

every kind of case, he must show that there is no sufficient reason to suppose it. The defender of such intervention stands or falls by no particular case. At most he needs but to show a class of cases in which such an agency must be allowed.

Thus the supporters of natural cases are likely to fall unconsciously in justice to the other side. They have a universal assertion to establish. To show that their opponents are sometimes over credulous, though it may pave the way to a demonstration, is not the demonstration itself. To show how fraud often comes in, is not to prove the whole course of Spiritistic phenomena a series of frauds. To show that certain phenomena can be produced naturally is not to show that all can. Nor do the three arguments taken together account for all Spiritistic phenomena, unless the categories corresponding to them divide all such phenomena adequately. Yet some disputants never get beyond these. Hence it will be useful to point out some of the fallacies that too often enter this controversy.

The first is so patent that only the inexperienced fall into it. It is assumed that the opponent holds every Spiritistic phenomena to be diabolical. When this is proved false the conclusion is drawn that none is such. Evidently between the two extremes: "all diabolical," "none diabolical," lies the medium: "some diabolical, some not," which expresses the opponent's true position. This same fallacy of the undivided middle appears, however, under a more specious form. A phenomenon or its cause is taken to be necessarily purely diabolical, or purely natural; so that if anything natural can be shown in it, it is held to be altogether natural. Now this reasoning ignores the middle possibility of a mixed agency; and in matters supernatural or preternatural this mixed agency is so general; fust that much of the practice of mystical theology is the determining in particular cases the respective shares of the good spirit, the bad spirit, and the natural faculties of the subject.

Let us pass then to another fallacy more subtle, which to preternatural causes opposes natural forces, sometimes merely hypothetical, generally doubtful and but partially understood; whose undetermined potentialities are assumed to be capable of any assignable effect on the matter at issue. Were there question of an effect certainly natural, such a method of reaching a provisional hypothesis would be legitimate enough; but when the question is just whether the effect is natural or preternatural, to use a method that assumes it to be natural, is to beg the question. On the one side is the explanation by diabolical agency, no mere theory, but consonant with the great facts of mankind, the Fall, the Redemption, the opposed kingdoms of Christ and Satan, the latter's consuming desire to frustrate the work of grace in every soul; recognized, too, by the Church both in her rituals and in the restrictions placed on its use, as well as in the rigid prohibition, even to the clergy, of books treating magical arts; and indicated not obscurely by the ruin of faith and morals following the practice of Spiritism; on the other side are the supposed potentialities of psychic force, or of the subconscious, or of the subliminal self to produce effects their subject is incapable of in his highest normal activity, and becomes capable of only when reduced to a state approaching, as nearly as possible, the inactivity of death. If there be here an adequate natural cause, the very conditions demand that it be manifested clearly. If this cannot be done, and if the state itself of the human subject does not compel one to see there the cooperation or domination of a superior being, at least one should be philosophical enough to admit that, for the moment, this is the only practical working hypothesis.

Another fallacy is the acceptance of the testimony of those who declare they reproduce all Spiritistic phenomena by purely natural means. Do they reproduce all or only some; and these, are they reproduced adequately, or only partially? But suppose the reproduction, and the question still remains, how far is the assertion of natural means to be believed? That man is naturally truthful and that his testimony must be received, is a fundamental principle of human society. But another principle equally necessary is that when one has an interest in deceiving his testimony must be confirmed. Now we have here the assertion of men whose whole business is, as a rule, to mystify. Their success in life is in proportion to their ability to deceive. That their deceptions may be harmless is not to the point; it is their habit of deceit that matters. On the other hand, the public finds wonders acquiring a new zest from the apparently incredible statement. Hence the clear interest in it for the performer, and its evident need of confirmation. The strongest confirmation would be a complete exposition of the natural means employed. But this, even if possible, could not be looked for from men whose livelihood depends on concealment. Hence such assertions are rather objects of suspicion than grounds of demonstration.

