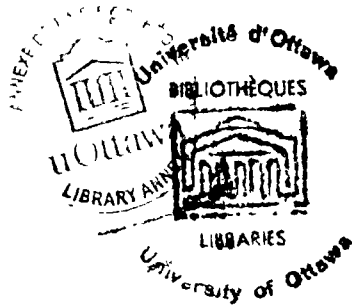


**CHESTERTON'S EDUCATIONAL THINKING IN THE
LIGHT OF DIVINI ILLIUS MAGISTRI**

by Sister Mary Marguerite Flanagan, S.S.A.

Thesis presented to the Faculty of
Psychology and Education of the
University of Ottawa as partial
fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy



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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This thesis was prepared under the direction of Dr. Lionel Desjarlais to whom gratitude is expressed for his professional guidance, his interest and encouragement.

The writer also thanks her religious Superiors for having afforded the time and the material assistance necessary for the accomplishment of this work.

CURRICULUM STUDIORUM

Sister Mary Marguerite Flanagan, S.S.A., was born in 1907, in Pawtucket, Rhode Island.

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INTRODUCTION

This study consists of a critical examination of the educational ideas of Gilbert Keith Chesterton in the light of the Encyclical Divini Illius Magistri, by Pope Pius XI,¹ in order to determine the extent of their agreement with Catholic teachings.

It must be admitted that although Chesterton is renowned on both sides of the Atlantic as an essayist, poet, novelist, biographer, critic, and playwright, his name is not generally associated with education. Hence, any attempt to organize and appraise his ideas on education may well be wondered at, especially when, at first sight, the four following facts seem to militate against the feasibility of a project of this nature: (1) Although Chesterton wrote close to a hundred books, not one can be found treating entirely of education as such; (2) Chesterton entered the Catholic Church only fourteen years before his death; therefore, most of his writing was done as a non-Catholic; (3) he did no formal teaching; and (4) he did not claim to be an educator. In fact, he said of himself, "I do not say that I am an educationist; God forbid."²

¹ Pius XI, Divini Illius Magistri, New York, The America Press, 1936.

² G.K. Chesterton, Come to Think of It, London, Methuen and Company, 1930, p. 160.

However, strange as it may seem, the first of the above facts aroused the curiosity that inspired this study; for the perusal of Chesterton's books soon made it apparent that his ideas on education might be found scattered throughout his numerous works on topics seemingly far afield from the subject. These ideas the present writer has long desired to study in the light of the Encyclical; and as a preliminary to this work, Chesterton's ideas have been gathered into an indexed anthology, Chesterton's Ideas on Education,³ consisting of 475 pages on 42 educational topics, and listing 141 bibliographical items.

These excerpts have been collected from his books, from The Illustrated London News to which Chesterton contributed from 1905 to 1936; from his own paper, G.K.'s Weekly, which he edited from 1925 to 1936; and from the numerous periodicals containing his articles. Hence, it may be reasonably assumed that all of his works available to the public have been sifted for their yield of his educational views.

It might be of interest to state here that when G.K.'s Weekly was being combed for significant findings, correspondence with Chesterton's secretary, Dorothy Collins,

³ Sister M. Marguerite Flanagan, Chesterton's Ideas on Education, unpublished Master's thesis presented to the School of Education of Boston College, Massachusetts, 1953, 475 p.

provided precious help in the wise choice of articles. In one of her letters she said:

with regard to G.K.'s weekly, I think you can safely use 'Top and Tail', and 'Straws in the Wind' from G.K.'s weekly, but certainly not the Leader or 'Notes of the Week', which were sometimes his but very often not.⁴

As to the second statement that Chesterton was a Catholic during only about one third of his literary career, the question arose concerning the difference, if any, there might be between his educational thinking before and after his conversion. Perhaps no significant difference can be expected when one considers his reply to W.R. Titterton, his associate editor, who asked him whether joining the Catholic Church made a violent break in his life: "I had always had the Catholic point of view."⁵

This point of view seems to be consistent in his writings in defense of basic human rights and distributive justice in England during the first quarter of the twentieth century. On this is based the hypothesis that the same Catholic principles that governed his treatment of other social questions applied as well to whatever educational ideas he may have had.

⁴ Dorothy Collins, Personal correspondence with the author, letter dated December 1, 1951.

⁵ W.R. Titterton, "G.K. Chesterton: Great Catholic Apologist", in Clergy Review, Vol. 12, No. 1, issue of July 1936, p. 1.

Moreover, although it is true that Chesterton did no formal teaching, Hilaire Belloc, who knew him best, did not hesitate to call him a teacher. When speaking of his gift of parallelism and its vast effect in the conveyance of truth, he compared it to the Gospel parables as a method of teaching and of illumination:

Always, in whatever manner he launched the parallelism, he produced the shock of illumination. He taught.

He made men see what they had not seen before. He made them know. He was an architect of certitude, whenever he practiced this art in which he excelled.

The example of the parable in Holy writ will occur at once to the reader. It is of the same origin and of similar value.⁶

To know what he taught, why he taught, and how he taught, serves as an impetus in the present analysis of what he taught, whenever he touched on the subject of education.

Finally, the fact that Chesterton did not claim to be an educationist does not preclude the possibility of his writings saying it for him. As ever, the words of Divine Wisdom ring true, "By their fruits you shall know them."⁷

So, despite the fact that it is not the purpose of this work to state the case for Chesterton as an educator according to the generally accepted meaning of the term, it

⁶ Hilaire Belloc, On the Place of Gilbert Chesterton in English Letters, New York, Sheed and Ward, 1940, p. 39.

⁷ Matthew, 7:16.

should not be wholly unexpected if from the selection and analysis of his thinking there should emerge a body of ideas, definite, consistent, and comprehensive enough to be called an educational theory.

While granting Chesterton's originality of expression, it would be naive indeed to expect that his ideas were original. They were much too basic for that, dealing mostly, as they did, with eternal truths and first principles and bearing about them something of the spirit of the Oxford Movement whose fundamental note was its anti-modernism as "it stood pro causa Dei against the apostasy of the modern world".⁶

In order to avoid confusion of terms it might be useful to state here that the word Christian, as applied to education, principles, and the like, means Catholic. This clarification is called for in view of the nature of the work involving in large measure the Catholic ideas of an Anglo-Catholic author.

Moreover, Chesterton's statements on the family, the school, and the state, refer to these institutions in their English setting.

A search through the literature published about Chesterton during his lifetime and since, offers reasonable assurance that no comparative study of this kind, linking

⁶ Christopher Dawson, The Spirit of the Oxford Movement, London, Sheed and Ward, 1934, p. 136.

Chesterton's educational ideas with those of Pius XI in Divini Illius Magistri, has hitherto been made. However a thesis entitled Chesterton's Ideas on Education was presented to the University of Ottawa in 1954 in which "The author has linked together in a corporate whole the scattered ideas of Chesterton and has commented on his stand where various issues were concerned."⁹

The method followed in the present study consists in the organization of Chesterton's ideas into the framework of the Encyclical where they will be measured for consistency with Catholic principles. Simultaneously, sensitivity to the evolution of his educational thinking over a period of thirty-six years will be maintained throughout.

The reason for the choice of the Encyclical, Divini Illius Magistri, as the criterion for this study will be explained in Chapter I. Chapter II will treat of Chesterton and his times. This should give a glimpse of the social forces that influenced his writings. In Chapter III, his ideas on the nature and the importance of education step into the spotlight of the criterion which, from then on, will focus on each of the ideas as the remaining chapters present them for scrutiny. Chapter IV will expose his views on the Church,

⁹ Ralph Sturm, Chesterton's Ideas on Education, unpublished Master's thesis presented to the Faculty of Arts of the University of Ottawa, Ontario, 1954, p. v.

the family, and the State as the agents of education. Chapter V, dealing with Chesterton and the educand, will necessarily reveal his philosophy of man, his nature and his destiny, while Chesterton's opinion on the importance of environment will be considered in Chapter VI.

The Conclusion will try to present a clear, concise, and definite report of the results of the investigation instigated by the problem.

CHAPTER I

THE CRITERION

The problem which involves a careful examination and analysis of Gilbert Keith Chesterton's educational ideas for the purpose of determining the extent of their agreement with Catholic teachings on education created the need for an effective criterion against which to measure this agreement. This need seemed best answered by the Encyclical, Divini Illius Magistri, issued by Pope Pius XI on December 31, 1929. The translation used is that published by The America Press.¹ The reasons for the choice of this document as the criterion will be set forth in this chapter. It must be pointed out, however, that no attempt will be made to trace the historical background of the Encyclical since it is to be appraised only on its merits as a criterion for the present study.

As such, its validity and its reliability are derived respectively from the basic Christian truths underlying its statements, and its official promulgation over the signature of Pope Pius XI which makes the work his whether he be the sole author or not.

The outstanding characteristics that favored the choice of the Encyclical as criterion may be said to be its

¹ Pius XI, Divini Illius Magistri, New York, The America Press, 1936.

uniqueness, its comprehensiveness, its permanence and its flexibility.

1. Its Uniqueness.

It may be considered to be unique in that it is the only Encyclical entirely devoted to the subject of education; and this exclusive treatment of the subject makes it a most efficient tool for the analysis of Chesterton's ideas. This uniqueness, however, does not mean to imply that the Church through the centuries has not been solicitous for the Christian formation of youth; nor does it call into question the pronouncements that so many Popes have made under the pressure of their deep concern for the souls of the young. In fact, Pope Pius XI seems most eager to identify himself with his worthy predecessors by quoting copiously from their documents in order "to renew and confirm their declarations".² "Indeed it would be wrong to expect originality of utterances which must always be restatements or clarifications of the universal doctrine of the Church."³ Thus, when the Pontiff treats of the divine mandate of the Church to teach, and of her rights deriving from her supernatural motherhood, he

² Ibid., p. 26.

³ "The Pope and Education", editorial in Commonweal, Vol. 11, No. 13, issue of January 29, 1930, p. 353.

recalls the Letter, Quum non sine, and the Encyclical, Libertas, of Pius IX,⁴ along with the Encyclical, Singulari quadam, of St. Pius X.⁵ When he wishes to stress the nature and the extent of the role of the Church in education, he draws on the wisdom of Leo XIII⁶ as found in Nobilissima Gallorum Genis; and he restates the mind of the Church on the duties of parents in Pope Leo's Encyclicals,⁷ Verbum Novarum and Sapientiae Christianae. He agrees with the same Pontiff when he uses Immortale Dei⁸ to describe what the relations between Church and State should be, and when he points to the Encyclicals,⁹ Caritas, Quod ultimum, and Militantes Dei, to remind the modern world of what the Church expects her schools to be. Finally, when speaking of teaching and methods the Holy Father advises Christian teachers to keep in mind what Leo XIII had to say in Inscrutabile.¹⁰

The doctrine expounded in these references though not intrinsically new, was considered by the Holy Father to be worthy of emphasis when he used it to support and enrich

4 Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 5.

5 Ibid., p. 6.

6 Ibid., p. 6.

7 Ibid., p. 11.

8 Ibid., p. 16.

9 Ibid., p. 27.

10 Ibid., p. 30.

the timely message he gave to the world in 1929 regarding the educational problems with which it was then faced. And his exhortation to the whole of Christendom to heed and honor the Church's ancient doctrine shows "how clear and secure is her position and how unchanging and sure are her directives as she leads mankind on the way to salvation".¹¹ If, then, the search for new doctrine proves to be in vain, it is amply rewarded by finding the old doctrines wedded to new visions in full harmony.

Another aspect of its uniqueness is the manner in which it is addressed. Whereas, generally, an Encyclical is directed to the members of the Hierarchy and through them to the Church at large, this Letter is sent to "all the Faithful of the Catholic World"¹² as well. Nowadays, of course, it is not at all unusual for the Sovereign Pontiff to speak directly to his spiritual children through the modern media of communication. The Encyclical, then, was intended also for the England of Chesterton's day, and there is no denying the fact that the Encyclical, which was intended for England as well as for the rest of the world, provides a very workable criterion for the message that Chesterton had been delivering on similar issues from as early as 1900.

¹¹ E.M. Bornet, Foreword, in Papal Teachings on Education, Boston, Daughters of St. Paul, 1950, p. 9.

¹² Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 1.

The Encyclical is unique also in the new adaptations that it introduces when treating of the State, the Family, Environment and the Laity.¹³ The most notable of these adaptations is, without doubt, that which concerns the role of the State. It had been traditional to relegate the State to the care of the material and temporal interests of the country, while education was fostered by individual initiative, private institutions and principally by the Church. In fact, had no limits been set by the Church in defense of her rights the whole educational structure would everywhere have been long since monopolized by the State. There is, however, no nation, and consequently, no State without a soul, without a culture, without an ideal; and there is, moreover, no State that lacks interest in the education of youth, be it for weal or woe. The Encyclical recognized this; and while it clearly restates the duty of the State to protect the rights of the Church and the Family, and defines the limits beyond which it may not legislate,¹⁴ it goes much further when it urges the State to take positive measures to fulfill the task of promoting education. These measures are: (1) to open its own schools when this is necessary to supplement the educational activities of the Church and the Family; (2) to provide for

¹³ Paul Foulquier, L'Église et l'École, Paris, Éditions Spes, 1947, p. 139.

¹⁴ Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 15.

the professional training of candidates for certain public functions; and (3) to exact that the citizens have the necessary knowledge of their civic duties as well as a certain degree of culture.¹⁵ Never before has a sovereign Pontiff officially affirmed the positive rights of the State in educational matters; and it is precisely in this area of state responsibility that the Encyclical serves as the perfect criterion for the ideas propounded by Chesterton during his unremitting struggle for distributive justice in his own country.

Besides this new emphasis on the duties of the state the Encyclical presents a fresh view of the Family as well. It is true that education belongs by nature to the parents,¹⁶ and this truth it reaffirms, but in a much more explicit manner than is found in previous documents. It teaches that not only do public educational institutions exist to assist the family, but that the educative action of the Church itself is dependent on the choice of the parents whose prior rights with regard to their children she has always respected and defended. As Paul Foulquier says,

15 Ibid.

16 Ibid., p. 4.

Ce sont, en effet, les parents qui présentent leurs enfants au baptême qui les soumet à la juridiction ecclésiastique. Ainsi la mission éducatrice de la famille précède non seulement celle de l'Etat, mais encore celle de l'Eglise.¹⁷

It would be a mistake to conclude from this that parents possess educational rights that are absolute and despotic, that is, independent of the child's destiny and of the natural and the Divine Law.¹⁸ Neither must it be understood to mean that Catholic parents are not obliged to have their children baptized and brought up as Christians.¹⁹ The Encyclical, however, does make it clear how much the Church respects the rights of all parents in this matter; and it is within the framework of this teaching that an attempt will be made to fit the numerous statements in defense of the family that run through so much of Chesterton's controversial writing.

Unique again is the stress put on the importance of environment in the work of education. It is true that as early as 1897 Pope Leo XIII called for this "sacred atmosphere"²⁰ in the schools; but Pope Pius XI²¹ goes beyond the

17 Foulquié, Op. Cit., p. 129.

18 Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 11.

19 Ibid., p. 12.

20 Ibid., p. 27.

21 Ibid.

THE CRITERION

school when he states that it is of the utmost importance that all the conditions and circumstances that surround the child during the period of his formation correspond exactly to the end proposed. This principle applies to the whole educational process. It involves the condemnation of secular schools; it teaches parents that there is no better way for them to bring up their children than to set them the example of a truly Christian home;²² and it influences the young in their social relations, their reading and recreational activities. In short, it is a Christian atmosphere that the Holy Father advocates as a necessary condition for a perfect education. Chesterton was of the same mind when he wrote four years earlier that "men must know very little about education if they do not know that children can learn from a tone or an atmosphere".²³

Finally, the Pope of Catholic Action brings to the fore the importance of the role of the laity in the apostolate of teaching; and after expressing his consolation and gratitude for the work they are doing in the schools, he urges the faithful to pray that their numbers increase. Moreover, he exhorts the pastors of souls to consider the formation of lay teachers one of their principal concerns.²⁴ A far cry, this,

22 Ibid., p. 24.

23 G.K. Chesterton, "The Desert Island". in G.K.'s Weekly, Vol. 1, issue of August 29, 1925, p. 529.

24 Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 30.

from the idea that prevailed for centuries that the education of young Christians belonged exclusively to the priests and religious who sought the help of the laity only when this was necessary to supply for the insufficiency of their numbers.²⁵

In perfect agreement with Pope Pius XI, the Sacred Synod of the Second Vatican Council also professed its gratitude not only to the priests and Religious men and women, but also to 'the laity who by their evangelical self-dedication are devoted to the noble work of education and of school of every type and level [...]'.²⁶ Likewise, this same Sacred Synod, again echoing the words of the Encyclical, exhorts, not only the pastors of souls, but also "the faithful to assist to their utmost in finding suitable methods of education and programs of study and in forming teachers who can give youth a true education".²⁷

A glance back over the Encyclical's claims to uniqueness shows it to be: (1) the only Encyclical entirely on education to date; (2) the first addressed directly to the faithful; (3) the first to introduce new adaptations regarding the State, the Family, Environment, and the Laity.

²⁵ Foulquis, Op. Cit., p. 129.

²⁶ Second Vatican Council, Declaration on Christian Education, Washington, National Catholic Welfare Conference, October 28, 1965, p. 12.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 7.

2. Its Comprehensiveness.

Pope Pius XI expressly says that it was not his purpose in writing the Encyclical to treat of education in its well-nigh inexhaustible range of theory and practice, but simply to summarize its main principles.²⁸ Still, so vast is the scope of the document as it stands that within its range any ideas on education can find a sure testing ground illumined by the double light of reason and Revelation. It is a criterion of just such dimensions that is required to evaluate adequately the ideas that flow from Chesterton's pen on a great diversity of educational issues.

These dimensions will be studied in relation to: (1) those to whom the Encyclical applies; (2) the extent of the matter treated; (3) the nature of the educand; and (4) general educational problems.

First of all, when the question arises as to whom the Encyclical applies, a distinction must be made between the Sovereign Pontiff's role as teacher and that of legislator.²⁹ When he teaches, it is in obedience to the direct command of Christ, "Going therefore, teach ye all nations."³⁰

²⁸ Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 2.

²⁹ "The Pontiff, Teacher and Legislator", editorial in America, Vol. 42, No. 16, Issue of February 8, 1930, p. 422.

³⁰ Matthew, 28:19.

And his lesson is directed to all men, irrespective of creed or nationality. As a legislator, however, he extends or retracts the sphere of his legislation within the limits of the power given him by Christ.

Now it is obvious that in his Encyclical Pius XI does not speak as a legislator. As already stated, he adds nothing to the existing laws, his purpose being to explain the principles on which these natural and supernatural laws are based, and to urge obedience to them. With this in mind he sets forth the rights and duties of the Church, the family and the State in education, bringing emphasis to bear on the principles taught by the Church from the beginning. Clearly, then, the Encyclical presents the Pontiff, not as a legislator, but as a teacher, and in this capacity he enunciates particular or general truths in morals or religion which are valid everywhere. Therefore, it is untenable to contend that though the Encyclical is addressed to the faithful of the Catholic world it is directed only to them.

The fact that on the whole the Encyclical was favorably received by many non-Catholics and their clergy is evidence that its real purpose and meaning were understood.³¹ Rabbi Jacob Katz, of the Montefiore Congregation in the Bronx, New York, readily grasps the point that Pope Pius XI

³¹ "Thinking with Rome", editorial in America, Vol. 42, No. 19, issue of February 15, 1930, p. 447.

speaks in the Encyclical as a teacher when he says:

Discarding all creedal differences, the educator of youth of whatever race or religion is inclined to agree with the Pope's Encyclical. The recently published full text of that wonderful document reveals the fullness of the heart, the maturity of the mind, and the eternal vision of a teacher of religion who seeks to give his own, we believe, a whole philosophy of life. Who can disagree with the Pope's criticism of modern education and modern life? Let his weighty words become an inspiration to Catholics, and a stimulus to Jews to give their youth a Jewish education.³²

But it would be unrealistic to expect all non-Catholics to recognize the universality of the teaching role of the Holy Father and to experience no difficulty in understanding the bill of rights in education which he claims for the Church. An editorial³³ in America states that this difficulty is based on the fact that they have never accustomed themselves to the idea of a religious society which is supreme in matters of religion and morality. The spiritual supremacy which Catholics attribute to the Church founded by Christ they attribute either to the State or to themselves in the exercise of their own private judgment.

Further insight on the Protestant point of view is provided by Dr. Luther Allan Weigle, Dean of the Divinity

³² Jacob Katz, New York Times, issue of January 27, 1930, quoted in "Habli Katz and the Pope", editorial in America, Vol. 42, No. 18, issue of February 8, 1930, p. 423.

³³ "The Rights of the Church in Education", editorial in America, Vol. 42, No. 17, issue of February 1, 1930, p. 398.

school of Yale University in his commentary on the Encyclical in which he stated in part:

The protestant dissents from the view of authority in religion which underlies the entire document; the almost wholly deductive character of the argument is to him unconvincing, especially since he questions its premises; and its statements are so general that they seem to him to combine scholastic precision with realistic vagueness. The protestant is conscious that his thought and language move in a different universe of discourse. There is thus an ambivalence of thought and language when Catholic and Protestant meet in discussion of a document like this.³⁴

However that may be, it is worth noting that just a month earlier the same Dr. Weigle disagreed with the editor of The New York Times who declared that the Pontiff's 'whole thought on the subject of education by the state appears to be [...], against American ideals and practice'.³⁵ His reply would not have been out of place within the very text of the Encyclical itself:

When the public school ignores religion, it conveys to our children the suggestion that religion is without truth or value. It becomes, quite unintentionally, I grant, a fosterer of atheism and irreligion. The present system reflects the conviction of no one, except such freethinkers as have been brought up in atheism.³⁶

³⁴ L.A. Weigle, "Protestant Comment on the Encyclical on Education by Pope Pius XI", in Current History, Vol. 31, No. 6, issue of March 1930, p. 1039.

³⁵ "The Pope and Education", editorial in The New York Times, issue of January 20, 1930, p. 20, col. 4 and 5.

³⁶ L.A. Weigle, quoted in "Tears of The Times", editorial in America, Vol. 42, No. 17, issue of February 1, 1930, p. 398.

Thus, the comprehensiveness of the Encyclical can be seen to be such that it includes all men in its teaching; for although it does not pretend to legislate, it has a message and a spirit to transmit to all. And even those who tend to quarrel with the dogmatic positions set forth cannot but respect the basic principles underlying its entire structure. When the Encyclical first appeared, bigots who had not yet read it began to prate of invaded parental rights and divided civic allegiance, but the din soon died away because "Once the document was examined, most non-Catholics discovered that though they might not agree with some minor applications, its deeply religious appeal they could not withstand."³⁷

That so many non-Catholics could agree with so much of the teaching contained in the Encyclical does not render less extraordinary the fact that the non-Catholic Chesterton unwittingly anticipated so much of it by many years in his writings, lectures and debates. Indeed, so orthodox were the doctrines he advocated even in the early years of the century that it has been said of those years: "In all probability he had not read a word of Catholic social doctrine nor heard of the great encyclicals, but his spirit and doctrine are

³⁷ Paul L. Blakely, "The Encyclical on Education", in America, Vol. 43, No. 12, issue of July 20, 1930, p. 201.

those of a man reared on the encyclicals of Leo XIII and Pius XI.³⁶ Nevertheless, the investigation of the real extent of his agreement with the criterion remains the purpose of the present study.

The note of comprehensiveness may also be applied to the extent of the matter which includes (1) educational authority, (2) educational purpose, and (3) educational method. By educational authority is meant all those responsible for education, whose right and duty it is to contribute in their respective capacities to the complete education of the child. The Encyclical clearly states what these rights and duties are that are proper to the Church, the Family and the State. Moreover, it specifies the conditions that should govern their interrelations if their God-given roles are to be functionally efficient. In the area of educative authority, then, nothing essential has been overlooked, and the very brevity of the statement but adds to the comprehensiveness that a multiplicity of details would tend to diminish.

Along with authority and intimately related to it the educational purpose in the Christian economy enjoys a comprehensiveness that only the Catholic ideal possesses. This ideal which is to "prepare the child to be a virile

³⁶ Hugh Kelly, "G.K. Chesterton: His Philosophy of Life", in Studies, Vol. 31, No. 121, issue of March 1942, p. 93.

son or daughter of the Church, the best possible representative of family tradition, and a loyal and alert member of society"³⁹ can be fully realized only when education has measured up to the criterion set by Pope Pius XI and produced "the supernatural man who thinks, judges and acts constantly and consistently in accordance with right reason illumined by the supernatural light of the example and teaching of Christ".⁴⁰ Herein is contained the whole gamut of full human living including the physical and spiritual, intellectual and moral, individual, domestic and social, a range vast enough to allow for the evaluation of any ideas that might be advanced concerning the "why" of education.

As to educational method, nothing could be more comprehensive; for

When we come to method, we arrive of course at the most relative, the least permanent, aspect of education. [...] The Catholic attitude toward method is, however, not at all dogmatic. It merely asserts that the manner in which children are taught must not conflict with the purpose for which they are taught.⁴¹

So, if naturalistic methods assume that a child is an animal who needs only to be trained in the art of obeying his

³⁹ "The Pope and Education", editorial in Commonweal, Vol. 11, No. 13, issue of January 29, 1930, p. 354.

⁴⁰ Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 32.

⁴¹ "The Pope and Education", Op. Cit.

instincts, it is impossible that the product should be a virile member of the Church. With this sole restriction, then, the Christian teacher is advised to use "whatever there is of real worth in the systems and methods of our modern times"⁴² with the caution that he be not hasty in abandoning what the experience of the centuries has found to be of real worth.

This leaves the academic door wide open to progress in educational method; and surely, it is imperative that Catholic education keep abreast of the times. But this keeping in step with modern trends can safely be done only on condition that the school does not lose sight of the purpose of Christian education of which the teachings of the Encyclical are the infallible criteria.

