspect's hand or arm wielding serious weaponry. A living creature contending with an equal ought not to be overcome by merely inanimate forces unless he himself resorts to them, so that police ordinarily would be justified in bearing only such arms as citizens ordinarily bear; bearing special weapons against actual criminals would be warranted only by those criminals' being convicted, which is done in court by due process, not by police making an arrest.

Clearly, police ought not to use a firearm to prevent a suspect from running away unless that suspect is running to where he might safely shoot back with a firearm he evidently has. Police may give at gunpoint no orders except the order to relinquish a firearm or not to reach for one. Also, killing in self-defence is always a failure, however justifiable, of the police in their duty to bring their suspect into court. In any case, shooting an attacker is not so much a defensive action as it is a counterattack or a punishment for attacking.

Either police ought to be punished severely for using firearms against anyone not similarly armed, or all citizens ought to be similarly armed in case the police choose to use firearms against them: they need not have weapons like those of the police in every respect, but only weapons of the same nature, perhaps holding fewer rounds and not firing automatically as police firearms might. Equality before the law seems to imply that if some citizens must register weapons they are permitted, all citizens ought to have similar registered weapons, of which their use could yet be strictly regulated: forbidding jokes about shooting someone with a gun one has would be at least as warrantable as forbidding jokes at airports by persons without bombs.

X

ARMED CITIZENS AND THE STATE

Our never deserving but sometimes being obliged to accept the protection which using firearms can afford might “warrant,” if only in the unconscious mind of a man well informed, delegating defence to paid police: earning a living by assisting punishment or prevention of injustice may more excuse demeaning means than actually doing defiantly a fitting defence of the freedom and the duty to do directly one’s own living: to perform processes both necessary and sufficient, strictly, for being alive and aware of deserving it. (As another essay noted, we don’t deserve defence derived from shooting because shooting is not so much something we do, or even which others do for us, as it is something we invite only to happen for our benefit.) And paying others to invite our defence to occur mostly through their devices is only marginally more unworthy than it

would be for us to do our own inviting of it, though far more unworthy than paying others actually to do the defending we desire, even if that too is less worthy than doing it ourselves. For we ought to deem ourselves demeaned if we resort to unworthy means, unless we feel personally so superior that our very gaining benefit must dignify sufficiently anything we turn to our own purposes, or unless we deem mankind generally, or only ourselves, already so unfit to do good deeds in fitting fashion that descending even lower cannot much matter, as the Calvinism long prevalent in our West seems to have fostered our assuming.

There may be other degrees of worth or unworthiness in delegating defence. Some, exalting safety over justice, might accept the state as the highest outcome yet of evolution, so far the most complex system of material unification, “developing” from within into ultimately perfect sophistication, the survival of which would be the best surety yet available for its servitor-components’ own security. People who cared more about deserving safety than for merely being safe could safely dismiss that attitude summarily. But it would otherwise “justify” relying almost wholly on the occurrence of events favouring merely physical survival, since evolution itself, if thus the source and summit of our existence,

would be only a complex event occurring in matter exclusively which rendered illusory our grasping valid truths higher than facts accessible to bodily senses.

If being genuinely rational entails doing that we may deserve, then we must do as much for ourselves as we could, relying on those mere occurrences only which occur, without our evoking them, through the “action” of nature, that no one, except maybe God himself or angelic powers, can be said actually to do. People who compel us to resort to inviting events that are not done, to occur for our benefit, like robbers using firearms whom we must then shoot to prevent our being robbed, ought to be punished for that affront specifically in addition to any usual penalty for armed robbery they could have committed with weapons other than firearms. The same could be said of foreign states invading with firearms our own country: if, defeated after attacking even with just cause, they argued validly against our penalizing aggression, we could legitimately punish the insult offered in their using firearms, to human worth. And that suggests how we might lawfully retain firearms to defend against tyranny without supplying them too liberally to criminals: we ought by law openly to designate as weapons of war all firearms not essential to skilful hunting and all firearms easily borne concealed, and we ought by law to require every citizen to have in his possession some such weapon, or

even several weapons, of war just in case he might be obliged to wage war, whether against foreign enemy or domestic tyrant: we may distinguish between firearms for hunting and firearms for self-defence but not between firearms for self-defence and firearms for warfare. Our law should forbid citizens of our own country to employ such weapons against fellow citizens unless waging actual civil war as members of a society – or as the only person – denying or defying principles of conduct another society is trying with firearms to impose, or resisting a government proper only to (authorized only by) those using firearms to impose it. Our laws should recognize attacking with a firearm to be not only a criminal offence against another but an act of war against the other's country; one attacking thus must then either leave that country or fight in succession, singly or with supporters equal in number on both sides, with force or weapons of equal nature, anyone willing in war to defend that country, until he or all its defenders are slain. Everyone owning firearms should be put under oath to abide by that standard of conduct in the use of firearms. We might also by law require every male citizen to carry, hung from his belt, in places or circumstances where he might expect mugging of himself or another, a stout baton of prescribed length and weight, in the wielding of which he had been trained and kept himself in

practice; it ought to be a point of honour for every male citizen to possess a weapon of war reserved entirely to the defence of his society's own primary principles of natural justice, which he will use only against a foreign foe or against an "official" government trying to dominate with firearms his society which declared its opposition to that tyranny. A government already disposed to despotism or tyranny might be the most likely to oppose this approach, as would perhaps most probably those citizens inclined to criminality or to desiring liberty without caring to deserve it. A government ill-disposed toward its citizens would probably seize eagerly upon the suggestion here that no one should distinguish between firearms for personal self-defence and firearms for warfare, and then try to use it as excusing a total ban against anyone having any such firearm, except for the military on the government payroll. That will confirm the opinion which citizens who love liberty ought to have of that government.

If we want justice, which is of all gifts other than mercy the most enjoyable when well weighed by right reason – being pleased is most pleasing, or else least critical, for those who most deserve it – we must do justice: we must perform what we can of what is just. When justice demands punishment for our fellow-citizens, we ought to share so far as is feasible in justly punishing them, to the

extent of enduring punishment for a failure to punish justly or for inflicting unjust punishment. This may mean that if we are not willing to fight to the death for the right to inflict personally on anyone who breaks a law the punishment the law provides for his breaking it, then we are obliged in justice to fight to the death against anyone's inflicting that punishment for that "offence." (Perhaps, if we will not fight our neighbour to the death to enforce a municipal regulation requiring him to get government permission to build a shed behind his house, we ought to fight to the death, with him, the officers paid to enforce that regulation.) If that entails fighting to the death to keep our laws few and simple, and maybe even to regain a way of life consonant with having laws far fewer and far simpler than at present, to uphold which almost all of us would gladly fight fiercely, then that may well be all to the good, since a citizen's only duty so far as he is simply a citizen – a man enlisted in a state – is to resist injustice and to punish it; though so far as we are more than citizens we are obliged to perform what is more assertively just: deserving to enjoy rather than endure. (Injustice consists in enjoying that of which we have not done the getting or which someone who did the getting did not freely give us, or in inflicting on someone what he has not deserved to endure.) Perhaps deserving full punishment entails willingness to

endure it to gain one's goal; perhaps modern criminals do not so deserve the full severity due some deeds: perhaps subjection to some systems reduces the reality of personhood consisting in powers of reasoning and choice.

If what we want is to “ensure firearms safety” and “prevent firearms offences,” all this may well not “work” at all. Justice often cannot “work” to “practical” effect unless sought solely for its own sake; people amenable to punishment after wrongdoing often resent being coerced beforehand to forgo misconduct; that is why punishing even children to “make them behave” rather than to show they deserve punishment only prompts children to become openly rebellious or secretly disobedient: “firearms control” really seeks to control people, who should be free to fight fairly in upholding or resisting punishment.

XI

DEFENDING CAPITAL PUNISHMENT “FROM SCRATCH”

Saying guns don't kill but rather people use them to kill, a saying familiar enough to most of us by now, is like saying the state doesn't execute murderers but rather justice employs the state to execute them, a saying not nearly familiar enough to most. Both sayings are in some degree expressions of wishful thinking rather than statements of fact. Guns can kill without actually being used for that purpose, far more readily than could a sword or a club; that is one reason some people want to ban them. Another reason is that they are often used without sufficient reason, just like the authority to execute murderers: the one reason necessary and sufficient for that is hardly ever cited today, and certainly hardly ever adequately analyzed and defended.

That a murderer deserves to be executed is sufficient reason for it to occur and an utterly necessary reason for the state to do it; the state has, at least in the ordinary course of things, no choice but to execute murderers; it is not merely allowed, but obliged to do that. For a society properly establishes “the state” to punish society’s own members – that is, these latter appoint it to punish themselves, not others – if they fail to render to others a benefit the others deserve from them or if they inflict on others a detriment the others do not deserve from them. Being killed is a detriment murderers deserve for having inflicted death on someone who did not deserve it. Indeed murderers deserve not only to be killed but to be murdered: a murderer deserves what would be murder if he had not himself committed murder. For murderers are not the only ones who deserve simply to be killed; anyone who kills at all, and anyone who approves his doing it, deserves to be killed, including executioners doing perfect justice perfectly and police protecting executioners from murderers’ friends who might try to rescue the murderers or avenge the murderers’ deaths. These other people are just lucky that no one has the right to kill them as they deserve; those who deal death deserve that death be dealt them. However, they might not always necessarily be that lucky: a murderer might claim that he does not see how murderers deserve

execution or that he has not authorized the state to execute him which desires to do that: being executed must result from the murderer's seeing himself that murder justifies execution – not necessarily in his own case, since no one may be judge in his own case, but simply as a rule: though we may not judge our own cases, any ordinary citizen ought to be qualified simply to judge what the rule should be: what people ordinarily and generally deserve by doing what they do; every citizen ought to know what a deed is – an action intentionally performed – and what are the ordinary effects of ordinary deeds. A citizen who does not see these things in the light in which they are here discussed has not been educated as he ought or has not thought things out as he ought to have done; he may have been “taught to read without being taught to reason.”

To kill a human is to disrupt the matter of which he was made, so as to separate from it that part of him which made his matter what it was, the part with which he while whole was able to see realities not made of matter, one of the chief of which is the truth that persons deserve the effects of what they do, so that they can deserve an existence proper to their kind. Now the existence proper to mankind is to be living matter conformed to truth: a life of matter deservedly living at a level higher than creatures consisting only of matter could possibly

attain, a life residing in a reality which unlike matter cannot be disrupted but only rejected, so that anyone who tries to disrupt someone's possessing that reality is thereby rejecting it on his own account. The state's executing a murderer does not thus disrupt his possession of that reality of reason, for he himself has thus rejected it and can regain it only by accepting the disruption of his matter which he has deserved. For that part of man with which he sees permanent truths not made of matter is not itself made of matter, or it could not see such truths, and so it cannot be broken down as his matter can, but still it is not the whole man and therefore after death might not be aware of itself as the person of whom it was part. But the worthiness to be human and to enjoy truth, which that person had achieved with his life, might still remain, so that the part with which he had chiefly achieved that might still at least "experience mere worthiness itself"; that might constitute a murderer's reward for freely accepting the death he deserved by his deed or deeds – if there were no supernatural awards or punishments after death, as Christians must believe there are. (Until the general resurrection, the Blessed might perhaps enjoy knowing God without fully knowing who they themselves are in knowing Him.) But this brings religion into the question, and unless the reasoning used here is invalid religious teachings cannot contradict it,

though some might think Catholic doctrine, as conveyed by the Church's official Catechism, condemns capital punishment. Actually, though, that Catechism rather skirts such questions as whether murderers deserve to be killed, even while in practice it actually confirms that, and whether the state is obliged where feasible to punish its citizens as they deserve. (If it is not so obliged, then accepting bribes to withhold a punishment which was well deserved might not be entirely gravely wrong.) It is quite reasonable to suggest that those who wrote that Catechism wanted to give the impression that executing a murderer must be wrong, without their actually having to say it – which in any case the Holy Spirit, if the Church is always right (as this instance strongly suggests), would not allow in an infallible catechism.

What the catechism actually says on this subject is: “Preserving the common good of society requires rendering the aggressor unable to inflict harm. For this reason the traditional teaching of the Church has acknowledged as well-founded the right and duty of legitimate public authority to punish malefactors by means of penalties commensurate with the gravity of the crime, not excluding, in cases of extreme gravity, the death penalty....If bloodless means are sufficient to defend human lives against an aggressor and to protect public order and the safety of

persons, public authority should limit itself to such means.” That’s what the Catechism said in a 1994 edition. A later edition said that capital punishment may be used when necessary for the protection of society but that instances of such necessity today are rare.

Now, that is not to say that protection from murder is the only thing which justifies executing a murderer. The actual sentence as I seem to remember it can be taken to have a meaning parallel to: “Apple pie may be eaten when necessary to prevent starving, but instances of such necessity are rare.” Capital punishment’s being necessary to protect human life is not necessary to justify it, any more than preventing starving is necessary to allow someone to eat apple pie. And if a murderer does not deserve to be killed but may be killed to defend someone else’s life, then anyone else who does not deserve it may be killed to save another’s life. Similarly, the Catechism says that “for this reason the traditional teaching of the Church has acknowledged....” and not “for this reason only” or even “it is for this reason that....” Note too that the Catechism says the state has a duty to impose penalties commensurate with the gravity of the offence. Protecting safety is a less worthy motive than upholding justice (after all, protecting safety can be merely a motive, but upholding justice is always a reason), and we must bear that in mind

especially when we read that Pope John Paul II wrote that the “death penalty should be applied only in cases of absolute necessity, in other words, when it would not be possible otherwise to defend society.” The Pope might have meant there to let us assume that the state should execute criminals only to keep “society” physically and organizationally extant, which would make execution rare indeed. But that is not what actually he said; the simple truth is that society and its members – who are their society – need chiefly to defend themselves from being unjust. That might well make absolutely necessary the execution of most murderers, or in particular those murderers aware enough of what justice must mean and having enough “sense of self” to call down upon themselves what they must deserve by doing murder; such as these may indeed be rare today, because of modern education and people’s current upbringing in general, which much need to be remedied. Defending society from being unjust might also make necessary especially the killing (in fair fight) of murderers who denied that murderers deserve death. However, when actual legislation withholds capital punishment from murderers of the most helpless and imposes it for the killing of big, hairy policemen who carry guns, the squeamishness of the Catechism’s authors and even of a Pope writing an infallible encyclical might be deemed pardonable and

even praiseworthy, though it may be that most of us are similarly squeamish because on the whole we have been diverted from discerning how people's deserving their deeds' effects ought to affect our daily living, so that we do not realize just how horrible a disruption of the norm must be the unjust ending of a daily life lived according to that truth, since mankind mostly exists, in the first place, so far as the merely natural is concerned, simply to be glad to deserve what we would deserve by doing what we ought. That ought to be mankind's overarching purpose and most permanent thought enveloping at least implicitly every specific pursuit.

Meanwhile, when people do murder and so deserve to be killed, they deserve to be killed by the actual deed of someone alive who understands justice and whose own deed deals the death, preferably by a method messy enough to be distasteful for all concerned, as with an axe, though efficiently painless to the murderer, so far as possible: death, not pain, should be what he most dreads in expiating his injustice.

XII

LICENSING AND GOVERNMENT

A government has no more right to license teachers than to license marriages. Indeed, a government has no legitimate authority to license any kind of activity, for government, as government, has no expertise in any other activity but (we should hope it has) in governing: in making and enforcing laws which punish its citizens for gaining what they do not deserve or inflicting what another does not deserve. It is regulated in that by the constitution its citizens drew up or which at least they approved; it may not regulate itself. But if it both licenses and regulates licensing, it is in fact regulating itself and is in conflict of interest. What it ought to do, therefore, is regulate licensing authorities which do have expert knowledge of the activities they license.

Since not governments but occupational authorities ought to issue licences for practice of an occupation, it follows that if marriage itself is to be licensed at all, it must be licensed by an authority which skilled practitioners of marriage have set up to regulate marriage and make sure that people who want to practice it have learned it well enough. But this immediately encounters practical differences. For instance, the authority set up by those who perform a function in society has to satisfy not only the practitioners themselves but also those whom the practitioners will serve, that this authority is competent and honest. If, therefore, the purpose of marriage is deemed to be the generation of new humans, it ought to be obvious that those expected to benefit are not yet present to assess the competence and integrity of the authority which would license their parents to generate them.

If, on the other hand, the purpose of marriage is that husbands and wives should find their lives' fulfilment in marital partnership, then either those who were currently husbands ought to set up a licensing body to approve applicants for the office of husband, and married women ought to set up a corresponding authority to approve of prospective brides, or else the wives' authority ought to license prospective husbands and vice versa. But if most persons desiring to marry were not content to choose their spouses from among candidates thus approved, or

if they were content with informally seeking counsel from persons already married but not officially established to license the suitable, then it must seem there is no basis whatever for requiring anyone to obtain a marriage licence, and government especially ought never to require it. A government's requiring such would be especially reprehensible if that government were doing almost nothing in the way of regulating sexual activity. Laws forbidding persons with certain traits to reproduce – if humans “bred true,” which they don't – or consistently forbidding coition in circumstances more often current than many in which coition now is legal, could better promote, and more straightforwardly, without ever mentioning “marriage,” any particularly practical purpose which the state's licensing marriage ostensibly serves.

The only thing actually achieved by a government's requiring citizens to get a licence to marry seems to be the citizens' accepting at least tacitly the state's acting “as though it had complete, unlimited, and eternal rights over the soul of man.” (Clergy's functioning on behalf of the state in their capacity as clergy, and their submitting to the state's approval the making of a religious bond which the natural law does not in any event forbid, tacitly approves the state's presuming to dissolve that religious bond which the clergy's religion may teach is indissoluble.)

This is an attitude that even Aristotle seemed to approve when he said that the state takes precedence over the family because the whole takes precedence over its parts; this overlooks the state's becoming a whole only by reason of families' consenting to become part of it, a consent which may at any time be withdrawn. The state's having been established before most of the families which now establish themselves within it does not assign the state authority to establish itself or them: it only allows the state a tactical advantage in teaching that in fact it legitimately "acts as though it had complete, unlimited, and eternal rights over the soul of man." Having a governmental "department of education" decide who may teach can ensure that they will teach, not that the state claims such rights (which might entail having plausibly to explain why, so that the rational might refute the explanation), but rather teach everything else as if it were true that the state enjoyed such authority: the teachers having become themselves dependent upon government for their livelihood would in practice practically guarantee their teaching thus; voila. (We often hear teachers privately complain bitterly about wrong-minded policies imposed on them by bureaucrats, but they never seem to argue, even in private, that government ought not to be in control of education.)

Requiring people to become “qualified specifically in teaching,” as opposed to their having definite knowledge which almost anyone could impart if he had enough of it and of which he ought to know (and understand) how it was imparted to himself, can in itself appear suspicious: it means for the most part that “students” while in school acquire knowledge or attitudes without knowing how these were instilled. If mastery of a subject entails being able to impart sufficient knowledge of it, any teacher could establish his “being qualified to educate” simply by showing that his students had acquired from his teaching the knowledge he had desired to impart; the “science of education” seems to consist, therefore, in having a certain psychological outlook about the human mind which is supposed to operate upon it in ways to which questions regarding what children actually learn in school are mostly irrelevant; what makes educating the young a profession for specialists is the impracticability of teaching the ordinary prospective parent while he is young in school the specialists’ methods; if the specialists tried that, it would backfire and well they know that: no one, especially a boisterous boy, likes being manipulated while aware of it. Put in that light, requiring such specialization does seem dubious, does it not? (There can be indeed a vast difference between knowing how the mind may be disposed to

accept a proposition and being able to explain that proposition clearly enough for anyone to see whether it is true or false or perhaps only likely to be true or only likely to be false. “Educating” therefore seems nowadays to mean helping others to learn a subject of which the “educator” has not enough mastery to teach it properly on his own. That, it seems, is what our governments license teachers to do.

If the state does not indeed have “complete, unlimited, and eternal rights over the soul of man,” then the state has no right to require men to seek its approval for anything they may ordinarily do for themselves (men ordinarily marry for purposes strictly their own though jointly pursued); it then may regulate only what they do for one another, which brings us back to its only regulating those authorities with which the professions and trades would seek to govern themselves in what they did for their clients and customers who paid for their expertise, just as citizens ought to seek to govern themselves with the authority they assign the state. This means that the state ought to licence taxi-drivers and police or security guards but ought simply to allow the ordinary citizen to drive his own vehicle and bear his own weapons until his doing so has become the means of harming someone: when someone has been harmed with a vehicle or a

weapon, then it will be time enough for the state's prosecutors to attempt to prove that the driver of the vehicle or the bearer of the weapon had not taken sufficient training to make him competent in safely using it, and if that is proven – it ought perhaps to be presumed, so that the burden of proof lies heavily upon the user of vehicle or weapon – then it ought to be an aggravating factor in the court's imposing a severe sentence upon him. If someone's pursuing his strictly private benefit by a given method is inherently dangerous to others in a way which the others do not deserve, then that method ought to be prohibited rather than licensed.

We need less licensing and more lie-sensing, especially about what children are “taught” in school.