Some reply that the defenders of diabolical agency fall into the same fallacy. This is not so. Uncommitted to universal assertions, maintaining only that out of the mass of Spiritistic phenomena some must be referred to preternatural causes, they are safe from the fallacy of the undivided middle. So far as

they from excluding mixed phenomena and causes, that their necessary function is to analyse, and to separate the natural from the preternatural. Nor can they be said to beg the question. Diabolical activity and magical art are incomplete hypotheses, but certain facts. Yet there is no *a priori* assumption that the phenomena of Spiritism must be explained by them. Each is examined; each is referred to its own sufficient reason. If this be natural, the truth is acknowledged. If the matter remains positively doubtful, it is left in suspense, and the defender of natural agents is welcome to produce them. All that is insisted on is that when prudent judgment declares natural powers incapable of some effect, no mere speculation in negative possibilities may interfere to prevent the attributing of it to a preternatural cause always ready and willing to act. Lastly the defenders diabolical agency rest on disinterested testimony. For the fact of diabolical activity they appeal to the Church and to the Scripture, that is, to God Himself. For the existence of phenomena inexplicable by natural means, they find their witnesses in the opposite school, who are compelled by evidence to confess that from their habit of mind they would rather deny,—Henry Woods, S. J., in America.

GENERAL INTENTION FOR NOVEMBER

RECOMMENDED AND BLESSED BY HIS HOLINESS POPE BENEDICT XV.

JUSTICE AND CHARITY AMONG MEN

The Almighty did not set us down in this world, fated to live alone like hermits in a desert and to work out our destinies alone; He created us to live with one another as social beings. There is a solidarity, an interdependence, among men which binds them together and enables them to carry out the designs of God. Just as the various members of the human body must be interlinked before they can perform the duties assigned to them, so also is it in the social body. If one member of the human body is diseased, or ceases to function, the whole frame suffers, and the physician is called in to prescribe. Analogous effects are observed in the social body. As long as order is preserved in the various orders of human society, that is, as long as men observe justice and charity, we have the reign of peace and harmony; but the contrary effect obtains when members abandon their duties or when they do not fulfil those which are indispensable to the welfare of the whole.

The social body is a vast organism, having its own life and laws and exacting the fulfilment of its own obligations. The agency which keeps it in health and vigor is the reciprocal service rendered by its members, professions and other activities which are exercised by its members. It is on the faithful performance of this reciprocal service that the life and welfare of the social body depend.

Trades and professions are more or less differentiated according to the degree of civilization reached by mankind. In primitive times and in backward countries each family unit usually sufficed for itself. In the matter of food and clothing, all that was needed to meet the wants of primitive people were hunting, fishing and elementary stock raising. But as civilization advanced, specialization advanced also. In the present state of society we could not provide for our most elementary wants without the aid of numberless trades and professions. How could we clothe ourselves nowadays if no one raised cotton or wool? How could we feed ourselves and sustain life if there were no farmers to grow corn or meat or fruit? Where should we lodge if there were no architects, carpenters or masons? How should we have all these things at hand if there were no means of transportation? What security should we have in obtaining what we need, if there were no leaders to coordinate national service and maintain order? Finally, what would happen if there were none to see that justice were observed in the distribution of the necessary things of life? Surely we are all dependent on one another; we are at the mercy of one another.

It is easy to see that all these obligations of reciprocal service involve the human conscience, which warns men that they are not free to do as they please whenever the welfare of others is concerned. The sense of the present General Intention seems to be that all tradesmen and professional men are called upon to observe justice, to perform their duties with care, competency, and fidelity, so that they may have nothing to reproach themselves with either before God or their neighbor. Only in this way, it would seem, can the rights of every man be guaranteed, his needs satisfied, the public welfare assured, harmony reigned among men, and the ideal of a peaceful Christian society be realized.

To what extent are tradesmen and professional men called on to fulfil these obligations? This is an important question to which we fear may give very little thought. There are undoubtedly some men who are moved by the desire of honorable dealing with their neighbor and who act according to the social sense, a keen instinct of human solidarity urges them and they feel guilty if they fail to follow their conscience.