Since every educational philosophy is based on what the nature of man is thought to be, it is of paramount importance to know the truth about his nature in order to understand his dignity and his destiny and to educate him accordingly. When it comes to the question of the subject of Christian education, no more complete idea of the educand can be imagined than that held by the Holy Father, an idea based on an explicit and comprehensive knowledge and an acceptance of man's whole being when he says, "In fact it

⁴² Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 29.

must never be forgotten that the subject of Christian education is man whole and entire, soul united to body in unity of nature, with all his faculties [...].⁴³ But the subject of Christian education is not merely the whole natural man, but man raised to the supernatural order, the supernaturalized human being, "[...] man, therefore, fallen from his original estate, but redeemed by Christ and restored to the supernatural condition of adopted son of God [...]"⁴⁴ and destined for eternal happiness with Him who is infinitely perfect.

This Christian concept of the educand is much broader than the naturalistic assumption that the subject to be educated is the intellectual faculty of human nature, or even the whole human person in the natural order, and this because it sees man as nothing less than the whole human person elevated to the supernatural order by grace. And it is only in the light of this knowledge so clearly set forth in the Encyclical that a true appraisal can be made of the various philosophical and pedagogical theories which, from time to time, strut across the educational stage.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 19.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 20.

3. Its Permanence.

If there is a characteristic to which a workable criterion should lay claim, it is, without doubt, that of permanence. In the world of ideas so ready to call truth relative and so accustomed to shifting values, there must be timeless principles against which to measure the principles of the times. These the Encyclical contains; for it was not without an awareness of this need in education that Pope Pius XI based his teaching throughout the document on such abiding and immutable truths as those found in the Deposit of Faith and in the natural law.

First of all, as the Holy Father reminds the faithful, since the Incarnation of Him "who is the way, the truth and the life, there can be no ideally perfect education that is not Christian education".⁴⁵ The fact that certain educational conditions may justify compromise in nowise alters the nature of the ideal. And the subject in whom this ideal is to be realized is man composed of body and soul, fallen but redeemed and raised "to the supernatural condition of adopted son of God".⁴⁶ But in spite of his restoration to the life of grace, man still bears the "effects of Original Sin, the

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 3.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 20.

chief of which are weakness of will and disorderly inclinations".⁴⁷ Therefore any educational philosophy that ignores the supernatural and denies the existence of the effects of Original Sin has been condemned by Pope Pius XI⁴⁸ as false.

Another permanent note is the mission and authority to teach given to the Church by her Divine Founder with the command "to direct and fashion men, in all their actions, to purity of morals and integrity of life, in accordance with revealed doctrine".⁴⁹ It is noteworthy that thirty-six years after the Encyclical the Second Vatican Council has emphasized the Church's magisterial office by declaring:

Finally, in a special way, the duty of educating belongs to the Church, not merely because it must be recognized as a human society capable of educating, but especially because it has the responsibility of announcing the way of salvation to all men, of communicating the life of Christ to those who believe, and in her unfailing solicitude, of assisting men to be able to come to the fullness of this life.⁵⁰

And the permanent character of this mission of the Church has been bestowed by Christ Himself who has destined it to last "even to the consummation of the world".⁵¹

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 5.

⁵⁰ Second Vatican Council, Declaration on Christian Education, p. 5.

⁵¹ Matthew, 28:20.

The favorable reception which, on the whole, was given the Encyclical by people of all faiths may be ascribed to the fact that those who could not in conscience accept the dogmatic statements were ready and willing to recognize the claims of the natural law on which so much of the message is based. And not the least of these claims is that every child has a right to an education,⁵² and, as though fearful lest this truth be forgotten, the Second Vatican Council repeats that "All men of every race, condition and age, since they enjoy the dignity of a human being, have an inalienable right to an education."⁵³

Along with this right of the child exist the inviolable right and duty of parents to educate their children; and here again the Council Fathers echo the words of Pius XI when they state: "Parents who have the primary and inalienable right and duty to educate their children must enjoy true liberty in their choice of schools."⁵⁴

As a corollary of this, the natural law moreover imposes on the civil power the obligation to respect distributive justice and at the same time to refrain from all attempts to monopolize education.⁵⁵

⁵² Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 10.

⁵³ Second Vatican Council, Declaration on Christian Education, p. 2.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 6.

⁵⁵ Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 15.

With these laws so deeply and permanently rooted in human nature, and so much in accord with the common sense of mankind, all but those who lack good-will can fully agree. And it is this feature of the Encyclical that helps to make it so functional in estimating the ideas of Chesterton whose whole career was devoted to the defense of such fundamental values and natural rights.

4. Its Flexibility.

Another quality that enriches the Encyclical as a criterion is its flexibility. This may not be immediately obvious due to its dogmatic nature and to what is sometimes described as its aggressive tone; but a look at the times that called for it may help towards an understanding of the style with which its spirit is clothed.

It must be remembered that in 1929 Pope Pius XI was rowing the Bark of Peter through very rough waters. An article,⁵⁶ published a few months after the Encyclical, recalls that dating back to the destructive confiscations of educational foundations during the Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars, which placed the State in a position to dictate policies in education through the power of the purse,

⁵⁶ T. Cercaran, "The Catholic Philosophy of Education, in Studies, Vol. 19, No. 74, issue of June 1930, p. 199.

the control and direction of education has been the chief aim of the secularist forces in Europe and America. That great upheaval, operative all over historic Europe for a quarter of a century, gave the neutral or secularized school a place among Christian peoples. These secular forces were fully active during 1921-30 when the Christian school struggled for survival against the materialistic and nationalistic ideologies of Fascism, Nazism, Socialism and Communism that harassed the pontificate of Pius XI. So, in the face of the violent threat to Christian education it is not to be wondered at that the Father of Christendom should state the case for Catholic schools in such emphatic and unequivocal terms.

Nor did the Apostolic Letter come as a surprise. On the contrary, considering the numerous problems confronting education, the Catholic world expected a papal pronouncement on this vital question. In fact, "we waited long for it; at least five years ago rumor, resting partly on hope and partly on information, assured us that Rome would soon speak".⁵⁷ And what Rome had to say to the world of 1929, since it shares the timelessness of the truths it sets forth, is as applicable today as it was then. This applicability is due to the fact that the Encyclical possesses an intrinsic flexibility without which it would cease to be a functional criterion in a dynamic society. An example of this occurs

⁵⁷ Blakely, Op. Cit., p. 201.

when the Holy Father speaking of the willingness of the Church that her schools be in keeping with the legitimate dispositions of civil authority, says that "she is in every way ready to co-operate with this authority and to make provision for a mutual understanding, should difficulties arise".⁵⁸ Another example is seen in the permission available to Catholic children to frequent secular schools when circumstances render their attendance at Catholic schools extremely difficult.⁵⁹ Though this concession is, according to the Encyclical, merely a toleration, Monsignor John Ryan offers this interpretation:

His condemnation of neutral or lay schools applies mainly to certain countries in Europe. This is evident from the statement that these schools have originated since the beginning of the reign of Pius IX.⁶⁰

This interpretation is not meant to minimize the ideal of Catholic schools for Catholic children, an ideal upheld by the Second Vatican Council when it "also reminds Catholic parents of the duty of entrusting their Catholic children to Catholic schools wherever and whenever it is possible".⁶¹ Rather, it carries the implication that the

58 Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 7.

59 Ibid., p. 27.

60 John A. Ryan, "Encyclical on Education: Catholic Interpretation", in Current History, Vol. 31, No. 6, issue of March 1930, p. 1007.

61 Second Vatican Council, Declaration on Christian Education, p. 9.

flexibility of the Encyclical is such as to take into account the nature and the organization of the school systems of various countries and certain adaptations that the changing times demand.

In this connection it may be relevant to mention the question of shared time which is being seriously studied by American Catholic educational authorities.⁶² This is recognized as a compromise, but because of the advantages it offers to Catholic youth, it may be approved by the Encyclical which allows "the State, in view of the common good, to promote in various ways the education and instruction of youth".⁶³

Another sign of the flexibility of the Encyclical is its susceptibility to updating; and this ability to lend itself to renewal will find favor with the Council Fathers, for, according to Bishop Robert Emmet Tracy writing from the Council, "What these Fathers feel the world expects is an updating of that powerful document, a veritable Magna Carta on Education for our own day."⁶⁴

62 Thomas Finucan, "Is Shared Time a Practical Possibility?", in Religious Education, Vol. 60, No. 6, issue of Nov.-Dec. 1965, p. 451.

63 Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 14.

64 Robert Emmet Tracy, "Letter from the Council", in America, Vol. 113, No. 16, issue of October 16, 1965, p. 432.

Among the vital ideas presented by the Council Fathers in their debate on education in November 1964, these may be mentioned as being representative of their thought:

- (1) The important distinction between the State and society in education (as urged by Bishop Malone of Youngstown, Ohio).
- (2) A thorough treatment of the rights of parents (as urged by Cardinal Spellman of New York).
- (3) A synthesis at the very beginning, clearly indicating--even if not fully developing--both the philosophy and the theology of Christian education (again as urged by Bishop Malone).
- (4) Stress on the linking harmony of the various roles of family, State and Church--instead of setting each one against the other by emphasizing merely the rights of each. And (5) a good "tone" to the document--one that is pastoral and apostolic (as urged by many Fathers: Archbishop Cody of Chicago; Bishops Elchinger and Gouyon, of France, Bishop Pohlschneider of Germany).⁶⁵ Such a document would also preclude unseemly brevity, unevenness and diffuseness.

If and when a new encyclical on education is issued to the world, it is certain that it will be animated with the ecumenical spirit of the Church of today and tomorrow. However, it may not be an overstatement to say that when it does appear, attuned to the needs of modern times by the inspired suggestions of the Council Fathers, it will be

⁶⁵ Ibid.

evident that it was drawn up with the document of Pope Pius XI in hand. For the notes of uniqueness, comprehensiveness, permanence and flexibility which make it so functional for the present study bid fair to qualify it as a criterion for further papal pronouncements on the vital topic of education.

An introduction to the Encyclical as criterion must needs be followed by an introduction to the writer on whose educational ideas it will be set to work. Therefore, the next chapter will offer a brief biographical sketch of Gilbert Keith Chesterton along with a look at the times in which he wrote and the influence they brought to bear on his educational thinking.

CHAPTER II

CHESTERTON AND HIS TIMES

1. Biographical Sketch.

Gilbert Keith Chesterton, the son of Edward Chesterton and Marie Louise Grosjean, was born on May 29, 1874, on Campden Hill, Kensington, near London, England, and was baptized in the Anglican Church of St. George. His brother Cecil was born five years later, and there was also a little sister Beatrice who died in babyhood. The family, which belonged to the stable middle class of Victorian England, was Liberal in politics and vaguely Christian and uncommitted in religion.

As a child, Gilbert Chesterton was a combination of backwardness and precocity. In some ways he was very backward; he did not talk much before three, and he was eight before he learned to read. However, his story-telling and verse-making began rather early, but not in the abundance that marked his drawings.¹

He was sent to St. Paul's, an old city school made illustrious by Milton, Marlborough, and a host of other distinguished men. Always last or near the last in his "form"

¹ Maisie Ward, Gilbert Keith Chesterton, New York, Sheed and Ward, 1943, p. 8.

there, Chesterton is not considered one of the lights of that school; he could not even reach the highest form on his own merits. In 1892, when he was two years behind his fellows, he entered a competition for a prize poem and won it with his St. Francis Xavier, The Apostle of the Indies.² Because of this, he was given the privileges of the highest form, though he still did not belong to it. In the meantime, since he could not join the top form's debating association, with a dozen of his friends he founded the Junior Debating Club and served as its president. A year later the group produced a magazine called The Debater. His sharp-witted juniors, a bit precocious themselves, accepted Chesterton as their leader when they formed a literary society. The authorities were less certain that genius lurked in the absent-minded student; they wryly conceded that "He ought to be in a studio not at school."³

So, when all his friends left for Oxford or Cambridge, Chesterton went to the Slade School of Art. He had considerable powers as a caricaturist and draughtsman, as his later illustrations in Hilaire Belloc's satirical novels were to prove. However, it soon became evident that his talents were primarily literary rather than artistic. During his years

² Ward, Op. Cit., p. 660.

³ Garry Wills, Chesterton, Man and Mask, New York, Sheed and Ward, 1961, p. 12.

at the Slade School, from 1892 to 1895, he also attended lectures on English Literature at University College; and it was at the end of this time that he realized that his real interest was in ideas rather than in art. For the next four years he read proofs for publishers, first at Redway and then at Fisher Unwin; he also reviewed books on art for the Bookman.

It was "only after this proper incubation period"⁴ that Chesterton burst into print. In 1900, the year he left Fisher Unwin, he wrote reviews in almost every issue of The Speaker; by 1901 he was contributing his weekly column to The Daily News. Though the launching of his journalistic career is usually associated with the Boer War and his association with the Pro-Boers, he had not entered journalism as a political commentator. Rather, the defense of principles was the task he had set himself.

On June 28, 1901, Chesterton was married to Frances Blogg, at Kensington Parish Church. In 1909, they moved out of London into Top Meadow Cottage in Beaconsfield. Between these dates stand what may be called his golden years on Fleet Street. A publisher's reader took London by storm; he seemed not only to have appeared from nowhere, but to be omnipresent, entering every controversy, known in every pub

⁴ Wills, Op. Cit., p. 55.

along Fleet Street, lecturing everywhere. His face leaped out at readers from every kind of journal. Books and articles came pouring out from his pen with bewildering rapidity. No less than fifteen of his best books were published during those years. Truly, what was written of him after his death could be aptly quoted here:

Mr. Chesterton was the nearest thing to perpetual motion our common literature has seen. He was literally 'at it' all the time, and one knew that he never forgot to keep on hammering at every anvil in his shop. There never seemed to be a point at which he would be likely to say, 'There, that's enough of that'. It would be a bad paradox but in many ways a sound truth to hold that he never aimed to improve, unless it were to improve his aim. He was like an archer with a number of targets and an unflagging interest in his sport.⁵

From 1909 on, his study in Beaconsfield was to be the scene of most of Chesterton's writing. From there came over eighty books comprising essays, poems, plays, stories, biographies, criticisms and history. Added to this massive production were countless contributions to periodicals on both sides of the Atlantic, articles treating of a wide variety of subjects but always in defense of fundamental principles.

Meanwhile, his popularity as a speaker was growing, and his lecture tours took him all over England, through much of continental Europe, and to America. During his first visit to America in 1921, he lectured in New York, Boston,

⁵ "Death's Harvest", editorial in Commonweal, Vol. 24, No. 9, issue of June 26, 1936, p. 243.

Philadelphia, Detroit, Chicago, and travelled as far south as Nashville, Tennessee. In Toronto he lectured on "The Ignorance of the Educated". On his return to England he published What I Saw in America. His second visit to America was in 1930 when he was invited to lecture at the University of Notre Dame, Indiana. Here he lectured every night, alternating a course on Victorian Literature with one on the great figures of Victorian History, thirty-six lectures all told, with an average attendance of five hundred.⁶ Again in Toronto, his subject was "Culture and the Coming Peril". Speaking of this trip, Chesterton had this to say, "My last American tour consisted of inflicting no less than ninety lectures on people who never did me any harm."⁷ The essays he had written while travelling were the material for Sidelights of New London and Newer York.

In 1923 he was invited to give a week's series of talks in Holland, and 1927 found him in Poland for a month as a guest of the Polish Government. A visit to Rome in 1929 which produced The Resurrection of Rome, was marked by lectures at the English College, the Scots College, the American College, and the Beda. At the Holy Child Convent he

⁶ Ward, Op. Cit., p. 581.

⁷ G.K. Chesterton, Autobiography, London, Burns Oates and Washbourne Ltd., 1936, p. 310.

spoke to a crowded audience on "Thomas More and Humanism".⁸ While in Rome he was granted an audience with the Holy Father, then Pope Pius XI, and interviewed Mussolini.

In 1932, the Chestertons attended the Eucharistic Congress in Dublin the memories of which remain in Christendom in Dublin.

In the autumn of the same year, Chesterton was first asked to undertake a series of radio talks for the British Broadcasting Corporation. He accepted this added burden of work, and won instant acclaim. As a speaker he was even more successful over the air than on the platform. And that is significant when one considers that

No Catholic Englishman was anything like so widely known in Europe. Books have been written about him in many languages and his works translated into French, German, Dutch, Czech, Russian, Polish, Spanish and Italian. A Letter from Russia asked for his photograph for The Magazine of International Literature as a writer whose works are well known in the Soviet Union.⁹

This mention of Chesterton as a Catholic turns the years back to 1922 when he was received into the Church by Monsignor John O'Connor, the hero of The Father Brown Stories. His path to the Church led through the agnosticism of his youth which followed on the complete loss of the shallow religion on which he was reared, and through the Anglo-Catholicism which he embraced at the time of his marriage.

⁸ Ward, Op. Cit., p. 570.

⁹ Ibid.

Even before his official reception into the Church, "for Catholics as for Protestants, Chesterton was a Catholic before 1922",¹⁰ as can be seen as early as 1903 in his religious controversy with Mr. Robert Blatchford, Editor of The Clarion, and in his Orthodoxy which was written in 1903 and which has been compared with Cardinal Newman's famous Apologia.

Especially after his conversion, so strenuously did he work with Hilaire Belloc in the field of Catholic apologetics that they have both been recognized as valiant champions of the Church. It came as no great surprise, then, when in 1934 "word was received in May that the Holy Father had bestowed on Mr. Hilaire Belloc and Mr. Gilbert Keith Chesterton, the Knight Commandership with Star, of the Order of St. Gregory the Great."¹¹

On June 14, 1936, Chesterton died at Beaconsfield, and his funeral was attended by his friends from London, from all over England, from France and from America. Later, Monsignor Knox at a special service for him in Westminster Cathedral preached to a much vaster crowd. It was on this occasion that the telegram sent to Cardinal Hinsley by

¹⁰ Margaret Clarke, "Chesterton the Classicist", in Dublin Review, Vol. 229, No. 467, issue of Spring 1955, p. 66.

¹¹ "Papal Honors for Two English Catholic Writers", editorial in Catholic World, Vol. 139, No. 832, issue of July 1934, p. 493.

Cardinal Pacelli, later Pope Pius XII, was read to the congregation. The following is the Papal message of sympathy:

Holy Father deeply grieved death Mr. Gilbert Keith Chesterton devoted son Holy Church gifted Defender of the Catholic Faith. His Holiness offers paternal sympathy people of England assures prayers dear departed bestows Apostolic Benediction.¹²

The secular press would not print the telegram in full because it bestowed upon a subject a royal title, one first given to King Henry VIII.

During his literary career, the academic world also recognized his work as a writer. In the British Isles alone he was honored with the titles of Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature (London), Doctor of Laws (Edinburgh), Doctor of Literature (Dublin).

Because Chesterton's enormous contribution to English Letters is so varied that it practically runs the whole gamut of literary forms, it has been deemed helpful, in order to provide a clearer view of his work, to consider him under the sub-titles: a) The Journalist, b) The Essayist, c) The Poet, d) The Novelist, and e) The Biographer.

¹² Ward, Op. Cit., p. 652.

¹³ Who's Who, London, A & C Black, 1936, p. 614.

a) The Journalist.- Chesterton worked successfully in every medium of literary expression with such versatility that critics have been forced to regard him as a miscellaneous writer. That he could turn out an average of three books a year for three and a half decades is remarkable enough; it is still more remarkable that so much of this gargantuan output rises above mere journalistic competence. But a journalist he became, and even in later years when he won fame as a novelist, poet, essayist, and critic, he would claim no other title than that of journalist. In spite of his wide reading and his unerring grasp of literary and philosophical problems he professed to speak for the man in the street.

While still at St. Paul's School, he foreshadowed a long journalistic career when he helped to produce the school magazine, The Debater for which he wrote essays and poems. It was while following courses in English Literature that he met Ernest Hodder Williams, soon to become governor director of the publishing house of Hodder and Stoughton, who started him on his literary career by asking him to review books in that firm's monthly journal, the Bookman. Although he took no degree, before he was twenty-one he was well launched as a reviewer and journalist. In 1899 Chesterton was working on The Speaker, a small weekly run by himself and a group of young Liberals whose general outlook was congenial

to his own. It was at this time that his great friendship with Hilaire Belloc had begun with its deep influence on his social thinking. By 1901, he was contributing his weekly column to the Daily News, and from 1905 till his death in 1936, he wrote a regular weekly article for "Our Notebook" in the Illustrated London News.

With Hilaire Belloc and his own brother, Cecil, he founded the New Witness in 1912 for the purpose of exposing and attacking political corruption. Cecil was editor, and when he was killed in the war Chesterton remained with the paper as editor until it died financially in 1923. After two years it revived as G.K.'s Weekly, and the emphasis was shifted from the exposure of political corruption to the advocacy of Distributism, a plan equally opposed to both Capitalism and Collectivism.

Chesterton's other journalistic contacts included Literature, Pall Mall, Black and White, Echo, World, Clarion, English Illustrated Magazine, Bystander, Fortnightly Review, Studio, New York Times, Commonweal, etc.

The choice of journalism as a career for a writer with such a variety of talents as Chesterton's often puzzled and sometimes annoyed his friends; but he wished, above all, to write on the problems of the day. He seemed to think that the solution to all the political and social ills of his times lay in the application of Christian principles of

justice. He used the press as a pulpit from which he fearlessly engaged in controversy with those whose "-isms" threatened the liberty of the country and the rights of the common man. Every subject on which he wrote proved to be a peg on which to hang his philosophy of life. In all his work he is philosophizing and testing contemporary institutions and ideas by his own principles. These principles never changed except in depth and firmness; and here we have the most fundamental paradox of Chesterton: that the most provocative and many-sided man of the day was its most consistent and traditional thinker.

However, the necessity of being brilliant and suggestive to attract the attention of the public led many to consider him as a clever writer who strained after paradox, and whose aim was to entertain. The truth is that he could not have made himself heard unless he had adopted a frivolous tone, and no doubt, some naive readers were misled into believing that he only meant to banter. But the conflict between Chesterton and his public went deeper than that. Had he expressed his unpopular views openly he would no doubt have been stoned or silenced--which would have been the same to him.¹⁴ So he dressed his message in motley and delivered it in a thousand ways even though he resented the

¹⁴ Emile Cammaerts, The Laughing Prophet, London, Methuen and Company, 1937, p. 12.

injustice of those who, while enjoying his jokes, refused to listen to his arguments. That he felt the humiliation of being applauded as an entertainer and ignored as a thinker can be seen from his remark, "Here light sophistry is the thing that I happen to despise most of all things, and it is perhaps a wholesome fact that it is the thing of which I am generally accused."¹⁵ But since humor succeeds where many a more pretentious weapon fails, and because paradox was a vital part of Chesterton, the awareness of this misunderstanding could not deter him from attempting to make truth palatable and to establish contact not with the learned few but with the human many. It was this twofold hope that journalism offered him, a hope that seems to have been realized:

The fact that modern journalism stands for so much that we Catholics regard as worthless, and even dangerous to faith and morals, is not to be wondered at when we consider that it is so largely inspired by the powers of materialism and negation standing where they ought not. But that a man should come out of Fleet Street to challenge these modern fashions of thought in the name of all that is traditional and Catholic is, indeed, something new and strange. Such a man is Gilbert Keith Chesterton. [...] he has become a sign in the way, a herald of change in the thoughts and convictions of men.¹⁶

¹⁵ Gilbert Keith Chesterton, Orthodoxy, New York, John Lane Company, 1909, p. 17.

¹⁶ W.E. Campbell, "G.K. Chesterton: Inquisitor and Democrat", in Catholic World, Vol. 66, No. 520, issue of March 1909, p. 769.

b) The Poet.- "Whatever joy a man possesses comes out more naturally in verse, and as we are seeking to understand Chesterton, one cannot do better than to consider his poetry."¹⁷

His first volumes, published in 1900, were both verse. Graybeards at Play was a delightful set of satirical nonsense poems and pictures. This was so widely acclaimed that it was followed a month later by The Wild Knight in which Chesterton assumed the role of the prophet of praise and burst in upon the decadent age of the eighteen-nineties with the holy fury of a crusader. All his songs were sung in challenge to the sterile cynicism of the literary world into which he had wandered.

The Ballad of the White Horse appeared in 1911 showing his Homeric capacity for describing warfare. It is an epitome of the whole history of the struggle between the Faith and its foes. But the poet, always a teacher, insisted upon pointing the moral: the undying heathen will always come again, and the Christian can never be at peace in the world or at peace with the world. The spiritual saga never ends. This epic ballad of Arthur has been called the greatest literary achievement of the twentieth century.¹⁸

¹⁷ Theodore Maynard, "The Chesterbelloc", in The Catholic World, Vol. 110, No. 655, issue of November 1919, p. 147.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 154.

In 1915, Chesterton published Poems, a collection of a wide variety of verse ranging from the light satirical to the deeply devotional. The one that most caught the popular mood of the moment was his "Lepanto". In Don John of Austria flinging back the destructive forces of Islam, we catch glimpses of another knight of Christendom rallying all the powers of his mind and pen against the ranks of modern paganism.

The same year saw the publication of a small volume of poems called Wine, Water and Song which contained some of the poems and drinking songs gathered from Chesterton's novels.

In 1922, the year of his conversion, Chesterton wrote Ballad of St. Barbara and Other Verses which he dedicated to his wife; and in 1926, the year in which she joined him in the Church, he wrote The Queen of Seven Swords which contains his first Catholic poems the burden of which was the sense of guilt that reaches out to Christ.