XIII

CORRECTING A SPECIOUS NOTION

Deeming it “self-evident” that “no process can be more important than its purpose” is indeed an error. Holding it, one overlooks the possibility that purposes are presented us chiefly so that we will perform certain processes, as having something to celebrate prompts people to celebrate by dancing or making music. (Even if the best for which one can but barely hope is some remote future occasion for celebrating, those in whom the high virtue of gratitude is inherent or well developed might deem that alone to be sufficient occasion to dance or sing.) The initial conception might have been partly true or part of a truth, but deeming it unequivocally true is probably the kind of mistake some people have been said to make when instead of reaching with the mind out into reality, so that the mind will stretch, they try to fit all reality inside the mind, so that the mind breaks.

Moreover, if insanity is closely allied with lust, as has been suggested, that kind of breakdown may be due to trying to “fit inside the mind,” as if it were “food for the intellect,” that aspect of reality we call “Sex,” which rather perhaps we ought warily to view intermittently as a steed that might someday consent to bear us. Meanwhile, although the spiritually mature might feel we were substituting rigid formalism for a living excellence if we supposed that seeing purposes seemingly essential was the firmest foundation for refraining from pernicious imagination – firmer even than discerning personal perfectiveness – yet there may be persons spiritually lame or even “emotionally crippled” who really need that kind of “crutch”: who deem it necessary to try only to do whatever they can directly see clearly as “objectively” right and just and to let God in his mercy and kindness decide whether they thus become holy: that is, become who they ought to be. And whether or not our trying as variously as we can to illustrate that “what persons deserve are the effects of what they do” would indeed further our growing in holiness, it can seem almost certain that wanting to act properly upon it should furnish us with more opportunities to perform worthy processes than now are available to most. For, if we are to deserve what we get, we must “do the getting”: we should perform the processes which produce what we will actually gain rather

than continue merely to receive through having induced lesser processes to proceed on set paths in patterns that (if we even care to attend to them) readily “fit within the mind” so as to disfavour reaching out to greater reality. That greater reality is found by attending ever more deeply to detail in what we perform and continuing to refine our performance, rather than in paying others to invent “even more refined versions of the same mechanical processes” which we may “invite to proceed.” (It might be that caring chiefly for the results of mechanical production without being interested in the working out of the process, as even the interior activity of a living body performing a productive process ought perhaps to draw one’s attention, can foster such a failure to reach out into reality as is found in a schizophrenic’s “two-dimensional” attending to others as if they were chiefly surfaces which spoke and expressed feelings, so that they readily “fit inside the mind.”) Also, doing our own getting might limit to a fitting number the processes present in our lives on which we would need to rely, even as our being alive and aware and capable of transcending rationality requires only the proper functioning of a set number of physical organs and a definite sort of skeletal structure. (Transcending rationality, though, ought not too soon to leave behind that elongating ladder which consists in seeing an expanding order in patterns

increasingly associated.) As a “severely limited” anatomical pattern yet underlies an almost infinite “varification” of the human spirit and even of the human body, so perhaps we ought to see that same “varification” of singular worth in doing what ought to keep ourselves alive. People ought therefore to do in modes multifarious what will deserve that they enjoy goodness and especially enjoy moral realities – like persons’ deserving their deeds’ effects – that are eternally immutable even while reflected most variously in matter most changeable.

Real joy may be found in approving the worthy performance of worthy processes and in finding even more such performances to approve. That joy may well be the greater as our acquaintance with others who perform them for us and who share in our performing grows closer and deeper and our prayers for them become more intimate, as for instance one might pray in particular that young people whom one knows will readily relish the practice of the trades their parents best can teach or that their parents can apprentice them to crafts of which can they better savour the techniques.

It is well that one’s performances should in some sense have the purpose of illustrating the truth that God deserves to be God because “being God is what he does” and because he does it entirely, allowing us to imitate that highest kind of

activity and to refrain from profiting from processes which proceed without our seeing that persons perform them, unless those processes which merely proceed, like the earth's orbiting the sun, are necessary to our performing the processes we ought to perform. For it is essential to justice that justice be done, more than that we simply see in what it consists; it is "good deeds" even more than valid insights which Christ wants to lead men to praise our Father who is in heaven, though maybe a seemly "tapestry of good deeds" which is "woven locally" might be best of all. In any case, it ought to be clear that our "purpose" is to perform the process which consists in doing justice, rather than that justice **simply** be done, since justice is done sufficiently in God's deserving to be God and our sharing in that process is due to his generosity rather than to justice.

XIV

AN ERROR ANENT THE EROTIC

Viewing sex as “mental nourishment,” and therefore inviting mental breakdown by “trying to fit that reality inside the mind” as G.K. Chesterton suggested some may try, is one of several missteps possible through the greater error of regarding God as an Ultimate Big Boss and taking it for granted that he “made sex ultimately irresistible” because he wants worshippers as an old Newfoundland fish merchant wanted wealth, and because people not compelled would not burden themselves with children to bring up as he prefers; this view is, I believe, a largely unconscious but widespread theological error that disregards Divine Reason and God’s consideration for the understanding he gave us. (It suggests, for one thing, that those few fortunate people safely enjoying self-control should not be disturbed by any sneaking suspicion that bestowing rationality upon matter through a choice unconstrained could be a noble geste,

their declining of which might diminish dignity otherwise their due.) It implies that since he made it possible for sex freely indulged to be much fun even without causing children, instead of rendering human coupling just another taxing, cheerless part of the daily grind, we ought to make the most of that gratuitous concession. Also, the Tempter might hint, if God really wanted the procreative process always to be effective, he could, unless he enjoys promising hellfire, have rendered all modes of contraception impracticable, so maybe he's playing the compulsion game to invite us to "become creative" in evasion. After all, he made our nature what it is, and it's human nature to resent all forms of compulsion – even to the point where what the news media always call "senseless" vandalism may chiefly express an understandable resentment at the "bossiness" of our society's enforcing security without explaining why justice is just. I fear this is an impression of God which many of my age imbibed. But it is not an official doctrine of the Church I follow. However, that notion of the Divine will regarding sex can be emphasized if parents convey (without actually declaring it), and if the moral disapproval of priestly preachers reinforces, an impression that coition is distasteful to the fastidious (who ought to be so) and is for those who enjoy it "a defiling kind of 'fun,' an act of forbidden pleasure somehow justified in

marriage.” That might foster resentment at God’s “making us subject to base desires,” so as to “warrant” our “getting back at God” by wrongly indulging these.

I have come to believe that God, far from constraining or demeaning us, offers excellent reasons pleasing the understanding unless we fail to notice them, for choosing freely to put much reasonable effort into making ourselves fit to have children and bring them up right. The best reason, for Christians, is that if we have children and mostly educate them ourselves, we will be doing what God himself “does most” and “does best”: God the Father, in generating the Divine Son and having the Spirit of Wisdom proceed from them both, “pursues” the best possible way to be Divine. We ought to be grateful for being allowed to imitate in our own fashion that Divinity; physical pleasure which that entails is neither inducement nor reward for doing it but is only the human body’s specific share in spiritual joy at attempting the best deed, and accepting the highest challenge, of Christian life. (The Catholic Church says it’s even better to abstain, for the right motive, from that best deed; maybe the only right motive for that would be wanting to help others, through one’s prayers and sacrificial abstinence, to be even better spouses and parents; I don’t claim that motive for my bachelorhood.)

Even life devoted only to natural justice, for those who don't believe in God but still see that what human understanding sees is real, can offer us a worthy challenge and noble work somewhat similar to what religion affords: Since humans are meant chiefly to be glad to deserve what we deserve, our having children would afford other humans opportunities to be glad of what they deserve, which when rightly considered must be deep spiritual joy; we would have children either to share our own joy or to amend our having failed to deserve what ought to make us glad, of which we today in many ways fall far short.

Those who resent that “everything is easy for God” perhaps overlook the truth that “easily being God” must demand infinite energy and infinite strength of will and that the one-word name for strength of will, particularly in a worthy cause, is “courage.” It takes courage especially for a creature to really try to be like God, as Adam and Eve realized in assuming that having the courage to do great wrong would empower them to do great wrong with impunity – the “privilege” to which vandals perhaps “aspire” – instead of turning out the way we are now. And that is why we can be mistaken in assuming that since God made us, therefore he also caused us to be the way we are; that had another cause; rather he made us in spite

of the way we would be, because he can count on us to remedy that if we but count on him to help.

No one should assume even, as maybe many do, that God at least condones selfishly seeking sexual pleasure, provided fertility not be frustrated, nor that he offers sexual experience itself as “worth achieving,” like a grasp of geometry (which does mostly “fit inside the mind”). Even emphasizing that coition affords “sacred pleasure” as “a reward for a virtuous act” might misdirect a young mind inclined to enjoy its contents more than the contents of the world, toward prurient “abstract” inquiry into what it supposed renders coition even more interesting to intellect than it is physically and emotionally gratifying: more worth thinking about than worth doing; such a mind might even “reason,” more or less unconsciously, that one willing and even eager to be later conjugally chaste therefore deserves to enjoy its reward now if only imaginarily. Believing God offers sex as enjoyable for its own sake might also prompt the young to conceive of coupling as an experience of bodies self-aware only of being bodies experiencing each other bodily, oblivious, at the moment, to moral context: such a conception might become by long habit a mode to which a mind was “locked in” upon advertent to certain images or ideas; or it might be simply a subtle method

of self-deceit. Or it may reside mostly in minds vividly impressed with and keeping in a separate compartment each item they acquire. It must be far better to teach that the physical pleasure is the body's specific share in the spiritual satisfaction of actually doing that by which ordinarily men become generous.

Emphasizing, as celibate spiritual advisers sometimes do, that the beauty of the female human body, "God's masterpiece in matter," is yet a "dangerous" splendour, often overlooks distinctions worth making: It is not a woman's beauty against which the susceptible male should be on guard but his own susceptibility – at least when what he sees is pleasantness frankly personal or cleanly physical, or both. It is when the woman is "physically sexually attractive" or "emotionally sexually attractive" that one ought, at least initially, to regard her with other than gentle geniality; much depends on how the woman "presents" her beauty: "To desire the desiring of her own beauty is the vanity of Lilith but to desire the enjoying of her own beauty the obedience of Eve" – when that enjoyment, in everyone not her husband, consists in glad unselfish admiration.

Perhaps the phrase "carnal knowledge" when current fostered in impressionable young the impression that "having sex" conveys by itself some important meaning to the mind when, of course, what coition ought to impart is

one's spouse's ultimately approving to full bodily effect one's worthiness to have children, or maybe only the general worth of having children if both spouses deem themselves and each other unfit to bring up children. For not wanting at all to have children is, as Dr. Rudolf Allers wrote, a spiritual defect: it is less a lack of emotional inclination than the intellect's failing to perceive, or the will's not approving, the right reasons for having children; disposition of intellect and will may much rectify emotional disinclination. Approval of generation is the one reason necessary and sufficient for coition. Some might feel lesser motivations, such as a man's and a woman's mutual mild impersonal gladness in recognizing good looks, or a mutual disposition emotionally to please and be pleased, may warrant seeking coition, but these properly only "enhance the experience" (maybe not much) when real reason warrants and suffices. What that pleasantness, of which one can indeed be gladly "worthy," does warrant is dancing, which to lesser degree similarly honours the pleasing with performance that gives pleasure almost irrespective of the personal; a lesser performance to which, moreover, partners much tempted might strictly limit themselves in stubborn chastity – against which, incidentally, sinners perhaps sin not so much by "having sex without marriage" as by not being married to each other when coupling. There

ought perhaps to be gradations of dance signifying the regard in which partners held each other, with livelier dances conveying sentiments more or less lighthearted, not to say lightheaded. We really ought to attend more to such “trifles” if only to avoid regarding the “tremendous” as “trifles”. For hearing that “small things amuse small minds” ought to remind us that only unsound minds use great things for amusement.

One ought therefore to have the heart of a child, to see that even very small things are well worth attention from such weak minds as ours. For unless we see that children are worthy of adult devotion if only because they need it, we shall not enter the kingdom of heaven. Without being able to confide in at least one parent, however – at least when tempted or in doubt – one will not retain the heart of a child but may assume through adolescence a mien of having learned self-control, so that no one will see his lack and realize it needs remedy: if one parent is always alert to eradicate fiercely any weakness or deceit or “dirty indulgence,” seeing any sign of these as brazen defiance of parental authority God made unquestionable, and if the other parent never opposes that, their child may grow up simulating moral certitude and integrity, the prospect of which in the parent was never subterfuge, since the parent sincerely felt always utterly right.

That is why one ought always to be entirely clear that the standards to which one ought to adhere are not in any way one's own: we ought to serve what is right, not act as if we share its rightness; one ought not in any sense to "believe in oneself" or to hint that people ought to believe in themselves; parents can too easily convey by strictly enforcing conduct without rational instruction, that a parent is his own authority – or that God's ways are too unlike ours for us to have a hint of them.

The "good" ought to manifest "their" goodness by admiring others' virtue: others ought to be as glass through which we see God's goodness in aspects of lower creation which these others, chiefly as owners of them, delight in presenting to childlike admiration, like the way plants propagate with what is in them most lovely: unselfish love of children is the loveliest trait of adult humans; even consecrated celibates ought not to forgo pleasure or subdue instinct so much as humbly to relinquish mankind's highest natural privilege and afford the married a "distillation" of the humility marriage itself demands, reminding us that the sexually alluring worthily gladdens chiefly when reflecting and assisting joy in getting progeny for Divine Justice.

XV

DEMOCRACY AND INDUSTRIAL CAPITALISM

If ever you read or hear the phrase “our democratic way of life,” which it is likely many have already read or heard, it ought hereafter, if it does not already, to cause you grave misgiving. Democracy ought never to be a way of life but only a form of government safeguarding a way of life; not the life of “the people” considered as one whole, which is what governs in a democracy, but the way of living which citizens share as separate persons or as family members under whatever form of government best upholds the standards of conduct they together see to be valid.

A “democratic way of life” may be due even more to industrial capitalism than to democracy, since “the people” under industrial capitalism now do as a collective whole what families and individual citizens used mostly to do for

themselves; the latter now serve an economic system relying far more on corporate direction of occurrences than on the actual deeds of living persons; this demands co-ordinated collective direction to avoid becoming chaos.

Existence within this complex structure of occurrences almost completely automatic has already given rise to that other ominous phrase “work-life balance,” an omen we ought well to heed: it practically screams that our lives, in which working ought to be fully integrated – and approved by conscience if not always actually pleasant – are badly off-balance. Relying almost universally upon occurrences as opposed to action now has people feeling even that a woman’s becoming pregnant is something which happens rather than what she does: an occurrence subject to “the democracy” rather than a personal step someone took while aware of the fulfilment due it. Similarly, many accustomed to collective control of processes which merely proceed without being performed, may never consider that some processes, like wind blowing or rain falling, should simply be left to proceed instead of being subject to public policy on “curbing climate change.” There are simpler, more cogent reasons to forbid some economic practices than the effect of these on weather; people who cannot see these when they are pointed out, have little hope of becoming expertly efficient practitioners

of global meteorology, which more nearly resembles rocket science than does ethics. And if we cannot convince the corporate suzerains who thrive on and in industrial capitalism that they ought to obey the dictates of valid moral reasoning with regard to economics, we may little hope that if they do learn to control the climate, for which “preventing climatic catastrophe” might be merely their most nearly plausible pretext, they would always control it for the benefit of all and to the detriment of none.

Some might even deem even coital pleasure even more than becoming pregnant to be an automatic outcome of physically effective procedures, rather than as a mostly moral joy. For that saint was mostly right who wrote that touch is of our senses the one with which we gain least lore. A man touching a woman’s flesh, therefore, ought chiefly to delight not in its texture but in the woman’s own desire that he enjoy her even at the “merest” level of her pleasantness. Rape is so bad as it is partly because it so exalts that lowest level of knowledge of a woman above learning who she is at her best, in her joining with a man freely to have children with him and prolong the possibility that justice may move in matter. The “joy of sex” should consist in realizing the glory of gratitude. Failing to do that may be a result of assuming “chastity” is only refraining from sexual wrongdoing,

as if a tree's purpose were only that it should avoid falling flat upon the forest floor, by leaning, partly uprooted, against another so disposed. That image brings to mind also how our "socio-economic system," where we all depend on selling to the rest instead of producing mainly for ourselves, resembles a forest where nearly every tree is leaning against others, so that altering the posture of even one might drastically effect many, with woodland maintenance then requiring careful regulation. That is consistent with depending on processes which merely occur as opposed to people's performing them, since now we might even say that the very operations of employees contributing to the same commercial enterprise must seem to each more like events occurring outside his own personal ambit than like deeds they actually do together; the industrial capitalist way of life treats everyone so much as just another leaning tree that municipal legislation now can even require residents to keep the grass on all their own lawns similarly short to avoid adversely affecting one another's "property values," although laws ought to regard only the use of one property as affecting the use of another, not as affecting monetary value grounded in taste. Similarly, it is not enough, in a modern democratic society, for national criminal jurisprudence to allow anyone to contract privately with others for any performance not actually illegal; rather, "the

people” as a whole subsisting more and more in a body formally and officially political must formally prohibit expressing moral disapproval of or personal distaste for whatever it refrains from forbidding: government itself must do anything that it allows to be done. That is “our democratic way of life” in industrial capitalism: there is public policy and a vote concerning every purpose under heaven.

Industrial capitalism may perhaps affect our sexuality more than most of us would immediately expect: as the inanimate, which men now with much facility “arouse” to movement convenient for them, is the ultimate in “femininity,” so to speak, relying upon it may tend to refine too far the humanly feminine and minimize human masculinity, which ought to represent maximal capability of action but no longer can. In “our democratic way of life,” therefore, we may find woman’s femininity exaggerated and men scarcely masculine at all, though both remain capable at least of minimal mutual appreciation; that is because, Rebecca West suggested, sexual reciprocity remains relatively constant: as men appear more harshly masculine, so do, proportionally, the women of their society, while staying quite feminine enough to suit such men quite well, and where women are most feminine, the men will tend not to be exactly at the furthest pole from

femininity. Perhaps women who are “most masculine” but yet “feminine enough” may be mostly found in societies mostly of farmers or fishers whose wives are their partners in all aspects of those men’s lives and especially in the bluntly economic aspects; it could be that a farmer’s own success was due mainly to his wife’s fierce fondness for the farming life rather than to his ambition to support by and for himself the kind of beautiful “trophy female” an industrialist or his minions might fancy they ought to enjoy and in imagining their “fulfilling” whom the feckless among such “men” might prefer to indulge. Even the old TV series *Gunsmoke* may have done much to promote such an “ideal of womanhood” through its depictions of farming women whom Marshall Dillon in one episode particularly counselled Deputy Chester Good against causing a prospective bride to resemble, because she deserved better.

Such considerations may bring to mind “poetic” imagery perhaps utterly fanciful but yet consistent with attitudes arising within the modern “mode of human maintenance”; that imagery might affect us unconsciously more than we surmise: people no longer draw or pump water from wells but let it flow from taps, as liquid bodily waste flows out into a sewage unit. Living persons chiefly initiate, or “fertilize,” the operation of inanimate machines, in ways less important

to the machines' running than the fuel they burn, which becomes not part of them as organic food becomes part of them but is discharged, which originated as waste material within the earth or is "generated" (as some will keep saying) by "living" water "making love" to the inert; that conflates with arbitrary, artificial production, allowed because convenient, the vital act we truly know to be generation: reproduction of the definably alive. If we carry such analogical reasoning to a wholly logical conclusion, we may find it not at all surprising that many moderns promote a "progressive" attitude which more than figuratively "treats babies like s—t," whether or not that has led to or has followed from morally equating the places from which those "products" proceed and to which some today refer generically as "plumbing."

Some, of course, "admire" the industrial capitalist system for the physical "structural beauty" of interconnectedness, perhaps forgetting it is a "structure" with men under it as foundation rather than viewing the material universe from above. Relatively few have the "artistic" sense to appreciate such "seemliness" and even in these it seems not to inspire the high poetry men can turn out when they have a subject of which, as C.S. Lewis put it, they simply "want to go on thinking."

XVI

COURTESY AND THE LOCAL CHURCH

Ordinarily, one ought not discourteously or in high dudgeon to reprove an act of discourtesy, but another essay on the topic this one is to discuss, which this ought to supersede, seems to have fallen short on that account. For one thing, it assumed that a religious authority ceded too much to secular commercial interests, when perhaps instead it had yielded too much influence to lay professionals whom it had itself appointed, who might complain publicly that it prevented their “doing effectively” the “job” for which it “hired” them. That is, maybe a diocesan “responsible ministry committee,” not the diocese’s insurers, required that parish volunteers have police certify their not having criminal records; the essay this one supersedes had maintained largely on the assumption that economic pressure from secular sources prompted the diocese’s overlooking in parish volunteers the

dignity of children of God, a strong tone of umbrage at the diocesan authority's measuring gift horses' teeth with red tape. That essay had kept that tone partly because one parish priest had told volunteers he had much resisted the condition's being imposed but he hoped they would accept it; at least one volunteer took this to emphasize the discourtesy entailed in what had been established, but perhaps that cleric was only humbly asking apologetically that volunteers his parish needed would not stand upon their admitted dignity.