Others are dominated by a natural taste, even passion, for order and for work well done. But with many others nowadays, perhaps the majority, professional honor would seem to be on the decline. Ignorant or heedless of their obligations to their fellow-men, this third class allow their petty, selfish interests to dominate the higher interests of the social body of which they are members. They care little what effect their acts may have on the public welfare. The terms "justice" and "charity" have little meaning for them, merely words and nothing more. Will not this attitude explain the existence of false weights and measures among merchants? Have we not here the secret of those "get-rich-quick" schemes, frenzied finance, stock manipulation, etc., which the newspapers tell us about? Will not this attitude explain the greater number of the strikes among workmen in recent months which have resulted in so much misery and suffering?

It rarely dawn on tradesmen and professionals of this mentality to ask themselves whether or not there is a danger of violating commutative justice, or whether their acts may not involve their consciences in the meshes of sin. Commutative justice controls all exchange of service between man and man; it exacts strict equality of value; it regulates contracts of buying and selling. It has a word to say in every deal one man makes with another. A seller who deceives a buyer either in quantity or quality of goods violates commutative justice and is bound to restitution, for he has in his possession that which he must not retain. Commutative justice also controls agreements made between employers and workmen, and by the term "workman" is meant not merely men employed in manual labor, but all classes, from the street-sweeper to the learned professor. This form of justice is violated by the employer who refuses his workmen a wage proportionate to their labor. Reciprocally, the negligent or indolent workman who does not furnish labor equivalent to the wage he receives also violates commutative justice. And thus the conscience of both employer and workman may become involved.

There is no one who does not perceive the importance of this very simple doctrine, as the opportunities for violating commutative justice are legion in every land. Count, if you can, the number of transactions that take place daily in large commercial, industrial, or agricultural centers. Count the millions of workmen who put themselves in the service of others in some way or other. We are here face to face with an enormous mass of mutual contracts, which, if they were not strictly lived up to, would entail a flood of injustice of all sorts, frauds, deceptions, robberies, and so forth, all liable to compromise the welfare of the social body. Suffice it to say that the moral law cannot be ignored in our dealings with one another. Some day we shall be called to account before God on the way we have observed it.

The public conscience has also the obligation of observing charity in dealing with others. If this obligation has not the sterner character of justice, at least it extends over a wider field and its applications to our daily lives are more numerous. The Gospel tells us that we should love our neighbors as ourselves. In Gospel sense our neighbors are not merely our relatives, our friends, those who live in our home, but all men, even the passer-by and the stranger. The love enjoined by the precept extends even to the providing for his positive needs. Charity obliges us to feed our neighbor when he is hungry, to quench his thirst, to clothe his nakedness. Here again our solidarity as members of the social body is called into action. How can we help one neighbor in such needs without the aid of others? If there were no bakers, our neighbors or clothiers, even a St. Vincent de Paul could not give a poor tramp anything more than a cup of water; and he could perform this little act of charity only on condition that the men at the aqueduct were not out on strike!

These few remarks will show us how fully we are dependent on one another and how the honor and conscience of tradesmen and professional men may be seriously compromised if they fall in their duty to their neighbor. A prompt straightening out of the public conscience in this matter of paramount importance, where this operation is necessary, and it would seem to be necessary at the present time. The late War has warped the minds of thousands of men, leaving them nothing but their instincts, oftentimes brutal, to guide them. Those vast numbers must be led back to a sense of justice and charity, the two virtues which will guide them in their duties to both God and their fellow-men and make them useful members of the social body.

The Catholic Church, with the many supernatural means at her disposal, has all that is required for directing those men along the true path, and she asks only a fair chance to enable her to do her work. One of the most promising attempts in Canada at the present time for the straightening out of the social conscience of tradesmen and professional men is the Closed Retreat Movement, which is taking root amongst us. In those retreats men plunge into solitude where, alone for a few days with God, they take stock with themselves. They ask themselves, what is God's plan in this world any-

was, and they look to see how they have been carrying it out. In those lonely days of solitude, men go down to the essence of things, and usually come out with a new orientation given to their moral and social responsibilities, not merely as individuals but also with a keen sense of their obligation as members of the social body. Let tradesmen and professional men make the experiment of a closed retreat. They will learn there what their obligations to God and their neighbor are, and they will have the courage and the grace to do their duty to both with fidelity and constancy, as it becomes the discipline of Him who said, "The Son of man came to serve not to be served."