In these poems as in many others not easily available, Chesterton was always less concerned with the perfection of his work than with the spread of truth which, during the past century has had to sustain an attitude of defense until he

[...] threw the doors wide open: and upon a world pallid and sick he sent floods of poetry, of joyousness, of noble sympathies, of radiant and thundering humor - all drawn from unfailing sources of orthodoxy.¹⁹

¹⁹ Paul Claudel, "Homage to G.K.C.", in Commonweal, Vol. 13, No. 9, issue of December 31, 1930, p. 229.

c) The Novelist.- Even in his novels Chesterton is always the thinker; he employed his immense powers of imagination, invention, and wit to embody and enforce his ideas. In The Napoleon of Notting Hill, for instance, he glorified the love of the parish and the town as against cosmopolitanism and big business; and this as early as 1904. In 1906, The Man Who Was Thursday showed the inanity of anarchism as opposed to the tradition and the love of fundamental human things. In Manalive, written in 1912, in the person of Innocent Smith who made a practice of eloping with his own wife, he praised the Christian idea of marriage. The Flying Inn, published in 1914, defended the liberties of the poor against the Puritanical legislation of rich faddists.²⁰ And even his Father Brown stories to which he gave a moral significance to action, are something more than first-class detective fiction. These stories, The Innocence of Father Brown, 1911; The Wisdom of Father Brown, 1914; The Incredulity of Father Brown, 1926; The Secret of Father Brown, 1927; all were combined in an omnibus volume in 1929. Even after this, Father Brown stories continued to appear in the Strand and other magazines. In 1935, these were collected into The Scandal of Father Brown.

²⁰ Hugh Kelly, "G.K. Chesterton: His Philosophy of Life", in Studies, Vol. 31, No. 121, issue of March 1942, p. 85.

In these stories social satire, comedy and debate give the complications so necessary to detective tales.

The Club of User Trades which appeared in 1905 is a piece of mere whimsy. The same year The Ball and the Cross came out with the story of two men who are prevented from fighting out their opposing philosophies by the interference of the modern world of compromise. The Return of Don Quixote, 1922, is a fantasia about the future in which the study of heraldry leads to the discovery of England and the centuries of her happiness and her faith. 'Increasingly, Chesterton saw the only future for his country in a re-marriage between those divorced three hundred years ago: England and the Catholic Church.'²¹

Stories which were published later are: The Poet and the Lunatics, 1929; Four Faultless Felons, 1930; and The Paradoxes of Mr. Pond, 1935.

In this abundant contribution to the world of letters Chesterton is not merely the novelist, any more than he was not merely the poet, but a man with a mission to fulfill. And all his ideas, in whatever form he chose to express them, were consistently aimed at leading men to the knowledge and appreciation of Christian values.

²¹ Ward, Op. Cit., p. 543.

d) The Essayist.- Chesterton does not easily conform to the common conception of an essayist. He is much more a brilliant exponent of an original point of view. In other words, he essays to break down erroneous opinions held by other essayists, be they writers or politicians. In fact, with the advent of Chesterton the essay received a shock. It had to realize that it was a larger and wider thing than it had been before.²² He used the essay to deal with a subject not so much in a dissertation as in a dissection. Having dissected one way so that it seems quite sure that no other method would do, he calmly dissects again in the opposite manner showing that there are really two ways of looking at every question. This was a device to set his readers thinking, a device which, united to humor, gave to the essay a form that was light and a thought that was heavy. Such was his method of teaching.

Since most of his hundred books were volumes of essays, no attempt will be made to treat of them all. Some of his most characteristic books of essays should provide an insight into the enormous depth of his intellect and the vast range of subject.

²² Patrick Braybrooke, G.K. Chesterton, Philadelphia Lippincott Company, 1922, p. 1.

As early as 1901, The Defendant was published. This is a collection of Chesterton's essays that had appeared in The Speaker in defense of the common, simple things that most people would not consider worth defending. His purpose was to remind man of his tendency to underrate his happiness and the things in life that are of the greatest value. The first collection of Daily News articles appeared in 1903 under the title, All Things Considered. It deals with the vices of the party system, the dangers of anonymous journalism, and the relationship between religion and science. The first book in which Chesterton formulated his maturing thought on the serious problems of life was Heretica, published in 1905. With penetrating insight he analyzes the writings of his contemporaries and shows that none of them presents a satisfactory philosophy of life. In 1906, he wrote Orthodoxy, an essay in which he showed how he found orthodoxy as the only answer to the riddle of the universe. In 1923, his Fancies Versus Facts gave his readers an idea of the influences which helped to shape the pattern of his thought. And concerning the consistency of this thought he says:

On the whole, however, whenever I happen to come across one of these fortunately forgotten fragments of my stratified past, I may indeed shudder at their crudity of expression, but I am rather surprised to see how little my fundamental convictions have changed. For my final conviction, which was also a conversion, did not come to destroy but to fulfill.²³

²³ G.K. Chesterton, G.K.C. As I.C., London, Methuen and Company, 1929, p. vii.

e) The Biographer.- During the years during which his philosophy was gradually taking shape Chesterton turned his hand frequently to the field of belles-lettres; and in this vast field he seems to have found for himself a place in the sun as a biographer. One cannot easily forget, nor would one want to, that his biographical work, for the most part, proved to be a springboard for his social and religious ideas.

His first attempt at biography was made when, in 1903, he was commissioned to do the Robert Browning volume in the authoritative "English Men of Letters" series. Though it was a success, the result was unexpected; for, characteristically, instead of describing Browning's works he preferred to discuss his views, and to point out that Browning teaches men how to find good in what was apparently unmixed evil.

In 1906, he wrote Charles Dickens stressing that writer's protest against the tyrannies of Victorian industrialism, which was exactly the protest that he himself was anxious to make. His George Bernard Shaw, in 1909, an appraisal of the gifted playwright as the incarnation of modernism, is merely another rejoinder in their endless debate, concentrating on the cold kindness and the fury of intellect in Shaw.

Chesterton used his experience as an art student to produce his study of G.F. Watts in 1904, and of William Blake in 1910, both for the "Popular Library of Arts" series.

These stamp Chesterton as an art critic of no mean ability.

William Cobbett, which appeared in 1925, showed the agreement between Cobbett's efforts to discredit the landed aristocracy of his day and Chesterton's doctrine of Distributism. In Robert Louis Stevenson, written in 1927, the biographer is caught re-assessing his own reaction to the Victorian fin de siècle.

When Chesterton wrote St. Francis of Assisi in 1923, he saw in St. Francis "the apotheosis of his old boyish thought - that thanksgiving is a duty and a joy, that we should love not 'humanity' but each human".²⁴

Without doubt, St. Thomas Aquinas, written in 1933, is the greatest of his studies. "In that little work, the brilliant British thinker observed the rediscovery of Aquinas as a definite sign of hope for western culture."²⁵

These biographical studies which focus attention on the thinking of Chesterton lead us to realize that

²⁴ Ward, Op. Cit., p. 402.

²⁵ A. W. Hess, "Twentieth-century Return of St. Thomas", in Catholic World, Vol. 179, No. 1072, issue of July 1954, p. 286.

In the twentieth century he is one of the few free men. And, to glance for a moment at some of the root ideas which underlay all his expressions of thought, we find over and over again not only a consistency from the earliest to the latest periods of his life, but also a constant appeal to what is timeless or revealed.²⁶

2. Social Forces Influencing His Writings.

As a journalist and primarily interested in social justice and religious principles, Chesterton was, more than most writers, exposed to the influences of the day. Belonging, as he did, to two centuries, he was indifferent to the spirit of neither. The pessimistic philosophy and the decadence in art and morality of the eighteen-nineties disgusted him to the point where he could say, "My first impulse to write and almost my first impulse to think was a revolt of disgust with the Decadents and the aesthetic pessimism of the nineties."²⁷

Greybeards at Play and The Wild Knight are attempts to introduce an optimistic joy into the age. The first was an elaborate sneer at the boredom of a decade; the second was a more definite attack upon some points of its creeds and an assertion of the principles which matter most.

²⁶ G. Macdonald, "G.K. Chesterton", in the Month, Vol. 160, No. 366, issue of August 1936, p. 140.

²⁷ G.K. Chesterton, Fancies Versus Fads, London, Methuen and Company, 1925, p. 220.

His sense of justice towards small nations was violated when, in 1899, the Conservative Government went to war with the South African Republics of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State. He was not content, like others, to argue that the British Empire was wrong to fight the South African Republic; he argued rather that they were right to fight the British Empire. In this he was in violent reaction against the popular imperialism whose tyranny imposed uniformity upon peoples of different cultures. These unpopular views he poured forth in the Speaker and the Daily News. It was these same views which later inspired the extravaganza, The Napoleon of Notting Hill. Indeed, it might not be too much to say that the joyous Christian spirit that permeated all of his work was in direct defiance of the gloomy mood of the times.

In 1905, Heretics was written to attack the philosophy of life so complacently advocated by some of his contemporaries as answers to the social problems of the day. Basing his refutation of their views on the thesis that there can be no real social reform without true philosophy or dogma, he vigorously proceeded to condemn Ibsen's cheerless and purely negative morality, Kipling's militarism, Wells's disregard for the true nature of man, and Shaw's preoccupation with the superman to the utter neglect of the common man. Hard on the heels of the challenge put to him to state his

own philosophy (if all those are heretics), he produced his Orthodoxy, a book in which for the first time he explicitly accepted the Christian position and bolstered his stand with forceful arguments. Simultaneously, his tireless campaign to inject the formless chaotic thought of the day with the elixir of truth was carried through countless articles in many of the popular journals.

It was in 1910 that the Liberal Party in England sought, through parliamentary action, to bring about social reforms based on the principles of socialism. This threat to the liberty and dignity of the average man was hardly realized before Chesterton strenuously opposed it by writing What's Wrong with the World the same year. Nowhere else does he express more clearly his views on private property, the home, and education. In reality, it was the family that was attacked and marked out to be the subject of social experiment. All the while, articles appeared regularly in the Distributist organ, G.K.'s Weekly, in defense of human institutions, with Chesterton giving as the reason for his hostility to Socialism that it aimed at taking from a poor man his private property and thereby his independence, and one of the chief supports of his human dignity. These articles were collected in The Outline of Sanity, in 1927. The same year, in Eugenics and Other Evils, he lashed out against state interference in the home.

In a letter to the Clarion, Chesterton outlined his own position:

If you want praise or blame for Socialists I have enormous quantities of both. Roughly speaking (1) I praise them to infinity because they want to smash modern society. (2) I blame them to infinity because of what they want to put in its place. As the smashing must, I suppose, come first, my practical sympathies are mainly with them.²⁸

3. Educational Controversy in England.

It would be somehow unthinkable that Chesterton, recognized everywhere as a powerful controversialist in the cause of truth and social justice, and known to keep three or four separate controversies going at the same time, would refrain from entering into the struggle for educational rights which was being carried on in the England of his day.

To understand the issues at stake it might be helpful to recall that the passing of the Elementary Education Act of 1870²⁹ based primary education in England and Wales on what is known as the Dual System. This means that on the one hand, were the provided schools built and maintained by the local taxes plus a grant from the London Board of Education, and from which all religious teaching was excluded. On

²⁸ G.K. Chesterton, "Letter to the Clarion", February 5, 1910, quoted in ward, Op. Cit., p. 306.

²⁹ B.B. Carter, "English Catholics and Education", in Commonweal, Vol. 12, No. 14, issue of August 6, 1930, p. 358.

the other hand, and in greater numbers, were the non-provided denominational schools built by the various religious communities, mainly Catholic, Church of England, and Wesleyan, which received no financial aid whatever. Then came the Balfour Act of 1902 which Cardinal Bourne labelled as "only an instalment of justice",³⁰ because while providing books, general equipment, and teachers' salaries, the non-provided schools were left with the burden of finding sites and erecting and maintaining schools at their own expense even though parents were paying the enforced school tax.

A further development followed when the Hadow Report of 1926 defined the ideal of primary education to be the forming and strengthening of character, the training of tastes that fill and dignify leisure, the awakening and guiding of the intelligence, especially on its practical side. Religion was relegated to special teaching outside the school. The Church of England, by a majority vote of its hierarchy, welcomed the suggested settlement thereby making their schools susceptible of assimilation. At that point Catholics stood alone with a small minority of those Anglo-Catholics who believed that religious teaching cannot be confined to a separate period, but will necessarily affect the teaching of other subjects, such as history and literature.

³⁰ Francis Bourne, The Catholic Attitude on the Education Question, Pamphlet No. 3 97, London, The Catholic Truth Society, issue of April 1929, p. 10.

The controversy begun in 1870 raged on well into the twentieth century; and, needless to say, Chesterton with his sense of social justice joined in the fray on the side of Catholic parents. He came out loud and strong in defense of their rights, and his chief platform was his own paper from 1925 on, though his articles appeared in any others that would tolerate his views. The following is typical of the expression of his stand with regard to Catholic schools:

If there is a psychological truth discoverable to human nature, it is this: that Catholics must either go without Catholic teaching or possess and govern Catholic schools. There is a case for refusing to allow Catholic children to grow up Catholic, by any machinery worth calling education in the existing sense. There is a case for refusing to make any concessions to Catholics at all, and ignoring their idiosyncrasy as if it were an insanity. There is a case for that; because there is and always has been a case for persecution.³¹

Though Chesterton was not opposed to compulsory education as such, inasmuch as it is required for the common good, he fiercely attacked that compulsion which, by withholding their just share of public money needed for the survival of Catholic schools, left the parents no choice. That Chesterton embraced their cause in this issue can be seen in the following:

³¹ G.K. Chesterton, The Common Man, London, Sheed and Ward, 1950, p. 167.

State Compulsory Education is a tremendous thing, potentially a tremendous tyranny, and by its very nature doing very much what all religious persecution attempted to do. If you punish people for not sending their children to schools, where some view of life (however vague) is implanted, you may be conducting education, and you may be justified in conducting education, but you are conducting persecution.³²

Another thing which seemed to cause him concern was the depreciation of the role of parents in education, for he said, "Nobody has yet measured the meaning of State education, with its practical elimination of the parent; at least of the poor parent."³³ In the same mood he went on to say:

In one sense, this is supremely the educational age. In another sense, it is supremely and especially the anti-educational age. It is the age in which the Government's right to teach everybody's children is for the first time established. It is also the age in which the father's right to teach his own children is for the first time denied.³⁴

This he found deplorable; for, according to him,

Education, the normal heritage of human culture is from father to son. It is so in any rank, in any place, in anything, theoretical or practical. Specialists are summoned to help the parents in the simplest crafts, but the primary reason for a thing being taught is that it is valued by the parent who wishes to hand it on.³⁵

³² G.K. Chesterton, "The Distributist Schoolmaster", in G.K.'s Weekly, Vol. 11, issue of August 16, 1930, p. 359.

³³ -----, All I Survey, London, Methuen and Company, 1933, p. 114.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 162.

³⁵ -----, "The Desert Island", in G.K.'s Weekly, Vol. 1, issue of August 29, 1925, p. 529.

These excerpts are merely a sampling of the many that may be found scattered throughout his writings. His intense interest in the educational question may be explained by the dedication of his life and his pen to the cause of social justice, a dedication which led him to espouse any cause which opposed the violation of justice, especially if it concerned the poor who found so few to defend them.

The following chapter will consider Chesterton's ideas on education in general in the light of the Encyclical whose merits as a criterion were studied in Chapter I.

CHAPTER III

CHESTERTON AND EDUCATION IN GENERAL

Following the study of the Encyclical, Divini Illius
Magistri, as the criterion, and the scanning of Chesterton's
life and works for insights into his philosophy, the present
chapter will attempt to set the criterion to work on his
ideas concerning the nature and the importance of education.
It might be well to keep in mind that Chesterton's interest
in education was always philosophical and social rather than
professional. In fact, his refusal to accept Sir Oliver
Lodge's offer of the Chair of English Literature at Birming-
ham University, in 1904, shows that he had no desire to be-
come professionally involved in education.¹ He believed
that one gets a much better view of things from a distance,
that "in order to take a bird's eye view of everything, he
must become small and distant like a bird".² That he was
able to do this may account in no small measure for his
ability to see the dangers that threatened Christian youth
in his own insular England with a clarity of vision similar
to that with which Pope Pius XI looked on the educational
problems of the world.

1 Maisie Ward, Gilbert Keith Chesterton, New York,
Sheed and Ward, 1943, p. 107.

2 G.K. Chesterton, Alarms and Discursions, New York,
Dodd, Mead and Company, 1911, p. 246.

The Holy Father, at the beginning of his apostolic Letter, gave the reason for his paternal solicitude and for his insistence on various points of Christian education when he said: "Such insistence is called for in these our times, when, alas, there is so great and deplorable an absence of clear and sound principles, even regarding problems the most fundamental."³ It is interesting to note that, twenty years earlier, Chesterton made a similar diagnosis of the social evils of his day, and advocated the same remedy. Little did he suspect that he, a non-Catholic, was anticipating the Encyclical when he wrote:

It is a fundamental point of view, a philosophy or religion which is needed, and not any change in habit or social routine. The things we need most for immediate practical purposes are all abstractions. We need a right view of the human lot, a right view of the human society; and if we were living eagerly and angrily in the enthusiasm of those things, we should, ipso facto, be living simply in the genuine and spiritual sense.⁴

Chesterton, too, was aware of man's need to be reminded of the fundamental truths when he said, "These are very elementary and therefore eternal principles; but it is well sometimes to repeat them clearly like a creed."⁵ For

³ Pius XI, Divini Illius Magistri, New York, The America Press, 1936, p. 1.

⁴ G.K. Chesterton, Heretica, New York, John Lane Company, 1909, p. 140.

⁵ -----, "The Infallible State", in G.K.'s Weekly, Vol. 9, issue of August 31, 1929, p. 391.

he saw them losing ground in the modern world when he wrote:

Of all the marks of modernity that seem to mean a kind of decadence, there is none so menacing and dangerous than the exaltation of very small and secondary matters of conduct at the expense of very great and primary ones, at the expense of eternal public and tragic human morality. If there is one thing worse than the weakening of major morals it is the strengthening of minor morals.⁶

Then, by way of explanation as to what bearing this could have on education, he made the following complaint no less than twelve years earlier--an indication of the consistency of his educational thought:

Educators and educational politicians declare, amid warm cheers, that cleanliness is far more important than all the squabbles about moral and religious training. It would really seem that so long as a little boy washes his hands it does not matter whether he is washing off his mother's jam or his brother's gore.⁷

This inversion and shifting of values by modern men seemed to be a matter of great concern to Chesterton for he referred to them often throughout his works. But he knew that

He who has gone back to the beginning, and seen everything as quaint and new, will always see things in their right order, the one depending on the other in degree of purpose and importance: the poker for the fire and the fire for the man and the man for the glory of God.⁸

⁶ G.K. Chesterton, Tremendous Trifles, New York, Dodd, Mead and Company, 1922, p. 75.

⁷ -----, What's Wrong with the World, New York, Dodd, Mead and Company, 1910, p. 304.

⁸ -----, A Miscellany of Men, New York, Dodd, Mead and Company, 1912, p. 25.

1. The Nature of Education.

In an era characterized by an emphasis on education which takes the form of controversy as to what education is and to what extent it matters, it is revealing to find in Chesterton's writings an indication that he shared the Holy Father's awareness of the mental confusion among education-
alists.

When Pope Pius XI gave to the world his timely summary of what the Church teaches concerning the education of youth, he knew how complex the question of education had become:

Indeed never has there been so much discussion about education as nowadays; never have exponents of new pedagogical theories been so numerous, or so many methods and means devised, proposed and debated, not merely to facilitate education, but to create a new system infallibly efficacious, and capable of preparing the present generations for that earthly happiness which they so ardently desire.⁹

Chesterton bore witness to the same discussion, "having", as he said,

read numberless newspaper articles on education, and even written a good number of them, and having heard deafening and indeterminate discussion going on all around me almost ever since I was born.¹⁰

Likewise, he was very close to the thought of Pius XI when the increasing number of theorists called forth his

⁹ Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 2.

¹⁰ Chesterton, What's Wrong with the World, p. 242.

opinion of the century:

This is perhaps the only period that has been crowded and cluttered up by Behaviorists and Materialists and Ionists shouting that there is no such thing as the soul; also with Pragmatists and Vitalists and Relativists and the rest, all saying that nobody need bother to be logical. It is rather a desperate period in which men deny both the spiritual and the rational guide to life.¹¹

He was also well aware of the search for new methods and means to improve education as can be seen from the remark: "On every side we hear of educational experiments by those who consider themselves most advanced and adventurous."¹² But the improvement sought was a new infallible system that would guarantee perfect earthly happiness, a quest recognized by Chesterton, when the century was young, when he had modern man say, "Neither in religion nor morality, my friend, lie the hopes of the race, but in education."¹³

And this hope in the heart of man that education can provide the happiness which even the greatest material progress fails to produce is explained by the Holy Father as springing from the very nature of man created, as he was, by God to His own image and likeness and destined for Him who is infinite perfection.¹⁴

¹¹ G.K. Chesterton, "The Psychological Man", in G.K.'s Weekly, Vol. 21, issue of January 20, 1935, p. 220.

¹² -----, "A Second Case", in G.K.'s Weekly, Vol. 15, issue of November 5, 1932, p. 135.

¹³ -----, Heretics, p. 32.

¹⁴ Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 2.

Likewise, Chesterton recognized that "Man is the image of God; he is the microcosm; he is the measure of all things."¹⁵ And that he understood the divine destiny of man can be seen from his statement "that all human beings, without any exception whatever, were especially made, were shaped and pointed like shining arrows, for the end of hitting the mark of Beatitude".¹⁶ With this true notion of man's dignity and destiny, Chesterton saw that happiness is not to be found in material progress, and he stated the reason:

I think it was a great medieval philosopher who said that all evil comes from enjoying what we ought to use and using what we ought to enjoy. A great many modern philosophers never do anything else. Thus they will sacrifice what they admit to be happiness to what they claim to be progress. [...] It is as if a starving man were to give away the turnip in order to eat the spade.¹⁷

It is as if man were to ignore that God-given impulse by which "alone of all the animals he feels the need of averting his thoughts from the root realities of his own bodily being"¹⁸ to seek his happiness in the things of sense. Chesterton believed that such things can never satisfy

¹⁵ G.K. Chesterton, Fancies Versus Fads, London, Methuen and Company, 1925, p. 122.

¹⁶ -----, The Thing, New York, Dodd, Mead and Company, 1930, p. 17.

¹⁷ -----, Generally Speaking, New York, Dodd, Mead and Company, 1929, p. 107.

¹⁸ -----, The Everlasting Man, New York, Dodd, Mead and Company, 1925, p. 19.

the craving of the spiritual soul for a perfection worthy of the one who 'bears the image of the King of Kings'.¹⁹

The Encyclical deplures the great number of those who, while looking to education to help them acquire the perfection they desire, concentrate on the etymological meaning of the word and "pretend to draw education out of human nature itself and evolve it by its own unaided powers".²⁰ It is not likely that the Holy Father was referring here to the Platonic theory of innate ideas which held that learning consisted in the recollection of pre-existent ideas forgotten at birth. Rather, it would seem that he had in mind the Aristotelian and Thomistic concept that there exist in man natural potentialities for learning that education is expected to actualize. However, he warned of the danger of trying to develop these powers independently of the supernatural help of divine grace, which alone elevates education above the level of naturalism.

Chesterton expressed the same idea when speaking of education in 1910:

There is, indeed, in each living creature a collection of forces and functions; but education means producing these in particular shapes and training them to particular purposes, or it means nothing at all.²¹

19 G.K. Chesterton, A Short History of England, London, Chatto and Windus, 1910, p. 202.

20 Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 2.

21 Chesterton, What's Wrong with the World, p. 249.

Here he revealed his thought on the theory of learning as well as his belief in the need of a goal or purpose in education. However, he went even further in stating the case for the supernatural. Not only did he think that its absence cleared the field for naturalism, but he even went as far as to state, "Take away the supernatural and what remains is the unnatural."²²

The Encyclical²³ goes on to warn that this dependence on human nature alone, to the exclusion of God, first principle and last end of the universe, throws man back upon himself and attaches him inordinately to the passing things of earth; and this forgetfulness of God as his goal results in a restlessness that will be overcome only when he directs his attention and his efforts to God, the goal of all perfection.

Chesterton labelled this dedication to worldly interests with the name of Service and then explained what he meant by the word:

22 Chesterton, Heretics, p. 99.

23 Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 2.

What is the matter with the cult of Service is that, like so many modern notions, it is an idolatry of the intermediate to the oblivion of the ultimate. [...] The sin of service is the sin of Satan; that of trying to be first where it can only be second. A word like Service has stolen the sacred capital letter from the being which it was once supposed to serve. There is a sense in serving God, and an even more disputed sense in serving man; but there is no sense in serving Service.²⁴

He was not without believing that this exclusive attachment to the things that pass leave man "maimed as well as limited by arresting those upward gestures that are so natural to him".²⁵

After treating of the nature of education in its negative aspect and stressing the inevitable outcome of a purely naturalistic education, the Holy Father set forth his ideas on the importance of education, ideas against which will be measured what Chesterton had to say on the subject.

2. The Importance of Education.

The Holy Father, who based the importance of education on its intimate connection with the last end of man which is generically happiness, and specifically God, reminded the faithful that "education consists essentially in preparing man for what he must be and for what he must do

²⁴ Chesterton, The Thing, p. 5.

²⁵ -----, G.E.C. as H.C., London, Methuen and Company, 1929.

here below, in order to attain the sublize end for which he was created".²⁶ That this double role of education (1) preparing man for right living here on earth, (2) in view of his sublize eternal destiny, is in keeping with the demands of his composite nature and his status as citizen of two worlds, was metaphorically expressed by Chesterton when he said:

Man is not a balloon going up into the sky, nor a mole burrowing merely in the earth; but rather a thing like a tree, whose roots are fed from the earth while its highest branches rise almost to the stars.²⁷

Thus, he envisioned man as striving to attain God, his ultimate goal, and working at the same time to procure his material well-being as a means to be valued only as it brings him more surely to God. An education, then, that would adequately answer this dual need of man's nature can be none other than that of which the Sovereign Pontiff speaks in the Encyclical:

[...] in the present order of Providence, since God has revealed Himself to us in the Person of His Only Begotten Son, who alone is 'the way, the truth and the life', there can be no ideally perfect education which is not Christian education.²⁸

²⁶ Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 3.

²⁷ G.K. Chesterton, St. Thomas Aquinas, New York, Sheed and Ward, 1933, p. 203.

²⁸ Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 3.