Many today may be so accustomed to working for others as not to clearly see, or to acutely feel, the difference between paid and volunteer "employment": in the latter case, those for whom we work are not really employing – that is, using – us for their own purposes, but rather we are working at purposes of our own, and we ourselves, rather than those whom thus we assist, are strictly responsible for any wrong we might commit while "voluntarily employed." If we seek "voluntary employment" as an opportunity to do wrong, without anyone in parish or diocese having offered us any inducement to work other than the work's getting done, the parish and the diocese are victims of deceit rather than accomplices in it. But whether or not they themselves realize this, it is beneath the dignity of volunteers for those who benefit from their work to regard or treat them as "wage slaves,"

even if that is a notion with which both the average modern parish volunteer and his or her pastor are not familiar; people who appreciate this distinction between work done for material gain which the work itself does not achieve and work achieving a purpose the worker desires without wanting to gain materially, may well resent anyone's imposing a condition on his accepting what they offer without charge.

We might find a similar overlooking of a worthy distinction in the stipulation that a volunteer himself must ask, since the diocese may not, that the police discover for him, rather than for the diocese, whether he has a criminal record. That implies that the volunteer is making the request on his own account and in his own interest, when indeed he is doing it in the interest of the diocese. But that means, if the law is just which prevents the diocese itself from finding whether a prospective volunteer has a police record, that the diocese has no real right to the information. And that may deepen the sense of affront which prospective volunteers may feel at the diocese's seeking such reassurance.

There is a third distinction a volunteer might make if a cleric commenting on the kind of objections submitted here should say that these miss "a critical point," which is that the diocese is not seeking to penalize its volunteers, or pacify

insurers or appease a responsible ministry committee, but is seeking strictly to provide “a safer environment” for children and vulnerable adults; the volunteer might bristle at being deemed but an “environmental factor,” when he is as much as any with him wholly a human being in the same environment as they. He might also, if at all finicky, ask why the environment must be made “safer”: whether “safer” in this context means “safer than unsafe” or “safer than safe.” And at least, if in order to keep children properly safe it is necessary to inflict a discourtesy upon benefactors, someone representing the diocese as keeping children safe (or “safer than safe”) ought to explain publicly the nature of that necessity and express publicly some regret that it is indeed a necessity; discourtesy is always a discomfort for anyone advertent to it, whether or not it is meant actually to affront.

On the other hand, it almost seems as if the diocese itself, or some diocesan agency concerned chiefly with temporal well-being, seeks to exact from its volunteer assistants quite a high degree of courtesy toward all of those for whose benefit such volunteers assist their diocese or parish: Volunteers volunteering in any one of many kinds of capacity are expected to “acknowledge the paramount importance of safeguarding, in all respects, all people to whom we minister,

especially children, youth and vulnerable adults.” Safeguarding everyone “in all respects” might presumably entail having to “safeguard” someone in respect of his or her being abnormally sensitive to any sort of imagined slight, especially since those signing the acknowledgement agree that it is of “paramount” importance that they use “appropriate” language and treat “all persons with respect.” These are positive requirements, one might notice, mentioning no upper limits on the verbal propriety or the degree of respect with which those to whom volunteers might minister can expect volunteers to address them; the volunteers do not engage themselves merely to refrain from being rude by any normal standard of politeness and from belittling those to whom they minister; they undertake positively to be rather highly respectful, hewing to a standard of courtesy apparently somewhat higher than that which the diocese itself follows with regard to parish volunteers. It ought to be quite enough, with regard to safeguarding those “to whom we minister,” if parish volunteers simply took an oath not to commit against any to whom they ministered, in the course of serving their parish, any offence known to law.

XVII

THE CHURCH AND CORPORATE INSURABILITY

Any laws of a secular state requiring that a corporation be insured for any reason ought never to affect episcopal corporations holding property for the Catholic church or its dioceses under the law of the state. That is because there ought not to be any episcopal corporations holding Church property under the law of any government but the authority of the Church itself; the state ought to recognize and protect that authority as long as the state is not actively hostile to the Church; where a state was actively hostile to the Church, state laws would not long protect Church property subject to the state's authority in any case. All the state has to do, when not hostile to the Church, is punish the Church's members, not as Catholics but strictly as citizens, when they break the state's laws. However, members of the Church may as citizens authorize the state to punish

them for breaking any agreement by which they may make themselves subject to Church authority, when any other citizen accuses them of breaking such agreements and they are convicted by due process of having done that.

Ordinarily, the Church ought to rely strictly on its own authority over its own members, even requiring them to defend her laws by force, if necessary, when justly these might conflict with the secular law of the secular state. When she and they could not do that, then ordinarily the state would overwhelmingly be persecuting the Church anyway.

The Church ought not to regard, nor obey secular laws which might demand that she treat, her priests or other clergy, as ordinary employees of any ordinary business or ordinary corporation or as employees of her bishops. Priests and deacons freely devote themselves to the service of the Church and its members, who freely maintain them: the work of the Church's clergy is not in any sense an economic function or employment, and the Church ought not to hold her clergy in employment contracts with episcopal corporations formed under the law of the state, nor may her clergy demand under the law of the state a minimum wage from that kind of corporation. Any other persons doing the work of the Church for salary or a wage, ought to be considered employees of a bishop or a parish priest

under those law which govern relations between citizens as individual persons; the Church ought not to vest any of its own authority or the authority of any Church agency in any “corporate citizen”: only individual persons can really hold membership in her, so that only an individual person can rightly wield authority for her, and the state ought to deal with those strictly insofar as they are individual citizens. So far as there are corporations, such as parish corporations, within the Church, these ought to be formed under Church authority only and subject only to the Church’s own laws, and these ought not to be engaged in “secular” business of any kind: “fundraising” for a parish is not the parish corporation’s function, but rather citizens who are members of their parish ought to form themselves, when necessary, into their own “business” corporation, subject to their government’s laws regarding secular businesses, to work for economic profit which then they would through that corporation donate to their parish. The Church could still make her own laws governing her members’ conduct within that kind of business corporations, even requiring them to make sure that their corporation turned all its profits over to their parish.

The Catholic Church as a whole, or a diocese of it, is not an organization which benefits others in order to benefit in return either corporately or in the

persons of its members; the Catholic Church, and each diocese of it, consists of Catholics helping one another to do what they firmly believe is God's will for men on earth and for the earth itself. The Church or a diocese of it is therefore more the way Catholics do God's will than it is what does his will for them; it is not so much an organization working for God as it is the human family of God performing his will through him and with him and in him.

God's will for his human family is that its members share his life by deserving their human lives as he deserves his divine life: we do what he wills if we do, or share in the doing of, deeds necessary to sustain our lives; we must gain what we need by directly feeding ourselves and those who clothe and shelter us, or directly sheltering ourselves and those who feed and clothe us, or directly clothing ourselves and those who feed and shelter us; if we do none of these three things or provide nothing which a majority of people need to do them or to celebrate being allowed and able to do them, we do not deserve to enjoy what we have, and far less do we deserve to enjoy that condition for which God made us, which if Catholicism is not a horrible fraud is literally worth dying for. Besides thus feeding, clothing and sheltering ourselves, we must as Catholics feed, clothe and shelter our clergy whom we need to bring among us the Sacrifice of Christ on

Calvary to remedy our rejections of God's will, which today almost our whole way of "life" rejects by relying not upon what we directly do but rather upon receiving monetary tokens from commercial corporations which amass these mostly for themselves and those who chiefly operate them, with whom even the Church, while unconsciously she condones that way of "life," is more or less constrained to co-operate even through investing some of her own authority in a similar corporation. The Church, however, ought to resist and condemn such constraint. She ought not to be obliged, as an organization, to enforce the laws of the state, nor should any diocese of hers, as an organization, be so obliged, and their members ought to be obliged to enforce the state's laws only so far as every citizen is so obliged. If the state punishes them, it should be because as citizens they have done wrong, not because they did wrong in their capacity, for instance, as Catholic clergy. The state, not the Church, must enforce the state's authority over these citizens.

We might well say that a corporation which the state allows to exercise real, material power over citizens has indeed incurred governmental obligations. The state does allow business corporations to exercise that kind of power when it fails to prevent the prevailing economic environment from virtually compelling its

citizens to work for business corporations instead of working directly at feeding, sheltering and clothing their children and teaching their children to do these things. Therefore, a business corporation which contributes to and profits from preserving that kind of economic environment is indeed obliging people to associate for its purposes rather than freely for their own ends and is to that extent answerable for what they do to one another while thus associated. An episcopal corporation relying similarly on people's "needing jobs" instead of being able to meet their own needs with their own deeds is in much the same situation, but the Church itself is not. The Church, so far as it is the Church, has no employees. A diocese, so far as it is a Church agency, ought to have no employees: any who work full-time for a bishop or a priest ought to be free to return at any time to an occupation of their own readily available, doing "Church work" out of motives strictly charitable. The Church ought to condemn the circumstances of an economic environment which circumscribe that freedom.

The Church's clergy should be content that the laity maintain them with wholly voluntary offerings from among the goods of which the laity do their own providing, offerings which the state ought not in any manner to induce the laity to provide and from their offering which the state ought not to benefit; that is to say,

the state ought neither to allow citizens any tax deductions for contributing to their church nor levy any tax upon goods received by the Church; the state ought to have nothing to do with encouraging its citizens to practice religion. The Church therefore ought not to invest any of its own authority in any secular agency, even to have the state protect that authority or its agents;; the Church ought to depend for her security and defence entirely upon her own religious authority as recognized by those laity whom she can thoroughly convince of her own truth; the state would be concerned with the claims of the Church only so far as it could convict her members who are citizens of practicing fraud in advancing the Church's claims to teach truth; we have seen too well already how a diocese's depending on state regulation rather than on the laity's good will and their religious conviction can impoverish parishes which the laity maintain by their own efforts, if a diocesan episcopal corporation owned by the office of bishop actually holds legal title, in contravention of the principle that things belong to those who make them, to what the laity provided for themselves as their own parish. If church property were owned by each parish and defended by parishioners respecting (in that regard) only the laws of the Church itself, and upholding these, the state could hardly harm the diocese more than it already has

done without instituting actual persecution or trying to deal with people as adherents of their own religion rather than as citizens all alike in their being citizens. If, however, physically defending the Church and the performance of its mission is, when such defence may be necessary, the particular duty of Catholic laymen, then fittingly it ought to be the laity who stir themselves to that defence rather than the clergy who call them to it – unless those clergy are well willing to suffer in the event that the laity fail to respond as they ought.

If the Church were to act thus consistently upon its own teaching that it does not constrain or induce its members to belong to it, but only tries to teach them that they ought to belong to it, none of its agencies could be held answerable for its members' conduct while they were thus associating freely, and so none of these agencies could be obliged to buy insurance against misconduct by those members; the parents or guardians of children or vulnerable adults would be answerable for bringing them where Church members associated freely.

XVIII

THE CHURCH AND INSURANCE

If the Catholic hierarchy acted strictly in accordance with Catholics' being citizens in a free association, so that they vested no church authority in any corporate citizenship, the hierarchy might then be well placed to descant independently and fair-mindedly on what people deserve in the way of insurance and what insurers may rightly require of their customers. For neither those customers nor the companies nor the lawyers for either are likely to be disinterestedly concerned primarily with abstract justice, as the Catholic Church's official teaching authority legitimately could claim to be if it had no agencies subject to insurance law.

It must be virtually self-evident that insurance companies have a financial interest in persuading as many as possible to seek insurance against unlikely

detriment, and that the more unlikely the detriment, the more readily they might insure us against it, even while representing it as probable, to the extent of requiring precautions attributable to paranoia. Perhaps those insuring a Catholic diocese's episcopal corporation against expenses a bishop's personal negligence might incur have insisted on that kind of precaution. Actually, as a previous essay suggested, a bishop ought to be solely responsible for his own conduct; his irresponsibility ought not to endanger property which parishioners established and maintained in and for their parishes, so that premiums which bishops (never "their" episcopal corporations) pay for insurance against their allowing priests sexually to exploit minors (or "vulnerable adults") ought perhaps to depend less on how much a secular corporation trusts religious hierarchy and more upon how much Catholic bishops trust one another, a practical question our Catholic bishops ought seriously to consider. For it may be an important principle that persons should seek to be insured rather than that insurance companies seek clients: if persons as a group seek insurance, they can decide for themselves how much they trust one another and what they are willing to wager on that trust; the risk is really theirs to assess and take, far more than it is the insurance company's; the latter otherwise might demand premiums most unfairly high merely because it could.

It ought also to be fairly evident that insurance companies might perhaps promote legislation obliging people to have insurance of which those people themselves saw not at first much need.

People in normal economic environments would normally most need insurance to tide them over should they become unable to produce their own necessities or produce one necessity for trade. Deserving their deeds' effects, people are entitled to the goods of which they do the actual producing or of which their deeds share in others' producing. Benefiting by insuring oneself against loss of the ability to do that is a poor second best which no one ought to encourage anyone to pursue primarily.

The legitimate purpose of "life" insurance is providing for one's children in case one dies before enabling them to provide for themselves adequately their own necessities, so that even a childless man ought not to be insured for the cost of his burial but rather against his becoming so disabled, while yet he lives, as to prevent his providing for his burial. People ought not ordinarily to profit from death, the ultimate temporal deprivation; inheriting a parent's duty to apply the parent's real property to the glory of God, or, if one is atheist, to serving natural justice, is a different matter.

People ought ordinarily to insure themselves against the loss of those goods only that people acquire by doing or sharing in production of necessities or by providing other services chiefly to persons who actually do or share the producing of necessary goods.

The law ought not to allow people to insure themselves against being obliged to pay punitive damages as a result of lawsuit for negligence causing harm. For the only payment actually punitive would be what the culprit paid for insurance, and he ought not to have to make punitive payments in advance of his being at fault. If this means that laws providing for punitive damages are ineffective or invalid, then that is the way it is. Ordinarily, punishments should punish and payments pay for positive goods except when fines are a just punishment.

When a man's pursuing his own interests accidentally results in disabling injury to another against which the first man ought to have guarded, his real obligation is to have the injury remedied and to support the injured person, in the style in which that person had by his own deeds supported himself, until his ability to support himself is restored; no law ought to require more. If a man ordinarily has the means to do that for anyone for whom he would ordinarily be responsible for accidentally harming – and the latter ought ordinarily to be

someone who supports himself by doing the producing of at least one necessity – he need not buy insurance against the chance of accidentally harming another; laws requiring one to pay more than that to someone he accidentally harmed would be unjust.

Laws obliging people to “pay compensation for pain and suffering” they wrongly caused while pursuing their own interests might be variously warranted, some of them doubtfully. There is a difference between having to maintain in reasonable physical comfort someone whose being wronged or duped into doing wrong has actually incapacitated him emotionally from supporting himself, and being obliged to provide comfort meant to “offset” pain deriving from wrongful conduct: “bribing” a victim or a dupe to be “content” with having been wronged. There may be also relevant difference between being emotionally disabled from producing directly goods one directly needs and being “incapacitated” for employment in “today’s ordinary labour market”; deserving one’s goods and so deserving to “be good” might be far more conducive to mental and emotional healing than labouring for an employer where perception of merit or worth is foggy at best. It is even conceivable that some insurance payments and even

government disability-pension plans are really bribes for the intellectually acute who realize such distinctions while mentally distressed.

Someone essentially “paying for the privilege of letting another suffer” ought himself to make these payments, not an insurance company which can well afford to pay far more than he.

Our law seems not to require our forestalling all harm to others which we could prevent, but such harm as arises from our action or an action another performs for our benefit, or which we enable another to perform for his benefit. It is from this last circumstance that his bishop is culpable, if he is, in a priest’s doing harm to or wrong with a minor. However, emotional harm occasioned by sexual abuse does not simply occur through a bishop’s lack of care, as a ladder might fall because carelessly placed, but arose from what the priest actually did to his victim or with his dupe, and ordinarily some serious moral discomfort may be fitting to our rightly regarding grave wrongs, especially as affecting ourselves. What the priest did was an action of the priest, not merely a glitch, which the bishop ought like a good mechanic to anticipate, in the functioning of an organization expected to run like clockwork as unfortunately many heads of modern corporations possibly expect. If a clerical culprit said he “did it just that

once” and “promised not to do it again,” a bishop not clinically expert in psychological compulsions who knew him a man of his word might blamelessly believe him. One may reasonably heap opprobrium upon clergy for voluntarily and deliberately corrupting youth or deceiving young who remain innocent – the corrupted do not often remain perfectly innocent simultaneously – or one may hold a bishop accountable for permitting harm he should have realized would likely occur as in the natural course of events because the priests psychologically were pathologically compelled, but one cannot in full rationality and pellucid logic do both. Insurance companies do not seem often to insure us against costs arising from our committing or abetting crimes but rather only against being injured by others’ crimes against which we take reasonable care to guard ourselves; if no episcopal corporations were available to be sued for the misdeeds of clergy but yet the victims of these clergy deserved compensation beyond the means of individual citizens, might not parents insure their children against that kind of injury? Or does even raising that question put the matter somewhat in a new light?

The Church ought also to teach clearly its position on the morality of legislation holding someone responsible for injuries occurring on his property

without considering whether those injured were furthering the interest of the property's owner, furthering primarily their own interest without detriment to the owner, furthering their own interest to the owner's detriment, or simply seeking maliciously the owner's detriment.

XIX

FRIVOLOUS SPECULATION

It might be at least mildly entertaining, or maybe even as mildly instructive, for us to consider further, even if only frivolously, what some might possibly deem implications of the “Covenant of Care” which a Catholic diocese asked some of its volunteer workers to sign and which another essay suggested a simple oath could adequately replace. That Covenant of Care says those signing it “...acknowledge the paramount importance of safeguarding, in all respects, all people to whom we minister, especially children, youth and vulnerable adults, by: following all the directives in the Responsible Ministry Protocol (RMP) for the Diocese of Corner Brook and Labrador; complying with the information given in my training orientation; using appropriate language; treating all persons with respect, regardless of gender, ethnic background, skin colour, intelligence, age,

religion, sexual orientation or socio-economic status; respecting confidentiality and privacy, unless a child, youth, or vulnerable adult is in danger; then I will report to a child-protection agency or the police.” Now, maybe the phrase “in all respects” means only in all those respects, and no others, which are found relevant through careful attention to the other sources of information to which the Covenant of Care refers. But that is not what the document itself actually says. At least, some might take it to say that those who sign it voluntarily oblige themselves to safeguard in all respects even many persons whom previously they had hardly any natural or legal obligation to safeguard from much at all. Settling that question could conceivably entail recourse to courts and paying lawyers to present arguments which might flatter judicial ability to “weigh competing interests” largely irrelevant to our deserving the effects of what we do or what we had thought we were doing, when in fact it might serve the diocese’s purposes just as well if those for whom it really is responsible simply “agree that so far as avoiding lawsuits against the diocese’s episcopal corporation or claims against the corporation’s insurers is concerned, it is of paramount importance that I not do anything while serving my church which would be likely to cause another person any real harm, whether physical, emotional or spiritual; that I not do anything to

prompt any children, youth or vulnerable adult to engage with me in, or to submit to my performing, any activity which either I or they, or anyone else, could reasonably deem motivated by sexual inclination; I acknowledge further that I must decline any offers from such persons to engage in any such activity (just to be certain; I know how farfetched that must be). Meanwhile, I hope it is clearly understood by all concerned that no ordinary adult has any ordinary obligation to safeguard ‘in all respects’ any other normal adult.”

Any signer of the Covenant of Care accepts as a positive requirement on which there are no upward restrictions that he or she will use “appropriate language.” He is not simply forbidden to use obscene, profane or blasphemous language or language which would be “offensive to pious ears.” There are simply no limits to the degree of verbal suitability he obliges himself to supply. Should a court decide after a costly lawsuit whether there should be such limits, or what? The “Covenant” does not even supply examples of what would be suitable language so that the signer might make an approximate estimate of what might be appropriate.

Similarly, the “Covenant” itself does not admit of any degrees in the “respect” with which its signers apparently commit themselves to “treating all persons,” when in fact it ought to suffice for them to undertake that they “will not outwardly

show actual contempt for anyone, not even professed and practicing sodomites who scorn every doctrine we hold dear which the true church teaches.”

Regarded thus, the “Covenant of Care” would appear either not carefully composed or else meant to incite litigation. Or it might appear an attempt to set precedents for holding all ordinary citizens to arbitrary standards unjustifiable, against lapsing from which progressive new laws might “with church approval” oblige increasingly numerous groups to insure themselves. It might be meant, perhaps, to reinforce society’s viewing justice as a matter of keeping all citizens safe, on the assumption that real harm or real pain must be an evil no one can deserve, rather than of making sure people can enjoy or must endure the effects of what they do. (Since, as mentioned elsewhere, the state may seek only by inflicting a just punishment after the fact to “prevent” wrongdoing, so that it will not forestall harmless activities not unjust, a responsible ministry protocol trying to obviate all occasions where harm might occur evidently exceeds what the state ought to require, and so suggests strongly that harm is worse than injustice.) These might seem reasonable inferences after this examination prompted chiefly by a natural emotional response to what was “only” a slight to someone “stuffy standing on his own stuffy dignity,” so that even such an “overly sensitive

reaction” might serve some practical purposes sometimes, even to financial effect, especially if it leads to wholly Christian outrage at our not being treated like sons of God by officials of the church which made us his sons. If some are indeed to hold others to high standards, maybe it ought to be ordinary laity of the kind on parish councils who should urge these higher officials to “Be prudent as serpents and simple as doves.” And if these officials must engage in litigation, all the laity should insist that they litigate in favour of simple sanity which ordinary people well understand. Maybe it is meant for the greater glory of God that our clergy should provoke some of us even better than they preach to us all.