RASH JUDGMENT

By Matthew J. W. Smith

Rash judgments are forbidden by the eighth commandment. If we judge a person to be wicked, without having sufficient reason for doing so, we commit sin, and if the matter be serious, it is a grave sin. All have a right to good esteem unless they have forfeited it by their bad conduct, and in judging others rashly, we take an authority upon ourselves that we do not possess. Judge not that you may not be judged," was the saying of our Lord Jesus Christ. "For with what judgment you judge, you shall be judged; and with what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again." (Matthew vii.)

Rash judgments and evil doubts of others are a rather frequent failing. They are wrong but are not usually gravely sinful in persons striving to lead good lives, for our depraved nature is rather prone to them and they do not generally inflict serious harm on our neighbor's reputation when indulged in by the good. If it is not sufficient to deem another wicked if we have proof that he is, and we may suspend judgment if we do not know whether a person is good or bad. There are so many bad persons in the world that we have to be on our guard, but it is not necessary to be suspicious of everybody. Rash judgments frequently arise from the malice of our own hearts, or from envy and hatred.

Just as we are forbidden to make rash judgments, so we are forbidden to express them. The prohibition goes even further. We are not allowed to tell even what we know positively to be the secret sins of another. Every man has a right to his good name, whether he be living or dead. And not only men, but also corporate bodies, have a right to their good names, so that we are not allowed to detract or slander them. Tale-bearing, which consists in making trouble between friends by telling tales to the disadvantage of one of them, is an obnoxious form of sin against the eighth commandment.

If a man has been tried and condemned in an open court of justice for a crime, there is no sin in talking about it. But if such a man went to a place where his sin was not known, uncharitable harm might be done to him by telling of his downfall.

Similarly, if a person committed a sin which became common report in one town, and another told it in another community where knowledge of it would be sure to penetrate before long, the teller would not be guilty of sin. Nor would it be wrong to tell of another's sin if it were necessary to protect the innocent, etc.

It is sinful to listen to a slanderer, and he who slanders his neighbor must correct the injury done so far as he is able. A story is told of an old woman who was constantly talking about her neighbors. She confessed it over and over again. One day the priest told her to take a feather pillow to the top of a hill and scatter the feathers to the winds. The next time she came to confession, he told her to go out now and gather the feathers.

"But it can't be done. I scattered them to the winds a month ago," she declared.

"Yes, and you have been scattering your neighbors' good names to the winds in the same way for years," said the priest. "You can't repair that injury any more than you can gather up the feathers. But you will have to do your best. Gather as many feathers as you can and it will teach you a lesson."

The gravity of sins committed in talking about our neighbors depends upon the harm we do their reputations. If we seriously harm their good name, and the sin is done with sufficient reflection and full consent of the will, it is mortal.

In our daily lives, there are often things that occur which offend us, and we wonder just to what extent we can discuss them with others. Father MacEachern, in his Moral Series (vol. iii, starting on page 177), says: "One person is often offended by another. The evil deed is not known to others. He is sad and downcast over the offense. He may be excused if, for the sake of conscience or advice, he speaks of the offense to a friend. Servants may, in like manner, reveal the injustice done them by their employers. Wives may thus from their husbands. Children may mention mistreatment they have received from a parent. This must always be done prudently.

The offender indeed suffers some injury to his good name. Yet the offended party is justified in seeking advice and even consolation."