In full harmony of thought with the Holy Father, Chesterton pointed out to the English schools of his day the futility of trying to form complete human beings by any other means than Christian education:

Since the coming of the more ambitious psychological education, our schools have claimed to develop all sides of human nature; that is, to produce a complete human being. You cannot do this and totally ignore a great living tradition, which teaches that a complete human being must be a Christian or Catholic human being.²⁹

The mistake being made by such schools was seen by Chesterton as typical of the inconsistency of the modern educational world with which he quarreled. The following statement is indicative of his stand:

The truth is that the modern world has committed itself to two totally different and inconsistent conceptions about education. It is always trying to expand the scope of education; and always trying to exclude from it all religion and philosophy. But this is sheer nonsense.³⁰

He tried to convince the modern world that any plan, however elaborate, to enlarge the scope of education that did not include religion and philosophy could not but frustrate its own purpose of expansion, and at the same time completely miss the true aim of education itself. Chesterton was of the opinion that all men without exception should be

²⁹ G.K. Chesterton, The Common Man, London, Sheed and Ward, 1950, p. 165.

³⁰ Ibid.

ready to admit the existence of eternal values. Years before he even thought of entering the Catholic Church he was convinced of this: "Even if we ourselves have no view of the ultimate verities, we must feel that wherever such a view exists in a man it must be more important than anything else in him."³¹ And years later, writing as a Catholic with the Catholic view of the ultimate truths, he satirically returned to the same question:

Information which seems to some of us to be of some interest, is information about what we are, and what we are doing in this strange world, and with what heart we are to go to death. But this is a dreadful and disgusting thing; it is sectarian education, and the sect of the secularists entirely disapproves of it.³²

Later still, as though fearful lest the true aim of education be forgotten, he reminded his contemporaries that "Everyone ought to learn first a general view of the history of man, of the nature of man, and (as I, for one, should add) of the nature of God."³³

Since the true aim of education cannot be devised by man--therein lies the initial error of naturalistic pedagogy--it can only be that which his Creator has set before him, and

³¹ Chesterton, Heretics, p. 290.

³² -----, "Mr. Buchan and Destiny", in G.K.'s Weekly, Vol. 11, issue of August 30, 1930, p. 391.

³³ -----, All is Grist, New York, Dodd, Mead and Company, 1932, p. 30.

this is the purpose which must be discovered and kept in view, the aim, as stated in the Encyclical, of "securing the Supreme Good, that is, God, for the souls of those who are being educated, and the maximum of well-being here below for human society".³⁴ The importance, therefore, of education derives from its function of co-operating with God in perfecting the individual and, through him, human society. This second aim of education, to procure the well-being of society, is rendered attainable by the fact that 'the education of youth makes on the soul the first, most powerful and lasting impression for life'.³⁵

This thought of the Father of Christendom on the importance of early impressions found a parallel in the words of Chesterton when he wrote about the modern critic who is generally much impressed with the subject of education:

That sort of man is never tired of telling us that first impressions fix character by the law of causation; and he will become quite nervous if a child's visual sense is poisoned by the wrong colors on a golliwog or his nervous system prematurely shaken by a cacophonous rattle. Yet he will think us very narrow-minded if we say that this is exactly why there really is a difference between being brought up as a Christian and being brought up as a Jew or a Moslem or an atheist.³⁶

³⁴ Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 3.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Chesterton, The Everlasting Man, p. 202.

Eleven years later, just three months before he died, Chesterton could still be found giving the same unswerving answer to the same sort of critic:

These people would be the first to tell us that education must take note of all the influences forming the mind, however apparently light or accidental. They will go wild with dismay if the child has to look at the wrong wall-paper; they will set themselves seriously to see that he has the right picture of the wombat; but they tell us not to trouble whether he has the right picture of the world.³⁷

It is just this impressionable character of youth that makes the forming of their minds and hearts according to the teaching of Christ so important. It is with good reason, then, that St. John Chrysostom asked, "what greater work is there than training the mind and forming the habits of the young?"³⁸

Chesterton agreed wholeheartedly with this, even to the extent of entering into controversy to defend it against those who denied or questioned it. Bernard Shaw was one of those who called down upon his head the scathing reply:

Mr. Bernard Shaw once said that he hated the idea of forming a child's mind. In that case, Mr. Shaw had better hang himself, for he hates something inseparable from human life.³⁹

³⁷ G.K. Chesterton, The Spice of Life, Beaconsfield, Darwin and Finlayson, 1964, p. 115.

³⁸ Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 3.

³⁹ Chesterton, What's Wrong with the World, p. 252.

But, far from leaving Mr. Shaw undisturbed in his hatred, he refused to exonerate him from the responsibility that falls to the human race with respect to the young:

Mr. Shaw and such people are especially shrinking from that awful and ancestral responsibility to which our fathers committed us when they took the wild step of becoming men. I mean the responsibility of affirming the truth in our human tradition and handing it on with a voice of authority, an unshaken voice. That is the one eternal education, to be sure enough that something is true that you dare to tell it to a child.⁴⁰

Herein lies the excellence of Christian education: that it is infallibly sure of the eternal truths that it teaches to the children with whom Our Blessed Lord was pleased to identify Himself when He said, 'whosoever shall receive one such child as this in my name, receiveth me.'⁴¹

These words of Infinite Wisdom seem to epitomize the reasons which urged the Holy Father to write his Encyclical: the deplorable absence of sound principles in education; and the need to remind the world of the nature and the importance of education for the individual and for society.

In this chapter Chesterton's ideas on these reasons have been placed in juxtaposition with the statements of the papal document in an effort to trace parallels of thought.

The following chapter will find Chesterton again under close scrutiny; this time to know his ideas on the agents of education and to what degree they resemble those of the Encyclical.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 3.

CHAPTER IV

CHESTERTON AND THE AGENTS OF EDUCATION

It would, indeed, be of little avail if, while admitting and appreciating the true nature and the supreme importance of Christian education, serious thought were not applied to those agents whose God-given right and duty it is to co-operate in imparting it.

The work of this chapter, therefore, will be to measure what Chesterton has written concerning educational responsibility against the teaching of the Encyclical on the subject.

Since "education is essentially a social and not a mere individual activity",¹ an activity that must be shared by the three societies into which man is born: (1) the Church in the supernatural order, (2) the Family and (3) the State in the natural order, and all three "in due proportion, corresponding, according to the disposition of Divine Providence, to the coordination of their respective ends",² it will be Chesterton's ideas on each of these that will form the burden of the chapter.

1 Pius XI, Divini Illius Magistri, New York, The America Press, 1936, p. 4.

2 Ibid.

1. The Church.

This section will attempt to explore Chesterton's thought on the education rights of the Church bearing on: a) her divine mission, b) her supernatural otherhood, c) the extent of her rights, and d) her relation to other authorities.

In the first place, "education belongs pre-eminently to the Church by reason of a double title in the supernatural order, conferred exclusively upon her by God Himself".³

a) Her Divine Mission.- This first of these titles is founded on the fact that to the Church alone Christ gave the educational mission: "Going, therefore, teach all nations."⁴ And upon this magisterial office He bestowed infallibility.

It was in a controversy with Bernard Shaw that Chesterton professed his belief in this divine mission of the Church to teach with infallibility, when he said, "[...] I believe one thing: that there is on earth a man wielding the authority of another man, who was also God."⁵ Though secure in his own belief in the Church as the pillar and

3 Ibid.

4 Matthew 28:16.

5 G.K. Chesterton, "The True Humanitarian", in G.K.'s Weekly, Vol. 21, issue of April 11, 1935, p. 73.

ground of truth, he knew full well that this belief was far from being held by the generality of men. An appraisal of his times led him to remark that "The notion that there might be a standard or tribunal of truth [...] seems to have completely vanished from a large number of minds."⁶ And when he wrote in 1909, "And in the act of destroying Divine authority we have largely destroyed the idea of that human authority by which we do a long-division sum",⁷ he allowed us an insight into his respect for Divine authority. However, 1909 seems much too early to read in Chesterton's mind a specific reference to the papal infallibility mentioned in the Encyclical; still, the passage suggests that the trend of his thought, even then, was towards the official acceptance of that truth thirteen years later. And this suggestion is further strengthened by the following statement written in 1920:

For the modern world will accept no dogmas upon any authority; but it will accept any dogmas upon no authority. Say that a thing is so according to the Pope or the Bible, and it will be dismissed as a superstition without examination. But preface your remark merely with 'they say' or 'Don't you know that ...?' or try (and fail) to remember the name of some professor mentioned in some newspaper, and the keen rationality of the modern mind will accept every word you say.⁸

⁶ G.K. Chesterton, Come to Think of It, London, Methuen and Company, 1930, p. 141.

⁷ -----, Orthodoxy, New York, John Lane Company, 1909, p. 59.

⁸ -----, The Superstition of Divorce, London, Chatto and Windus, 1920, p. 69.

b) Her Supernatural Motherhood.- The second title upon which the Church bases her claim to educate is her "supernatural motherhood, in virtue of which the Church, spotless spouse of Christ, generates, nurtures and educates souls in the divine life of grace, with her sacraments and her doctrine".⁹

Chesterton, the Catholic, paid tribute to this motherhood of the Church when he called her "a mother who seems to grow more beautiful as new generations grow up and call her blessed. We sometimes fancy that the Church grows younger as the world grows old".¹⁰

As a mother, then, the Church has the inviolable right to freedom in teaching which makes her independent of every earthly power; the right, too, to make use of every kind of human learning in her educational work, and to evaluate such learning as helping or hindering the cause of Christian education. For, as Chesterton said:

⁹ Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 5.

¹⁰ G.K. Chesterton, The Everlasting Man, New York, Dodd, Mead and Company, 1925, p. 338.

There is a Catholic view of learning the alphabet; for instance, it prevents you from thinking that the only thing that matters is learning the alphabet. The old school of instructors used to say: 'What possible sense can there be in mixing up arithmetic with religion?' But arithmetic is mixed up with religion, or, at the worst, with philosophy. It does make a great deal of difference whether the instructor implies that truth is real, or relative, or changeable, or an illusion.¹¹

This maternal vigilance of the Church extends not only to every form of instruction but also to every human action because of its necessary connection with man's last end. St. Pius X,¹² who is quoted in the Encyclical as saying that whatever a Christian does even in the natural order, he may not neglect the supernatural, and that all his actions, inasfar as they are morally good or evil, fall under the judgment and jurisdiction of the Church, stated a truth published two years previously by the Protestant Chesterton: "To the Catholic every daily act is a dramatic dedication to the service of good or evil."¹³

It is difficult to say with certainty whether Chesterton personally held this idea of morality or merely expressed his belief in the Catholic belief. However, it is certain that he was aware of the Catholic view, and appreciated it enough to use it in controversy.

¹¹ G.K. Chesterton, The Common Man, London, Sheed and Ward, 1950, p. 165.

¹² St. Pius X, quoted in Divini Illius Magistri, p. 6.

¹³ G.K. Chesterton, What's Wrong with the World, New York, Dodd, Mead and Company, 1910, p. 229.

Again, the query as to whether Chesterton used the word "Catholic" here to mean Anglo-Catholic rather than Roman Catholic would seem to be irrelevant in respect to a truth equally held by both; for "The Church does not say that morality belongs [...] exclusively to her, but that it belongs wholly to her."¹⁴

c) The Extent of the Rights of the Church.- Because the Church possesses the whole of moral truth and the right to control all that is conducive to her end, her maternal supervision extends to the domain of letters, science and art; and even to physical culture inasmuch as it, too, "may help or harm Christian education".¹⁵

That Chesterton recognized the relation of each of these subjects to the eternal truths is evident from his writings. For instance, concerning the power of literature, he had this to say:

Literature, classic and enduring literature, does its best work in reminding us perpetually of the whole round of truth and balancing other and older ideas against the ideas to which we might for a moment be prone.¹⁶

The need for the ageless vigilance of the Church in the realm of science was admitted by Chesterton:

¹⁴ *Fius XI, Op. Cit.*, p. 6.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹⁶ Chesterton, *The Common Man*, p. 22.

It is amusing to read the medieval Catholics on Astrology, and note how much they resemble the modern Catholics on Evolution. Both feel first that no science must be allowed to deny the dignity and liberty of the human soul.¹⁷

The following passage shows his appreciation of the Church's control and encouragement of art through the ages:

The Popes had only to neglect art, and it would have produced all the naked monsters needed to inspire the newest of the moderns. But the Popes encouraged art; as they encouraged science and education and most other things. It is a very dangerous thing to do.¹⁸

Physical culture, which is so conducive to bodily development and good health, can help Christian education by preparing youth physically for their mission in life. But, as Chesterton pointed out, it can also prove to be harmful because of the exaggerated importance so often given it:

I read with a proper reverence the scientific pronouncements upon physical education. But I entertain a private suspicion that physical sports were much more really effective and beneficent when they were not taken quite so seriously. One of the first essentials of a sport being healthy is that it should be delightful; it is rapidly becoming a false religion with its austerities and prostrations [...]. We have dedicated men to sports as to some god of an inhuman excellence [...]. And having taken the frivolous things seriously we naturally take the serious things frivolously.¹⁹

¹⁷ G.K. Chesterton, Chaucer, London, Peter and Faber, 1932, p. 247.

¹⁸ -----, The Resurrection of Rome, New York, Dodd, Mead and Company, 1930, p. 135.

¹⁹ -----, "Physical Education", in Illustrated London News, Vol. 129, No. 3512, issue of August 11, 1906, p.106.

It is worthy of note that Chesterton was twenty-three years ahead of the Encyclical in deploring this distortion of the true sense of values as he saw it in the England of his day.

Moreover, as though fearful lest it be forgotten, the Holy Father stressed the right and the duty of the Church to supervise the education of her children as being "of immense benefit to families and nations which without Christ are lost".²⁰ For the rejection of religion in education is tantamount to the rejection of Christ. Chesterton saw clearly the indispensable place of religion in the scheme of true education when he said:

Religion is exactly the thing which cannot be left out - because it includes everything. The most absent-minded person cannot very well pack his Gladstone bag and leave out the bag.²¹

This amusing yet trenchant remark revealed his keen awareness of the importance of religion in education, an importance that fully warrants the maternal care and watchfulness so strongly recommended in the Encyclical.

The Holy Father further stated that such care, far from being considered as undue interference, should be welcomed as protecting youth from all kinds of doctrinal and

²⁰ Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 7.

²¹ G.K. Chesterton, Heretics, New York, John Lane Company, 1909, p. 290.

moral evil. He then strengthened his statement by borrowing the words of Leo XIII who said that, without proper religious and moral instruction

[...] every form of intellectual culture will be injurious; for young people not accustomed to respect God, will be unable to bear the restraint of a virtuous life, and never having learned to deny themselves anything, they will easily be incited to disturb the public order.²²

It is little short of amazing to find Chesterton expressing the same truth a year earlier in the secular press, the truth that the practice of self-denial necessary for a virtuous life must be inspired by religious motives. His article reads in part:

Young people of any intelligence are now much more interested in doctrines than they are in general notions of aimless abnegation. And they are perfectly right in beginning at the right end. People must have some definitions of duty and conscience before they give up everything for them. Self-denial is self-destruction and partakes of the sin of suicide, unless the moral motive is clear.²³

This was his answer to those with whom he locked horns because of their statement that "young people today will answer to an appeal for self-denial if it is clearly and wisely presented, but the mere acceptance of a number of doctrines leaves them cold".²⁴ He prefaced his argument with

²² Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 7.

²³ G.K. Chesterton, "The martyrs of Hammon", in G.K.'s weekly, Vol. ., issue of November 10, 1920, p. 139.

²⁴ Ibid.

the statement, "[...] as things go, there probably is not much harm in it. And yet I have one small objection to it; and that is, that every phrase in it is false".²⁵

When Pius XI²⁶ spoke of all that the Church has accomplished in the field of education throughout the centuries, he referred back to the Middle Ages in reminding the world of its debt to the Church for the spread of civilization and Christian culture.

But Chesterton did not seem to need this reminder. He even anticipated the Holy Father by saying of that period:

It was perhaps the one real age of progress in all history. Men have seldom moved with such rapidity and such unity from barbarism to civilization as they did from the end of the Dark Ages to the time of the universities, and the parliaments, the cathedrals and the guilds.²⁷

Chesterton was only too ready to give the Church the credit she deserved in this matter when he wrote:

The Popes have paid dearly for their support of progress, and their belief in education and the advancement of learning. If they had always been behind the times, they would by this time be quite in the fashion. They have for a moment lost their chance among the Modernists through having so often been Modern.²⁸

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 6.

²⁷ G.K. Chesterton, The New Jerusalem, New York, George H. Doran Company, 1921, p. 250.

²⁸ -----, The Resurrection of Rome, p. 135.

It is evident, then, according to the Encyclical,²⁹ that the Church has the pre-eminent right to educate, and that no one can reasonably hinder her in her work to which the world today owes so much. Of this indebtedness Chesterton wrote in the following graphic statement:

The fact is this: that the modern world, with its modern movements, is living on its Catholic capital. It is using, and using up, the truths that remain to it out of the old treasury of Christendom, including, of course, many truths known to pagan antiquity but crystallized in Christendom.³⁰

d) Her Rights in Relation to Other Authorities.-

Moreover, there is no contradiction between the rights of the Church and the rights of the family and the State in the matter of education, but rather complete harmony. Nor is the Church's right opposed to the rights of individuals regarding just freedom in the pursuit of science and culture.

Commenting on the respect of the Church for the intellectual freedom of her children in their search for knowledge, Chesterton said:

29 Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 9.

30 G.K. Chesterton, The Thing, New York, Dodd, Mead and Company, 1930, p. 12.

Putting aside the strict sense of a Catholic courage, the world ought to be told something about Catholic intellectual independence. It is, of course, the one quality which the world supposes that Catholics have lost. It is also, at this moment, the one quality which Catholics perceive that all the world has lost. [...] The Catholic Faith, which always preserves the unfashionable virtue, is at this moment alone sustaining the independent intellect of man.³¹

This thought he considered worth while publishing in order that the world might know that the supervision of the Church in educational matters restricts in no way the freedom required for progress in knowledge; rather has it always proved favorable to philosophical and scientific enquiry.

2. The Family.

As a Distributist and, therefore, a champion of private property, primarily because of the protection it provides for the independence of the families of the land, it would be surprising if, in his defense of hearth and home, Chesterton had nothing worth while to say on the rights of parents in education. The truth is that he wrote so much on the family that to include it all would render the present work much too cumbersome. So, the problem becomes one of selection. This section, then, will appeal to the selected excerpts to provide a glimpse into Chesterton's mind in order to know his thought on the rights of the family as an

³¹ Ibid., p. 163.

educational agent, rights which will be considered as a) anterior to the State, and b) inviolable.

a) It is Anterior to the State.- When Chesterton stated that "Father and the family are the foundations of thought",³² he was found running ahead of the Encyclical which set forth the same idea in words borrowed from the Angelic Doctor: "The father is the principle of generation, of education and discipline and of everything that bears upon the perfection of human life."³³

"The family therefore", said Pius XI, "holds directly from the Creator [...] the right to educate the offspring [...] a right anterior to any right whatever of civil society [...]"³⁴

In a succinct but meaty paragraph taken from an article on the family, Chesterton expressed his belief in both this God-given mission, and priority of rights. It reads:

We that are Christians believe that the family has a divine sanction. But any reasonable pagan, if he will work it out, will discover that the family existed before the State and has prior rights; that the State exists only as a collection of families, and that its sole function is to safeguard the rights of each and all of them.³⁵

³² G.K. Chesterton, Eugenics and Other Evils, New York, Dodd, Mead and Company, 1927, p. 222.

³³ Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 9.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ G.K. Chesterton, "The Family", in Illustrated London News, Vol. 20, No. 512, issue of January 3, 1935, p. 269.

An excerpt from his writings of twenty-five years earlier shows him, even then, earnestly trying to convince the world of this priority: "It may be said that the institution of the home is the one anarchist institution, that is to say, it is older than the law, and stands outside the State."³⁶ Ten years after this, with a consistency of thought that would lead one to believe that he had not laid aside his pen, he wrote:

Indeed, there is something in the family that might loosely be called anarchist; and more correctly called amateur. As there seems something almost vague about its voluntary origin, so there is something almost vague about its voluntary organization. The most vital function it performs, perhaps, is that of education; but its type of early education is far too essential to be mistaken for instruction. In a thousand things it works rather by rule of thumb than by rule of theory.³⁷

Referring to the antiquity of the family as a human institution and the respect with which Christianity cherished it, Chesterton had this to remark:

The family may fairly be considered, one would think, an ultimate human institution. Every one would admit that it has been the main cell and central unit of all societies hitherto, except, indeed, such societies as that of Lacedaemon, which went in for efficiency, and has, therefore, perished, and left not a trace behind. Christianity, even enormous as was its revolution, did not alter this ancient and savage sanctity; it merely reversed it. It did not deny the trinity of father, mother, and child. It merely read it backwards, making it run Child, mother, and father. This is called, not the family, but the Holy Family, for many things are made holy by being turned upside down.³⁸

36 Chesterton, What's Wrong with the World, p. 62.

37 -----, The Superstition of Divorce, p. 69.

38 -----, Heretics, p. 179.

And so, with Chesterton, "It is enough to note here that everybody does know by intuition and admit by implication that a family is a solid fact, having a character and colour like a nation",³⁹ and, one may add, antedating all nations.

b) It is Inviolable.- If Chesterton was such a staunch crusader for the rights of the family against the inroads of the State, it was because his defense was based on the Christian principle that the family is sacred and its rights inviolable. To him, anyone holding this view had a basis for his criticism of any temporal power that failed to respect it. Of this he wrote:

The truth is that only men to whom the family is sacred will ever have a standard or status by which to criticize the State. They alone can appeal to something more holy than the gods of the city; the gods of the hearth. That is why men are mystified in seeing that the nations that are thought rigid in domesticity are also thought restless in politics; for instance, the Irish and the French.⁴⁰

He believed and, through the medium of the press, he tried to teach the public and those in power, that the family holds directly from God the right to educate, and that no State may justly infringe upon it. He knew that such infringement was not uncommon when, two years before the Encyclical, he wrote that "the natural authority is

³⁹ Chesterton, The Superstition of Divorce, p. 65.

⁴⁰ -----, The Everlasting Man, p. 167.

overlaid and thwarted with more artificial authorities: the official, the schoolmaster, the policeman, the employer, and so on".⁴¹

This inalienable right and duty of the parents to educate must not be considered as occasional or transitory in nature, but, according to the Encyclical, "this duty on the part of the parents continues up to the time when the child is in a position to provide for itself".⁴²

It was just this truth that Chesterton brought out in one of his arguments against divorce. To the objection that, in an era as advanced and progressive as the present, the co-operative guidance of parents was no longer indispensable, he made the following retort:

So far from any progress in culture or the sciences tending to loosen the bond of marriage, any such progress must logically tend to tighten it. The more things there are for the child to learn, the longer he must remain in the natural school for learning them; and the longer his teachers must postpone the dissolution of their partnership.⁴³

Should it be thought that after certain things have been learned that divorce is then justified. This would be missing the point; for, not the least among the important things to be taught is the doctrine of the indissolubility

⁴¹ Chesterton, Eugenics and Other Evils, p. 222.

⁴² Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 10.

⁴³ Chesterton, The Superstition of Divorce, p. 60.

of marriage, and this can be learned only through the example of the lifelong partnership of the parents.

He believed, moreover, that "In the last resort, the only people who either can or will give individual care to each of the individual children are their individual parents."⁴⁴

Despite the truth of this assertion, Chesterton found that not all parents were willing to assume their responsibility; some were only too ready to substitute other activities. Of these he had the following to say:

The moderns would rather arrange the educational course in history or geography, or correct the examination papers in algebra or trigonometry, for a hundred children, than struggle with the whole human character of one. For anyone who makes himself responsible for one small baby as a whole, will soon find that he is wrestling with gigantic angels and demons.⁴⁵

The responsibility still remains, however; and when the Holy Father stated that "On this point of parental responsibility, the common sense of mankind is in complete accord [...]"⁴⁶ Chesterton had already published the same idea four years earlier in the following words: "[...] we come back to a general parental responsibility which is the

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 62.

⁴⁵ G.K. Chesterton, Fancies Versus Fads, London, Methuen and Company, 1925, p. 194.

⁴⁶ Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 10.

common sense of mankind. We must come back to the parent as the person in charge of education."⁴⁷

So, rather than seek release from their sacred duty, they should firmly resist all attempts on the part of the State to deprive them of it. The reason advanced by the State to justify its absolute control of the education of the young is that the children belong to the State before they belong to the family. This reason the Holy Father calls untenable, asking all to bear in mind that "before being a citizen man must exist; and existence does not come from the State, but from the parents".⁴⁸

In keeping with this, Chesterton contributed the following quaint comment:

People are not born in an infant-school any more than they die in an undertaker's shop. These prodigies are private things, and take place in the tiny theatre of the home. The public systems, the large organization, are a mere machinery for the transport and distribution of things; they do not touch the intrinsic nature of the things themselves.⁴⁹

Neither do children "enter into civil society directly by themselves, but through the family in which they were born".⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Chesterton, Fancies Versus Facts, p. 197.

⁴⁸ Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 11.

⁴⁹ G.K. Chesterton, The Colored Lands, New York, Sheed and Ward, 1930, p. 190.

⁵⁰ Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 11.

Chesterton, who believed that "the supreme adventure is being born",⁵¹ wrote in 1909:

When we step into the family, by the act of being born, we step into a world which is incalculable, into a world which has its own strange laws, into a world which could do without us, into a world that we have not made. In other words, when we step into the family, we step into a fairy-tale.⁵²

He was not at all ready to say that we step into the State.

Referring to the relative importance of the family and the State, he made the telling remark:

All tends to the simple truth that the private work is the great one, and the public work the small. The human house is a paradox because it is larger inside than out.⁵³

Going back to what he wrote sixteen years earlier, one gets a clearer notion of what he implied here; for then he compared the family to the whole of humanity:

The men and women who, for good reasons and bad, revolt against the family, are, for good reasons and bad, simply revolting against mankind. Papa is excitable, like mankind. Our youngest brother is mischievous, like mankind. Grandpapa is stupid, like the world; he is old, like the world.