Of course, if a Catholic diocese instead of relying on the “invisible hand” to make people available for employment were simply to command under pain of sin that particular persons do for their parish or diocese daily work for which the parish or diocese would then be obliged in justice to pay them reasonably well, that authority could command those to tolerate whatever conditions not actually pernicious the authority might choose however arbitrarily.

XX

A MEDITATION ON THE OVERLY LITERATE

The pride of writers in their craft, a pride probably often pardonable and even sometimes perhaps proper, might well, when well apparent through their writing, much mislead too many who when young may take too much to heart the “world” of books (as opposed to books about the world). A young and zealous reader, especially if hungry for praise and eager to know those worth praising, might thereby become persuaded that people are at their most praiseworthy when worth writing about, and even more so when worth writing about as a worthy writer.

Such excessive love for “literature” especially embodied in fiction may be part of what forms the minds of “those materialists who want everything catalogued, who regard emotions as complicated watches to be taken apart and put back together,” as Jeff Minick of Asheville, North Carolina, observed for the October 2013 issue of *Chronicles: A Magazine of American Culture*.

Minick's, of course, is an apt reference to the kind of human person we often find in the mental boxes we call books, perhaps most especially in the books of authors like the late John D. MacDonald: the stories fit neatly in the books, which itself may be fitting and proper enough, and the characters fit neatly in the stories, though that is not at all necessary. What is worse, their outward appearance too often reflects in physical detail, even more than merely countenentially, the actual moral character the author means them to contain; someone far too late to help him improve had to take even C.S. Lewis harshly to task for that fault, which that particular critic, whose name unfortunately I forget, felt might much distress young readers who deemed themselves outwardly unprepossessing. That defect might have fostered in some of the more impressionable "fans of reading" (as opposed to lovers of reality seeking to enhance appreciation of it) a failure, at least partial, to distinguish between what is merely likeable and what ought to be approved, and also to realize that many who do not deserve approval ought yet to merit affection. There might even be, rarely, a literal-(not to say simple-)minded sort among the too zealously literate who therefore kept himself from trusting with even a lesser emotion, such as ought to be lightly regarded, anyone whom he did not deem worth trusting utterly even with his own salvation.

Perhaps, therefore, it might be better to indulge in stories of deeds anyone may be likely to do, or of events likely to occur to anyone, and to speculate on how a variety of persons would react with thought or feeling on those occasions, than to write or mainly read fictions concentrating on peculiar characters or even ordinary persons in social circumstances more or less extraordinary although plausibly rendered. Perhaps that is because life in a relatively simple, or even almost rigid, pattern of deeds directly productive of goods directly needed, would tend much to magnify the “merely” personal response of people’s thoughts and feelings. Our not adverting to such “abstractly intellectual” distinctions might be part of the reason for our “getting a job” with others’ corporations instead of “having a life” on our own farms. This may suggest that the main difference between the old fairy tales and the modern novel rightly named is that the former very largely related what would have happened if it could, and what is worth thinking about even if it can’t, as the best of modern “high fantasy” still can do, and the novel tells of things which really could happen but only most improbably and upon which the mind does not much dwell after the book is closed.

Speculating on how the various might react to the extraordinary may help our meditations on the story of Mary and Joseph as Matthew and Luke each tell it in

part: some of what St. Matthew recounted – Mary’s being “found” pregnant, which an established opinion seems to deem after her return from Judea when the pregnancy would be apparent, might actually have occurred before she left for the home of Elizabeth; neither account says it did not, nor does it say who “found” her pregnant; possibly it was she who found herself so, as women usually are the first to make that discovery of themselves, especially since she had been told she would be pregnant and so would be watching eagerly for signs of that. Too often we may think of Mary as a modern maiden to whom being pregnant is almost necessarily burdensome rather than as a young married virgin (of sanity as intact, one presumes, as her conscience) with full confidence in her slightly older husband-in-fact, with whom she did not yet dwell, who fully returned that trust and to whom she first would naturally have told her gladdest news instead of kiting off for three months without him and worrying all that time about how he would take his not being her child’s father. Quite possibly Joseph’s doubts (about his own place in what he most likely firmly believed at once were God’s special plans for Mary, which he might have expected to be made manifest by miracle less marvelous but more public than the glorious Annunciation), his being reassured in dream, and their “formal” marriage ceremony, all took place in

“those days” in which Mary set out and went with haste to a town in the hill country of Judea. Let us bear in mind at least that the angel in Joseph’s dream might have said not “Do-not-be-afraid, because” but rather “Do not: be-afraid- because.” There may be a great difference in what is expressed in such locutions, to which only those “crazy about reading” in the sense that reading is “the only thing that keeps them sane,” as G.K. Chesterton put it, might be likely to advert.

XXI

REIGNING CATS, AND DOGS

Those (likely most often) men who prefer dogs over cats because cats are “spooky-looking” and aloof are right enough so far as they go – without liking cats, at least they see what cats are like, while some cat-lovers may be self-deceived – in deeming canine pets to yield a better return on their owners’ emotional investment, which way of putting it may make the dog-lover sound somewhat crass, as perhaps he may be indeed if one looks at him in that particular light; we who keep cats might suggest that we ourselves are the more deeply Christian, in offering hospitality to those who can make no return and so relying on our Father in heaven, who made them what they are, for any reward we have coming to us. As things are, though, it might not be preposterous to speculate, considering the childish truism that “all dogs are he’s and all cats are she’s,” whether “investing” emotion often results in unnecessary difficulties in marriage.

(The childish “truism” applies in some degree even to cats like the tom I named Snowdrift – “Drifter” for short – whom my second brother called “All Head and B---s” and remembering whom has called to mind somehow my last woman teacher in high school. And at least one cat fancier – that is the word, not “fanatic,” which should have been shortened to “fan” if shortening had to be done – has claimed to divine whether a feline which judging by its physique he would have deemed male was in fact neutered, just by looking into the window of its soul and finding there an otherwise unaccountably feminine expression; he could do the same, *mutatis mutandis*, he said, regarding an altered female cat.) Such difficulties may arise especially for men who “invest” affection and “understanding” so as to escape being unchaste, though having to choose either the latter or a lifetime with a woman would seem to suggest that at least one of these alternatives must be singularly unattractive to the morally sensitive. “That may seem rather brutal sense but to a man it does make sense,” wrote C.S. Lewis. But even the “elements” of chastity may be more complex in womankind, as a mere male unmarried may only surmise.

One might try to outline (inadequately) men’s crucial incomprehension of woman by suggesting that we never know for certain whether, when, or for what

she expects us to console or to congratulate her, and that the same occasion might variously require both consoling and congratulations; what we can see of her inward reality is simply “spooky-looking,” unlike her being in outward manifestation, manifestly, human nature in specific flesh specifically feminine especially for the furtherance of matter’s meriting, which is a matter we need not here enlarge upon. Here it may suffice to remark only that even if “womanhood” as men mostly have seemed to see it were indeed only “a social construct,” and so proven, yet the “mere idea” to which that construct has given rise or which, more likely, gave rise to that construct, although not capable of embodiment in it, would yet be well worth men’s regarding it as if it were a natural reality and indeed embodied in every human female. Or, as G.K. Chesterton wrote, a man’s feeling obliged to take off his cap to a woman may not do that woman any material good, but it still has saved “women as a whole” from many a well-deserved chastisement with a walking stick – which most women seem to feel even in this modern era that men have no business inflicting on them. But if “womanhood” is only an “artefact” of “society” as some deem even justice to be, then most men may be much like a dog which could chase cats in dreaming sleep without ever having encountered anything at all feline. That ideal we can feel we

ought to cherish as nobler than ourselves ought therefore to be granted us from some source actually above us or else ought to derive from our seeing, as Chesterton saw, that “mankind is a woman.”

So far as “understanding women ” is concerned, men need only (at least initially) see clearly what a woman is: who she is, must be, as Jeff Minick wrote for readers of *Chronicles: A Magazine of American Culture*, “a mystery to be treasured and slowly explored,” since “for those who love mystery” the inescapable “estrangement between men and women is one of the great delights of life,” so that “understanding the woman who captures your heart is really not that important,” while “loving the woman who captures your heart is vital.”

Now, if the woman who captures your heart does not comprehend the relatively plain reality of what she is (“mere” flesh to further matter’s meriting), to which who she is ought to be an unfathomable super-addition, your heart may well be either lost intact or thoroughly broken, perhaps even along with your sanity. However, the latter is especially likely to “self-destruct” if it was you yourself who failed to appreciate her essential nature as requiring children while you had only sought to “enjoy her for her own sake” after having initially pursued primarily the achievement of “chaste” sexual satisfaction, or if you and she share

some other equally important conflict between desire and approval. One ought not to seek marriage in order to be “chaste,” but to remain truly chaste through wanting rightly to marry, so that one ought to be aware of whatever spiritual or mental “techniques” may be available for diverting one’s attention from whatever is sexually too attractive at the moment. One such “technique” may be the practice of Buddhist “detachment”: concentrating the mind severely upon only its own awareness as distinct from anything else of which one could possibly be aware. E.F. Schumacher recommends this as our “default” mental condition, but it may be better that we resort to it only to avoid being distracted from considering such realities as the presence to each other of Jesus and his Mother in their regarding and trying to guide us in that to which we ought to attend: “detachment” ought to be not food but remedy, maybe even “desperate” remedy. In any case, anything to which we turn even as being more interesting than sex is attractive might still require that we make a real effort to concentrate fully upon it. It might even be essential that we keep learning new disciplines, and trying to see clearly for what they are even those things which do not please us, chiefly because we must be interested chiefly in teaching children everything they need to know. Similarly, men ought rather to be more glad that woman exists and is interesting

than that she can be enjoyable, as the true cat fanciers – not all of whom are “fans” as the abbreviation is generally understood – approve the existence of the cat more than we want one as a pet (there are always dogs). One ought therefore to respect woman’s being often “spookily aloof,” as one respects it in a feline queen until she condescends to honour one’s best suit with her own special hair.

Moreover, of course, if one is a man, one ought to maintain a devotion, akin to the dedication of the dog, to the spiritual purity in general of the opposite sex rather than see its members chiefly as a danger to one’s own, more or less selfish, desire for chastity; the latter kind of “catlike” self-concern may be far more fitting to the feminine human, who ought not to inculcate it in her sons; to the latter she ought rather to transmit her particular style of being unselfish, in desiring to have children, if only because the word “generous,” which originally meant “born a noble,” should convey especially today that it is always noble to give birth.

That there is such a thing as “typical womanhood” received support one October day from a woman’s taking issue with her brother-in-law’s opinion in a newspaper that women’s modern “political advancement,” when governments “protect the public” and “provide services” more than they punish injustice, reprises women’s original “primary role” under “patriarchy” of providing

motherly comfort (not now for their own children but for adults increasingly dependent.) She “felt insulted,” having inferred he meant “women should be kept in their place” – as if women were not making public life into the place they like better. She threatened (most fortunately without intending) to deny her brother-in-law her good dinner. Is there any man among you who would not say, “Just like a woman! Indignant at a ‘personal’ affront instead of going at an abstract argument’s actual merits hammer and tongs over a friendly feed!” Talk about differences between cats and dogs! A typical rebuttal from women who would deny being typical, which holds abstract arguments invalidated by failure to follow standards they imply, is like denying cats a home for their uncanine independence.

XXII

THE NATURAL AND THE NEUTERED

Castrating pets may be kindness less often than moderns mostly seem to assume. Perhaps those moderns who keep saying, “Have your pet spayed or neutered” implicitly recognize that, since “neutered” obviously is there merely a euphemism; if it were not, then “Have your pet neutered” would include spaying as well as what “the C-word” more plainly means, so that there would be no need for non-differentiating distinctions.

Speaking of non-differentiating distinctions, the modern pet lover seems to make more than just that particular one: for him, shooting a bullet directly and painlessly into a dog’s or cat’s brain with a gun whose muzzle one puts directly and quickly on the animal’s head before the animal knows what’s happening is “cruelty to animals” while shooting a moose through the lungs with an arrow is

not – or “not yet.” But perhaps the really devoted “animal-rights activist” only wants to say later on, “If shooting a dog is cruelty to an animal, then why...” That must be later on, because it would fool no one at the moment, but once the premise is solidly fixed in modern feelings, the “logic” may seem later to make sense. Similarly, the International Fund for Animal Welfare, if it is not just a money-grabbing scam, may be sincerely trying to establish that kind of precedent by getting the Newfoundland seal hunt made illegal, so as to forbid the trapping of rats.

I have seen the “putting down” of pets presented at least as logically as that, in support of mercy-killing for humans, from whom humans could profit by “the example of animals.” What he who said that was actually referring to, of course, was “the example of humans” with regard to animals and the suffering of animals: we want to spare them suffering. But the animals themselves seem not to seek death to end their suffering; who has heard of rabbits with broken legs or even broken backs welcoming the arrival of Br'er Fox? And at least one cat who had painful terminal cancer shrank, resisting, from the ministrations of the veterinarian's assistant preparing her for the fatally kind injection. Maybe what we can learn, by the exercise of reason, from the example of the animals is that

death is the worst form of physical harm. Reason often demands actions painful to our emotions. For instance, it may be only because downing kittens is emotionally painful to cat owners that this practice, once universal in Newfoundland at least, now is almost universally condemned perhaps throughout North America. But it may be that the very pain it causes us can make it a worthy form of sacrifice to “ideal petdom”; if drowning kittens caused us no pain, we might be less likely to assume it makes blind kittens feel an unjustifiable agony. Anyway, when it comes to following the “example of animals,” we might remember that tomcats are said to kill kittens well after these actually are born; we might notice also that the example of whole toms in having the courage actually to fight fiercely for their fornications (and for their territory) is to many human males “rightly” so admirable that John D. MacDonald, disdaining as “crypto-primitives” any who left cats whole to live thus dangerously, yet invented in Travis McGee an “admirable” human male who himself behaved much like a tomcat. Besides, many moderns may feel that their pets ought to follow the example of humans in not relying on chemical assistance to diminish sexual desire when it might be inconvenient to have offspring.

No one ought to assume that cats or dogs are automatically pets or that the offspring of animals we choose to care about automatically inherit their parents' "right" to "pet-hood." Getting attached to a pet is strictly a matter of pure choice: we arbitrarily choose one animal out of millions that roam our earth and decide, from whatever sort of motive may influence us at the time, to confer upon it our affection and a share, so far as the non-rational can share, in our own lives as rational beings. But we have no obligation to feed any offspring they gestate or beget; our pets' offspring are our pets' responsibility, so to speak, if they are anyone's. And in any sort of environment natural to animals, it seems, a female cat, at least, will meet that responsibility by encouraging her kittens, when they are old enough, if she and not we had been feeding them, to go forth and seek their fortune in the wide world around about. In any case, it seems to some of us more rational to kill what we choose to reject than to maim what we affect to cherish: neutering an animal whom we have indeed chosen to cherish denies in effect that generation of its kind is inherently the worthiest function available to anything physically alive whose life is not eternal; it denies that physical generation rightly named is a fitting reflection of the vital fact that doing what is just generates justice itself in the human soul, and that generation as found in

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physical nature is the permanent reminder to men of “that by which God himself is eternally real.”

XXIII

PLEASURE AND APPROVAL

G.K. Chesterton wrote that “approval is stronger than pleasure.” And so it is. Or at least it ought to be so. We ought more to do deeds of which we approve, and refrain from deeds of which we disapprove, than to do what pleases and refrain from what merely displeases us or others. And we ought more to disapprove, strictly on principles we clearly see, of wrongdoing than of persons who do wrong. We ought more to be pleased by personal traits than to approve of the persons who have them. But pleasure and approval are often much confused one with the other, and none more so than when the well-meaning denounce pornography as “disgusting.” For what is really wrong about much pornography is that it tends more or less “fittingly” or “tastefully” to please us into approving wrong and doing it. Pornography that is truly “disgusting” is really “attractive”

only to a taste which has become perverse, and insisting to the impressionable young that all pornography must be “disgusting” might well do much to foster a taste’s becoming perverse, in its developing a horror of quite normal femaleness. It is not so much that some things ought not to please as that in some circumstances we ought not to approve our own being pleased by them.

Confusing approval and pleasure can subtly have unfortunate effects also in strictly personal relations. It can, for instance, lead a naive young male to feel that a woman of about his own age who simply is honestly pleased with herself and what she assumes to be her place in the world, without actually appearing displeasingly selfish, is chiefly attractive personally in evidently approving all things self-evidently right in the abstract so that he ought to enjoy basking in that approval. That can cause disaster, especially if she is simplemindedly the sort who assumes that whatever she happens to dislike, such as poetry however genuine, must be unworthy of her (or anyone) and that anything she happens to like, such as the Harlequin Romance novel, is of uncontestable value. This can be especially unfortunate if it leads her children to feel unconsciously that their accepting any proposition she may set before them is both authorized and required by the force of her “belief-feeling,” which usually is manifest not so much in

statements submitting reasons or even motives but through a disparaging or disgusted tone in merely referring to the person or trait she “found” objectionable: “Soandso is so *fat!*” Such an attitude of a domestic despot may well end in her translating her own whim for grass on her property to grow no more than a specific length, into an objective “need” of grass to be kept thus short, and a “duty” of males in the family to keep it so. It may end in her scouting her men’s “mere dislike” for certain “jobs” from which their earnings would support their children, when indeed, regarding those particular employments, both she and her husband (especially her husband) ought, in simple truth and justice, to teach their offspring that even starving can be less bad than furthering certain unfairnesses. For, in ordinary circumstances, disapproval should be stronger even than great pain.

God’s own “original” disapproval was itself far stronger than great pain; it was strong enough to warrant “later,” so to speak, great pain in his assumed humanity as Christ the Lord on earth. One of the things of which “now” he “most” disapproves may be an almost universal failure of mankind to teach, what should be the core of education in every culture, that the majority in any society ought directly by their own doing to feed clothiers and builders, clothe farmers and

builders, and build for clothiers and farmers, so that, for instance, if a Newfoundland fisherman finds that fishing to feed builders and clothiers and poets who celebrate in English his way of life begins to bore him, then he ought simply to aspire to something like reading in Mandarin the views of (respectful) Chinese humorists regarding Newfoundland fishermen. It is conceivable that education's lacking precisely this core almost everywhere in the world, is chiefly now, besides men's doing specific grave injustices, what "gives God grief"; we ought perhaps therefore now to contemplate God not so much as having foreseen on Calvary this disregard of what he meant for us but rather as remembering today that he then endured agony to earn for us the grace and courage to correct our currently deplorable conditions.

It might also be that our not currently seeing in physical reality those happy patterns we ought readily to approve as resulting pleasingly from our dealing with that reality in accordance with those principles that justify approval of human acts, and our not seeing clearly those "elements" of natural justice so as to realize what our remedies should be for such defects in physical reality, have given rise in some to an inability to experience pleasure as an emotion, disposing them more than ordinarily to indulge narrowly either intellect or bodily inclination.

The very word “happy” seems, derived from “hap” or “happen,” to suggest that what we call happiness consists in our relating rightly to whatever comes to pass, and rightly relating to that entails approving or disapproving of it rather than merely being in only an emotional sense glad that it occurred. For we can be glad from one of two motives: either because what comes to pass is what is right or because it gives rise to pleasing sensations, which are not themselves emotions; one can find pleasure in the taste of food, for instance, without actually being glad to experience the taste. What we call happiness, therefore, some might take simply to be gladness at having pleasing sensations or even more simply to be having such sensations without any unpleasant ones. But for anyone to assume that happiness so consists, he must assume it without much, if any, exercise of his reason. For if reason itself could confirm that that was indeed happiness, happiness itself must then be, in at least some sense, subject to confirmation by reason: that is, it must need approval.

XXIV

A CRITIQUE OF CREATIVITY IN CAPITALISM

Capitalism is long on desire(s) and service(s) but short on admiration. Maybe therein it takes its cue from the valid view of money, as capitalism, especially when it is monetary capitalism, seems to apply that to everything. For money, as money, is “good” or “bad” in being used for good or bad purposes. But to capitalism, at least monetary capitalism, money is of paramount importance. But when what is most important is important only in being exchanged for something else, then things less important than it can scarcely be important in themselves: whatever exists must matter only as we employ it to serve another purpose, which then must matter only so far as someone seeks it. That is purely logical if capital exists to serve a purpose other than itself and if in capitalism what matters most is capital: but if not, why call it capitalism?

The creativity some capitalists value in capitalism seems, therefore, to be mere ingenuity devising gadgets which we do not regard with admiring wonder at that ingenuity so much as even without real gratitude we apply them to reducing effort and promoting ease. But they who devise and sell new gimmicks seek not ease but rather enjoy creative effort in gaining wealth, so that the purveyors and their customers are not seeking together what for both would be “common good,” but rather exploiting each other through “services” rendered for the sake not of those served but the “servers,” both sides content to let “the system” to “take care of them” – as, previous essays made clear, they do not then deserve.