Father MacEachern points out that it is sometimes necessary to reveal evil done by another for the sake of protecting a third

party or for his own sake. We can reveal the crime to those who should know it under such circumstances. Newspaper writers have the right to reveal secret crimes that would render a political candidate unfit for the office he seeks, but not simply to gratify the curiosity of their readers. Historians have greater privileges. They should tell the whole truth, but must guard against injuring the relatives of persons recently dead.

Sometimes the revelation of a slight fault may cause serious injury and be a mortal sin, as when a person would remark, in idle gossip, that a certain private secretary was talkative and cause him to lose his job. Where material injury is done, it must be repaired, just as stolen goods must be returned.

Shakespeare, in *Othello*, penned an immortal truth when he declared: "Good name, in man or woman, dear my lord, is the immediate jewel of their souls; who steals my purse steals trash; 'tis something, nothing; 'twas mine, 'tis his, and he'll soon have a ducat, and he'll soon have a wife; but he that filches from me my good name, rakes me of that which neither enriches him nor makes me poor indeed."

In stopping others from detracting their neighbors in our presence, we can be guarded by prudence. We cannot encourage such conversations, but sometimes we cannot condemn the detractors or calumniators by speaking without causing a fight or serious annoyance to ourselves. Hence silence or a deft switching of the conversation would be all that would be required. Where we can do good by protesting, however, we should do it.

DIVORCE AND ITS REMEDY

We are gratified to note that even our secular editors are becoming awake to the evils that our easy divorce laws are bringing upon the country. We read in the *Little Rock Daily News*:

"If something is not done to curb the divorce evil in this country, and to make the American vow a thing more sacred, the American freedsman is doomed to destruction. The dockets of the divorce courts of the country are crowded as never before. Never has this docket been so heavy in Pulaski county before. Hasty marriages, growing out of infatuations of youth, formed largely on emotion and passion, are responsible for nearly all the broken vows, the shattered freeds and the ruined faces of the home."

"Until death do us part," has come to mean no more to some people, than the idle summer romance. Many people are married now with as little thought of the future, and as little care for the consequences as though marriage was but for a day or a week; and knowing full well that the bond may be dissolved on the slightest pretext, they enter into a sacred contract with the reckless dash of heedless youth.

"If only those who swear falsely or frivolously at the marriage altar suffered there would be little objection.

If those who dug the pit alone could fall into it, innocent children and society not suffer the consequences, it might be all right. Even then, there might be some law to curb the wilful, and save the foolish from lives of sin and suffering."

In creating the married estate, the Almighty said, "What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." And the edict meant more than a rebuke to the wicked destroyer of the home; it meant, once people married, they became man and wife, and "ye twain shall be one," and it meant that they should be one for life, one in purpose, in thought, in action, united now, united tomorrow, united always, and in the sight of High Heaven no man made law can ever nullify the bond that God ordained. Courts may give divorces, decrees may disrupt home and scatter families, but nothing save death can ever change the relations of a man and woman once joined in holy wedlock.

All this shows that the editor has imbibed the true Christian idea of marriage. We are rather disappointed then to learn that his remedy is to appoint a divorce commission!

"There should be in every county in the United States a divorce commission, composed of men and women of unquestioned character, of unquestioned integrity, and before any man or woman could go to the court with a divorce proceeding they would have to submit their case to this commission, and have this commission make the recommendations to the court."

We are afraid that the divorce commission would soon become as lax as our courts in recommending divorces. Why not live up to the command of Almighty God, quoted in the former paragraph? "What God hath joined together let not man put asunder." That is the only remedy for the divorce evil. All palliatives are failures. And the Catholic Church alone enforces on her adherents the teaching that marriage is a sacrament and a holy thing that lasts for life.—True Voice.

GOD'S WILL BE DONE

Grant me, I beseech Thee, Almighty and most Merciful God, fervently to desire, wisely to search out, and perfectly to fulfill, all that is well-pleasing unto Thee.—St. Thomas Aquinas.

Marriage and Divorce

By Rev. A. P. Mahoney Professor of Sacred Scripture in St. Peter's Seminary, London

With a foreword by Rt. Rev. M. F. Fallon, D. D. Bishop of London

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