Those who wish to step out of all this, do definitely wish to step into a narrower world. They are dismayed and terrified by the largeness and variety of the family [...]. I say that anything is bad and artificial which tends to make these people succumb to the strange delusion that they are stepping into a world which is actually larger and more varied than their own.⁵⁴

51 Chesterton, Heretics, p. 179.

52 Ibid.

53 -----, Fancies Versus Facts, p. 196.

54 -----, Heretics, p. 179.

To Chesterton the home was the best of training grounds to prepare the young for life in what he called the smaller world outside:

The best way that a man could test his readiness to encounter the common variety of mankind, would be to climb down a chimney into any house at random, and get on as well as possible with the people inside. And that is essentially what each one of us did on the day he was born.⁵⁵

Chesterton knew, however, that there would always be those who seem determined to exalt the educational role of the State above that of the family. In fact, the century was only ten years old when he showed that he recognized this trend:

To hear people talk today one would fancy that every important human function must be organized and avenged by law; that all education must be State education; that everybody and everything must be brought to the foot of the august and prehistoric gibbet.⁵⁶

That he also knew, what the Encyclical published later, that "the father's power is of such a nature that it cannot be destroyed or absorbed by the State; for it has the same origin as human life itself",⁵⁷ can be seen from his own remark that "This triangle of truisms, of father, mother

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Chesterton, What's Wrong with the World, p. 212.

⁵⁷ Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 11.

and child, cannot be destroyed; it can only destroy those civilizations which disregard it."⁵⁸

Ten years after writing the above statement he could still be found standing guard for the educational rights of parents. In language typically his, he informed the public that

Some social reformers try to evade difficulty, I know, by some vague notions about the State or an abstraction called Education eliminating the parental function. But this, like many notions of solid scientific persons, is a wild illusion of the nature of moonshine.⁵⁹

When the Encyclical reminded parents that it is their duty "to make every effort to prevent any invasion of their rights in this matter, and to make absolutely sure that the education of their children remain under their own control",⁶⁰ it was not without a high degree of sensitivity to the need of the times. That this need was one of long standing can be gathered from Chesterton's testimony concerning the school situation in England in 1910:

There is one thing at least of which there is never so much as a whisper inside the popular schools, and that is the opinion of the people. The only persons who have nothing to do with the education of the children are the parents.⁶¹

⁵⁸ Chesterton, The Superstition of Divorce, p. 62.

⁵⁹ -----, The Thing, p. 31.

⁶⁰ Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 11.

⁶¹ Chesterton, What's Wrong with the World, p. 308.

Three years after the publication of the Encyclical, he was still wrestling with the same question in English papers. The following is indicative of his position:

I read in [...] all sorts of papers supposed to be both progressive and popular [...] that the majority of manual workers will have their proper proportional right to rule in all matters of education and humanitarian reform; that the poor will at last inherit the earth. But if I say that one workman is capable of deciding about the education of one child, that he has the right to select a certain school or resist a certain system, I shall have all those progressive papers roaring at me as a rotten reactionary. Why the workman should be clever enough to vote a curriculum for everybody else's children, but not clever enough to choose one for his own children, I cannot for the life of me imagine.⁶²

Though Chesterton had no children of his own, he identified himself with all the Catholic parents of England when he wrote, in a controversy with Dean Inge in 1930:

The reason why we will not surrender our religious education to admixture or compromise is that we regard it as the only complete and universal education of a human being. We will not, if we can help it, give up the human beings for whom we are directly responsible for any education that is less complete, less universal and less human. Educational systems more narrow, or even more dehumanized, may have their elements of good, and it may be right that some people should have these elements when they can have no other. But we will not narrow or main our own universal culture, to copy these local accidents.⁶³

If this article by Chesterton, then only eight years a Catholic, came to the attention of the Holy Father, it must

⁶² G.K. Chesterton, All is Christ, New York, Dodd, Mead and Company, 1932, p. 169.

⁶³ -----, "Cast and Catholic Education", in America, Vol. 43, No. 24, issue of September 20, 1930, p. 263.

have consoled him to know that a powerful pen was tracing so faithfully his own ideas on the education of youth.

To those who might wonder why such a versatile writer should devote so much time and effort to the defense of the educational rights of the family, Chesterton answers:

When we defend the family we do not mean it is always a peaceful family. We mean that it is the theatre of the spiritual drama, the place where things happen, especially the things that matter. The family is the test of freedom; because the family is the only thing that the free man makes for himself and by himself. Other institutions must largely be made for him by strangers whether the institutions be despotic or democratic. There is no other way of organizing mankind which can give this power and dignity, not only to mankind but to men.⁶⁴

3. The State.

In view of the ideas set forth in the foregoing sections on the Church and the Family, it should not be wondered at that Chesterton had very little to say in favor of the State as an agent of education. Although from the very beginning of his career he was never indifferent to the activities of the State, his interest was always social rather than political. He was not opposed to the government as such, but he strove valiantly with all his journalistic might against any ruling of the civil power that jeopardized the just rights of the common man.

⁶⁴ Chesterton, Fancies Versus Fads, p. 194.

But such the same attitude prevails in the Encyclical. After officially declaring that the State has definite educational rights and duties conferred by God Himself for the common good, the Holy Father forthwith proceeded to stress the limits beyond which it may not go in the exercise of its authority, limits set by the divinely established order of things.

With reference to the criterion, this section will treat of Chesterton's ideas concerning the educational role of the State under the following aspects: a) the extent of the rights of the State; b) the duty of the State; c) the dangers of nationalism; and d) the Church and science.

a) The Extent of the Rights of the State.- When Chesterton, in an educational controversy in 1934, said that "the State is supposed to exist for the protection and the service of the people",⁶⁵ he was very close to the Encyclical which teaches that the function of the civil authority is, by its legislation, to protect and foster the prior rights of the Family and the supernatural rights of the Church.⁶⁶ To this was added a reminder to the State not to overstep its limits by attempting to substitute itself for them.

⁶⁵ G.K. Chesterton, "Teaching the Poor", in G.K.'s Weekly, Vol. 19, issue of June 28, 1934, p. 257.

⁶⁶ Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 14.

Such attempts are not unheard of in modern times; and Chesterton, speaking for conditions in England, humorously but nonetheless keenly, analyzed this tendency of the State, and pointed out how utterly futile and unnatural such usurpation must necessarily be, because

It is based on that strange new superstition, the idea of infinite resources of organization. It is as if officials grew like grass or bred like rabbits. There is supposed to be an endless supply of salaried persons, and of salaries for them; and they are to undertake all that human beings naturally do for themselves, including the care of children. [...] The actual effect of this theory is that one harassed person has to look after a hundred children, instead of one normal person looking after a normal number of them. Normally, that normal person is urged by a natural force, which costs nothing and does not require a salary, the force of natural affection for his young.⁶⁷

Then, with his gift of parallelism which marked him as a teacher, Chesterton vivified the lesson he was trying to teach:

If you cut off that natural force, and substitute a paid bureaucracy, you are like a fool who should pay men to turn the wheel of his mill because he refused to use wind or water which he could get for nothing. You are like a lunatic who should carefully water his garden with a watering-can, while holding up an umbrella to keep off the rain.⁶⁸

He was convinced that no matter how efficiently organized the State may be in social service,

⁶⁷ Chesterton, The Thing, p. 31.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

It becomes more obvious every day that private life in any commonwealth with a common creed of common sense, has a tact and activity and adaptability of its own, for which no public institutions are a substitute.⁶⁹

Going back twenty-five years, as though time did not exist, one finds Chesterton explaining that "This is not to be understood as meaning that the state has no authority over families; for State authority is invoked and ought to be invoked in many abnormal cases."⁷⁰ What it does mean, however, is that

[...] in most normal cases of family joys and sorrows, the State has no mode of entry. It is not so much that the law should not interfere, as that the law cannot. Just as there are fields too far off for the law; so there are fields too near; as a man may see the North Pole before he sees his own backbone.⁷¹

b) The Duty of the State.- "Besides exercising its role as protector of the educational rights of the family, the State should also promote the general culture of its citizens."⁷² In complete agreement with this idea, Chesterton wrote in a news item nearly five years later: "The object of compulsory education is to prevent illiteracy and

⁶⁹ G.K. Chesterton, "The State and the Stunt", in G.K.'s Weekly, Vol. 21, issue of August 15, 1935, p. 367.

⁷⁰ -----, What's Wrong with the World, p. 62.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 14.

to enable future citizens to face life in a complex state of society without the handicaps that illiteracy might impose.⁷³

But in order to know what Chesterton considered the minimum degree of knowledge that the average citizen should have, one has to turn back to 1912 to hear him say in his characteristically inimitable style:

I think there are normal things that a normal man ought to do, as he sleeps or wakes or walks. One of them is to sing, to a plain tune with a common chorus, as our fathers did round their supper tables. Another is to dance, however clumsily, at least some of the dances of his native land. Another is to speak with clearness and moderate cogency in any council of his equals or on any not disreputable public occasion. Another is to recite poetry if he likes it; another is to be at ease and tolerably intimate with domestic animals; another is to know, even slightly, the uses of some weapon; another is to know quite common remedies for quite common maladies. Another is to be able to write down in pen and ink what he really thinks about public questions, and why he thinks it.⁷⁴

Though Chesterton recognized the need for a certain degree of general culture and the right of the state to exact it, he deplored the fact that "legislation has taken us far beyond that comparatively simple idea".⁷⁵ He saw, as did the Holy Father, that compulsory education was being used to "force families to make use of government schools, contrary to the dictates of their Christian conscience, or contrary

⁷³ Chesterton, "Teaching the Poor", p. 257.

⁷⁴ -----, A Miscellany of -----, New York, Dodd, Mead and Company, 1912, p. x.

⁷⁵ -----, "Teaching the Poor", p. 257.

even to their legitimate preferences".⁷⁶ That is why he spoke out as a Distributist in defense of distributive justice and the freedom of families in educational matters; for example:

Since the children must go to school and the parents must pay through taxation for the upkeep of the schools, the right of the parents to decide how the children shall be educated must be respected.⁷⁷

He justified his stand in this issue by claiming that a distributist has the right to take this position:

He can do it especially because of his social convictions, in the case of the poor family. He can do it whatever his religious convictions, in the case of the Catholic School. He is fully justified, merely as a Distributionist, in supporting anything that defends the domestic and individual organization of mankind.⁷⁸

If, then, there is one aspect of the educational controversy which should, according to Chesterton, be of vital concern to Distributists:

It is the aspect in which only the State is exalted above the School; and the Family is deprived of all influence over the School, as it has been largely deprived of all influence over the State.⁷⁹

Chesterton did not think that compulsory education is necessarily wrong; but he did complain

⁷⁶ Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 15.

⁷⁷ Chesterton, "Teaching the Poor", p. 257.

⁷⁸ -----, "The Distributist Schoolmaster", in G.K.'s Weekly, Vol. 11, issue of August 16, 1930, p. 359.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

[...] that what we now call Education does belong to that class of coercive, militant and sometimes servile things represented by the organization of a modern army rather than by the emancipation or eccentricity of a modern poem. It is a great iron engine for hammering something, generally the same thing, into great masses of mere passive humanity. And anyone who is moved, as we are, to set the man against the machine, will have a certain suspicion of it at the start.³⁰

This suspicion of his was not unfounded; for he saw the State, through the schools under its control, interpreting in this militant way its specific duty to inculcate a sense of civic responsibility and a spirit of patriotism in the youth of the land. Moreover, since such a system made no provision for religious education, Chesterton questioned the wisdom of trying to impart civic education while ignoring the necessity of basing it on moral principles when he asked:

What in the world is the sense of having an education which includes lessons in 'citizenship', for instance, and then pretending not to include anything like a moral theory, and ignoring all those who happen to hold that a moral theory depends on a moral theology.³¹

c) The Dangers of Nationalism.- Chesterton had no doubt that such a system would result in that false and exaggerated spirit of nationalism against which Pius XI³² warned as being a constant threat to true peace and

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Chesterton, The Common Man, p. 165.

³² Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 15.

prosperity; and he illustrated the truth of this by the following example:

A journalistic debate still lingers about what caused the Great War. I should say that education caused the Great War [...] the result of the compulsory culture peculiar to modern times. Dean Inge and other critics of Christian tradition always treat the Catholic School as something fitted up with all the engines of the Spanish Inquisition. But that is because they live in the past. Take the facts of modern Europe as they really stood in still recent times, and the truth is just the other way. Nobody believes that an ordinary Bavarian, left alone with his Catholic home and his Catholic school, with his relaxations of music and Munich beer, would ever have evolved all by himself the idea that he was a Superman or Nordic War-Lord eugenically destined to conquer the world. All that theory that Germany was a Superior Nation, that it was a chosen people organically superior to Latins, Slavs and Celts, never came out of Munich beer or music; it most certainly never came out of Catholic schools or Catholic doctrines. That was imposed entirely, exclusively, and forcibly, by the huge modern machine of universal instruction, which printed and stamped the Prussian idea upon every town from Poznan to Metz.⁶³

Nor did he claim that Germany was the only nation so tainted with nationalism. Of France, he said, "The French State in a much more civilized way, forced all citizens to learn the patriotism which divided nations, but not the religion that unites them."⁶⁴

⁶³ Chesterton, "The Distributist Schoolmaster", p. 359.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

The English, too, came in for their share of blame:

The English, in a much more general fashion, were educated in national narrowness, and it was made compulsory to sing 'what is the Meaning of Empire Day?' while it would be thought 'sectarian' to sing the Dies Irae about the common doom of all mankind.⁸⁵

Thus did he try to show the inevitable outcome of a nationalistic training that ignored the fact that "civic education ought to be regulated by the norms of rectitude".⁸⁶

d) The Church and science.- What is true of the state, according to the Encyclical,⁸⁷ is true also of science and scientific research. For faith and reason are not at variance with each other, but, on the contrary, they complement each other.

Twenty years earlier, Chesterton declared his belief in this intimate relationship between religion and reason when speaking about the trend of the times:

In as far as religion is gone, reason is going. For they are both of the same primary and authoritative kind. They are both methods of proof which cannot themselves be proved, [...] With a long and sustained tug we have attempted to pull the mitre off pontifical man; and his head has come off with it.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 16.

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 13.

⁸⁸ Chesterton, Orthodoxy, p. 59.

With this very effective metaphor he revealed his thought; so it came as no surprise when, in 1933, writing of St. Thomas Aquinas, he highly lauded his philosophical treatment of religion and reason in the following passage:

It is true to say that Thomas was a very great man who reconciled religion with reason, who expanded it towards experimental science, who insisted that the senses were the windows of the soul, and that the reason had a divine right to feed upon facts, and that it was the business of the Faith to digest the strong meat of the toughest and most practical of pagan philosophies.⁸⁹

The relationship between religion and reason being such as it is, the Church actively helps and encourages the arts and sciences, not only because of the immense benefits they offer, but because they come from God, and if rightly used, they lead to Him.⁹⁰

When Chesterton said that

The Arts exist, as we should put it in our primeval fashion, to show forth the glory of God; or, to translate the same thing in terms of our psychology, to awaken and keep alive the sense of wonder in man,⁹¹

he was very much in line with Catholic thought in this matter; nor did he part company with the mind of the Church when, referring again to St. Thomas, he exposed his own views concerning the respective provinces of faith and enquiry:

⁸⁹ G.K. Chesterton, St. Thomas Aquinas, New York, Sheed and Ward, 1933, p. 19.

⁹⁰ Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 19.

⁹¹ Chesterton, The Thing, p. 49.

He had cleared the ground for a general understanding about Faith and enquiry; an understanding that has generally been observed among Catholics, and certainly not deserted without disaster. It was the idea that the scientist should go on exploring and experimenting freely, so long as he did not claim an infallibility and finality which it was against his own principles to claim. Meanwhile the Church should go on developing and defining about supernatural things, so long as she did not claim a right to alter the deposit of faith, which was against her principles to claim.⁹²

This seems, indeed, very close to the Encyclical which stated that while the Church acknowledges the freedom due to the arts and sciences, she nevertheless takes every precaution to prevent them from encroaching upon the domain of faith.⁹³

Chesterton has written so much against pseudo-science and pseudo-scientists that a sample of his views may be worth quoting here:

The real weakness in civilization is best expressed by saying that it cares more for science than for truth. It prides itself on its 'methods' more than its results; it is satisfied with precision, discipline, good communications, rather than with the sense of reality. But there are precise falsehoods as well as precise facts. Discipline may only mean a hundred men making the same mistake at the same minute. Broadly, we have reached a 'scientific age' which wants to know whether the train is in the time-table, but not whether the train is in the station.⁹⁴

⁹² Chesterton, St. Thomas Aquinas, p. 103.

⁹³ Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 19.

⁹⁴ Chesterton, A Miscellany of Men, p. 231.

Remarks such as this that punctuate his work tend to create the impression that Chesterton was not in favor of science. He was not without knowing this, and as early as 1900 he said in his own defense:

In these days we are accused of attacking science because we want it to be scientific. Surely there is not any undue respect to our doctor in saying that he is our doctor, not our priest, our wife, or ourself. [...] To mix science up with philosophy is only to produce a philosophy that has lost all its ideal value and a science that has lost all its practical value. I want my private physician to tell me whether this or that food will kill me. It is for my private philosopher to tell me whether I ought to be killed.⁹⁵

In 1925, he was still trying to explain away the impression that seemed to persist:

I feel that I have given an impression of scoffing at certain scientific work. It was, however, the very reverse of my intentions. I am not arguing with the scientist who explains the elephant, but only with the sophist who explains it away [...]. But I have never meant my own criticisms to be an impertinence to the truly learned. We all owe an infinite debt to the researches, especially the recent researches, of single-minded students in these matters; and I have only professed to pick up things here and there from them.⁹⁶

These statements of his serve to show that, at one with the Christian concept of science, he wanted it to be true science and not the numerous theories that borrow its name to betray its cause.

⁹⁵ G.K. Chesterton, All Things Considered, London, Methuen and Company, 1900, p. 144.

⁹⁶ -----, The Everlasting Man, p. 343.

CHAPTER V

CHESTERTON AND THE EDUCAND

After the exploration of Chesterton's ideas concerning the agents responsible for the work of education, it is now incumbent upon this chapter to probe his thought on the nature of the educand. This is imperative; for, since every philosophy of education is built on what the nature of man is considered to be, it will be the measure of his agreement with the doctrine set forth in the criterion that will determine whether or not Chesterton held the Christian philosophy.

This chapter, then, will treat of the nature of the educand under two main aspects: (1) man according to God's design; that is the whole man, fallen from his original state, but redeemed by Christ, yet still bearing the effects of original sin; and (2) man as he is erroneously conceived to be according to the naturalistic notion of man as expressed in a) naturalistic pedagogy in general, and in b) sex education and c) co-education, in particular.

Chesterton himself ably introduces this chapter:

It is necessary to know whether man is responsible or irresponsible, perfect or imperfect, perfectible, mortal or immortal, doomed or free, not in order to understand God, but in order to understand man. Nothing that leaves these things under a cloud of religious doubt can possibly pretend to be a Science of man; it shrinks from anthropology as completely as from theology.¹

¹ G.K. Chesterton, St. Thomas Aquinas, New York, Sheed and Ward, 1933, p. 200.

1. Man According to God's Design.

Since it has already been said of Chesterton that even his biographies were little more than pegs on which to hang the discussion of his own views,² it may not be amiss to assume that the idea of the nature of man which he attributed to St. Thomas Aquinas was written precisely because it was so very much his own. Be that as it may, the following passage with typical clarity of thought offers a definition of the nature of man which is in strict keeping with what Pius XI emphatically said "must never be forgotten",³ and that is, that "man is whole and entire, soul united to body in unity of nature":⁴

It was a very special idea of St. Thomas that Man is to be studied in his whole manhood; that a man is not a man without his body, just as he is not a man without his soul. A corpse is not a man; but also a ghost is not a man. The earlier school of Augustine and even of Anselm had rather neglected this, treating the soul as the only necessary treasure, wrapped up for a time in a negligible napkin. Even here they were less orthodox in being more spiritual. St. Thomas stood up stoutly for the fact that a man's body is his body, as his mind is his mind; and that he can only be a balance and union of the two.⁵

2 Christopher Hollis, G.K. Chesterton, London, Longmans, Green and Company, 1950, p. 7.

3 Pius XI, Divini Illius Magistri, New York, The America Press, 1936, p. 1.

4 Ibid.

5 Chesterton, St. Thomas Aquinas, p. 25.

This, of course, describes the natural man only, without taking into account his supernatural life of grace which must be included in the Christian notion of the whole man mentioned in the Encyclical. However, it is not difficult to trace Chesterton's belief in the Fall and the Redemption through his writings. For instance, in an amusing commentary on the statement of a learned professor that the Eumerian name for Adam was Tagtug, he had this to say:

In the abstract, as a matter of personal taste, Tagtug is good enough for me. [...] I should be quite content, if necessary, to say that in Tagtug all died, so long as I could still say that in Christ all were made alive.⁶

In 1909, Chesterton, the Protestant, expressed his early belief in the Fall of Man when he condemned the new-born twentieth century because it could be truly said of it that it was a time in which "the doctrine of the Rights of Man is dismissed with the doctrine of the Fall of Man".⁷

He taught, through his writings, that man who was created free, and fell from grace through his own fault, has been given a second chance. One example of this is the following:

⁶ G.K. Chesterton, The Colored Lands, New York, Sheed and Ward, 1938, p. 130.

⁷ -----, Heretics, New York, John Lane Company, 1909, p. 12.

Will made the world; will wounded the world; the same Divine Will gave to the world for the second time its chance; the same human will can for the last time make its choice. That is the real outstanding peculiarity, or eccentricity, of the peculiar sect called Roman Catholics.⁶

Another example of his optimistic attitude inspired by the knowledge of man's second chance, is the following:

The Fall is a view of life. It is not only the only enlightening, but the only encouraging view of life. It holds [...] that we have misused a good world, and not merely been trapped into a bad one. It refers evil back to the wrong use of the will, and thus declares that it can eventually be righted by the right use of the will. Every other creed except that one is some form of surrender to fate.⁷

Therefore, it is the training in this right use of the will, weakened as it is by the effects of original sin, that Christian education is expected to give. To Chesterton, this was by no means an easy task. In 1900, after reading certain current educational works, he wrote his opinion:

⁶ G.K. Chesterton, The Common Man, London, Sheed and Ward, 1950, p. 326.

⁷ -----, The Thing, New York, Good, Mead and Company, 1930, p. 226.

To take the most obvious point, they all talk as if the child stood still to be educated. They talk as if the government of your home were entirely concerned with what you should do with the children. A great deal of it is concerned with the desperate question of what the children will do with you. They talk of giving this or that final touch to the shape of the child's will, as if the child had no will of his own. A child is weaker than a man if it comes to a fight or a knowledge of the world; but there is nothing to show that the child is weaker in will or desire. You come away from a modern educational work with the feeling that you have been putting together little pieces of different-colored clay until you have made the image or statuette of a small child. You come away from having to do with a small child with the sense of having been wrestling with gigantic angels and gigantic devils, with the first eddy of evil as it enters the universe and the first cataract of innocence as it comes from God.¹⁰

Here Chesterton recognizes the disorderly inclinations mentioned in the Encyclical¹¹ as another legacy from the fall, inclinations that it is the work of education to correct.

Speaking of correction and the unavoidable paradox of childhood, he gave his views on this aspect of education:

Although this child is much better than I, yet I must teach it. Although this being has much purer passions than I, yet I must control it. Although Tommy is quite right to rush towards a precipice, yet he must be stood in the corner for doing it. This contradiction is the only possible condition for having to do with children at all. Anyone who talks about a child without feeling this paradox might just as well be talking about a merman. He has never even seen the animal.¹²

¹⁰ G.K. Chesterton, "Our Note Book", in Illustrated London News, Vol.132, No.3604, issue of May 16, 1903, p. 598.

¹¹ Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 20.

¹² G.K. Chesterton, George Bernard Shaw, New York, John Lane Company, 1910, p. 173.

In the above citation, one finds Chesterton stressing the need to teach, to control, and to punish justly; all of which fits in very neatly with the directives of the Holy Father, though written nearly twenty years before the Encyclical.

All told, Chesterton's ideas on the whole man as the subject of Christian education bear a remarkable resemblance to the criterion. However, it is worthy of note that Chesterton, unlike Pius XI, made no explicit mention of the indispensable role of grace and the Sacraments in the formation of youth. Still, it would seem that in view of his insistence on the necessity of Catholic schools for the complete education of Catholic youth, one might assume that the need for supernatural help was implied, and that the omission was only apparent.

2. Man as He is Erroneously Conceived to Be.

Against this true notion of the whole man--man naturally supernatural and supernaturally natural--stands out in sharp contrast the naturalistic philosophy which either ignores or denies the life of grace. Furthermore, although, as Chesterton remarked, "mankind has, in nearly all places and periods, seen that there is a soul and a body as plainly as there is a sun and a moon",¹³ the advocates of

¹³ Chesterton, The Thing, p. 158.

the extreme version of naturalism, or materialism, go so far as to deny the spiritual part of man's essence. Commenting on such as these, Chesterton reveals his opinion of their philosophy:

There is the atheist, the materialist or monist or whatever he calls himself, who believes that all is ultimately material, and all that is material is mechanical. This is emphatically a view of life; not a very bright or breezy view, but one into which it is quite possible to fit many facts of existence.¹⁴

According to him, the proponents of such a view were traitors to their own human dignity, for he considered that "It is not natural, it does not even feel natural, to be a materialist. It is not natural to be content with nature."¹⁵

But that this thought was inspired by more than just a feeling of the inadequacy of the purely natural, the following explains:

I know that man is the image of God, and that he is different from the brutes in a fundamental and real sense and that his dignity must be preserved by a separation. But how many thousands of people nowadays have mixed up men and animals past any separation or any distinction. How many of them have anything like a religious dogma or even a clear ethical dogma distinguishing man from the other creatures.¹⁶

The fact that so many have lost the sense of the supernatural, and thereby the notion of their true human

¹⁴ G. K. Chesterton, Pathways to the Faith, pamphlet, New York, International Catholic Truth Society, (no date), p.4.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ -----, The Superstitions of the Sceptic, Cambridge, Heffer and Sons, 1925, p. 17.

dignity, urged the Holy Father to strike at naturalistic education as the root of this evil: "Every method of education founded, wholly or in part, on the denial of forgetfulness of Original Sin and of grace, and relying on the sole powers of human nature, is unsound".¹⁷

a) Naturalistic Pedagogy in General.- One of the tenets condemned in the Encyclical is that the child should be emancipated from all authority. This implies 'a pretended self-government and unrestrained freedom'.¹⁸ Chesterton's gift of satire was set to work on the theory of self-government as it appeared to him:

We hear new theories of the nature of schools and scholars and schoolmasters; they are all very progressive, and many would confess to be reactionary. And their idea of a new movement, nine times out of ten, is to say that the boys will govern themselves in the manner of a parliament, or even under the name of a republic. Schoolmasters, should they still exist, will exist to be impeached or possibly deposed; if not exactly beheaded in the manner of Charles the First or Louis the Sixteenth. Anyhow, the school is to be on the model of the Parliament which was to have killed Charles, or the Republic which was supposed to have condemned Louis.¹⁹

Though the article from which the above was borrowed was written after the publication of the Encyclical, the following excerpt anticipated it by nearly five years and shows Chesterton's consistency of thought:

17 Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 20.