It is evidently wrong indeed to take care of something for the good of the caretaker rather than for the good of those of whom he is takes care: that may be why G.K. Chesterton wrote that not men but women ought to take care of things. For the real purpose of men in this respect, as I have not read that Chesterton himself actually pointed out, is not to take care of what needs that someone care for it but to direct what needs directing to its proper end or purpose, whether that purpose be becoming a mature human and an independent agent of justice or whether it be merely being food for humans or covering them: farming is properly be far less a matter of caring for animals and plants than of directing them to their

proper purpose in the service of those whose purpose is to become just by serving justice: herding sheep is not a matter of keeping pet lambs. To avoid confusing these major functions we might well, perhaps, assign each to one of the two major divisions of mankind, if only to accentuate in both divisions a distinctive flavour of creativity, of a kind for which capitalism seems less and less to foster appreciation, tending as it does to require that both sexes adapt equally to all commercial roles and that all the roles of both be equally and similarly “productive,” so that women like men should initiate production without lastingly embracing the fruit of labour. (That is consistent with feeling that pleasurably invading a man’s body with his consent is a privilege as glorious as being seductively invited into a woman’s body in the name of a child, and consistent also with the view that human existence is justified not by the capacity for seeing what is just and learning to do it but by someone’s having some commercial purpose for each individual human.) Men’s accepting the duty to teach while woman chose to care for those needing care might, if spirited women really rejected patriarchal imposition and repudiated also the commercial corruption endemic in needing others to need help not inherent in being human, result in caretakers’ deciding for themselves who genuinely needed care and to whom they

would accord it, who then might often be the women's own children. And that might result in mothers and fathers admiring and respecting in each other a sense of disinterested dutiful devotion almost alien to their own, which in the abstract might interest them even if the other person personally did not, so that at least they might have that difference to discuss at bedtime. Anyway, empirical science has no more proven yet that it is wholly irrational to choose domestic duties on the basis of sexual distinctions than it has confirmed beyond a reasonable doubt that inexorable evolution established the current circumstances of capitalist corporatism as permanent fundamental reality.)

The corruption implicit in capitalizing on giving care might have been condoned, in some sense, by the Calvinism which encouraged early capitalists and taught that God, just because he could, would render eternally "blessed" a number of men thoroughly corrupt and unrepentant because no man can by doing justice, as all men yet were obliged to do, become just: no man is ever admirable, which may be why capitalists make few fine statues.

Now, men who cannot be admirable may well begrudge admiration to lesser creatures, even one at least to outward appearance as noble in physical performance as a magnificent horse thoroughly well bred to manifest power,

strength, speed and beauty, all of which must pale in comparison with the moral depravity Calvinism saw in mankind: what the horse really did, therefore, in that view, would be to reflect, a number of noble attributes of divine origin in which men must utterly despair of sharing. That for a Calvinist would be one excuse for deeming inanimate engines more suitable for human employment than the noblest horse; but if we are not thorough-going Calvinists, what excuse do we then have for preferring soulless engines which like money matter only for what they provide? Especially if purveying horses or motorcars is others' function so that we need take no interest in the actual processes. (Strangely, capitalists seem often to prefer gifted and competent employees, even for work which far less qualified could well perform, when the superior are content to be retained.)

If capitalist "creativity" were truly "progressive," as moderns conceive of progress, it would invent extravagantly new purposes, hitherto unimagined, for its wealth, rather than increasingly novel instruments deployed by parvenu organizations for the same old, same old purpose of only gaining more wealth – half the real "fun", for the authentic capitalist, in making or finding available new entertainment devices or even "improved production methods," would be that these then constitute more wealth which one might gain – with capitalists'

employees following narrow courses within a wider economic context about which most workers remain uninstructed – unlike farmers and craftsmen on wider paths in a “limited” – that is to say, well-defined – moral context they can thoroughly appreciate. (Perhaps capitalism requires “innovative approaches and techniques” because if it did not, parents could train their own children for capitalist employment and teach them its ideals, and that might quickly pall on parents and children alike; or people thus brought up might form co-operatives which rightly only borrowed investors’ money instead of selling shares and which hired business administrators as employees of the members who actually did the co-operatives’ work.) However, perhaps capitalists keep pursuing ever greater gain because even capitalists realize dimly that doing is inherently more worthy than having and because they had been taught that doing justice, which was man’s original occupation, was futile. For if we continue doing anything chiefly because we are accustomed to do it, which may be mostly why most of us continue serving other capitalists, what we **therefore** do ought to be the performance of justice; we ought to realize that if we find doing justice does not excite us, or at least engage our interest, as the pursuit of money well may not, we ought to blame that on a lack of moral appetite in ourselves. For in this present life, it may be

even more necessary that we simply do what we ought than that we behold the seemliness it makes manifest; someone who gladly incurs, out of a sound sense of adventure and healthy relish of hazard, without ever perceiving consciously that the basic moral truth that persons deserve their deeds' effects must absolutely affirm his attitude, all the risks attendant on being an independent farmer, and who teaches his children to enjoy being thus adventurous and daring of danger, if only to render misfortune more probably palatable when eventually one cannot escape it, is certainly more just a man – that is, a better man – than a retired newspaper reporter trying in ineffectual elderliness to amend a misspent career by showing the utterly uninstructed what every living human ought from the beginning to have been taught and to teach. For even what any stallion from pure instinct does with mares in heat is of itself an effort more finally creative than any engineering genius's designing the most intricate mechanical device of which the actual existence must depend on investment by someone wealthy and then on mass production by others needing vicarious employment wherefrom the wealthy profit. If the mechanical device were really worth admiring, its inventor ought to be able to persuade a progressive entrepreneur to assemble a sample to take on tour. Or he could simply sell copies of his design to any who genuinely appreciate

what G.K. Chesterton rightly called the “romance of machinery,” who then might engage in a collective effort actually to produce this remarkable machine for their own joint ownership and enjoyment.

If capitalists, like farmers blindly following the farming tradition, which yet is better worth following blindly than is capitalism, chiefly pursue gain because, despite their no longer believing in Calvinism, that is what capitalists have always done since Calvinism encouraged it, that might entail a degree of altruism: capitalists may be glad unconsciously that “a rising tide lifts all boats,” because “trickle-down economics” might add to Calvin’s prospering “elect” while securing perfectly an eternal future eternal for those from whom the money trickled. Or, perhaps, capitalists’ actual practice, which we might better call “grabitallism,” could reflect a grim determination of strict Calvinists to join an elite they sternly keep small to make sure that they themselves are indeed among those whom arbitrary power will keep secure.

XXV

CREATIVE CAREER CHOICE IN CAPITALISM

Some may be content simply to stay alive as they desire without desiring also that they ought to stay alive. These latter can, presumably, be wholly content to survive and thrive, economically if not morally, through buying from and selling to other capitalists without deserving anything very much; to receive sustenance more or less as a “gift” from “the system.” For if all one does, for instance, is labour to purvey cell phones, all one deserves is that cell phones be purveyed; whatever else one gets is a bonus, perhaps a magnificent gratuity. To deserve to stay alive, one must do the producing of at least one thing people need to stay alive, and get what else one needs through supplying that need. What the wider range of career choices one can find in a capitalist system really does is offer a multitude of distractions from that primary duty of mankind, which Pope Leo XIII

said is a dangerous responsibility men often try to escape or maybe to forget. A physician getting rich from providing “health care,” for instance, may well forget, or it may never have occurred to him, that what he really ought to be doing is to keep people from being unable to do those deeds by which they will deserve to stay alive; he may deem himself worthy by his own actions to have kept them alive, with which they ought, since they or their insurers or maybe their government, using theirs or others’ money, have paid for it, to be content: it is not, or is no longer, his duty to promote a way of life within which people actually get what they deserve or deserve what they get. Especially, he need never trouble his head about whether those who ordinarily keep themselves alive and who have thereby earned the means of compensating him for his services might have more “right” to medical service than minions of capitalist corporations, or whether such service is actually his own gift to bestow on whom he chooses.

However, many who want to deserve what they get might not be content merely to deserve their remaining alive; they might, without hubris, desire to deserve to have been made alive in the first place, as, it seems evident, none of us have deserved. But perhaps one can apply the principle that persons deserve their deeds’ effects to mitigate that lack of merit: if one makes someone to be alive, one

thus deserves to be someone who is made alive; that is as near as one can come to deserving one's own having been generated. (It might be particularly fitting to express through action normally generative but in particular instances ineffective as regarding its primary purpose one's special gratitude for one's own and one's spouse's having similarly been generated.) If justice is just, then, our thus "originally" deserving life, so that we might be glad to deserve gladness, is mankind's main work. Also persons who make wholly alive – by generating and educating, through deeds of their own – as many others as they find feasible, deserve thereby to be themselves more wholly, and even variously alive, in responding to the needs and potential of their own (perhaps vastly) various children. Besides, if one believes in a just God, it is reasonable believe that deserving most to live most fully will most make men like God himself. If justice is just, therefore, men must dedicate their energies primarily to careers of generating, feeding, clothing, sheltering, and teaching their own family's members to cherish their chances of such careers, not only to deserve having been made alive but to deserve, through having cared well for their own aged parents, that their children look after them when they are aged parents. Directly performing exactly these kinds of deeds constitutes the chief cycle of mankind's

natural, and essential duties, compared with which “doing a job” as part of a capitalist system largely artificial ought to appear dull, at least to men morally acute.

To men morally acute one of the chief faults of capitalism would be its very largely making courage “optional” – mainly required only in those who choose employment in the military, or as police or firefighters. For justice requires courage of us all, if we are to be glad to deserve gladness: we must gladly defend, to the death, what gladdens us, or we are not really glad of it; or, if it is not worth our defending it to the death, we ought not to be glad of it. Justice demands that every man face death rather than do an injustice; it demands, indeed, that all of us live all our lives without ever having done anything wrong, and that if at all during our lives we have been unjust we ought willingly to accept a proportionate suffering. Besides, people who believe in living with the life of God need courage in order to live like him, whose own infinite courage is necessary for him to endure the injustice brought into his creation. Capitalism offers courage as an “option” only, because it takes courage to decline so many of its other “options” and instead to do our plain duty. That “to desire the enjoying of her own beauty [is] the obedience of Eve” may well mean that Eve’s real beauty actually is, far

more than any physical or emotional attractiveness her husband might like to enjoy, her genuinely being obedient to the duty of all mankind to “increase and multiply and fill the earth” with persons rationally and voluntarily obediently just. Seeking “fulfilment” through one of the lesser careers which capitalism creatively makes available amounts perhaps to “the vanity of Lilith” in “desiring the desiring of her own beauty,” since capitalist employers desire women as employees far more than they care about them actually as persons in their own right, which properly only their husbands can do, if anyone justly could. For it may be that men must begin with woman’s sound sense of dedication to what is dear to her, from which the capitalist employer can profit much when “society” can misdirect it, in order to appreciate rightly her physical allure and emotional charm, which might be meant ultimately to flow down from within, and to reflect, more than to serve as stepping stones by which an individual rises to, feminine virtue.

We ought not, however, to discount the value of physical allure and emotional charm as stepping stones to our appreciating woman’s essential inner beauty, nor should we condemn dismissively any particular woman for failing to see or to acknowledge that her essential inner beauty consists in obedience to moral principles “external” to her own will, though many a man might feel it a duty to

remain unmarried while the final object of his approval as a prospective spouse with strong character and ordinarily good judgement also remained single but firmly an unregenerate capitalist or even an industrial capitalist. That is to say, women who dismiss the prospect of being rationally and voluntarily obedient to principle self-evidently valid ought not to be fought physically as ought their male counterparts, but rather men opposing capitalism ought to resist any temptation, however powerful, to marry such a woman, for in such a marriage, it is more likely that the husband will change his economic outlook, at least in actual practice, since he will feel obliged to support his family somehow, than that he will be able to dissuade his wife from seeking “fulfilment” in a “creative” career within capitalism.

Physical allure and emotional charm can also indeed serve as stepping stones to the essential inner beauty of women who truly have that beauty, or even to the respect one ought to have for strength of will in “disobedient Liliths”: even depictions the feminine unclad which appeal chiefly to the Chestertonian “clean love of beauty” must fail finally to fulfill the ambition to admire fittingly someone worthy of her own beauty; the sooner that occurs, the better. Meanwhile, even that clean tribute to pleasing physical proportion of size, shape and colouring does fail

to seek beyond an intermediate objective to the fulfilment for which our nature ultimately is meant: thus, the capitalist economic position is much akin to the view which many capitalists now have even of sex; that cast of thought when habitual even in persons who in fact know better might sometimes lead to mildly disappointing, or maybe even painful, confusion, especially for those failing to see at all beyond what might be invitation to or expectation of such a “relationship” as is far too common in “capitalist societies”; that is to say, in societies which themselves became capitalist like their economy; however, if one kept centrally in mind one’s primary duty as a human and, especially, if the thought chiefly accompanying such recollection were of someone of the opposite sex with whom one would like to share repentance of capitalist failure regarding that duty, one’s manner generally might then convey that one’s peripheral gladnesses and approvals were relatively unimportant.

XXVI

MODERN ERROR AND “MEDIEVAL” JUSTICE

It seems G.K. Chesterton, acute analyst of modern error, considered carefully whether it is more important that one person enjoy intensely what only he enjoys than that most people greatly enjoy what is “only” ordinary: it must be better, in Chesterton’s view, for most people much to enjoy having children (and lessening one’s own in the essential lore of living) than for anyone intensely to enjoy “making” progeny-rejecting “love” with a supremely devoted spouse uniquely glorious in body and emotion. He certainly wrote that it is wiser to question why we do not enjoy the ordinary than lightly to deem it unenjoyable. And he wrote also that children but not adults approve the infliction, in old fairy tales, of harsh punishments, because children are innocent and love justice, while adults are wicked and desire mercy. This suggests that God’s being good and loving justice

may run counter to some people's insisting that he "sends no one to Hell" but "only allows those to go there" who refuse to repent. (We are told, after all, that the wicked are "cast" into everlasting fire, not that they climb down into it.)

Refusing to repent, of course, amounts to refraining from asking God's mercy. The latter, if one reads aright a certain book by E.F. Schumacher, is pretty much in what sinning consists: Schumacher suggested that if we want to suppress our imagination so that the imaginings we might conjure or the images of the real we gain through the senses, will not eventually suppress ourselves, we ought always mentally to pray, "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy upon me, a sinner." Or, at least, one ought mentally to pray thus when not actually praying with some specific deed (or other specific words) giving glory to God or proclaiming his glory, as relatively few really modern occupations tend effectively to do.

Because the kind of deeds which really give glory to God are those by which men really deserve to live their own lives, even as God deserves to live with his own life – deeds actually producing food, shelter or clothing or sharing in others' production of these by providing what they need to do that or to defend or to celebrate having the opportunity to live thus, or to punish those who prevent our having such opportunities – it ought to be clear by now that most of what now

occupies us, far from seeking to give God all the glory we could, operates to deny him the glory found in natural justice. But economic life actually did much to promote that natural glory in the real Middle Ages, when punishments of the kind meted out in the old fairy tales were relatively popular and when perhaps the harshest punished witchcraft which then consisted chiefly in preventing birth or conception. For it may be that medieval men could readily punish harshly because they learned early to evade strong inclination to do wrong, by praying constantly for God's mercy, which men need more in order to eschew wrong than escape punishment. They might really have been able to choose freely whether to honour God's generating the Divine Son and therefore maybe in some sense his own nature, by their doing what generates progeny and "rounds out the circle" of purely natural justice, or whether they would forsake freedom in defying God like our first parents; for much has been forgotten about the Middle Ages, including the Industrial Revolution's having in its early days not so much remedied medieval hardship as disrupted what prosperity there was – quite a bit of it, actually – and inflicted severe social injustice which today persists and which much physical comfort palliates our permitting. (Coition honestly done "brings justice full circle" because by it people offer life as a gift and by thus making it

their own gift they deserve that it had been given them, especially if they are able to impart also life's chief lessons; a couple unable physically to generate could yet celebrate sexually in particular their having life-giving wisdom to impart to people badly needing it; someone single because selfishly quite continent would not deserve life's being given.) Anyhow, most medieval people seem to have enjoyed having children as much as "having sex," and likely enjoyed "having sex" even more because it resulted in their having children, which is after all the rational motive for "having sex." Perhaps being thus free from "the compulsion of instinct" was what allowed them to be "shameless" in the sense in which Chesterton used that word regarding them. We moderns tend not thus to enjoy life and the giving of life, perhaps because we have forgotten that, revealed religion aside, the purpose of human life is that part of material creation should be aware of, and delight in, deserving what it deserves by doing what it does.

It might be, too, that medieval people far more aware than we of the "bones of natural justice" to which men should supply the necessary flesh were much more aware than we of actually being flesh and bone and soul: maybe, because in order to eat, or also because they cut one another apart at close quarters in their warfare and because they relied so much, if only in order to eat, on actions personally

physical, they saw, when looking at another, not only his colouring and his facial expressions and his height and width, but a rational animal consisting of a solid, deep pattern of skeleton and organs necessary, ordinarily, to his even having a face and its expressions, just as a modern man may when he sees a motor car think of the combustion engine of which the operation results in the car's moving; it might be that the average modern man's not needing usually to attend to the details of the mechanical, and his not often finding these much interesting, has resulted in his overlooking likewise the bodily, as well as the emotional, composition of the people he greets every day in the course of employment largely impersonal and nonphysical. But consciousness of what those you see consist of, can tend either to enhance or diffuse any desire for close contact which you might conceive, depending much on whether you regard one single solid pattern before you or consider simultaneously a wider range of similar patterns. In an age less mechanized, one might regard the earth itself as a "spherical platform" covered all over with separate arrangements of flesh and bone feeding on fruit and root. If medieval men did indeed regard one another in that light, they might have felt more than we a sense of privilege in increasing the number of such wonders, through bodily joining with another both opposite and apposite; perhaps that

enhanced for them the reverence with which men ought always to regard woman and might have prompted them to pray continually for God's mercy to keep them refusing to defile what they were glad to see in womanhood. For woman's parenthood actually "embodies" better than men's, though men "more accurately represent artistically," Divine Fatherhood, so that men must always bear in mind that it is always wrong, however "natural" it may seem and however pleasantly it may appeal, to "dedicate" her to lesser enjoyment, though men may tend much to overlook that if brought up to assume that God, instead of offering our intellect wholly rational motivation to follow his forming it, as indeed he does, merely made us lustful to constrain us into procreating while we feared to suffer Hell if we frustrated what to many might feel like fruition of folly. Our having forgotten these things, so that unlike medieval and other saints we may fail to fear wrong and may feel no tension in temptation, could mean that God indeed will not "send us to Hell" for thoughts and deeds objectively immoral to which we turned without actually refusing, as opposed only to failing, to pray for his mercy. For it may well be that we need to pray thus whenever we are able, in order to be able so to pray when we really need to do that; continuous control may be necessary to combat even intermittent temptations virtually habitual. Even if concentrating

(whether without inclination or contrary to our current inclination) upon a short series of words not prayerful, and naturally focussing self-awareness on itself, without our needing consciously to request that mercy which grants courage to accept severe, just punishment, sufficed to gain us perfect self-control, we ought to be grateful enough for God's rendering that practicable, to ask him to grant us particularly "success" with that "technique." For letting some regard being virtuous as "technical success" rather than a gift from God might be a Satanic stratagem for cultivating pride in "personally gaining humility." (Perhaps Christians aware of Our Lord's revelations to Blessed Faustina might rather avail of the Chaplet of Divine Mercy for their "formula of constant petition.")

"Weel, ye ken noo," as a Scottish "fire-and-brimstone" minister said God will tell the wicked protesting ignorance at the Last Judgement, according to an "anecdote apparently apocryphal" which Fr. John Moss related at St. Augustine's Seminary in Toronto in the 1960s.

XXVII

A DEFENCE OF FREE CHOICES

What the “pro-life” ought to reply when asked whether they “support a woman’s right to choose,” which the “pro-life” usually seem unable to answer satisfactorily for themselves, is that woman’s special right is not deciding between right and wrong, which is the basic function and fundamental duty of all who are human, but rather her special office is to decide which good things are the better ones: which of all that is pleasant really pleases her most; and that the pro-choice keep insisting that women’s being obliged to abort their babies is not a pleasant prospect. The question the pro-choice ask as if it meant only one thing actually is therefore two questions, about things radically different in a way they want no one to notice.

Woman’s special “right to choose” is the right to cherish and enjoy without argument those good things against the enjoyment of which no one can

successfully argue rationally: the right to act upon insight rather than discourse, when discourse cannot prove the insight false; it is right to insist upon such insight's worth, since only insight can establish that persons deserve their deeds' effects; it is vital to justice itself that the mothers of men should insist especially upon their seeing that. Men who want to follow justice, therefore, may be more or less obliged to accept a woman's asserting that "I can see exactly when the grass needs to be cut and I can't see why ----- can't see it," which really means that she knows at what length the grass on her lawn is most pleasing to herself, a distinction of which ----- never could convince her. But the point here is that -----, being male, ought to keep the grass on her lawn at the length she prefers, if only because she will make his life wretched if he does not do that. But he ought to do so with a right good grace, because when it is a matter of a man's whim against a woman's whim, the man ought to enjoy giving way, especially if that is the only thing he can give her at the moment, and especially if she claims to see a seemliness which he does not in the shortness of short grass which she claims is not present for her in grass that is as long as grass itself, by objective biological criteria, does apparently "need" to be. But ----- was entirely right when he objected to a woman's saying, "Don't lie; Grandma doesn't like lying," because

Grandma's not liking it is not what makes it wrong to tell a falsehood. But that wrong itself can, perhaps, only be seen, and not proven, to be wrong; perhaps we can "show" it to be wrong only by giving illustrations of it, as we can "prove" that persons deserve their deeds' effects, only by applying that principle in specific instances.