18 Ibid.

19 G.K. Chesterton, "A Second Case", in G.K.'s Weekly, Vol. 15, issue of November 5, 1932, p. 135.

If the young are always right and can do as they like, well and good; let us all be jolly, old and young, and free from every kind of responsibility. But in that case do not come pestering us with the importance of education, when nobody has any right to teach anybody. Make up your mind whether you want unlimited education or unlimited emancipation, but do not be such a fool as to suppose you can have both at once.²⁰

Earlier still, he pointed out that it would be a sheer waste of time to try to create a world in which there is no authority over the young:

You can say, as an educationist said the other day, that small children should 'criticize, question authority and suspend their judgment'. I do not know why he did not go on to say that they should earn their own living, pay income tax to the State, and die in battle for the fatherland; for the proposal evidently is that children shall have no childhood.²¹

But as long as there are children, as Chesterton reminds educators,

We must confront without a quiver the notion of a child who will be childish, that is, full of energy, but without an idea of independence; fundamentally as eager for authority as for information as for information and butter-scotch.²²

This leads to the consideration of another principle of naturalistic education mentioned in the Encyclical,²³

20 G.K. Chesterton, Fancies Versus Facts, London, Methuen and Company, 1925, p. 194.

21 -----, The Superstition of Divorce, p. 63.

22 -----, What's Wrong with the World, New York, Dodd, Mead and Company, 1910, p. 344.

23 Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 20.

that of unrestrained freedom on the part of the child from any law, natural or Divine.

Chesterton's definite opinion of this sort of autonomy dates back as far as 1910, and nothing that he has written since has been found to gainsay what he said then: "All educationists are utterly dogmatic and authoritarian. You cannot have free education; for if you left a child free you would not educate him at all."²⁴

This pedagogical fact, he knew, was far from being undisputed in his time; and one can judge how closely and with what intense interest he followed the widespread discussion of the educational question of freedom versus control from his own statement concerning the issue:

I have read hundreds and thousands of times, in all the novels and newspapers of our epoch, certain phrases about the just right of the young to liberty, about the unjust claim of the elders to control, about the conception that all souls must be free or all citizens equal, about the absurdity of authority or the degradation of obedience.

But what strikes me as astonishing, in a logical sense, is that no one of these myriad novelists and newspaper men ever think of asking the next and most obvious question. It never seems to occur to them to inquire what becomes of the opposite obligation. If the child is free from the first to disregard the parent, why is not the parent free from the first to disregard the child? If Mr. Jones, Senior, and Mr. Jones, Junior, are only two free and equal citizens, why should one citizen sponge on another citizen for the first fifteen years of his life?²⁵

²⁴ Chesterton, What's Wrong with the World, p. 253.

²⁵ -----, The Thing, p. 30.

It is evident that this passage refers to control as it is exercised by the parent rather than by the teacher; but what is important is its treatment of the educator-child relationship which applies whether the educator be the parent in the home or the teacher in the school. Chesterton concluded by saying that, "It is obvious that we are dealing with a real relation which may be equality, but is certainly not similarity."²⁶

Early in his career Chesterton began to answer those who were only too ready to claim that authority is absurd and obedience degrading. In 1903, he was found offering a child subject to authority as a model for all:

It is no derogation to man as a spiritual being that he should be ruled and guided for his own good like a child - for a child who is always ruled and guided we regard as the very type of spiritual existence.²⁷

An excerpt from an article written the same year leaves no doubt about what he thought of the necessity of law in the formation of the young. It reads:

It is right to say to a sad and civilized man, 'Oh, think a little less about laws, and a little more about life!' But there is no sense at all in saying this to children. Children have more life than we have; the only thing they lack is law.²⁸

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ G.K. Chesterton, Varied Types, New York, Dodd, Mead and Company, 1903, p. 21.

²⁸ -----, "Our Note Book", p. 698.

Then, twenty-six years later, as though he just remembered that he had not explained what he meant by law--the natural law, at least--he supplied the omission:

By the way, the Natural Law does not mean the Law of Nature; which moderns talk about when they mean the Lawlessness of Nature. It means the truth which man can perceive even through his own nature, without the supernatural which is above nature.²⁹

The didactic tone of this passage betrays the teacher in Chesterton. His clear, direct and simple presentation of this truth could not fail to instruct the general public whom it was intended to reach through the medium of his newspaper, though it might not succeed in convincing it.

It is noteworthy that eighteen years before the Holy Father warned Christian educators against those systems and methods that "attributed to the child the exclusive primacy of initiative",³⁰ Chesterton declared that the young do not have the ability to take the initiative in educating themselves; and the reason is that

Youth is almost everything else, but it is hardly ever original. We read of young men bursting on the old world with a new message. But youth in actual experience is the period of imitation and even obedience. Subjectively, its emotions may be furious and headlong; but its only external outcome is a furious imitation and a headlong obedience.³¹

²⁹ G.K. Chesterton, "Who Is the Ascetic?", in G.K.'s Weekly, Vol. 18, issue of February 1, 1934, p. 351.

³⁰ Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 20.

³¹ G.K. Chesterton, Charles Dickens, New York, Dodd, Mead and Company, 1911, p. 69.

For one who never had to deal with children, Chesterton showed remarkably keen insight into the psychology of childhood. It must have been his great love for children that gave him this understanding. It may be worthwhile to digress here, by inserting a passage written in 1901, to show the appeal that children had for him:

The humorous look of children is perhaps the most endearing of all the bonds that hold the Cosmos together. Their top-heavy dignity is more touching than any humility; their solemnity gives us more hope for all things than a thousand carnivals of optimism; their large and lustrous eyes seem to hold all the stars in their astonishment; their fascinating absence of nose seems to give to us the most perfect hint of the humor that awaits us in the kingdom of heaven.³²

It is not at all surprising that one who could think such thoughts of children should be as ready as Chesterton was to take up the cudgels in their defense in every educational controversy that arose in England.

To return to the dangers of naturalism, not only does it advocate the freedom of the child from all restraint, but it also demands that education be completely emancipated from the laws of God.

"But, without morality man cannot live, nor can any system of education thrive. So, having discarded the ancient Christian morality they try to invent one of their own."³³

³² G.K. Chesterton, The Defendant, London, J.M. Dent and Sons, Limited, 1901, p. 153.

³³ Otto Cohausz, The Pope and Christian Education, New York, Benziger Brothers, 1933, p. 56.

"So today we see, strange sight indeed, educators and philosophers who spend their lives in searching for a universal moral code of education."³⁴

That Chesterton tussled with this question as early as 1906 can be seen from what he wrote about it at that time:

I have just received a long, elaborate, and very able document from the Moral Instruction League describing what they conceive to be a complete system of sensible education in ethics; a scheme of ethics to which every one assents and which can therefore be substituted for the morality of all the creeds. It is supposed to represent the morality in which all men agree. And really, I do not think I ever read a document with which I disagreed so much.³⁵

In 1930, he had nowise changed his opinion. He was still disagreeing with those who persisted in this search for a new universal morality in education, notably Dean Inge, with whom he crossed swords in controversy on this subject. Speaking of modern men who, in order to avoid a Catholic conclusion, have to fall back on a sort of talk of the times and attack the Church with words of which even the world is weary, he wrote:

³⁴ Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 21.

³⁵ G.K. Chesterton, "Our Note Book", p. 696.

This blast of dullness is the more startling when it comes from minds that are not intrinsically dull, but sometimes in their way distinguished. An extraordinary example occurred recently in the form of an article by Dean Inge against religious education. [...] He has often expressed a healthy contempt for cheap cheerfulness about progress [...] yet in this article he is as bright and breezy as any salesman with a slogan: 'The modern State is feeling its way towards new ideas of Nature, of man, and of society, and hopes that public education may promote a social unity, out of which, perhaps, a new religious unity may at last grow.' which is far worse than Wells at his very worst, in the matter of vagueness, and is without that inner sincerity which still gives strength to the Wellsian style.³⁶

Further on in the same article where Dean Inge answered so perfectly to the description given in the Encyclical of "these innovators who are wont to refer contemptuously to Christian education as 'heteronomous', 'passive', 'obsolete'",³⁷ Chesterton's reply left no doubt about what he thought:

I call it thinking journalese to write like this:

'If we are to work our way to a new integration in religion, more in keeping with modern scientific and social ideas than the old traditional forms, which in some respects are antiquated, this plan of scattering pupils among sectarian teachers for the religious lesson is essentially retrograde, and ought not to be tolerated in schools under State control.'

There is not a word in that wordy paragraph that is not a stock phrase over which any intelligent person will stumble, and want to kick it out of his path. Everybody who believes in a religion believes he has the right integration in religion; and it is not our fault if the Dean of St. Paul's has not found any right religion yet.³⁸

³⁶ G.K. Chesterton, "Cant and Catholic Education", in America, Vol. 43, No. 24, issue of September 20, 1930, p. 562.

³⁷ Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 21.

³⁸ Chesterton, "Cant and Catholic Education", p. 562.

Chesterton was prepared to doubt the intelligence of those who would thus try to set up a new standard of morality "as if there existed no Decalogue, no Gospel law, no law even of nature stamped by God on the heart of man".³⁹ This opinion is based on what he had one of his characters say: "Aye, the Ten Commandments are a test. What we doctors are beginning to ca' an Intelligence Test."⁴⁰

b) Sex Education.- More than sixteen years before the Encyclical appeared warning against "that naturalism which nowadays invades the field of education in that most delicate matter of purity of morals",⁴¹ Chesterton published an article which, though couched in popular language, contained the same ideas on the subject of indiscriminate and even public sex instruction. In this article, he speaks of a conference at which it was solemnly debated whether the sense of race-responsibility could not be taught in schools; whether schoolmasters could not implant in their pupils the Eugenic ideal to guide their affections in later years, when they came to select their partners. Here is his opinion of this:

³⁹ Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 21.

⁴⁰ G.K. Chesterton, The Paradoxes of Mr. Pond, New York, Dodd, Mead and Company, 1937, p. 72.

⁴¹ Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 21.

Now let any two-legged mortal in this vale of tears try and turn these words into a concrete picture. I remember my own school: Picture a number of idle, busy, or brooding boys sitting at inky desks: at a taller desk in front is sitting an athletic but nervous young man from Cambridge, blinking at them, and wondering by what verbal avenue he should approach the topic.⁴²

Chesterton then proceeds to describe the psychological effects on those being thus instructed; after asking:

What surgeon has removed the risible muscles from all these people's heads: have they ever seen a school-boy? I went to a large school and saw a good many different sorts; and I cannot think of one kind of boy on whom the effect of such a scene would not be either crazy, or downright depraving. The only possible results would be either a hot and torturing embarrassment, or an enormous increase in entertaining but improper conversation. And what sort of noodles are they that think they can talk to schoolgirls about the Ideal Man?⁴³

Chesterton's condemnation of the sort of sex education he described does not mean that he did not consider instruction necessary; but, like the Holy Father,⁴⁴ he too saw the need for private instruction given by those who have the grace of state. This is clear from his statement in the same article:

⁴² G.K. Chesterton, "Our Note Book", in The Illustrated London News, Vol. 142, No. 3056, issue of March 15, 1913, p. 332.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 22.

The question of warning children privately, by parents, priest, or doctors, of the snares of their own age is entirely another matter. Nothing done in this way could give them any 'race-responsibility', or teach them to 'select their partners'. This must mean talking in class about love and marriage; and if Eugenists mean that I tell them respectfully that they are maniacs.⁴⁵

It is impossible to mistake his meaning; and even those who do not agree with him cannot accuse him of being vague or equivocal in his thought on the subject.

Besides Chesterton's definite ideas on this naturalistic method of public sex instruction, research has revealed that about two months before the Encyclical condemned the illusion that "by exposing youths to the occasions"⁴⁶ they could thereby "harden them against the dangers of sensuality",⁴⁷ he had picked up the gauntlet flung down by Bernard Shaw on this question. Since it is well known that Chesterton and Shaw agreed on nothing except their friendship, it is not surprising to find them taking opposite stands in this matter as well:

⁴⁵ Chesterton, "Our Note Book", March 15, 1913, p. 332.

⁴⁶ Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 22.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

Mr. Shaw is reported as saying that the dropping of the Victorian decorum in dress has been followed by the total disappearance of what is called 'Sex Appeal'.

He refers to the revival of the ancient Adamite heresy which has broken out of late, largely among the Germans. He assumes [...] that if this cult of nakedness could be complete and universal, we should think nothing of it and get no harm from it. In other words, he assumes what I should flatly deny.⁴⁸

The reason he gave for such a flat denial was based on what has already been said about his truly Christian concept of the nature of man:

We do not believe that modesty is mere hypocrisy, or that the decrease of modesty will be the increase of moderation. We do not believe it, because our whole conception of the origin and object and principal problem of man is quite different from his.⁴⁹

And while he conceded that conventions differ, and that conventions, as such, are not necessarily universal or eternal, he did not admit that the cry in the human heart for conventions is merely conventional. Neither did he believe that the sudden dropping of convention would mean the substitution of conviction.⁵⁰

He then went on to say that:

⁴⁸ G.K. Chesterton, "G.R.C. vs G.B.S. on Sex Appeal", in America, Vol. 42, No. 4, issue of November 2, 1929, p. 80-81.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

[...] the Adamite perfection ought to be true, if the Shavian theory and theology were true. Only they happen to be false; and a totally different theory and theology happen to be true. For they are founded on the Fall of Man, and they are practically proved, over and over again, by every experiment of mankind. There is only one thing that stands in the way of the Adamite; and that is Adam.⁵¹

Chesterton's belief in the fact of original sin and the consequent weakness in human nature would not allow him to expect anything but moral harm to result from trying to impart sex education by purely natural means. And when the Encyclical appeared shortly after the above statements, it contained nothing in its treatment of this topic that ran counter to Chesterton's position in the issue.

c) Co-Education.- "False also and harmful to Christian education is the so-called method of 'co-education'. This too, [...] is founded upon naturalism and the denial of Original Sin."⁵² Such a method takes for granted the essential goodness of human nature, and ignores the differences in organism, in temperament, in abilities--differences which must be respected and developed if education is to correspond to the designs of the Creator. Granting this, there ought not to be promiscuity and equality in the training of the two sexes.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 22.

To Chesterton, the important thing about co-education was the question of what the co-educators' aims really were. Characteristically, he went to the root of things:

If they have small aims, some convenience in organization, some slight improvement in manners, they know more about such things than I. But if they have large aims, I am against them.⁵³

Accustomed as he was to look for the philosophy underlying modern movements, his opinion of co-education would naturally depend on what he thought of the principles guiding its supporters. He could not be expected to subscribe to a naturalistic notion of the nature of the educand, opposed as it is to the Christian view to which he adhered.

But if no Christian principles were at stake, he was ready to say, concerning the discussion on co-education:

For myself, I doubt whether it would make much difference at all. Everyone must agree with co-education for very young children; and I cannot believe that even for elder children it would do any great harm. But that is because I think the school is not so important as people think it nowadays. The home is the really important thing, and always will be.⁵⁴

Chesterton did not think that co-education would ever succeed in levelling the differences between the sexes to the point of making boys and girls ordinary comrades; for, as he pointed out:

⁵³ Chesterton, The Common Man, p. 143.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 141.

The home does not make them that. The sexes can work together in a schoolroom just as they can breakfast together in a breakfast-room; but neither makes any difference to the fact that the boys go off to a boyish companionship which the girls would think disgusting, while the girls go off to a girl companionship which the boys would think literally insane. Co-educate as much as you like, there will always be a wall between the sexes until love or lust breaks it down.⁵⁵

He graphically pictured the co-educative playground as "a place where boys go about in fives sulkily growling at the girls, and where the girls go about in twos turning up their noses at the boys".⁵⁶ And, according to him, co-education can do nothing to change this normal relationship, or rather, this lack of relationship. This failure he saw to be a good thing, for "it is better that the sexes should misunderstand each other until they marry. It is better that they should not have the knowledge until they have the reverence and the charity."⁵⁷

Nearly twenty years before Pius XI taught that because "in keeping with the wonderful designs of the Creator, [they] are destined to complement each other in the family and in society, precisely because of their differences",⁵⁸ their training should be in view of their respective roles as men and women, Chesterton wrote:

55 Ibid.

56 Ibid.

57 Ibid.

58 Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 23.

There must be specialists; but shall no one behold the horizon? [...] Shall all mankind be monomaniac? Tradition has decided that only one half of humanity shall be monomaniac. It has decided that in every home there shall be a tradesman and a Jack-of-all-trades. But it has also decided, among other things, that the Jack-of-all-trades shall be a Jill-of-all-trades. It has decided, rightly or wrongly, that this specialization and this universalism shall be divided between the sexes.⁵⁹

Fifteen years after this statement, he gave another example of the consistency that marks his ideas, by returning to the same thought:

It is neither a perceptible fact nor a first principle that the sexes must not specialize; and if one sex must specialize in adopting dubious occupations, we ought to be very glad that the other sex specializes in abstaining from them. This is how the balance of criticism in the commonwealth is maintained; as by a sort of government and opposition.⁶⁰

These statements may be attributed to his deep respect for womanhood and his strong conviction of the importance of the home. He saw industrialism in England as a threat to woman's role in the home, and consequently to the stability of the family; hence his frequent references to the complementary functions for which youth should be prepared.

Still on the topic of education proper to each sex, Pope Pius XI said that "in gyanastic exercises, special care must be had of Christian modesty in young women and girls,

⁵⁹ Chesterton, What's Wrong with the World, p. 154.

⁶⁰ -----, Fancies Versus Fads, p. 54.

which is so gravely impaired by any kind of exhibition in public".⁶¹ Though the admonition was given to the world at large, the Holy Father was alluding principally to the prevailing Fascist practice of forcing girls to engage in public physical training.⁶² However, the effort on the part of educators in England to subject girls to the same exercises and games as boys was ridiculed by Chesterton as early as 1910 when he said of them:

What they call new ideas are very old ideas in the wrong place. Boys play football; why shouldn't girls play football? [...] That is about their notion of a new idea. There is no brain work in the thing at all; no root query of what sex is, of whether it alters this or that and why. There is nothing but plodding, elaborate, elephantine imitation. [...] Even a savage could see that bodily things, at least, which are good for a man are very likely to be bad for a woman. Yet there is no boy's game, however brutal, which these mild lunatics have not prozoted among girls.⁶³

It is interesting to note that every idea on co-education touched upon in the Encyclical found a counterpart in the writings of Chesterton, some of which express the Catholic principles of the Protestant Chesterton.

61 Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 23.

62 Paul Foulquie, L'Eglise et L'Ecole, Paris, Editions Spes, 1947, p. 197.

63 Chesterton, What's Wrong with the World, p. 314.

CHAPTER VI

CHESTERTON AND EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

It now falls to this chapter to ascertain Chesterton's thought on the environment which forms the setting for the interaction of the roles of the agents of education and of the educand which were respectively dealt with in the last two chapters.

This environment will be considered in its four-fold aspect: (1) the Christian home, (2) the Church, (3) the school, and (4) the world.

Before treating specifically of these, a glance at what Chesterton had to say about environment in general may provide an insight into his thinking on this topic. For example, when he wrote, "We are on the side of all modern psychologists and serious educationists in recognizing the idea of atmosphere. They sometimes like to call it environment",¹ he was in harmony with Pius XI, a serious educator indeed, who stressed the importance of the right environment for perfect education.²

However, Chesterton was not of the opinion that environment will infallibly produce the desired results.

¹ G.K. Chesterton, The Common Man, London, Sheed and Ward, 1950, p. 165.

² Pius XI, Divini Illius Magistri, New York, The America Press, 1936, p. 23.

Given the fact of free will in defense of which he wrote so much in controversy against Calvinism and determinism, he thought that,

[...] about the effect of environment modern people talk much too cheerfully and cheaply. The idea that surroundings will mold a man is always mixed up with the totally different idea that they will mold him in one particular way. [...] Environment might work negatively as well as positively.³

This was written in 1910; twelve years later the same thought returned. This time, it was the Catholic Chesterton who said:

I think with a sort of smile of some of my friends in London who are quite sure how children will turn out if you give them what they call 'the right environment'. It is a troublesome thing, environment, for it sometimes works positively and sometimes negatively, and more often between the two.⁴

Although he consistently believed that "It is quite doubtful whether a person will go on specially with his environment or specially against his environment",⁵ he was ready to admit that

Nevertheless, it remains the working reality that what we have to deal with in the case of children in, for all practical purposes, environment; or, to use the older word, education. When all deductions are made, education is at least a form of will-worship, not of cowardly fact-worship; it deals with a department that we can control.⁶

3 G.K. Chesterton, What's Wrong with the World, New York, Dodd, Mead and Company, 1910, p. 239.

4 -----, Tremendous Trifles, New York, Dodd, Mead and Company, 1922, p. 240.

5 Ibid.

6 -----, What's Wrong with the World, p. 239.

1. The Christian Home.

When Chesterton was quoted in the preceding chapter as saying, "The home is the really important thing, and always will be",⁷ he was seen to be very much in the spirit of the criterion which stated that "The first natural and necessary element in this environment, as regards education, is the family."⁸ This belief in the importance of the family kept him ever in the vanguard in its defense. In fact, in 1924, when he was struggling with the notion of a paper of his own, and was handicapped by the lack of available funds, he wrote to his friend, Maurice Baring:

Do you think anything would come from any Catholics you know? Or for that matter from any people who want to fight for the curious institutions called men, women, children, roofs, doors, fireplaces, fields and similar fads?

It seems to me a standing monstrosity that there is not a single ordinary paper fighting for them.⁹

In spite of difficulties, the first issue of G.K.'s Weekly appeared on March 21 of the following year. From then on, until his death in 1936, Chesterton used this organ of distributism to do battle with whatever forces, political or social, that threatened to undermine the sacred foundations of the family.

7 Chesterton, The Common Man, p. 141.

8 Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 23.

9 G.K. Chesterton, "Three Letters of G.K.C. to Maurice Baring", in The Tablet, Vol. 202, No. 527, issue of December 26, 1953, p. 622.

Twenty years before Pius XI declared that the most effective and lasting education will be that which is received in a well-ordered and well-disciplined Christian family,¹⁰ Chesterton was convinced of the importance of this early training when he wrote: "A boy is only sent to be taught at school when it is too late to teach him anything, and thank God, it is nearly always done by women."¹¹ To him, the Christian home was the natural school in which the groundwork of character formation was laid, and from which the child went to school already equipped with basic habits and attitudes that remain to influence his further development.

Chesterton thought that among the many things to be learned in the family not the least important is respect for authority; for, according to him, "Nobody can doubt that a reasonable respect for parents is part of a gospel in which God Himself was subject in childhood to earthly parents."¹² And where this respect is wanting, Chesterton was of the opinion that, often enough, the blame can be laid on those parents who too readily tolerate undue familiarity and even rudeness in the young. He spoke of this tolerance in the following passage:

10 Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 23.

11 G.K. Chesterton, Orthodoxy, New York, John Lane Company, 1909, p. 208.

12 -----, The Everlasting Man, New York, Dodd, Mead and Company, 1925, p. 175.

Now, as far as I can discover from the social authorities who tell us all about the Rising Generation and the Bright Young Things, it appears to be considered a mark of advanced intelligence to call your father a bean or a scream, or possibly Tom, Dick, and Harry, in reference (or without reference) to his Christian name. Broadly speaking, the parent of the progressive age appears to answer to 'Hi!' or to any loud cry; and it seems to be considered in itself a proof of progress that the cries are very loud indeed.¹³

The same year in which this was written another Look appeared containing Chesterton's ideas on "the problem of what is called the general decline of manners, and especially of domestic habits that should be dignified by manners".¹⁴

It is somewhat surprising to find one who never thought of himself as an educator, not only deploring the lack of manners in the young and stressing the need of the social virtues, but even instructing the parents in the procedure they should follow in teaching consideration for others. He was consistent in his opinion that young people should be given the real reason and the right motive for doing what is expected of them. Pedagogically he stated:

¹³ G.K. Chesterton, All is Grist, New York, Dodd, Mead and Company, 1932, p. 3.

¹⁴ -----, Sidelights of New London and Newer York, London, Sheed and Ward, 1932, p. 55.

When the young people disregard doors or other details of manners, as understood in the immediate past, they are only told that they have disregarded particular conventions of the immediate past. They are not told clearly that the real meaning of a door is not a convention, and is not a thing of the past. It is an eternal dogma about the right relations of human beings; because human beings, while they cannot live without some change, and some adventure, also cannot live without some privacy and some protection. And the door and the dogma will outlive the present drifting fashions, just as they have outlived any number of other fashions that have already drifted away.¹⁵

He took this one working example, the rude invasion of the privacy and property of others; but he thought the argument applied to a dozen other things:

For instance, the young are not told why they should defer to the old, though the ideal is one that is, in the most accurate and appropriate sense, as true as death. It would be impossible to explain why that courtesy is a part of culture, without discussing some of the deepest things in life; including death. They are not discussed, and nothing is said to the young man except, 'Your Uncle Hiram was deeply shocked'; or 'What your great-aunt Abigail would have thought, I cannot imagine.' The young man is left under the impression that he is only getting on the wrong side of Uncle Hiram, whereas he is getting on the wrong side of Socrates and Confucius and Dante and Shakespeare and the whole cumulative culture and ordered imagination of mankind.¹⁶

Chesterton concluded these remarks on domestic manners by telling parents, "You cannot expect him to admit that he is wrong in disregarding the courtesies of the older culture, unless you tell him why."¹⁷

15 Ibid.

16 Ibid.

17 Ibid.

Twenty-one years earlier, he pointed out another aspect of child training for which the home is responsible, and that is, the Christian sense of human dignity:

Modern and cultured persons, I believe, object to their children seeing kitchen company or being taught by a woman like Peggoty. But surely it is more important to be educated in a sense of human dignity and equality than in anything else in the world. And a child who has once had to respect a kind and capable woman of the lower classes will respect the lower classes forever. The true way to overcome the evil in class distinctions is not to denounce them as revolutionists denounce them, but to ignore them as children ignore them.¹⁸

Here, indeed, is sound Christian teaching based on the virtue of charity and the brotherhood of man, teaching which is applicable to the evil of race distinctions as well. And one cannot help thinking what a difference it would make to the world were such Christian attitudes built up in every home.

It might be well to mention here that, because of the vastness of the subject, the Holy Father had no intention of treating of the question of domestic education, nor even to touch upon its principal points. However, since he said, "Besides there are not lacking special treatises on this topic by authors, both ancient and modern, well known for their solid Catholic doctrine",¹⁹ it may not be amiss

¹⁸ G.K. Chesterton, Charles Dickens, New York, Dodd Mead and Company, 1911, p. 199.

¹⁹ Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 24.

to count Chesterton among those modern authors who could be trusted to respect the mind of the Church when writing on this point.

If Pius XI did not issue any specific directives regarding domestic education, he did not fail "to call attention in a special manner to the present-day lamentable decline in family education",²⁰ due either to the lack of preparation on the part of parents, or to the increasingly widespread tendency of mothers to seek employment outside the home.

About the same time, Chesterton expressed his opinion of the trend as he saw it in England: "My complaint of the anti-domestic drift is that it is unintelligent. People do not know what they are doing; because they do not know what they are undoing."²¹

To appreciate fully his concern in this matter, one must remember that to him the family was a sacred institution and the most important environment for the education of youth.

Shortly before the appearance of the Encyclical, Chesterton was found putting forth the following argument in defense of the home:

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ G.K. Chesterton, The Thing, New York, Dodd, Mead and Company, 1930, p. 35.

One very common form of blunder is to make modern conditions an absolute end, and then try to fit human necessities to that end, as if they were only a means. These people say, 'Home is not suited to the business life of today.' Which is as if they said, 'Hats are not suited to the sort of hats now in fashion.' Then they might go around cutting off people's heads to meet shortage or shrinkage of hats; and calling it the Hat Problem.²²

To Chesterton's way of thinking, the home and education were so intimately connected, that anything that would endanger family life he saw as a threat to true education. And as there can be no home without a mother, he did all in his journalistic power to keep the importance of the mother's role continually before the public. It distressed him to see increasingly large numbers of women neglecting the home to engage in gainful employments. An example borrowed from his writings reveals his thought on this social question as he saw it in 1925:

In short, if education is really the larger matter, then certainly domestic life is the larger matter. [...] It is a mere matter of simple subtraction that the mother must have less time for the family if she has more time for the factory. If education, ethical and cultural, really were a trivial and mechanical matter, the mother might possibly rattle through it as a rapid routine, before going about her more serious business of serving a capitalist for hire. If education were merely instruction, she might briefly instruct her babies in the multiplication tables before she mounted to higher and nobler spheres as the servant of a Milk Trust or the secretary of a Drug Combine.²³

22 G.K. Chesterton, Generally Speaking, New York, Dodd, Mead and Company, 1929, p. 30.

23 -----, Fancies Versus Facts, London, Methuen and Company, 1925, p. 194.

Three years earlier, writing in the same vein, he said that the mother has already been given an almost irresponsible power over a limited region, and that "If she adds to her own power in the family all these alien facts external to the family, her power will not only be irresponsible but insane."²⁴

Chesterton seems to have marshaled all his literary powers in defense of the integrity of the home. Not only did his prose works carry his message, but his ideas on this subject found expression in one of his poems the first stanza of which runs thus:

I remember my mother, the day that we met,
 A thing I shall never entirely forget;
 And I toy with the fancy that, young as I am,
 I should know her again if we met in a tram.
 But mother is happy in turning a crank
 That increases the balance at somebody's bank;
 And I feel satisfaction that mother is free
 From the sinister task of attending to me.
 But mother is happy, for mother is free.
 For mother is dancing up forty-eight floors,
 For love of the Leeds International Stores,
 And the flame of that faith might perhaps have
 grown cold,
 With the care of a baby of seven weeks old.²⁵

This was written in 1923; and two years later, in his own paper, he again brought his gift of satire into full play when commenting on a column with the head-line,

²⁴ G.K. Chesterton, What I Saw in America, New York, Dodd, Mead and Company, 1922, p. 174.

²⁵ -----, The Ballad of St. Barbara, New York, G.P. Putman's and Sons, 1923, p. 70.

"Restoring Home Influence", in "a highly progressive paper, ever to the fore with the very latest developments of enlightened thought":²⁶

It seems that the social students who have long been engaged in this science have discovered in their researches into history that there existed in ancient times, and still exists in some secluded and even savage places, a thing called a Home or Household; in which children were often to be found for considerable periods at a time.²⁷

In the same satirical mood, he went on to say:

We may even expect to see the experiment of a human home being started again here and there. It will suffer ridicule at first like all bold innovations. [...] But progress will go on and survive ridicule; and weird as the prophecy may seem today, we can imagine a time when a mother looking after her own baby will be a normal sight in this country and attract no special attention.²⁸

Chesterton seemed to be tireless in his campaign against the declining influence of domestic environment, as his recurrent references to the subject show. For instance, to mothers who sought freedom in external pursuits, he had this remark to offer:

The mother dealing with her own daughters in her own home does literally have to deal with all forms of freedom, because she has to deal with all sides of a single human soul. She is obliged, if not to talk with the tongue of men and angels, at least to decide how much she shall talk about angels and how much about men.²⁹

²⁶ G.K. Chesterton, "More Novelties", in G.K.'s Weekly, Vol. 1, issue of July 18, 1925, p. 390.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ -----, Fancies Versus Fads, p. 194.

Then, if they thought that others could assume their educational role in the home, he told them that "It is only the domestic discipline that can show any sympathy or especially any humor."³⁰ And if they were inclined to underrate their influence on their children, he reminded them that "[...] a little boy in the street has more traces of having been brought up by his mother than of having been taught ethics and geography by a pupil teacher."³¹

2. The Church as Educational Environment.

Since the nature of the whole man requires that the child be educated as a supernatural being, he needs a supernatural environment; and this God has provided in His Church, that great family of Christ in which supernatural influence and effective education are so perfectly combined. For the Church, true teacher that she is, makes use of all the means at her disposal to lead souls to God. Not only does she offer the sacraments as the divine channels of grace, but she also calls upon the grandeur of the liturgy, the beauty of art, and the architecture of her churches as her audio-visual aids to help her instruct her children in the things of the spirit.

³⁰ Chesterton, The Thing, p. 35.

³¹ -----, The Common Man, p. 141.

Chesterton saw that in appealing to the senses in order to teach the eternal truths the Church was using a holy means for a noble end; for he said:

The senses had truly become sanctified; as they are blessed one by one at a Catholic baptism. 'Seeing is believing' was no longer the platitude of a mere idiot, or common individual, as in Plato's world; it was mixed up with real conditions of real belief.³²

And if from the very beginning the Church has depended on art and architecture to help her present lasting object lessons in the mysteries of the Faith, it was because, as Chesterton remarked: "Art, and especially architecture, can express actualities that are at once too large and too elusive to be expressed in words."³³ He then gave the following as an example of what he meant:

St. Mark's Cathedral at Venice is in some ways a very curious building, and to some northern eyes does not look like a Cathedral at all; but it does look like a thing coloured with the sunrise and the sunset, in touch with the very ends of the earth; open like a harbour and full of popular poetry like a fairy-palace. That is, it does express the first essential fact that Catholicism is not a narrow thing; that it knows more than the world knows about the potentialities and creative possibilities of the world, and that it will outlast all the worldly and temporary expressions of the same culture.³⁴

32 Chesterton, St. Thomas Aquinas, p. 138.

33 -----, The Well and the Shallows, London, Sheed and Ward, 1935, p. 163.

34 Ibid.

He then went on to speak of the lessons taught by such buildings, "in the breadth of great gates declaring the brotherhood of men, or the lifting of great domes pointing the way of their destiny".³⁵

That the religious environment of the Church answers a psychological need Chesterton set out to prove by citing the attitude of the opponents of this use of symbolic externals:

It may still be noted that the unconverted world, Puritan or Pagan, but perhaps especially when it is Puritan, has a very strange notion of the collective unity of Catholic things or thoughts. Its exponents even when not in any rabid sense enemies, give the most curious lists of things which they think make up Catholic life; an odd assortment of objects, such as candles, rosaries, incense (they are always intensely impressed with the enormous importance and necessity of incense), vestments, pointed windows, and then all sorts of essentials or non-essentials thrown in in any sort of order: fasts, relics, penances or the Pope. But even in their bewilderment, they do bear witness to a need which is not so nonsensical as their attempts to fulfill it.³⁶

But lest it be thought that Chesterton attributed to these externals a role beyond that assigned them by Mother Church, he explained that the need supplied by such things "should of course be described from within, by the definition and development of its theological first principles".³⁷

35 Ibid.

36 Ibid., p. 175.

37 Ibid., p. 176.

After granting the necessity of the knowledge and understanding of the dogmatic truths, he again stressed his meaning when he wrote:

I mean that men need an image, single, coloured, and clear in outline, an image to be called up instantly in the imagination, when what is Catholic is to be distinguished from what claims to be Christian or even what in one sense is Christian.³⁸

And of all the reminders that the Church uses to inspire the minds and hearts of her children, Chesterton saw in the image of Our Lady the power of her who gives their ultimate meaning to all those other appeals to the senses. For to him there was no doubt that

Our Lady, reminding us especially of God Incarnate, does in some degree gather up and embody all those elements of the heart and the higher instincts, which are the legitimate short cuts to the love of God.³⁹

And when Pius XI mentioned the means with which God in His goodness endowed the great family of Christ to meet the weakness of man's fallen nature,⁴⁰ surely he was thinking of devotion to the Mother of that great family as one of the most powerful of these means. As for Chesterton, he thought no education complete that did not include the knowledge and love of Our Lady; and he was greatly concerned

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 174.

⁴⁰ Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 25.

lest the Catholic children of England grow up deprived of this knowledge and love. This concern was made public in a controversy with Dean Inge:

If there was one thing that was the soul of Europe, and rather especially of England, it was the love of Our Lady. And when we say that we will have schools in which such a power is present, we merely mean that we will have children educated adequately, and not inadequately, and children not cheated of their heritage.⁴¹

Chesterton, then, recognized the educational environment of the Church as a necessary condition if the child is to develop into a perfect Christian.

3. The School.

Pius XI stated that since the school owes its existence to the initiative of the family and of the Church long before it was undertaken by the State, "[...] it must form a perfect moral whole with them".⁴² As an educational environment, then, it must complement the family and the Church if education is not to fail in its purpose.

This Chesterton believed; and from the very beginning of his literary career he thought it his duty to become involved in every school question that arose in England. It is true, however, that around 1902, when English Catholics

⁴¹ G.K. Chesterton, "Cant and Catholic Education", in America, Vol. 43, No. 24, issue of September 20, 1930, p. 563.

⁴² Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 26.

were struggling to maintain their own schools, Chesterton failed to see the reason why denominational schools should be provided. But his strong sense of justice soon made him change his mind; and for the rest of his life he fought valiantly against those who would exclude religion from the schools of the nation. To such he referred in 1900:

Men say indignantly that we ought not to be worrying about creeds; we ought to be worrying about education. They might as well say that we must not worry about cats, because we ought to be worrying about kittens. A kitten only means the first stage of a cat. Education only means the first stage of some creed, some view of life.⁴³

An excerpt from his writings two years later shows how far he had moved from the stand taken in 1902:

It is quaint that people talk of separating dogma from education. Dogma is actually the only thing that cannot be separated from education. It is education. A teacher who is not dogmatic is simply a teacher who is not teaching.⁴⁴

To Dean Inge's hope that purely secular public education will automatically produce a Christian morality, Chesterton opposed the following statement:

I gather, in his own phrase, that morals are to be caught like measles. It is an unfortunate parallel, for measles are infectious and health is not [...]. But of course, he never dreamed, when he was a schoolmaster of acting on any such absurd principle. He did not think that boys would catch Greek by contagion, or would naturally come out in spots of decimal fractions.⁴⁵

⁴³ G.K. Chesterton, "Our Note Book", in The Illustrated London News, Vol.133, No.3622, issue of September 19, 1900, p.392.

⁴⁴ -----, What's Wrong with the World, p. 246.

⁴⁵ -----, "Cant and Catholic Education", p. 562.

In the same article Chesterton continued to point out the absurdity of neutral education: "However, the following sentence has a curious simplicity and charm: 'Under some neutral heading such as 'Civic and Personal Duties' a great deal of Christian teaching might be introduced'."⁴⁶ Then, using his best satire, he went on to say:

I grieve to note this dark and crooked priest-craft learnt from the infamous Jesuits, in the educational policy of the Dean of St. Paul's. It is distressing to find him, a dark figure gliding noiselessly behind the arms insinuating religious teaching under entirely neutral headings.⁴⁷

This was followed by a series of questions which Chesterton seemed to intend partly as a rebuttal to Dean Inge and partly as a stimulus for the mind of the reading public:

What are our Civic and Personal Duties? How much of the old outworn Christian prejudice against polygamy or murder are we allowed to 'introduce' under that neutral heading? Should a man keep his marriage vow? Is that a Personal Duty? If it is, then three-quarters of the theory and practice of modern marriage and divorce is evil. [...] All this talk of teaching the duties of citizenship is cant and claptrap, when there are such violent contrasts between what St. Augustine called the City of Babylon and the City of God.⁴⁸

These passages illustrate Chesterton's views on what the criterion calls neutral education, and his appreciation

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 563.

of the vital role of religion in the schools, a role that the advocates of secular education refuse to recognize.

Chesterton spoke of these:

Those who attack the teaching of religion, which is the one human and historical mode of education, are evidently quite unaware of how large is the thing they attack, and how small their sect actually is in its presence.⁴⁹

And eight years earlier he gave the world an idea of how vast the thing is when he wrote, "A religion is not the church a man goes to but the cosmos he lives in."⁵⁰

Chesterton's works have also contributed his ideas on what the Encyclical condemned as "the mixed school, or the school in which students are provided with separate religious instruction, but receive other lessons in common with non-Catholic pupils from non-Catholic teachers".⁵¹

He lost no time in expressing his opinion of this piecemeal type of Christian education; for in 1908, as an Anglo-Catholic, he published an article sparkling with philosophy, logic and humor which made his position clear. This excerpt conveys his idea:

⁴⁹ G.K. Chesterton, "We Are Not Cranks", in G.K.'s Weekly, Vol. 11, issue of July 19, 1930, p. 295.

⁵⁰ -----, Irish Impressions, New York, John Lane Company, 1922, p. 215.

⁵¹ Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 27.

I believe in a religion: and a man who believes in a religion disbelieves in bits of that religion. The pedantic way of putting it is that once a thing is organic and living it cannot be divided without death. If you love the dog on the hearthrug, you don't like parts of him on the hearthrug. The more you want to find your wife in the dining-room the less (as a rule) you want to find half your wife in the dining-room. Half a wife is not better than no marriage; it is worse because it is being a widower instead of a bachelor. Therefore, anything that has in it a center of being and a circulation of strength cannot be cut up.⁵²

And more than twenty years before Pius XI said that religion should be the foundation and crown of all education from the grades to the university,⁵³ Chesterton wrote about the importance of this continuity in religious training:

To teach children only the first elements of religion is like reading children only the first chapters of a detective story. It is cruelty to children. The last chapters of a detective story are necessary in order to make any sense of the first. [...] And religion is a detective story, in the sense that its secret is not only satisfying, but also startling. To break into the middle of a thing like that and say it must stop at page five is exactly like breaking into the middle of a romance, or of a riddle, or of an anecdote, or of a practical joke. In all cases you are cutting the thing off at a point before you have come to the point of it.⁵⁴

Chesterton identified himself with those who believe that if Catholics are to teach Catholicism all the time, they cannot merely teach Catholic theology for part of the time, when he wrote:

⁵² Chesterton, "Our Note Book", p. 693.

⁵³ Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 27.

⁵⁴ Chesterton, "Our Note Book", p. 693.

It is our opponents, and not we, who give a really outrageous and superstitious position to dogmatic theology. It is they who suppose that the special 'subject' called theology can be put into people by an experiment lasting half an hour; and that this magical inoculation will last them through a week in a world that is soaked through and through with a contrary conception of life.⁵⁵

In another work, strange as it may seem to some, he showed more tolerance towards secular education which made no pretense of teaching any religion than he did towards the mixed school which prided itself on teaching an adequate amount of religion, and succeeded only in belittling an extremely important thing:

Secular education is more sensible than making religion one of the extras; like learning fret-work or Portuguese. And this principle is important in the controversy about religious education, because it involves the whole question [... the question of what is called 'atmosphere'.⁵⁶

To him, educational environment meant this all-pervading religious atmosphere that did not admit of barometric fluctuations between religion and non-religion. That is why he said:

⁵⁵ Chesterton, The Common Man, p. 167.

⁵⁶ -----, The Spice of Life, Beaconsfield, Darwen Finlayson, 1964, p. 114.

The expression, 'a religious hour' is something like a contradiction in terms. And it is amusing to note that the same casual sceptic who is always sneering at the orthodox for their forms and limitations, who is always talking of their Sunday religion and their separation of things sacred and profane, is generally the very man who is most ready to make fun of the idea of a religious atmosphere in the schools. That is to say, he of all people, objects most to sacred and profane things being united and to a religion that works on week-days as well as on Sundays.⁵⁷

However, strong as was Chesterton's faith in religious education, his knowledge of human nature prompted him to write in 1911:

The foil may curve in the lunge; but there is nothing beautiful about beginning the battle with a crooked foil. So the strict aim, the sound doctrine, may give a little in the actual fight with facts; but there is no reason for beginning with a weak doctrine or a twisted aim.⁵⁸

As the Encyclical states, in the Catholic school the various branches of secular learning do not enter into conflict with religious instruction to the detriment of education; for it is the purpose of such a school to ground students so thoroughly in sound doctrine that even if they have to read authors propounding false doctrine, it will not harm them.⁵⁹

It is interesting to find Chesterton anticipating the same thought by twenty years, when he wrote:

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 115.

⁵⁸ G.K. Chesterton, Alarms and Discursions, New York, Dodd, Mead and Company, 1911, p. 56.

⁵⁹ Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 29.

Religious and philosophical beliefs are, indeed, as dangerous as fire, and nothing can take from them that beauty of danger. But there is only one way of guarding ourselves against the excessive danger of them, and that is to be steeped in philosophy and soaked in religion.⁶⁰

And nine years before the Holy Father said that in such a school, moreover, the study of classical literature will do no damage to moral virtue,⁶¹ Chesterton declared that

Every man ought to have read enough good literature to know when he is reading bad literature, and to go on reading it. He ought to have had what is rightly called a liberal education, that he may know the largest purposes to which human language has been put. [...] The highest outcome of an interest in literature is a finer interest in life; and bad literature as well as good may throw a light on life, if we have learnt to know light from darkness.⁶²

The Encyclical compared the Christian teacher to the bee, which takes the choicest part of the flower and leaves the rest.⁶³ This seems to be very much like what Chesterton said in 1909:

To know the best theories of existence and to choose the best from them, appears to us the proper way to be neither bigot nor fanatic, but something more firm than a bigot and more terrible than a fanatic, a man with a definite opinion.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ G.K. Chesterton, Heretics, New York, John Lane Company, 1909, p. 295.

⁶¹ Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 29.

⁶² G.K. Chesterton, "Our Note Book", in The Illustrated London News, Vol.157, issue of October 9, 1920, p. 546.

⁶³ Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 29.

⁶⁴ Chesterton, Heretics, p. 295.

The following year, he returned to the subject to deplore the fact that this was not being done by the modern world, whose tendency was towards rejection rather than selection, with the result that

Our modern prophetic idealism is narrow because it has undergone a persistent process of elimination. We must ask for new things because we are not allowed to ask for old things. The whole position is based on this idea that we have got all the good that can be got out of the ideas of the past. But we have not got all the good out of them; perhaps at this moment not any of the good out of them. And the need here is a need for complete freedom for restoration as well as revolution.⁶⁵

This type of progress in education Chesterton could not understand, for to his mind, "if there really be anything of the nature of progress, it must mean, above all things, the careful study and assumption of the whole of the past".⁶⁶

Like the Holy Father who urged the Christian teacher not to be hasty in abandoning the old which the experience of centuries has found expedient and profitable,⁶⁷ Chesterton was always ready to give due credit to the past for the progress of the present; for he believed that "when there really is anything like the building of a new civilization, it means that there has been a great deal of quarrying in the ruins of the old civilization."⁶⁸

65 Chesterton, What's Wrong with the World, p. 29.

66 -----, Heretics, p. 170.

67 Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 29.

68 G.K. Chesterton, Avowals and Denials, New York, Dodd, Mead and Company, 1935, p. 195.

But Chesterton could see that this respect for the past so necessary for the completion and enrichment of education, was far from being a popular idea in his time. He complained of this when he wrote:

The modern world seems to have no notion of preserving different things side by side, of allowing its proper and proportionate place to each, of saving the whole varied heritage of culture. It has no notion except that of simplifying something by destroying nearly everything. I do not see why any cultural conquest should be lost or despised, or why it is necessary for every fashion to wash away all that is best in every other.⁶⁹

On the contrary, "an should be a prince looking from the pinnacle of a tower built by his fathers, and not a contemptuous cad kicking down the ladders by which he climbed."⁷⁰

About the time when the Encyclical expressed regret that the teaching of Latin was falling more and more into disuse in modern education, Chesterton paid the following tribute to the language of the ancients:

Now the true teaching which strengthens and steadies the mind [...] has, in fact, come down to us very largely from the culture of those great languages in which were written the works of the last Stoics and the first Saints, the Greek Testament and the Roman Law.⁷¹

⁶⁹ G.K. Chesterton, All I Survey, London, Methuen and Company, 1933, p. 19.

⁷⁰ -----, Vowels and Consonants, p. 26.

⁷¹ -----, Come to Think of It, London, Methuen and Company, 1930, p. 49.

If Pius XI thought that the noble traditions of the past require that the youth committed to Catholic schools be fully instructed in the letters and sciences in accordance with the exigencies of the times,⁷² Chesterton, too, held the same idea in 1910 when he wrote:

As a part of personal character, even the moderns will agree that many-sidedness is a merit, and a merit that may easily be overlooked. This balance and universality has been the vision of many groups of men in many ages. It was the Liberal Education of Aristotle; the jack-of-all-trades artistry of Leonardo da Vinci and his friends; the august amateurishness of the Cavalier Person of Quality like Sir William Temple and the great Earl of Forset.⁷³

On the whole, the ideas found in Chesterton's works concerning the environmental aspect of the school, be it neutral, mixed, or Catholic, may be said to be very much in agreement with the criterion.

4. The World.

The Holy Father did not want it to be forgotten that besides the home, the Church, and the school, the world is also an environment whose powerful influence on the young cannot be ignored, an environment fraught with danger for the unprepared.⁷⁴ And Chesterton has left us an idea of how the world goes about its teaching:

⁷² Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 30.

⁷³ Chesterton, What's Wrong with the World, p. 153.

⁷⁴ Pius XI, Op. Cit., p. 31.

The real world, that roars round the poor little gutter-boy as he goes to school, is an utterly anti-educational world. If the school is really giving any education, the world is certainly engaged day and night in ruining his education. For the world gives him things anyhow, in any order, with any result; the world gives him things meant for somebody else; the world throws things at him from morning till night; quite blindly, madly, and without meaning or aim; and this process, whatever else it is, is the exact opposite of the process of education. The gutter-boy spends about three-quarters of his time in getting uneducated. He is educated by the modern State School. He is uneducated by the modern State. Because the State is in a devil of a state.⁷⁵

Although this was written in 1933, comparison with what he wrote in 1910 fails to show any inconsistency in his thought in this matter. The following is an example:

Real educationists have to resist a kind of roaring cataract of culture. The truant is being taught all day. If the children do not look at the large letters in the spelling-book, they need only walk outside and look at the large letters on the poster.⁷⁶

It will be noticed that, unlike the Holy Father who had all youth in mind, Chesterton in every case referred to the poor whose cause he always championed.

Continuing his remarks about what children learn from the world about them, he wrote:

If they cannot learn enough about law and citizenship to please the teacher, they learn enough about them to avoid the policeman. If they will not learn history forwards from the right end in the history books, they will learn it backwards from the wrong end in the party newspapers.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Chesterton, All I Survey, p. 162.

⁷⁶ -----, What's Wrong with the World, p. 211.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

Chesterton went on to explain that if the children are being neglected by those responsible for their education, they are far from being neglected by the world. He thought that

So far from being without guidance, they are guided constantly, earnestly, excitedly; only guided wrong. They are not at all neglected [...] They are not like sheep without a shepherd. They are more like one sheep whom twenty-seven shepherds are shouting at. All the newspapers, all the new advertisements, all the new medicines and new theologies, all the glare and blare of the gas and brass of modern times - it is against these that the national school must bear up if it can.⁷⁵

So it is against all this that the school must compete for the souls of the young. And Chesterton would not leave anyone under the false impression that it would require anything less than strong competition on the part of the school to counteract the appeal of the world, so he listed a few of the things expected of the schools:

A modern London school ought not merely to be clearer, kindlier, more clever and more rapid than ignorance and darkness. It must also be clearer than a picture postcard, cleverer than a Limerick competition, quicker than the tram, and kindlier than the tavern. The school in fact has the responsibility of universal rivalry. We need not deny that everywhere there is a light that must conquer darkness. But here we demand a light that can conquer light.⁷⁹

Moreover, regarding the danger of worldly reading against which Pius XI warned parents and educators to protect youth,⁸⁰ Chesterton wrote in 1905:

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 212.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 213.