Every healthy man therefore ought to have a strong bias in favour of "a woman's right to choose," because his mother ought to have brought him up with a healthy respect for womanly whims – although, of course, he ought to have, even if he values his own capacity for abstract reasoning, also a high regard for individual feminine judgement concerning reality in the concrete. Woman's whim chooses with firm finality only, but always, where her whim or a man's whim is all that matters. If, for instance, a man begrudges his wife the energy she devotes to her flower garden, because he sees no point in growing plants other than vegetables they both eat, which also she raises in sufficient abundance, any healthy woman and most healthy men might well suggest that when he asks, "How many blasted flowers did you 'cultivate' today?" the wife ought to reply: "A few. Quite. A few." But none can give him a rational argument against his own position, which itself sounds quite rational. But the world is richer, as most

can readily see but none can prove, for flowers and the many other things which thrive in it mostly because of woman's "whims"; the rational argument favouring this, mainly for men, is that it extends the range of what is possible for people to enjoy, and men do dearly love enjoyment. But the point here is that a choice is not entirely "free," in the sense in which a man who mostly serves other men to stay alive ought to enjoy at least his wife's being free, if conscience "dictates" it.

Any woman ought indeed to choose anything which pleases her, without having to give for that any reason whatever, whenever there is no reason for her to forgo it. But we ought to keep in mind here that to choose anything, in that sense, means choosing to cherish, not deciding to reject: "The Liberal Party supports a woman's right to reject out of hand anything at all, including what some women insist are parts, and what all can see is a chief purpose, of their own bodies" has not the same ring to it as "I support a woman's right to cherish anything worthy of her liking it." And the pro-choice keep insisting that no one actually likes abortion, though they keep rejecting the soundest arguments against it and seem also to keep accepting the slightest reasons for allowing it; anyway, they do always give reasons for abortion instead of claiming to see simply that it is good and seemly in itself.

The way the West, at least, in the Middle Ages punished purveyors of “reproductive freedom” which actually frustrated reproduction may be evidence that people in those days were mostly free psychologically, as many now may seem not to deem themselves, to forgo coition: people’s essentially choosing to be burned for witchcraft suggests strongly that either they were not afraid of burning because they were sure they would never practice witchcraft (which mainly was purveying reproductive choice frustrating reproduction) or they deemed such a “choice” morally so evil as to want themselves severely warned against it when most disposed to “benefit” from it. That in turn suggests that medieval people tended more than we moderns to regard the moral realm very much as a supreme reality, and that we have been remiss in neglecting since the advent of Calvinism the simple truth which men can plainly see that persons deserve the effects of what they do, so that people who constantly do what they see to be justice almost certainly would not, even if there were no God to welcome them to his own presence, end up eternally unhappy after dying. Maybe, even, it was their seeing far more clearly than we moderns now can the nature of choices between what rationally is right and irrational wrong and the abyss of difference between immorality and misfortune, which gave them the confidence

G.K. Chesterton said they had in far greater measure than we to make and to fulfil even “rash” vows of which maybe they feared the breaking more than they feared the punishment for breaking them; perhaps they were much disposed to look for and rejoice in the real reasons for mankind’s being sexual before leaping into bed. For people who think things through and are consistent in their choosing ought really, so to speak, to decide when consenting to coition whether that entails accepting birth no matter what or pursuing an abortion no matter what; there is such a thing, perhaps, as tearing the fabric of a choice once it is made actual.

Deeming difficult parenthood or abortion “the lesser of two evils” emphasizes “evil” felt as pain rather than seen or reasoned to be wrong, and so overlooks moral reality, as do couples today considering contraception who seldom even feign to decide between perilous pregnancy and harsh abstinence and so to “justify” consenting to abortion after “severe strain” had “overcome high resolve.” (Having to deny oneself, even temporarily, the privilege of perpetuating justice by having a child ought, after all, to entail some stress.)

What the pro-choice really want, apparently, is that women be as “free” to “have sex” as are irresponsible males: it might appear that some feminists, perhaps deficient in “self-esteem” while they lacked men with whom to claim

equality, deemed it a good thing to be an irresponsible male, so that they welcomed permissive abortion law which allowed males to be even less responsible for or to women. Anyway, speaking of irresponsibility, some people who vociferously uphold “a woman’s right to choose,” seem about equally outraged at the prospect of a law which would let a rapist “force an innocent, helpless woman to carry his child to term” and at the possibility of a woman’s having such “low self-esteem” as to decide freely to bear the child of a man who had violated her. For them, apparently, a rapist’s compelling a woman to have an abortion is “not a problem.” So how irresponsible is that?

XXVIII

AN ATTACK UPON FREE CHOICE

When men now speak of “a woman’s right to choose,” they often do not mean the feminine privilege, considered elsewhere at some length, of making important what males might reasonably call trivial, by “choosing” such “trifles” as well worth woman’s attention. They may likely mean to “release” woman from the “obligation” to which men traditionally have “bound” her, of choosing only among things which naturally are more or less equally good and so embodying in herself the ideal of a “complete” personality whose will is “undivided with regard to good”: who by custom at least and at least in the presence of progeny will choose between good things, taking it for granted that evil is rejected, and so will emphasize goodness as goodness itself deserves. This latter is important because personality tends to erode in the process of “getting done what needs doing”

especially when that needs doing under another's direction: That is to say, it may be necessary in mankind's fallen state for woman to "over-emphasize self-worth": mankind now does have to "exaggerate" what reverence we have toward what is good, just to bring that reverence up to a passing grade.

If some years ago you had asked an average man whether men ought to uphold and defend "a woman's special right to choose only between good things" and to protect her from having to choose even the lesser of evils, he might well have replied, resoundingly, if he were at all a reflective man, "My son, that's the only reason I myself ever put up with having to choose between two evils!" For the latter is what men with families often have to do because they have wives and children. They often find themselves, especially in modern times, putting up with petty snubs from their superiors which they would not take from tough guys in bars and enduring manifest unfairness, which it might take an expert in their field to make clear to a court if they took their case there, in order to remain employed, because, although one's talents may be much in demand, bosses are bosses everywhere one goes and no boss likes "insubordination."

If men indeed can maintain the minimum of manly self-respect – which properly is respect for ourselves being human rather than esteem for who we are

(this latter is woman's province) – only by having wives and mothers emphasize at home to their children with no one contradicting them there the glory of “free mankind rejoicing in sheer goodness,” our women might teach such lessons best not so much by “expounding doctrine” as by conducting themselves in the home as persons at liberty to enjoy the best of all that is good: G.K. Chesterton said what teachers assume comes across more strongly than what they only explain. This latter is why children today come out of schools, which now are made more influential than their parents, assuming that justice – if they think of it as “justice” – consists only in doing whatever pleases one without causing harm to another, as if all mankind were women well safeguarded or as if none could ever through valid rational insight attain a genuine, universal truth – “persons deserve their deeds' effects” – which might require not only making choices but choosing a particular course.

The ideal of safeguarding at least one woman and her children, at least until her sons grew up, by which time the world might have been improved, from personal dependence in service to mostly impersonal necessity, might well have kept many a “high-minded” man “content” in his “career,” – and, of course, it might have been a kind of shame at benefitting from another's ignoble servitude

which prompted the more idealistic and responsible feminists to share their men's productive captivity. Or maybe most feminists simply assumed they could run their own offices or the businesses of male employers as modern men had mostly let their women run their own homes. Or maybe many women ceased to be content to remain at home and raise children as chattels of commerce. Or maybe most women, accustomed to choosing in the safety of the home between courses more or less equally good, simply felt that their choosing a career in the wider world would always be a matter of selecting what best suited them from an array of availabilities all innocuous, chiefly because that wider world had no notion now of anyone's being obliged to actually do the producing of something which someone directly needed to stay alive. Where a majority of people actually did such producing, of course, careers not much conducive to that probably seemed highly convenient at first, but it has since become irksome for the clear-thinking to have to choose between dependence upon doing what is only negligibly necessary and being supported by governments raising revenue from those who do what is only negligibly necessary; hardly anyone does or has an opportunity to do any direct producing of any real necessities, just because everyone else has chosen a course convenient to himself. That may be partly because many feel

about a career, as George Orwell put it, that “This is what I came into the world to do. Everything else is uninteresting. I will do this even if it means starvation,” and because “when it comes to it,” starvation “is the nastiest death there is,” and also because a general prosperity can tempt even dedicated physicians to profit far superfluous to the prestige they deserve; it is not merely coincidence that surgeons in a more moral era earned their living through a craft which thrived when others prospered well – and which itself employed and enhanced a skill akin to surgery – rather than when these others desperately needed parts cut off. Each of these “men of differing temperaments” which turn them into “scientists, inventors, artists,” etc., and newspaper reporters and editors, especially, would likely be quite content in a society of farmers and craftsmen if it afforded him full scope for his own chosen full-time occupation exclusively, but he will not serve that society because it does not thus indulge him and so he tolerates, or simply fails to see, the deficiencies of a capitalist society catering prodigally to all such special interests. But if all can pursue whatever they like and suffering is the only thing “wrong,” then “having to have” an abortion may seem but another obligatory affliction in an entire environment of arbitraries more or less alien even when agreeable. That can end in a whole society, because it thrives by reason of

people's pleasing themselves by pleasing others, obliging some to please others even when their doing that would contravene their own moral convictions.

It would be true, of course, that any woman might choose any career open to men, if men confined themselves by law to careers directly productive or directly serving people who were directly productive and if men and women all acknowledged that the careers of the clergy and the military or police are not careers at all in the ordinary sense but rather the meeting of religious or social obligations. For there are aspects of the careers that really are directly productive for which most women seem not much to care, and aspects of these for which men and women generally seem differently suited. In any case, women who really need men with whom to claim equality in order to be content with their lives may deem themselves to have achieved that equality where women have the same right as men to make themselves to be Catholic priests or else to start their own church or when women "have sex" without generating offspring while men themselves can do that (since men neither make themselves priests nor can a man "have sex" without offspring unless a woman also does that; a woman's thus being "spared being pregnant" is only incidental here.)

What applies to choosing careers may apply to choosing to commit crimes or the gravest sins: men, not capable of being pregnant, as the “pro-choice” keep pointing out to “justify” their position, cannot have abortions, so women ought not to bear a burden of wrongdoing which men do not equally bear and men ought never to occasion a woman’s having an abortion. If this means men must choose between strictly constrained celibacy and the comforts capitalism confers, then that may be so much the better for all concerned; it may help settle whether the capitalist system is well worth everyone’s expending every effort to keep it going, or whether it would rather be well worth one’s expending every effort to maintain oneself and one’s spouse in fashions conducive to fulfilling natural justice and best emulating God the Father. For Chesterton said people naturally welcome opportunities to fight for what they love most, and working strenuously to support would seem to the next best thing to fighting in defence; having done all one could (that was allowable) to “enjoy coition” rightly, might perhaps dispose one to forgo it freely when the circumstances gravely failed to favour generation, especially if one had not been complicit, as most capitalists and their employees now are, in letting circumstances run counter to commodious coition; it might be, even, that the abundance of all the choices available in capitalist societies has

much diminished men's eagerness to enjoy anything or anyone in particular, pleasure now perhaps being spread wide and thin. A "capitalist society," of course, is one which admires nothing for its own sake but only values everything so far as it serves someone's further purposes, as capitalism employs wealth to produce more. But childbearing's being naturally good in itself might, when most women realize that, result finally in women's fiercely defending their noblest privilege against capitalism's making all things into commodities. (Realizing that there are things which of their nature we ought in justice to pursue and must not neglect might well restore the world's "lost sense of sin," which perhaps men had lost through coming to assume that sin was something the Church invented rather than the pre-existing doing of wrong from which the Church is meant to save mankind and for which we cannot by ourselves gain pardon.) Women's feeling perhaps unconsciously even now that "being pregnant is a positive condition" might be one reason so many pregnancies now begin which only later seem "unwanted" – because of some adverse condition not itself the pregnancy.

Finally, supporting "a" woman's "right to choose" would seem to mean one man's "enduring" the "fads" and enjoying the fancies of one particular woman rather than every husband's being obliged to fight in defence of all the eccentric

excitements which might emanate from a whole harem of office secretaries or female truck mechanics, or, what would be far, far worse, required by law or social custom to uphold a female truck mechanic's being as totally and uninterestingly free as all her "patients" are of any "feminine quirkiness."

XXIX

HUNGER STRIKES AND EUTHANASIA

Applying the principle that what persons deserve are their deeds' effects may settle whether we are ever morally permitted to decline, on the ground that economic, though not medical, "disease" renders it an "extraordinary means of preserving life," food we need then to sustain us if we are physically to be sustained. For it might be that although one may not refuse food while one really deserves to eat, one may "go on hunger strike" to protest imposition of a law which one contends, with an argument its supporters cannot refute, to be unjust and under which one is being held in custody, that unjustly prevents one from obtaining his own food by his own activity from his own property, which is the ordinary way of deserving food. In such circumstances, one is permitted, perhaps, to refuse food so long as one can actually bear with the resulting hunger, which

results from injustice done to him more than from his own fault; perhaps no one in these circumstances has a right to dissuade him from his purpose or to feed him by force.

The same principle may apply similarly to someone who desires to escape the indignity of being kept alive by activity not his own, though to be consistent he ought similarly to despise the indignity of being killed by someone not himself. He might say that because he cannot keep himself alive by his own deeds, it is not unjust that he cease to live. But if it is really the indignity of being helpless, and not “mere” grave discomfort from disease, that he desires to end, he ought to have the courage to endure death by starvation; otherwise his simply fearing grave discomfort will pretty much tend to keep him eating, or being fed, enough to stay alive. This is, of course, a matter quite different from a believing Christian’s obstinately refusing to receive from charity what he does not deserve in justice; the latter is a question which concerns not the state but the Church, and those two ought always to be deemed distinct and separate institutions.

The question then, briefly (and abstractly), is whether one may freely take upon himself a physical evil which a moral wrong someone else is inflicting upon him would logically entail but which does not yet result. Or one might more

concretely present it thus: Is it wrong to decline food which someone else wrongly, or circumstances unfortunately, prevented us from obtaining by our own deeds, if only to impress on the one so preventing us how wrong he is to do that, or to display to others who need such lessons the depth of human misfortune which consists in not being able to deserve what men ordinarily need? Put thus, if it is true that what we deserve are our deeds' effects, the answer seems reasonably clear. Promoting the reflection of moral wrong, or of what one might call "moral misfortune," in a "merely" physical evil, is not the same kind of thing as harming oneself to get from someone else a positive good which the harming cannot naturally even cause.

A "right to strike at wrong through hunger" may be especially important when nearly all receive "their" food as a result of maintaining a society dependent upon its being unjustly organized: when, for instance, a judge in a criminal court has not the choice of returning to a family farm or carpenter work if he would rather resign than enforce unjust commercial regulations favouring huge corporate interests over family-run small enterprises, because he had fondly assumed when accepting judicial appointment that he was entitled to a living by reason of his helping to safeguard "social well-being," which really meant supporting a

framework comprising “optional” functions that, taken singly where most people prospered by justly producing with their own property, might remain more or less innocuous, but when all compose the same general scheme will confine and constrain a multitude who ought freely to sustain themselves deservedly. Or an elderly man unfit for manual labour and failing to support himself with “intellectual property” might deem himself justified in declining a pension from government gained by taxing other citizens morally obliged only to support themselves and their state’s punishing of wrong: warranted even in refusing relief from family members not sharing his conviction that what they would reluctantly prefer to give the captious had been ill-got, a conviction of which perhaps he thought it was time someone should show the courage. He might think it was appropriate to establish thus to the masters of a capitalist society that if they would rather let people die than allow them to prosper through widespread ownership of productive property from which genuine charity might legitimately contribute to the well-being of the unable, they are evil men who ought to be repentant. Or maybe a citizen so situated might excusably rely on such dubious support until he reached the limit of his elucidating to his fellows the errors of their ways and his, unless continuing to appreciate the difference between right

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and wrong, praying for wrong to be righted, and doing “penance” for those who, perhaps unconsciously, prolonged the doing of wrong, warranted remaining alive at whatever other cost to “self-worth.”

XXX

CONFLICTING “EQUALITIES”

Some have been suggesting the Supreme Court of Canada ought to restrict what they might call “religious freedom to discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation.” These suggestions may arise from thinking anti-discrimination law regards as equal all those it seeks to safeguard, because the “equality section” in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms applies all laws equally. But settling such questions may require considering what one side hopes to gain from what another might be forbidden to concede, not only whether the rights of religion and rights stemming from sexual orientation are absolutely equal, so far as discriminating when selling goods or services to the public is concerned. Settling those questions may also require that we consider under what light people should normally regard the services we sell to the public: whether a bed-and-breakfast establishment, for example, is letting lodging for travellers primarily pursuing interests other than

sex, or primarily letting its rooms to people who want chiefly to indulge in sexual recreation. A landlord might not want a reputation for providing chiefly, or at all, the latter sort of accommodation. That sort of distinction might provide the key to deciding discrimination suits which “gay” couples might bring against bed-and-breakfast owners who refused to let rooms to people in whose sinful conduct the owners would consider themselves formally co-operating by letting rooms to them. After all, the anti-discrimination laws forbid us to discriminate against individuals, not couples, so that landlords might perhaps comply with the law by insisting always on renting to only one person rather than to a couple; what the lodgers then did privately in their rooms or other rented premises, or whom they entertained there, need not then affect their landlord’s conscience. Perhaps a landlord claiming much concern for his establishment’s reputation might with the law’s cognizance require all his paying guests, including those of whose domestic situations he himself approved, to sign an undertaking temporarily to forgo sexual indulgence while under his roof. I see no objection to such requirements, unless there are some gays, not content to “live and let live,” who would enjoy coercing others against their consciences. (One might almost feel, though, today, that some

gays are so militant that everyone ought to hesitate to say, “B-gg-r you” to anyone, lest someone at once have a lawyer respond, “You’d better.”)

. A law school’s requiring students to forgo sexual activity except in marriage of a man and a woman, and a law society’s denying provincial accreditation to graduates of that school, seem to present a different sort of question: The school is not open simply to the “public” but to persons seeking to be lawyers, and the law society admits not “members of the public” but persons whom law schools have qualified to function as lawyers. Law societies ought not to deny admission to law-school graduates who are indeed learned in the lore of the law, just because the latter hold an unfashionable view of sodomy; a law society which did that would seem to be discriminating against religious beliefs in order to favour gays more or less gratuitously. It would be a different matter if a gay person could not obtain legal representation in court without having to go to law school so as to be allowed to represent himself.

Regarding sexual orientation as a valid principle in itself seems to endorse three assumptions Michael Hannon mentioned in the May 2014 issue of *First Things*: “(1) that our sexual desires reveal a fundamental facet of our being, our

“sexuality”; (2) that we have a moral obligation to discover and express that key aspect of ourselves; and (3) that we will not be happy until we do so.”

We would seem to contradict these assumptions if we found, as some seem to say they find, that sexual desire virtually evaporates when one adverts to it directly rather than to the person or the representation (or maybe only the idea) giving rise to that desire. Or maybe the desire will “evaporate” only if one attends not so much to one’s “wanting sex” but rather to one’s “wanting to imagine sex,” or maybe to wanting the mood in which we “desire sex”; it may be necessary to observe with some care our own inward tendencies for us to dismiss effectively what Catholicism calls “impurity in thought.” But that approach does seem often to “work” as a result of one’s saying to oneself something like, “Oh, this is just a mood I’m in,” or “This is only a fiction I’m just inventing.” A genuine “basic reality” ought not, perhaps, to dissipate so readily upon simply becoming evident. (However, attempting to dismiss as “just a mood” what is rightly a deeply painful sadness at social or economic wrongs against which we are powerless can be detrimental to spiritual balance and to sanity; distress is rightly “consonant” with injustice.) Moreover, what a “heterosexual” might deem his own “orientation” can seem more or less redundant when he learns to really regard not sexual experience

itself, but rather a right reverence for human generation reflecting the Divine Essence, which is Fatherly Generation, as requisite to human identity. It is requisite in the sense that begetting and conceiving children to nurture, baptize, and nurture them may well represent, even if it might not actually be, the source and summit of human existence. For providing food to baptized children, if “only” by making clothes or building houses for those who grow food for theirs and ours, since we cannot all be mothers actually breastfeeding, sustains in its “cleanest” human manifestation, that infinite, eternal Life which holds the entire universe in being; this particular manifestation of the Divine consists in God’s dwelling in souls as yet unspoiled by actual sin. An “orientation” which neglects or dismisses or rejects this, even if the religious can present it only as a hypothesis, may well seem to the religious to be gravely defective, if only because that hypothesis could reasonably be true and because, as G.K. Chesterton suggested, genuine skeptics would at least respect possibilities they could not disprove.

Endorsing “heterosexuality” as an “orientation,” which Michael Hannon says we must not do, can prompt even an otherwise deeply Catholic mother to condone contraception on the ground that women have “equal right” to sexual pleasure at

its greatest, as it is when women are fertile, whereas in truth the highest pleasure ought to attend the noblest purpose: both men and women ought actually to enjoy most their trying to give each other children and after that their working together directly at, rather than merely for, their children's material support and moral and religious education; the Church must proclaim this even if it may result in her having to teach from the catacombs – or maybe from “ghettoes” where Catholics, to avoid providing goods indiscriminately “to the public,” might gather to serve one another exclusively.

Anyway, the basic question for many may be whether sexual orientation must preclude investigating a religion's credentials intellectually if its doctrines purport to direct and limit consensual sexual activity or whether investigating them could convince anyone he should freely choose to accept such direction, as apparently some Catholic homosexuals freely do – who, some say, find it easier to be celibate in celibate partnerships, against which perhaps other Catholics ought not to “discriminate.”

XXXI

BELONGING TO “SOMETHING BIGGER”

Being “part of something bigger than yourself,” the great ambition held out to people these days, can be really worthy only if the “something bigger” is something better, a better kind of thing than we are, which today most things “bigger than ourselves” almost certainly are not. To be better than ourselves, they ought to have better purposes than we do, or at least our being part of them ought better to serve purposes common to us and them, and if our purpose and theirs is only survival – whether theirs, ours, or both theirs and ours – then their purpose is no better than our own, however more comfortably (physically) they enable us to serve it. They especially are no better than ourselves if what they chiefly offer is the illusion that they will preserve something of ourselves after we are gone, by continuing the kind of effort we have begun or have helped to further through

them. For the only effort worth exerting and preserving must serve justice, and the family is the only institution “bigger than” we are as individuals that can serve justice better than an individual can. In a sense, even the Church itself does not serve justice better than the family so much as it enables the family better to serve justice.

Universities may be the chief promoters of the notion that it is fitting to be part of some physical institution larger than ourselves. For if learning is good enough in itself to be sought for its own sake, rather than for the sake of serving justice, a university is almost the Supreme Institution: as a whole it gains and transmits more real lore than anyone could who is only part of it. It might therefore be that professors then assume that the rest of their society exists to serve the university’s purpose and that the society as a whole is politically and mentally sound so far as it promotes professors’ seeking or gaining lore. Musicians and other artists, and especially novelists, especially if university-educated, might come to feel thus about what they most like doing, and that attitude toward one’s own career might well rub off on even the lowly and merely commercial businessman. This sense of worthily belonging to a “worthy” commercial enterprise might perhaps have received deceptive impetus from those Catholic educators who, being monks and

nuns, might unconsciously have conveyed an impression that heads of families need a quasi-monastic environment wherein to pursue ascetic or penitential exercises away from the “spiritual laxity” deemed “inherent” in being at home with a wife. Thus, if serving an interest other than that of our own family appears to “fulfill our moral obligation to be unselfish,” we may forget that, so long as we refrain from doing wrong and dedicate our efforts to doing what is right because it is right, Christ on the Cross was “unselfish enough for all of us,” to enable us to do, harmlessly and with enjoyment, just because it is right, what is right.

Actually, of course, guiding men to “monastic” commercial careers seems to have resulted in the latter becoming in fact the kind of “refuge from real life’s rigours” which some have wrongly taken the earlier monasteries to be. For one thing, accepting employment from others’ businesses will naturally “relieve” us of any duty of which we might ordinarily conceive to defend our source and means of employment, since we have in justice no right to these. And, since a “monastic commercial career” does not require men to be masculine and women to be feminine but rather commercialism thrives upon making men and women interchangeable, that kind of career favours feminism’s “giving” males the “right” to nurture children and denying them the duties of providing what women need to

nurture and of protecting both nurturers and nurtured. Today, even monasteries themselves may be in danger of becoming “refuges from rigour” as they turn more and more from self-supporting productivity to the specialized commercial production by which they can thrive under the capitalism they should be trying to teach us how to live without, which preaches “belonging to something bigger than oneself” in order to exploit. Corporate capitalism preaches that piece of preciousness so effectively now that one formerly Catholic school which now is part of Newfoundland’s secular education system has as its motto “We Belong,” which one could take to suggest that its pupils may properly give their devotion to any cause or institution greedy to accept devotion, provided only that they are devoted enough. Those who really care about the young will perhaps pray that eventually they will dedicate their service to God through the one institution he established to restore the world to sanity, without their having to be received into institutions necessary to restore sanity to individuals. For almost the only thing of which our current life ought to be “only a part” is our own life in the future, much improved by our own striving now to make it so through the grace of God Almighty.

If having children and bringing them up is only “part” of our life, then it ought to be that “part” to which the “whole” is directed: one’s having children and bringing them up ought not to be “incidental” even to one’s healing the sick, for instance, no matter how gifted a physician one might be; physicians ought to be among some few married professionals allowed to employ someone else to run farms or workshops for them and to train their children to operate these. No married person ought to be “part of something bigger” which primarily did anything that diminished his contributing directly to the support of his own family. For the “biggest thing” of which people can be “part” is the nurturing of children, and our society itself ought to be part of that, not least in being large enough for would-be tyrants to balk at wiping it out for fiercely defending, with legitimate weapons only, justice and the family’s rights.

We ought to want not to be “part” of a bigger “thing” but rather to do greater deeds than simply being ourselves merely living; the greatest deed we can do is to accept gratefully God’s keeping us alive as his children, in the manner of children accepting sustenance from their human parents as pure gift the children themselves did nothing to deserve, for men are most like God the Father when they give that gift, preferably after realizing thoroughly how freely, in the sense of

being unconstrained even by gratitude, they themselves while children had accepted it, and women are the men most like God in their giving nourishment from within themselves. For, though in natural justice, most is due the adult human who actually does his own gaining, yet in the life supernatural which Christ confers and reveals, all good living, as Chesterton emphasized in *The Everlasting Man*, is already done, most rightly, by the Baby in the manger. The greatest danger to our souls because of this might be the temptation to resent and to repudiate our dependence upon God himself for the kind of vast courage which our finally accepting his will may ultimately require. For even the lives of Tolkien's simple hobbits must have required even of them a greater hardihood from farm labour than Tolkien seems at the beginning of their story to have attributed to them as jollily enjoying "six meals a day when they could get them." Six meals a day entail a lot of tilling, sowing and reaping, and enjoying a banquet where meat is served entails something more severe than that. (What Tolkien really imagined, therefore, was a yeomanry with the soul of a proletariat, presented so as to show the proletariat both what it was and to what it might aspire.) Even so, "merely" enjoying "eating to live" while aware that one fully deserves to live thus by reason of doing one's own deeds to produce food, might

well make for much contentment, so that “the one thing lacking” for perfection might be a conscious willingness to endure being murdered rather than surrender such contentment to would-be tyrants ready to apply more (which really means “less”) than their own deeds to conquering the contented. And being strong from labour might develop animal spirits natural to holding “mock combats” as practice for “provoking” the kind of wholesale murder at which relatively honest tyrants might balk if they found it “essential” to conquering a people contented to be chiefly agricultural and experiencing crises chiefly in the kind which Chesterton said is the “whole pleasure of marriage.”

However, willingness to endure being murdered rather than sin, even when necessary, might not suffice; to rightly oppose tyranny, we might be obliged to endure children’s being murdered, most horribly, and even to endure our women’s suffering their children’s being murdered, most horribly. Such courage, which our women might call moral cowardice, may require a personal friendship with God Himself which realizes that our committing any injustice would destroy if anything could the Christ Child’s Divinity which one day will resurrect the Holy Innocents.

XXXII

JUSTIFYING MEANS: CAPITALISM AS “RATIONAL”

When we say the end does not justify the means, we ought to mean that directing it to a good end will not itself justify our means; we must never imply that a means does not need an end to justify it. For instance, though it now may seem it necessary to serve “the” (capitalist) “economy” in order to have children continuing the race’s giving glory to God, wanting to have children even for those reasons might not justify continuing to serve capitalism: capitalism appears increasingly at odds with much of mankind’s having children: even capitalists, unless capitalism is badly misnamed – “capital” is “wealth used to gain more wealth” – would themselves have children only so that these could continue piling up wealth or, at best, so that the children might enjoy continuing to pile it up, as the most interesting pursuit which life could possibly offer. Therefore, if ordinary

people who from a normal motive want children must regard capitalism as pursuing a means without a justifying end: a means of which its “having” an “end” is only incidental, just because we cannot “get” without “getting something.” That is the “rational” view of capitalism, which otherwise we must deem motivated by sheer greed or lust for irresponsible power over others, or by a desire to usurp from others their responsibility for their own lives, or maybe motivated even by mere insecurity and cowardly refusal to risk healthy misfortune by actually doing only the direct production of what would suffice to support one’s family. (Our having forgotten, in long service to capitalists, that everyone has a positive moral duty to do what directly supports us, may be largely a cause of what a Pope called the modern loss of the sense of sin: we have no longer a standard of positive obligation of which our departing from it would disconcert our conscience.) Capitalists thus perhaps resemble either dancers who dance not in celebration but for entertainment or else artists performing acts of acquisition to be, in memory, simply because by them one acquires, things of beauty and joys forever: “getting is by itself glory enough.” It may be necessary only to state the position thus for most ordinary people to see the error of it. But there is more: that capitalism holds men’s worth to consist in getting, even more than in having or

using for purposes other than getting, material goods, is borne out by its zealously getting what is only a means of getting: vast amounts of paper money useless in itself for any purpose at all practical and, even in its standing for actual goods, “representing” in total vastly more real goods than men really produce. At least, that seems to be the burden of a popular book by Thomas Piketty setting forth the thesis, and proposing remedies (relying, unfortunately, on employing paper wealth) for the wrong, that the rate of return on capital far exceeds the rate of actual economic growth. That is pretty much what Hilaire Belloc said we might expect from an economy dominated by usurers; in fact, seeking a return on capital which exceeds what the use of capital produces is almost exactly Belloc’s definition of usury.

Of course, where ownership depends on having money, those few who have most of it determine pretty well what the rest of us will own: they seem to have determined that we will not own much property from which we might support ourselves by our efforts with our own instruments, as perhaps we would be able to do if our “medium of exchange” were some kind of “property in its own right” genuinely valuable or which could be altered to serve a practical purpose at need, as most metal coins perhaps could be altered. As things are, our depending on

having paper money which increasingly stands for services rendered rather than for goods actually gainable, lends itself almost consistently to unfair taxation.

Since things belong to those who produce them, those from whom taxes, as opposed to service to government, are due – the people to whom the duty of paying taxes “belongs” – ought to produce that from which they pay their taxes; taxes ought not to come from any other source; every citizen allowed to vote should be required to produce goods from which he can pay tax enough to support his government’s doing its real duty, which, exclusively, is enforcing against him and his fellows the laws of which they approve. This means, for instance, that the taxes which the government in Newfoundland levies on the sale of wine, beer, rum, and whiskey, which vastly exceed what the makers of these products could afford to pay in taxes from the profits they earn, are unjust. So is the “goods and services” tax which the federal government of Canada currently imposes on the customers of retailers who do nothing to produce what they sell. Insisting upon “no taxation without justification” might do much to simplify government and our own lives generally.

Unfair taxation, which governments always need in order to do more than enforce laws which citizens understand well enough to approve – even if they

need lawyers to explain these first for their approval – is partly what prevents the ordinary citizen from providing much for himself, since he cannot produce from his own property enough to give government what it “needs” in order to assure him comfortable security while he much enriches his employers by serving them with their property; he might be much reluctant, anyway, to hand over to government large amounts of what he actually helped produce instead of ceding to it paper or plastic tokens which merely it has issued to represent effort in the abstract and which his employers merely have assigned him for expending energy on their behalf.

Even reluctantly enduring capitalism now is hardly even excusable unless we insist on applying to subvert it almost all we get from it, which mostly the chief capitalists begrudge us anyway, at least unless they get money through our using it, as they do more expeditiously when we spend it on something other than our own offspring. But we ought to have generated offspring, and we ought to nurture them with deeds as direct as generating them, to appreciate the truth that persons deserve the effects of what they do. That is a truth that even capitalism, in an evil emphasis on “giving” only to “get,” can seem to teach in its own perverted fashion even as it frustrates most men’s furthering their fulfilment in accord with

that fundamental principle of natural justice, our many violations of which Christ founded his Church to forgive – when we repent of these and really try to remedy them.

Remedying the contraventions of justice which are inherent in several capitalist practices may require an attitude akin to resistance against a totalitarian regime employing secret police (our “totalitarian” legal framework regarding capitalist practices hides the secret that they are wrong in not obeying the principle that persons deserve the effects of what they do): Someone who is said to have engaged in such resistance is said to have said that persisting in it requires one to have a loyal lover. Real resistance to capitalism, therefore, may require us to share our interest in reforming economics with a close confidant of the opposite sex who partakes of our desire to have children and will resist with us the inclination to enjoy each other through coition in circumstances gravely adverse to bringing up those children to relish the thought, and pursue the practice, of either enjoying or enduring the effects of whatever they may actually do. One might even suggest, since the situation may well be desperate enough, that the Catholic Church should ask that someone found a religious Order of Continent Couples Against Capitalism vowed to refrain from coition until free of

capitalism's wage slavery; that would make at least as much sense as moderns marrying to practice contraception in order to maintain ownership of at least one motor vehicle needed for continuing employment under capitalism.

“Continuing continent against capitalism through shared celibacy” might help us to appreciate God's being great enough to remain himself despite contraventions of his willing infinitely that humans engage in coition as a result of seeing clearly that to generate is worthy of divinity and that if Adam had not sinned, the outcome of human coition would have been children sharing Divine Sonship in the Spirit of Wisdom from their very conception. For living in the wisdom of the spirit consists first and fundamentally in welcoming and teaching the doctrine that we are made to enjoy deserving what we deserve by doing what we do and that even if we do not feel glad of that, we ought however to approve of it. We must never lose sight of this primary end of the creation of mankind and never assume that whatever means we employ to continue living will naturally serve that end without our consciously keeping that means directed to it, as people do not, and probably never could, keep consciously directing to it their careers as capitalists' confederates duped or determined. For all history, when rightly we consider it, is simply the record of mankind's trying or failing, or forgetting, or

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repudiating outright our worthiest duty, to emulate the way God himself deserves  
to be God.

XXXIII

TRUTHS WHICH COMPREHEND ERROR

It is true enough that “Truth can comprehend error, but error cannot comprehend truth,” but that is not enough even of that truth. For very often error fails not only to comprehend, but even to guess at, what the truth really is. I have in mind, for instance, a friend to whom I suggested, what Pope Paul VI insisted upon, that couples ought to regret having, when they have, grave reason not to desire that their coupling result in children. My friend seemed to feel that such a regret was itself inconceivable. But he himself could conceivably have had misgivings, amounting perhaps to real regret, regarding coition’s being naturally conducive to childbearing for any with whom he might couple, although he perhaps could not conceive of a couple’s wanting rationally to have children, in order to educate them in enjoying rationally not merely life but their deserving

life, as eagerly as he himself irrationally desired coition, if only because that couple realized that sharing moral truth ought to be a source of greater joy than even partaking in another's physical pleasure or emotional gladness. In any case, the regret to which Paul VI referred might not necessarily entail anyone's actually feeling distress during coition itself but might consist rather in both partners' realizing while yet level-headed that circumstances which render generation unwelcome are, ordinarily, unwelcome circumstances. That kind of circumstance would include a quixotic journalist's having become almost wholly dependent upon his trade in which eventually he faces an equivalent of Gordon Comstock's choice in *Keep the Aspidistra Flying*: being obliged, if because being deep in love he is to marry and risk failure of NFP, to entertain readers with skilful, needless "feature writing" because a newspaper chain's distant executives will no longer pay him for "public service" in continuously covering court trials of charges less than murder; this would be particularly an unwelcome prospect while like Comstock one lacked analytical lore to educate offspring against the capitalist infection; being able to do that might make having children look worth trying despite one's personal deficiencies as an aspirant to independence on five acres.

After all, Chilton Williamson Jr. did write in *Chronicles* that the few who can do a few important things really well may be able to do at all only those few things.

That most people do not now follow a trade which itself they deem worthwhile may be partly why most couples now do not have many children, if indeed they have any. Those couples who have (one or two) more children than do most are, I think it likely, couples of whom both members are teachers: these may well want their children to grow up to be like them and to enjoy the kind of career they enjoy, although that enjoyment becomes increasingly difficult as government increasingly meddles in education. (Schoolteachers can plausibly feel they are fitting children with what people need to live well, since what they themselves were taught would seem to have served that purpose for them at least; it might not be the teachers' fault if the children assume that what the teachers teach is not only necessary but sufficient for living well.) In any case, a society which approves of its members chiefly pursuing what is convenient to them, will not automatically inculcate in them a desire to provide for the convenience of members whom they would have to produce for that purpose.

It is understandable that even Christians in such a society might, as G.K. Chesterton said many did, mistake Christ himself for a “gentle Jesus meek and

mild” when the truth is, in the words of Dr. Donald Demarco, that Christ “doesn’t stop at being nice” and so can well seem “terrifying.” Christ in the Gospels in fact can “terrify” as much as his Father in the Old Testament: the chief difference is that in one Testament God inflicts mostly temporal punishments for wrongs mainly material in effect and in the other he warns us mostly against eternal agony of soul for misbehaviour mainly spiritual, and that God in the New Testament encourages his friends to bear patiently persecutions more cruel than the sudden deaths which in the Old Testament he ordered his chosen people to inflict on their enemies – which “martyrdom” perhaps wrought for those enemies their eternal salvation.

The truth is, I think, that all Christians are called to live, if not intensely, then at least attentively, a life consistently effortful with intermittent rest, which produces as directly as possible with our own activity what we need to remain active, as justice demands of us and which our thinking chiefly should direct and uphold. That is, when not doing what else we ought specifically to do, we ought to attend mentally, perhaps as a penitential exercise in spiritual discomfort, to whether we and those about us deserve what we enjoy or endure, and especially to consider whether what we and they enjoy or endure results from: ascribing

ownership of businesses to “shareholders” who in truth are only moneylenders to those who establish the businesses; “making” mere arrangements to have goods produced and sold instead of actually making real goods and selling them (as only the makers have a real right to sell their goods, since only makers are legitimately owners); or inducing production merely to occur mechanically without the living actually doing the producing from which they live. A free market would be one where all could sell what freely they produce, not where only relatively few sell much and what they mostly sell are what their system mainly constrains the others to contribute toward producing, or else to buy, thus “supplying the market” in both senses of the phrase. (Maybe many instances of clinical depression arise from neglecting this mental exercise of attending thus to our spiritual environment – though mostly without attributing subjective guilt; that depression’s symptoms, actually painful, are said to be also those of the capital sin called sloth, may mean not that depression itself is sloth but that it is the fruit of a sloth which had at first appeared pleasant. Also, of course, “purity of thought” may need keeping minds on the “mundane,” not merely “switching off” some imaginings; even following C.S. Lewis’s and Orson Scott Card’s advice to advert to our responses, when these are illicit, rather than to what occasions them, requires our having first

formed a habit of firmly concentrating, even when we have correctly identified the occasion itself as “a desire to imagine sex” rather than directly “desiring sex.”)

“Making” mere arrangements to profit might seem the worst of these immoral business practices, since arrangements are not real things but only relations set up among things and people; this perhaps reflects capitalism’s viewing results rather than things as what really matter, maybe regarding even the family as just another arrangement although the family clearly is morally and physically a compound: composed of elements. But even many Catholics today seriously seeking truth not only have not comprehended ideas like those we consider here but have tended hardly even to guess at them. They have very largely forgotten that when God “condemned” us to gain our food by the sweat of our brow, he most certainly did not condemn us never to enjoy doing that. We are most likely to enjoy it when we see how much sense it makes that we gain our own bread by our own work, as opposed to being obliged by others to work for them for money with which merely to buy bread. When we see the sense of great exertion, we can indeed enjoy “working up a sweat,” which of course we do most often through physical exercise but which can also arise through effort of mental concentration, chiefly

perhaps on “mild” physical activity: either might be acceptable to God, but not our continually avoiding both.

All this means that Christians whom circumstances prevent from doing their own farming or garment-making ought always before or after buying from a grocery or clothing store to pray that the “sales associates” there at least realize the wrong constraining them and therefore desire almost desperately that they could be farmers, fishers, or seamstresses. It is not nearly enough in the life of the Church that customers and store clerks be pleasant to one another and grateful for great ease in supplying and getting goods, though it might indeed be churlish not to be thus grateful for that ease when it is virtually unavoidable, just as Catholic spouses ought not actually to be ungrateful for the pleasure or gladness coition affords them when lawfully expressing love not pursuing then its primary purpose. Even an unpaid writer enjoying excellent pie he is grateful for having made ought to regret his not having deserved the flour, butter, water, apples, sugar, and cinnamon he bought with money he had not earned by providing a necessity to a neighbour.

As things are now, those willing to marry “for better or for worse” as much as “in good times and in bad times” ought especially to consider how much worse

supporting a family in dependence upon “the (capitalist) system,” as opposed to the family’s relying on applying its own energies to its own resources, might induce both spouses to become. Embracing for the future the latter kind of truly “economic” effort as worth the danger of failing at it, requires even at the outset the sort of courage which really honest failure in capitalist enterprise may demand if we are to keep any sense of honourable self-respect but which our “normal” experience under capitalism may be ill-fitted to foster. For demanding “courage at the outset” is what parents ought primarily to do for their children: their first lesson to these ought to be that one must never simply bow to mere force but always be obedient to right reason; parents ought therefore, until their children reach the use of reason, to convince or at least persuade their young that the parents themselves either are always acting in accordance with right reason or are deeply repentant of any failures to do so. Parents not equipped to teach that primary lesson well have been themselves most badly “educated,” especially if they are supposed to be Catholic parents. For that for which Catholics ought in Eucharistic celebration chiefly to give thanks is the gift of Divine courage of which the Son of God “earned” his giving us through suffering and dying as Man, and no parent can absolutely guarantee that even his own child will never have to

endure violent death from religious persecution. We are bound in Christian charity not so much to accept that gift of courage as to refuse to decline it.