⁸⁰ Pius XI, *Op. Cit.*, p. 31.

Papers are permitted to terrify and darken the fancy of the young with innumerable details, but not permitted to state in clean legal language what the thing is about. They are allowed to give any fact about the thing except the fact that it is a sin.⁸¹

If it is true that the world forms a necessary part of the whole educational environment of youth, and since the young must grow up in society, it is no less true that the nature of its influence calls for the constant and combined vigilance of the home, the Church and the school. It was because this need for watchfulness was so clear to Chesterton that he seemed tireless in trying to alert those in charge of education to the dangers to which youth is exposed.

⁸¹ G.K. Chesterton, All Things Considered, London, Methuen and Company, 1900, p. 124.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The Encyclical Divini Illius Magistri was chosen as the criterion against which to measure the extent of the agreement of Chesterton's educational thinking with Catholic teachings because of its validity and its reliability. The characteristic notes which gave its functional value to the criterion are its uniqueness, its comprehensiveness, its flexibility and its permanence. These marks show that the papal document possesses the breadth of scope required to make it an efficient testing ground for the vast range of Chesterton's ideas.

An introduction to the writer on whose educational ideas the criterion was set to work consisted of a brief biographical sketch followed by a survey of his literary career as a journalist, poet, novelist, essayist, and biographer. As a journalist and primarily interested in social justice, Chesterton was, more than most writers, exposed to the influences of his day. Among the social forces that had a bearing on his works were: the pessimistic philosophy and the decadence of the eighteen-nineties; the popular Imperialism which found expression in the Boer War; the false philosophies of life advocated by many of his contemporaries as the answers to the social problems of the times; and the effort of the Liberal Party in England to bring about social reforms based on the principles of Socialism. His vigorous

reaction against these forces is apparent in his works. Chesterton's writings also show him actively engaged in controversial issues on the side of distributive justice, the educational rights of parents, and the teaching of religion in the schools.

Chesterton's ideas on the nature and the importance of education were examined in the light of the criterion, and a remarkable similarity with those of Pius XI was noted. Both deplored the absence of sound principles, the inversion and shifting of values by modern men, and man's constant need to be reminded of the fundamental truths. Both signaled the mental confusion among educationalists concerning the true nature of education, and the increasing number of theories. Chesterton's diagnosis of man's restlessness in his search for happiness in education alone was found to be the same as that of the Holy Father who stated that man, created by God and destined to enjoy the Beatific Vision, can never be satisfied with material things. With this truth in mind, Chesterton pointed out to the educators of his day the futility of trying to prepare the child for such a sublime destiny by any other means than Christian education.

No disparity has been detected between the thoughts gleaned from Chesterton's writings and those contained in the Encyclical on the distinctive roles of the Church, the Family, and the State as agents of the education of youth.

The study of the nature of the educand under two main aspects: man according to God's design, and man according to the naturalistic notion of his being, brought out in relief Chesterton's ideas on man's dignity and destiny. Despite a noticeable absence of explicit reference to the role of the sacraments and grace in Christian formation, Chesterton's writings testify to the fact that he held the Christian philosophy of the nature of man.

Chesterton's thinking on the child's whole environment was found to be consonant with what the criterion contains concerning the Christian family, the Church, the school and the world, as educative influences.

Besides giving evidence of the complete agreement between Chesterton's educational thinking and the principles set forth in the criterion, this research has yielded the following by-products:

1. Chesterton's works contained ideas on every aspect of education treated of in the criterion.
2. In sixty per cent of the references, Chesterton anticipated the Encyclical.
3. No significant difference seems to exist between the educational thinking of Chesterton the non-Catholic and Chesterton the Catholic.
4. There seems to be enough evidence that Chesterton possessed all the marks of a Christian educator.

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-----, All Things Considered, London, Methuen and Company, 1908, vi-220 p.

A collection of Daily News articles dealing with the vices of the party system, the dangers of anonymous journalism. Useful for its section on the relationship between religion and science.

-----, Varied Types, New York, Dodd, Mead and Company, 1908, 269 p.

Short biographies of authors. Remarks on psychology, sociology and education.

-----, Heretics, New York, John Lane Company, 1909, 305 p.

Twenty papers on social non-conformists and their doctrines. An excellent defense of philosophy and dogma.

-----, Orthodoxy, New York, John Lane Company, 1909, 299 p.

An exposition of his philosophical and religious views, done from a point of view that was historical and evolutionary rather than systematic.

-----, George Bernard Shaw, New York, John Lane Company, 1910, 296 p.

A keen analysis of the good and evil that Shaw has done to his generation. Contains Chesterton's thoughts on the necessity of correction in the education of children.

Chesterton, G.K., "Letter to the Clarion", February 6, 1910, quoted in Maisie Ward, Gilbert Keith Chesterton, New York, Sheed and Ward, 1943, p. 306.

Chesterton states his reasons for and against socialism in England. Used here in treating of State interference in the home.

-----, What's Wrong with the World, New York, Dodd, Mead and Company, 1910, 367 p.

A social and philosophical treatise on the nature of man, marriage, the family, the child and its education. All of these topics provided ideas of value to this thesis.

-----, Alarms and Discursions, New York, Dodd, Mead and Company, 1911, 259 p.

Short essays, paradoxical, serious, and frivolous, on all sorts of subjects. Contains a passage on the value of humility as the sign of the best educated man.

-----, Charles Dickens, New York, Dodd, Mead and Company, 1911, 300 p.

A critical study. Reveals Chesterton's knowledge of child psychology and an understanding of youth.

-----, A Miscellany of Men, New York, Dodd, Mead and Company, 1912, 314 p.

Contains thoughts on the hierarchy of values in things intellectual and moral, human and divine.

-----, "Our Note Book", in The Illustrated London News, Vol. 142, No. 3056, issue of March 15, 1913, p. 332.

Article on the folly of public sex instruction in the schools. Interesting for its illustration of the psychological effects of such teaching.

-----, A Short History of England, London, Chatto and Windus, 1910, x-241 p.

A strong and fascinating history of England based on the idea that the Middle Ages were the time of true democracy. Useful ideas on the dignity of man.

-----, "Our Note Book", in The Illustrated London News, Vol. 157, issue of October 9, 1920, p. 546.

An essay on the value of literature in a liberal education. The Catholic school should so form youth in Christian principles that even bad literature may not harm them.

Chesterton, G.K., The Superstition of Divorce, London, Chatto and Windus, 1920, 150 p.

Five papers on marriage and divorce. Strong defense of the rights of the family and authority in education.

-----, The New Jerusalem, New York, George H. Doran Company, 1921, 223 p.

Consists largely of notes taken on spot while traveling in Palestine. Defines theology as thought applied to religion, and defends medieval education.

-----, Tremendous Trifles, New York, Dodd, Mead and Company, 1922, 325 p.

A consideration of the decadence of the true sense of ethical values in modern times. Provides a lengthy passage on environment.

-----, What I Saw in America, New York, Dodd, Mead and Company, 1922, 297 p.

Book treating of the lack of ideals, the lack of chivalry, humanism, and Greek culture. Useful thoughts on the inroads of secularism in education.

-----, The Ballad of St. Barbara, New York, G.P. Putman's and Sons, 1923, 35 p.

Ancient ballad of St. Barbara, patron saint of the artillery, with a ballad of the Battle of the Marne. Other poems satirical. Contributed a poem on working mothers to this thesis.

-----, "The Desert Island", in G.K.'s Weekly, Vol. 1, issue of August 29, 1925, p. 529.

An article on the normal role of parents in the work of education, and the efforts of the State to usurp it. Important for ideas on the value of the right atmosphere in the home.

-----, The Everlasting Man, New York, Dodd, Mead and Company, 1925, 344 p.

A Christian apologetic in which Chesterton shows what Christian revelation has meant for mankind as a whole. It treats of the confusion of thought in education because of the lack of religion.

-----, Fancies Versus Fads, London, Methuen and Company, 1925, 274 p.

Written in a lighter vein the subjects of these thirty essays range from lady barristers to cavemen and from psycho-analysis to free verse. Valuable thoughts on the importance of home education, and on free will.

Chesterton, G.K., "More Novelties", in G.K.'s Weekly, Vol. 1, issue of July 18, 1925, p. 390.

A satirical article on social scientists discovering the home in their historical research. Used in this thesis in relation to the environment of the home in education.

-----, The Superstitions of a Sceptic, Cambridge, Heffer and Sons, 1925, 50 p.

A book printed from a verbatim shorthand report of a lecture given by G.K.C., and deals chiefly with life in the middle ages. Good passages on the dignity of man.

-----, Eugenics and Other Evils, New York, Dodd, Mead and Company, 1927, 246 p.

Provocative papers on legislation affecting eugenics, low wages, etc. Chesterton lashes out against materialistic school of thought, and state interference in the home.

-----, Generally Speaking, New York, Dodd, Mead and Company, 1929, 250 p.

Essays on a variety of topics including literary themes. Chesterton deplors the fact that many intellectuals have no clear idea of the ultimate end of man.

-----, G.K.C. as M.C., London, Methuen and Company, 1929, 273 p.

A collection of thirty-seven introductions to the works of other writers. Helpful for the references to the dignity and the destiny of man.

-----, "G.K.C. vs G.B.S. on Sex Appeal", in America, Vol. 42, No. 4, issue of November 2, 1929, p. 50-51.

Chesterton's answer to Bernard Shaw's statement that the decrease in modesty would lead to the increase in moderation. A reply that fits the teaching of Pope Pius XI on prudence in this matter.

-----, "The Infallible State", in G.K.'s Weekly, Vol. 9, issue of August 31, 1929, p. 391.

An article in complete agreement with the Encyclical as to the moral authority of the Church, the family and the State.

-----, "The Distributist Schoolmaster", in G.K.'s Weekly, Vol. 11, issue of August 16, 1930, p. 359.

States the right of a distributist, as such, to speak out in defense of the freedom of families in education. Shows Chesterton's awareness of the attempt at government control.

Chesterton, G.K., "Mr. Buchan and Destiny", in G.K.'s Weekly, Vol. 11, issue of August 30, 1930, p. 391.

Article which lists the things that every ordinary man should know. Contributes to this thesis by stressing Chesterton's belief that the eternal verities are an indispensable part of knowledge.

-----, "Cant and Catholic Education", in America, Vol. 43, No. 24, issue of September 20, 1930, p. 562-563.

An answer to Dean Inge in defense of religious education and devotion to the Mother of God. It provided ideas on the educational environment of the Church.

-----, Come to Think of It, London, Methuen and Company, 1930, xii-272 p.

Short informal essays on such subjects as literary censorship, vulgarity, psychoanalysis, etc. Helpful in this work for its references to the Church as the tribunal of truth.

-----, The Resurrection of Rome, New York, Dodd, Mead and Company, 1930, 294 p.

Interpretation of modern Rome which deals with it as a city risen from the dead and once more taking its place as the head of the world. Treats of the Church as having always encouraged learning.

-----, The Thing, New York, Dodd, Mead and Company, 1930, 255 p.

The Catholic Church is the thing he discusses, and he gives his reasons for becoming a Catholic. Offers definite ideas on the inability of the State to assume absolute control of education by eliminating the parental function.

-----, "We are Not Cranks", in G.K.'s Weekly, Vol. 11, issue of July 19, 1930, p. 295.

A controversial article against a group of atheists who circulated a letter protesting against any justice being allowed to sectarian schools. Helpful for statement on the teaching of religion in the schools.

-----, All is Grist, New York, Dodd, Mead and Company, 1932, 216 p.

A collection of essays on the prudery of slang, G.B. Shaw's puritanism, Christian Science, etc. Treats also of domestic relations, and assertions made in the name of popular science without adequate scientific authority.

Chesterton, G.K., Chaucer, London, Faber and Faber, 1932, 310 p.

More than with the work of Chaucer, Chesterton is concerned with the medieval world and its superiority, intellectually and morally, over the times that have followed. Good for his opinion on pseudo-science.

-----, "A Second Case", in G.K.'s Weekly, Vol. 15, issue of November 5, 1932, p. 135.

Chesterton's opinion of those educators who would eliminate authority in the school.

-----, Sidelights of New London and Newer York, London, Sheed and Ward, 1932, 261 p.

Essays embodying author's attitude toward present day fashions in morals, marriage, literature, politics. Helpful for ideas on domestic manners.

-----, All I Survey, London, Methuen and Company, 1933, 280 p.

Forty-four essays on war memorials, bad poetry, industrialism, and other subjects. The chapter "On the Creative and the Critical" offers excellent ideas on Christian humanism.

-----, St. Thomas Aquinas, New York, Sheed and Ward, 1933, 246 p.

A brilliant enough guide through the labyrinthine ways of the Thomistic mind to have earned the praise of Maritain and Gilson. Helpful for ideas on the whole man as the educand.

-----, "Who Is the Ascetic?", in G.K.'s Weekly, Vol. 18, issue of February 1, 1934, p. 351.

Chesterton gives an explanation of the differences between the natural law and the law of nature. Excerpt used to stress the necessity of law in the education of the young.

-----, "Teaching the Poor", in G.K.'s Weekly, Vol. 19, issue of June 28, 1934, p. 257-258.

Treats of the role of the State as the protector and servant of the people. Pertinent to that part of the thesis dealing with the educational rights of the State.

-----, Avowals and Denials, New York, Fodd, Head and Company, 1935, 237 p.

Essays on G.B. Shaw, eugenics, sociology, paganism, decency. Good ideas on man's debt to the past for his knowledge of the present.

Chesterton, G.K., "The Family", in The Illustrated London News, Vol. 20, No. 512, issue of January 3, 1935, p. 289.

Article on the priority of the family over the State in educational matters. Striking agreement with the Encyclical.

-----, "The Psychological Man", in G.K.'s Weekly, Vol. 21, issue of January 20, 1935, p. 220.

An article treating of the large number of materialistic philosophies that clutter up the present age. Shows Chesterton's similarity of thought with Pius XI who deplored the increasing number of educational theorists.

-----, "The State and the Stunt", in G.K.'s Weekly, Vol. 21, issue of August 15, 1935, p. 367.

A defense of private life for which no public institutions are a substitute. Defines limits beyond which the State may not legitimately go.

-----, "The True Humanitarian", in G.K.'s Weekly, Vol. 21, issue of April 11, 1935, p. 73.

A criticism of Bernard Shaw's belief in the Superman. Chesterton's statement of his belief in papal infallibility useful when treating of the authority of the Church in education.

-----, The Well and the Shallows, London, Sheed and Ward, 1935, 277 p.

Forty papers on many topics: the styles of certain writers, the Oxford Movement, communism, etc. Helpful for remarks on the influence of environment.

-----, Autobiography, London, Burne and Oates, 1936, 347 p.

Less of an autobiography than a very valuable work on child psychology based on experience and observation. This fact makes it useful to this thesis.

-----, The Paradoxes of Mr. Pond, New York, Dodd, Mead and Company, 1937, 231 p.

Eight short detective stories combining mystery and wit. Worthwhile thoughts on psychology.

-----, The Colored Lands, New York, Sheed and Ward, 1938, 238 p.

A book of fantasy treating of dreams, nightmares and matters in that category. But it is always fantasy associated with reality. An amusing yet serious defense of the family.

Chesterton, G.K., The Common Man, London, Sheed and Ward, 1950,

A collection of essays dealing with the problems of the common man in the modern world. Valuable for its chapters on the Catholic School and co-education.

-----, "Three Letters of G.K.C. to Maurice Baring", in The Tables, Vol. 202, No. 5927, issue of December 26, 1953, p. 622.

Letters about Chesterton's hopes and plans to start a newspaper dedicated to the defense of Christian morals. Useful for his ideas on the family.

-----, The Spice of Life, Beaconsfield, Darwen Finlayson, 1964, Edited by Dorothy Collins, 175 p.

A collection of essays written by Chesterton three months before he died. The chapter "The Religious Aim of Education" was helpful in this work for explanation of the need for a complete religious atmosphere in education.

-----, Pathways to the Faith, pamphlet, New York, International Truth Society, (no date), 16 p.

Chesterton and others each separately tells the way God led him into the Church. Offers Chesterton's opinion of a purely materialistic philosophy of man.

Clarke, Margaret, "Chesterton the Classicist", in The Dublin Review, Vol. 229, No. 467, issue of Spring 1955, p. 51-67.

Article on the gradual development of Chesterton's religious thought as seen from his writings. Points to the fact that it was consistently directed toward Catholicism.

Claudel, Paul, "Homage to G.K.C.", in Commonweal, Vol. 13, No. 9, issue of December 31, 1930, p. 229.

Tribute to Chesterton on the occasion of his visit to Holy Cross College in Worcester, Massachusetts. Useful as an appreciation of Chesterton's joyousness, sympathy and humor in a cynical world devoid of Christian principles.

Cohausz, Otto, The Pope and Christian Education, New York, Benziger Brothers, 1933, 131 p.

A commentary on Divini Illius Magistri. Helpful remark on the absolute need for morality in education.

Collins, Dorothy, Letter, Top Meadow Cottage, Beaconsfield, England, December 1, 1951.

A letter from Chesterton's secretary containing directions to the writer concerning sources of his educational ideas.

Corcoran, T., "The Catholic Philosophy of Education", in Studies, Vol. 19, No. 74, issue of June 1930, p. 199-210.

Article on the control and direction of the training of teachers as advocated by the Encyclical. A good resume of the powerful influence of teachers in spreading the philosophies in which they have been trained.

Dawson, Christopher, The Spirit of the Oxford Movement, London, Sheed and Ward, 1934, xiii-144 p.

An essay explaining the intellectual traditions and the social environment from which the Oxford Movement sprang. Shows a similarity of thought with Chesterton on the subject of modernism.

Finucan, Thomas, "Is Shared Time a Practical Possibility?", in Religious Education, Vol. 50, No. 6, issue of Nov.-Dec., 1965, p. 451-456.

A commentary on the possibility of reaching more Catholic children by means of shared time. Some ideas useful to show the flexibility of the criterion.

Foulquier, Paul, L'Eglise et l'Ecole, Paris, Editions Spes, 1947, 255 p.

The first part of this book treats of the Church and education along with a sketch of the life of Pius XI. The second section consists of a richly commented copy of Divini Illius Magistri. It was useful especially for the chapter on the criterion in the thesis.

Hess, M.W., "Twentieth-century Return of St. Thomas", in The Catholic World, Vol. 179, No. 1072, issue of July 1954, p. 286-291.

In this essay, the author calls Chesterton one of the few free men of the twentieth century. Helpful when treating of the consistency of his thought and his constant appeal to what is timeless.

Hollis, Christopher, G.K. Chesterton, London, Longmans, Green and Company, 1950, 32 p.

A pamphlet partly biography and partly a critical study of Chesterton's earliest works.

Katz, Jacob, New York Times, issue of January 27, 1930, quoted in "Rabbi Katz and the Pope", Editorial in America, Vol. 42, No. 16, issue of February 5, 1930, p. 423.

A Jewish rabbi's comments on the Encyclical on Education. His praise of the document helped to establish its comprehensiveness as a criterion.

Kelly, Hugh, "G.K. Chesterton: His Philosophy of Life", in Studies, Vol. 31, No. 121, issue of March 1942, p. 93-97.

A study of the philosophy underlying Chesterton's works by a critical analysis of fifteen of his books. Useful in treating of Chesterton as a novelist.

Macdonald, G., "G.K. Chesterton", in The Month, Vol. 168, No. 866, issue of August 1936, p. 135-143.

Author speaks of Chesterton's joy in the revival of Thomistic philosophy. Useful for remarks on his St. Thomas Aquinas.

Maynard, Theodore, "The Chesterbelloc", in The Catholic World, Vol. 110, No. 655, issue of November 1919, p. 145-160.

One of a series of articles which treats of Chesterton as a poet who insists on pointing a moral. Significant in calling Chesterton a teacher.

Pius XI, Divini Illius Magistri, New York, The America Press, 1936, 46 p.

The Encyclical on the Christian Education of Youth. This was the criterion for the evaluation of Chesterton's educational ideas.

Ryan, John, "Encyclical on Education: Catholic Interpretation", in Current History, Vol. 31, No. 6, issue of March 1930, p. 1007.

Article interpreting the Holy Father's condemnation of the lay schools as applying mainly to certain European countries. Adds to the note of flexibility in the criterion.

Second Vatican Council, Declaration on Christian Education, Washington, National Catholic Welfare Conference, October 28, 1965, 16 p.

Mostly a re-statement of the principles set forth in Divini Illius Magistri. Used in this work for its emphasis on teacher formation.

Titterton, W.R., "G.K. Chesterton: Great Catholic Apologist", in The Clergy Review, Vol. 12, No. 1, issue of July 1936, p. 1-12.

An article treating of Chesterton's work as defender of the Faith. Useful for Chesterton's admission that he had always had the Catholic point of view.

Tracy, R.E., "Letter from the Council", in America, Vol. 113, No. 16, issue of October 16, 1965, p. 432-433.

Lists ten of the vital concepts presented in the debate on education in November 1964 by the bishops in the Council. These ideas have been included in the study of the Encyclical as criterion.

Ward, Haisie, Gilbert Keith Chesterton, New York, Sheed and Ward, 1943, xv-685 p.

This is the definitive biography and another Boswell. It is of value to this thesis in that it probes beyond biographical data into the development of his thoughts as a critic of education.

Weigle, L.A., "Protestant Comment on the Encyclical on Education by Pope Pius XI", in Current History, Vol. 31, No. 6, issue of March 1930, p. 1069.

This Protestant point of view of the Encyclical based on a different idea of authority in religion which makes discussion difficult. Helpful for the Protestant opinion of the criterion.

Wills, Garry, Chesterton. an and ask, New York, Sheed and Ward, 1961, 243 p.

A complete and compact critical assessment of G.K. Chesterton. Discusses the major works, their sources and development, and summarizes Chesterton's thought accurately and briefly.

"The Pope and Education", Editorial in Commonweal, Vol. 11, No. 13, issue of January 29, 1930, p. 353-355.

An explanation of the Encyclical touching on the three-fold authority, belonging to the Church, the family, and the State; and treating of educational purpose and educational method.

"The Rights of the Church in Education", Editorial in America, Vol. 42, No. 17, issue of February 1, 1930, p. 390.

Notes difficulty of non-Catholics to understand the supreme authority of the Church in education. This authority they attribute to the State or their own private judgment.

"Tears of the Times", Editorial in America, Vol. 42, No. 17, issue of February 1, 1930, p. 390.

A reply to the editor of The New York Times who saw the Encyclical as a subversive document aiming at the destruction of American ideals.

"The Pontiff, Teacher and Legislator", Editorial in America, Vol. 42, No. 18, issue of February 5, 1930, p. 422.

A short article distinguishing between the Holy Father as teacher and as legislator. In the Encyclical, he is teaching the old doctrine rather than defining new laws.

"Thinking with Rome", Editorial in America, Vol. 42, No. 19, issue of February 15, 1930, p. 447.

Mentions the favorable reception given the Encyclical by the non-Catholic world in general. Useful in explaining the comprehensiveness of the criterion.

"Papal Honors for Two English Catholic Writers", Editorial in The Catholic World, Vol. 139, No. 332, issue of July 1934, p. 493.

Editorial on the occasion of the bestowal of the Knight Commandership with Star, of the Order of St. Gregory the Great, on G.K. Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc, by Pope Pius XI. Mentioned in the biographical sketch.

"Death's Harvest", Editorial in Commonweal, Vol. 24, No. 9, issue of June 26, 1936, p. 243.

A tribute to the rapidity and the constancy which characterized Chesterton's enormous literary production. A note included in the biographical sketch.

APPENDIX 1

ABSTRACT OF

Chesterton's Educational Thinking in the
Light of Divine Illius Magistri

APPENDIX I

ABSTRACT OF

Chesterton's Educational Thinking in the Light of Divini Illius Magistri

The purpose of this study was to examine the educational ideas of Gilbert Keith Chesterton in order to ascertain the extent of their agreement with the Encyclical Divini Illius Magistri, by Pope Pius XI, which was used as the criterion.

The four-dimensional nature of the problem derived from the following facts: (1) Chesterton wrote no book on education as such; rather are his ideas on this subject to be found embedded in much of his work on other topics; (2) most of his writing was done as a non-Catholic; (3) he did no formal teaching; and (4) he did not claim to be an educator; on the contrary, he disavowed any such implication.

The research was based on the hypothesis that the same Catholic principles that governed his treatment of other social questions applied as well whenever he dealt with educational issues in England.

1 Sister Mary Marguerite Flanagan, doctoral thesis presented to the Faculty of Psychology and Education of the University of Ottawa, Ontario, 1966, xi-175 p.

The method of procedure consisted of:

1. A critical analysis of Divini Illius Magistri as the criterion with emphasis on the characteristics of uniqueness, comprehensiveness, flexibility and permanence.
2. A study of Chesterton and his times, comprising a sketch of his life and works with a glimpse of the social forces that influenced his writings.
3. An examination of Chesterton's ideas on the nature and importance of Christian education in the light of the criterion.
4. An evaluation of his views on the Church, the family and the State as the agents of education.
5. A scrutiny of Chesterton's thought on the educand which necessarily included his philosophy of man.
6. An inquiry into his thinking on the importance of environment in education.

The research led to the following conclusions:

1. Chesterton's works yielded ideas on every aspect of education treated of in the Encyclical.
2. These ideas were found to be in full agreement with the principles set forth in the criterion.
3. In sixty per cent of the references in this thesis, Chesterton anticipated the papal message.
4. No significant difference seems to exist between the educational thinking of Chesterton the Catholic and that of Chesterton the non-Catholic.
5. Chesterton possessed the marks of a Catholic educator.