Robert Browning is said to have suggested that God became Man to suffer crucifixion in order to experience courage. But the Crucifixion was really meant, I think, to make manifest to men the courage which it takes to be God in the first place: to offer oneself for approval by a Son who himself is Infinite Justice and whose Sacramental Presence is called Eucharist because his very Person-ness constitutes originally the Divine Thankfulness for God's being God; the Nicene Creed alludes to this in saying, "We give thee thanks for thy great glory"; gratitude itself is therefore a Divine attribute; Chesterton said thanks is the highest form of prayer. Our Lord's being therefore "as much Eucharist" in the tabernacle as at the Mass and his offering himself as Son to the Father continuously in the Sacrament also, might mean we could be mildly mistaken if we much emphasize altar over tabernacle during Mass; although we should remember that the Sacrifice does not "transfer Christ from the tabernacle" but rather that he comes to the Altar "from" the Father, we ought perhaps also to bear in mind, as maybe some did when the tabernacle occupied the centre of the altar, that in the Mass (mankind's particular participation in the eternal Divine Offering) the priest

offers Christ to the Father “even” as Christ “even” in the tabernacle always sees the Father as present “even” to his human intellect: prizing even Divine Purpose over Divine Person-ness may be an error born of capitalism’s seeing men chiefly as others’ functionaries.

XXXIV

WORK AND WORSHIP

As G.K. Chesterton is said to have remarked that people no longer believing in God will believe almost anything at all, so Chesterton's disciples may come to realize that minds no longer dwelling continually on the privilege of Divine Sonship will then dwell much on almost anything at all, often much to the neglect of much else they ought seriously to consider. That may be partly an effect of the capitalism Chesterton's true disciples much condemn: in particular, an effect of capitalism's workers' "needing work-life balance." And the need for "work-life balance" may suggest to capitalist Catholics that it is perfectly all right to maintain also a "work-life-worship balance"; indeed our "natural" tendency under capitalism to compartmentalize all activities might incline even a priest in the pulpit to preach what he has learned from the more "mundane" sources of

doctrine without his adverting just then to the physical Presence in a tabernacle nearby of Him about Whom and from Whom every Christian teacher is meant to transmit knowledge and Who during those very moments is attending closely to the nature and the quality, and the effects on both the speaker and his listeners, of that transmission. On the other hand, of course, this very impression of how priests preach might well be the peculiar product of an abnormal mentality tending to view each in a separate compartment all the concepts which an ordinary mind thinking of God and Christ would find unified in the Blessed Sacrament.

Anyway, we ought not to seek “a work-life-worship balance” but rather to “balance,” if that is really the right word, the kind of “living worship” we do in church with the kind of “worshiping-life ” we ought to offer through those activities which supply our economic needs – and which under capitalism are moved ever farther both from religion and from real needs genuinely economic: work itself ought to be a form of worship, of giving praise to God by imitating what He does, as any image actually alive ought to imitate its model’s actions. We imitate God best by maintaining human existence as directly as he maintains Divinity. That entails supplying our own needs through means as immediately

effective as we can find feasible: manufacturing or selling DVDs in order to eat or to stay warm and dry is not a means immediately effective of those purposes, and having others – or their economic “system” – fulfill those purposes so that we will be able to make or sell DVDs is not something we ought to take for granted.

Really attending mentally to “doing what God does” could help us to remain aware of God’s keeping His mind on us and on our doings, and to remain aware also that his continuous and eternal act of creation maintaining our existence is entailed in, and is an aspect of, our Living the Supernatural Life as His Sons, and to remain grateful for that former action in itself, so to speak, even if the Life Supernatural had not been superadded. That might well result in Catholics attending Sunday Mass chiefly to “apologize” for bad-mannerly lapses of attention to the Divine Presence at, and in, our weekday work rather than to gain forgiveness for actual sins of rejection graver. For when we have become accustomed to the routines of farming or of craftsmanship, we can perhaps more readily give thanks more leisurely to God for our having invested the effort which makes our work “routine,” and we can be more disposed to ask His help in meeting with our own skill and understanding which he gave us and helped us train, those more serious technical difficulties arising occasionally in the course of

our careers. It may be psychologically easier to ask God urgently for help with what we are actually doing than to seek it in our merely directing operations more or less occurring only mechanically.

It might be that the spirit behind capitalism would like us to “fulfill our potential” through economic employment alone, so that we will not have adequate leisure or restful mental energy thus to attend to what ought not to be merely the “religious ‘dimension’” in life but is the very way we ought to live, for it may be easier to share with our fellows any insights we gain into Life Divine if those insights arise in the course of, and derive from, “ordinary” labour with which we and our fellows supply what is needful to us and them, and easier to offer our “ordinary lives” to God in the Mass, as we ought, and as they ought to be worth offering thus, if we see how they form part of the way God Himself lives His Life in our souls. Also, it may be easier to reject, even when that entails much hardship, those “abuses of capitalism” which on sober second thought seem inherent in capitalism itself, if we see clearly that thriving through such practices entails actually repudiating this way in which God wants to live our lives, the “strait and narrow way” which consists in growing or making, directly, at least one necessity in order to deserve the others which our neighbours grow or make,

directly. Freely refusing to deserve thus what we get, as most “modern” modes of “acquisition” fall short of true desert, virtually constitutes, when it does not actually help deprive another human, practising a kind of fraud against God, Who wants us to approve of our deserving and to deserve as much as we can of what is good; our getting what we want in ways contrary to His will must cause us to be, so to speak, “dead Christs walking”; a baptized human who knowingly and willingly does anything wrong, perhaps especially one who promotes, as opposed to only tolerating, wrongdoing in his own selfish material interest, is indeed, most horribly, “a Christ who sins.” In any case, incurring hunger and cold because of crop failure on our own land despite our best efforts would seem more likely to be the kind of cross God prefers us to be willing to bear than anxiety about retaining employment which we need far more than it needs us – unlike a farmer’s land needing its own farmer to be at its best – especially when our working at it remains entirely incidental to supplying any actual needs of anyone. (There would be far more honor in thus risking woe on our own account even when we meant primarily, by supporting ourselves, to permit our providing goods for others and so serve a more general wellbeing, than there can be in our “serving society” for our own greater comfort than we ourselves could gain through really honest

labour with which neighbours much assisted.) Meanwhile, we may perhaps tolerate receiving through “government programs” some assistance from those workers under capitalism who are not yet conscious of doing wrong, though we must do our best to enlighten them and may be obliged to fight them fairly in seeking to punish them – perhaps by confiscating much of what they had gained by their wrongdoing, since even goods ill got ought not simply to go to waste – if we must deem them enlightened enough but only obstinate in economic injustice. After all, the social safety nets modern governments now provide seem meant chiefly not to protect the well-being of independent farming families whose crops may fail but to induce all of us to accept for the sake of physical security the kind of employment which the fair-minded often admit to be in some ways detrimental to spiritual perfection, even though “economic realists” who – when it suits their purposes, as encouraging the independent fisher or farmer does not – deplore dependency on government tend to laud as “self-reliant” the people who depend on businessmen to rescue them from that “ignoble” dependency by consenting to employ them.

What truly is only an illusion of enjoying security through serving the modern employer, which operates by concentrating minds on proximate tasks that distract

us from thought of ultimate failure, seems indeed to prevent many today from thinking of having children and educating them in the imitation of the Divine as a final purpose of human life which finally we should pursue in a manner directly confronting danger because the “danger of allowing wrong” is inherent in the greatness of God’s very goodness; that is why we ought to farm in the face of crop failure or fish for our food in the face of failure by drowning at sea. When we see why a life like that is fitting for sons of God, we may have the fortitude to fight in its defence or in defence of striving to lead such lives – if indeed our “economic realist” opponents will themselves fight for themselves instead of purchasing modern societies’ predominantly mercenary warriors (since for these warfare is mainly a means, however intermediate, after all, of acquisition) to protect their compartmentalized system of limited “economic” exercises: if employees in a supermarket, for instance, can be convinced that they ought either to give over their employment or else defend courageously in combat, from those who would take only what the takers really needed, the foodstuffs their employers pay them only to assist in selling for the employers’ profit more than their own.

The chief remedy for our modern ills may consist in seeking directly what I suggest here is our ultimate end rather than trying to obtain what really are only

means, whether more or less proximate or remote, to that end. For seeking a means which only enables further pursuit of its end but does not actually effect that end, can tend too much to make that means tend to appear itself an end, especially if day after day we keep applying it thus without the results we ought most to seek or if our pursuing, and even achieving, these runs mostly parallel to our main employment. Chesterton said that a fully rational distaste for mud on a living-room carpet requires seeing the real worth of mud and carpets in their proper places; a career not causative of what chiefly concerns us – which for Catholics ought to be having children we should cherish to be co-workers of Christ, whether they themselves will work with wood or else make clothes or grow food for carpenters – can seem as incongruous to a rational mind as mud on carpets, although our masters today would rather pay us, through governments they control, a disability pension for “mental illness” than admit that clinical depression can sometimes result logically from their having soiled with such unreason what we may call the floor in the home of duty. Not seeing the nature of that floor may prevent our realizing how firm a footing our lives could have, however learned we might become in the lore of mosaics men make to ornament it, after the manner of (married) professors who forgo large families so as to better

teach biology. Rather, the better we realize that mankind's purpose is teaching children rightly why to have and how to sustain offspring, and the more directly we focus on that purpose, the more immediate, most likely, will be the means we seize upon to achieve it: we might, then, not so much seek money to purchase food – which just because we buy it with money onerously earned can seem to be enough on which to spend – as to seek food itself, primarily where mostly we can find it naturally, to supply energy for generously generative lovemaking in which the male prospective parent should strive mostly to give her whose living their generating most affects, the larger portion of that physical pleasure which incarnates the joy of seeking to give their God children God himself will cherish.

“FEAST WITH WINE AND...”

Reflecting on G.K. Chesterton’s advice to drink wine not to become happy but to increase happiness we already have, suggests that the happiness most worthy of our thus enhancing it might be the happiness we ought to have at weddings. For Chesterton’s counsel applies even more emphatically to men’s “natural” inclination to seek pleasure in sex, a pleasure not to be sought chiefly because it is pleasure but because it enhances and celebrates, if not our actual joy in being alive, which not everyone can always feel, at least our approving of mankind’s existence, so that those “having sex” ought at least to be sharing gladness at the prospect of men’s and women’s giving life, if not purposefully to be attempting in every instance that particular giving, through which mankind confers on itself, so to speak, the privilege of being permitted the performance of justice and of resembling Deity in “the divine internal activity” of Fatherhood and Sonship

being the same God, through deeds which merit one's being glad to do them with what is proper to oneself.

“Having sex” from any lesser motive is like using wineglasses to drink ginger ale, although even that could possibly be excusable in alcoholics wanting not to give offence on ceremonial occasions they ought to attend. But we must keep in mind that wine and weddings are proper to mankind among all the varied denizens of earth.

Now, not every worthy cause is worth celebrating with wine, nor every worthy enjoyment worth enhancing thereby. Like wine itself, the occasions of our drinking it ought to be additions to than necessary for mankind's basic existence. We ought to celebrate with wine, for instance, not so much a successful harvest, perhaps, as our current harvest's yielding tastier food than last year's or else our just being glad that our own having a good harvest is not necessary to the perfection of the universe. A man who drinks while reading (alone in his own house) ought perhaps to honour another of Chesterton's observations by taking wine with literature and by being content with tea while enjoying what is “only” fiction. (“Literature is a luxury but fiction is a necessity.” Chesterton of all people will forgive me if the quotation is not verbatimly exact.) Men ought definitely not

to drink wine or whisky during business negotiations but rather during conversations more or less lightly entertaining or enlightening. Wine would be fitting for the welcoming of allies but not to planning the campaign with them – even allies are in some sense a kind of “luxury” in those circumstances where we must either fiercely fight or surely die. An ardent suitor ought to be abstemious in every respect.

A man ought especially not to celebrate with strong drink his having achieved any but the most luxurious and unnecessary sort of motor vehicle. For many now may regard possessing a motor vehicle as at least mildly unfortunate in some ways, even when they do not recognize it, when it is necessary, as something of an affront – “like cutting off a healthy leg to walk with a wooden one,” a quotation which also is close if not exactly verbatim, as many sentiments its author quoted also were not. Also, of course, the fuel with which men necessarily (so far) operate mechanical vehicles mainly artificially made necessary, has not an origin vastly noble, consisting as it does (like even a wooden leg rather than a metal one) in material that once was living but later became waste matter decently buried before the wealthy paid their working class to effect its exhumation. A far more fitting way – the only one genuinely fitting – to run machines on fuel would

be to provide for them electricity produced from mechanical sources operated by pedalling or, even more appropriate, by exercise approximating rowing, which for the most part is an activity worth imitating, as having been necessary for centuries to fishermen and sailors and men at war on the sea.

That kind of doing with the body, or with energies of which a living body is at least remotely the source, deeds which with the soul we see are worthy of body and soul, can prompt us to perceive how worthy a work of Divine art the human body is, especially when female, and remind us that admiring the chief work of God in matter is our main duty and highest privilege. Relying thus on bodily work which family members and close neighbours then must do in near allegiance, would promote the handing on by parents of the lore in which their parents had lessoned them, through anecdotes in which former learner might recall also hints of a lesson's unique character and actions and some details of the work or recreation teacher and pupil shared during the lending –for repayment through a later generation – of the lore itself anent life, labour and religion as the “triple task” of making rightness manifest in matter. Learning thus could build a hobbitish kind of history of family and local residents, to whose memory those currently alive might drink many a toast when recounting or hearing such history.

Self-respecting men who respect themselves not so much as the manliness to which men ought to aspire might well drink a toast also to their gaining the clarity of understanding which can demonstrate that we are not obliged by ethics, morality, or economic principle to serve capitalist employers but rather that we would be fully warranted, if they found our arguments irrefutable and resorted then to purchased political power to protect preposterous profits, in our fighting fairly to support ourselves with seized property sufficient for a family to produce at least one necessity for itself and for exchange with other families likewise productive. (Our thus opposing in actual combat a majority of our fellow citizens, though, perhaps would be really justified only when and where there were enough of us to establish and maintain and defend with morally legitimate weaponry a farming or fishing village of decent size.) For that compartmentalization of almost all social functioning by which the capitalist employer profits excessively from others' work has led far too many to accept in practice the false doctrine, maybe rarely taught explicitly but almost everywhere assumed, that ordinary civic duty for most of us consists entirely in selecting, in roundabout fashion, and then paying through taxes, indirectly, fellow citizens to make laws and uphold these and protect us, when in truth all citizens are duty-bound to resist any who would

usurp their natural prerogative of defending themselves and the laws they approve and their obligation to maintain themselves by doing what ought naturally to keep men, and women and children, alive. That is the basic obligation of mankind and we ought not to celebrate with wine or whisky our being able to fulfill it, but rather “fast on water” for not having wanted soon enough to pursue it; however, we might enhance with suitable beverage our gladness at finally being ready to embrace that duty with all our might without deeming it so direly necessity that we ought not pursue if in fact we could fail. (Mother Teresa assured us that God wants us not so much to gain success as to keep faith.) That lighthearted “recklessness” is the spirit in which we ought always to rejoice at weddings. (I admit, though, that it could feel like unmitigated disaster that courage had not envisioned if one wedded while accepting capitalism’s conditions of conferring prosperity and later one woke to simple morality’s demand that one be mainly and materially the efficient cause of wealth well wanted, and especially if one’s spouse were virtually insensible to that reality and insisted on keeping the comforts capitalism affords.) For, as someone said elsewhere, mankind’s being able to continue its existence was never essential to the basic minimum of our nature as rational animal, any more than drinking wine is; God could have created

one human only, to live long or briefly, and the male of our species is its basic minimum, which womanhood magnificently embellishes in a way no animal merely rational would have expected.

Indeed, womanhood might like wine embellish even to the point of allowing a “sexual” expression of it, even such friendship, between the sexes, as consists only in “caring about the same truth,” as C.S. Lewis put it. For, though kissing ought ordinarily to express a lover’s desire to have with the beloved a child to whom “both will speak as with one mouth,” and also excite passion enough to achieve that purpose, it could confine itself to “enacting a poetry abstract” in setting upon lips “merely friendly” a sense of being grateful generally for the part lips play in shaping sounds during conversations companionable which foster attraction that is complimentary but not profound enough for pursuing parenthood. (Even thinking one’s intentions through in such terms beforehand might do much to limit lust.)

AFTERWORD:

“MICE EGRETS” FOR STAYING SANE

Hello. My name is Colin and I'm a schizophrenic.

(Everyone together, now: “Hello, Colin.” Stole this from Scott Feschuk at *Maclean's*, I think.)

A wise friend told me that my telling how I managed my illness and achieved unlunacy might help others manage similar affliction, since for a schizophrenic I must seem either to have managed almost superbly well (“Not brag. Just fact”: *Guns of Will Sonnett*) or just been plain incredibly lucky in my psychiatrist's choice of medication (for me, not him). The secret of my sanity might simply be my not having quit trying to counter, so far as I can by merely writing, or maybe my merely continuing not to ignore, for the sake of mental comfort, wrongness which might drive the sensitive insane. As to what constitutes that, well, you can

look up whatever else I've written that you can find besides this. A friend of mine with a Ph. D in psychology said that going insane is a natural response to the world's own insanity – I think now that maybe the “sanest” moderns are merely the least perceptive – and he later, after even I felt much recovered, declared me the sanest person he knew, and later still, the least vain of his acquaintances. Two out of three, as they say ... Mental distress is “consonant” with seeing anything that is wrong, and only unsound thinking can wish that it were not. Sustaining this even without seeing it should be so perhaps can heal a mind harmed by “failure” to “achieve” what one had deemed one's “due” because “that's how normal psychology works”; someone else's “psychology” had not been “normal” in such a narrow sense. Love, if one is at all to receive it, is a matter of gift, not gain; one ought to be grateful enough for what is already given, to desist from persisting obstinately after only an aspect of it which rightly was not offered. Anyhow, the outcome was consistent with G.K Chesterton's observation that any man ordinarily sound of mind to begin with will realize fully that he could not merit even what he would break every nerve to possess. Striving obliquely to possess can, and maybe ought to, similarly miscarry: a bachelor naive in early middle age essaying to “give love to get sex” in strictly marital chastity (because that is

“necessary” for salvation) could find that she whom he then loved mattered then most, so that now he “needed sex” somewhat more urgently but only to confirm requital and so maintain “sanity.” (It is almost fitting that marital chastity may seem the only attractive kind, since all of us are called either to marry or “only” to assist the married – not by doing things for them so much as by enabling them to do what they themselves ought; our “frustrated” bachelor might well deem later that the greater joy he ought to have pursued should consist in sharing with his beloved the education of their children in the art of enjoying not merely life but the deserving of life.)

That assessment is consistent also with Chesterton’s suggestion that lunacy is closely related to lust and also to depending too narrowly on mere logic – my own contribution here is that one can reason far too logically from the false premise, too widely accepted, that God wills us humans to be lustful. Chesterton suggested also that some men who were thought to be insane might have been “prophets raving in impotent sanity.” For a prophet may impotently “rave” internally if he can only sense grave wrong but not define and point it out for those who don’t yet care about it. So, if someone finds that something much disturbs his soul, maybe he ought just to look for what that something has in common with other things

about which he can clearly see why they are wrong. Hint: most wrongs violate in some way the principle that persons deserve the effects of what they do or that things belong to those who make them.

What I did ultimately was: take my medication religiously and endure the “deadness” of “affect” which it “imposed,” because “isolated chaotic intellection” experienced three times was the worse alternative (I was, more or less, “scared sensible”); I followed my previous daily routine of work though it seemed then to lack all the interest I had been used to find in it; I remain grateful for my reason being in touch with the real; I maintained my original basic attitude to life until I could see and explain how supremely it made sense; and, what is by no means the least of these, despite all the detriment I find insanity funny. (I don’t believe anyone while actually insane ever finds anything funny, although he might feel almost incredibly glad about what he assumes is going to happen, of which no one ordinarily would be glad unless he were sustained wholly by God’s grace; being glad of something is not the same as finding it funny; I’m not glad of having been insane; it’s just funny.) For one or two things I did when first “out of it” are hilarious to look back at, such as my happily clapping a short and dignified District Court judge on the shoulder and greeting him as “Bilbo” – I didn’t find

him funny; I was glad to encounter one of the good guys; they were few – and the manner in which, just after that, I addressed myself to his mature and attractive secretary ... well, actually, “that’s all I have to say about that.” My basic attitude had been “unconsciously rational,” so that my brain’s functioning had not needed much mending by medication, wherein I might indeed have been more fortunate than many, not having required more than three brief stays, about two years apart, in hospital. The second of these became necessary because I hadn’t been told what my trouble was and so assumed that a distant psychiatrist’s advising me to see another in my home area was superfluous, and the third because my psychiatrist temporarily and reasonably allowed me off my meds and a psychotic episode ensued earlier than I had thought I should expect. (I think my longest time off my work as a newspaper reporter was about three weeks.) So perhaps my situation is not much akin to those of others to whom I might have thought it helpful; maybe my smart friend is mistaken, or maybe I’m too coy or lack the knack to supply narrative that could assist another. Or maybe I’m just luckier in my remedies than knowledgeable of them. Or maybe it’s just true that Catholics who go frequently to Confession don’t really need much psychiatric supervision. Also, as my friend pointed out, I benefited from wonderful support by family.