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'The Dignity of Man'

A prominent belief of "liberal humanism" is the doctrine of "the dignity of man". This notion, which perhaps requires radical qualification, is calculated to appeal to the reassuring (though probably erroneous) conviction that "man is the measure of all things" and that the world would be as good as it possibly could be if only we were all more "humane". Popular slogans of the devotees of this religion are such cliches as "We must foster the development of human values" and "Let us improve the quality of life". Aside from the fact that such comfortable sentiments may in fact have little to do with the real nature of man, one is struck by the anomalous contradictions between the 'philosophy' which such persons espouse and the policies which they often promote or approve.

Take, for example, the form in which "improving the quality of life" generally occurs: the provision of "employment" so that persons can feel "useful" and "earn their own way". A person, it is argued, becomes "real" only when he has a vocational label attached to him - only when he (or she) is meshed into the machinery of industry or bureaucracy. How many liberal humanists, proclaiming the "dignity of man" ever question the validity of "full employment" as a cultural goal? The assumption of the employment ethic is that persons are primarily economic

units. The "dignity of man" flowers as crude materialism.

Similarly, one hears of the desirability of "doing one's own thing"; only then is he "truly human". The corollary of this variety of "individualism" is, however, "anything goes". Eccentricity is promoted for its own sake and issues in cheap and ostentatious displays of "style": the person who paints himself chartreuse and claims to be an ostrich egg is, therefore, presumably 'completed". Since "man [in this case, the fad-seeker] is the measure of all things", any notion of judgement, or discrimination on the basis of objective principles of value, is regarded as inadmissible. Thus, in the name of "doing their own thing", people are hypnotized into foregoing the very traits which distinguish them as human: their critical or evaluative faculties, their consciousness. Consciousness itself becomes perverted to mere responsiveness to titillation: clarity of thought is replaced by sensory massage as the objective of "human" endeavour.

This tendency perhaps reaches its apotheosis in the heinous logic of the "pro-abortionists". "A woman," they howl, "has the right to do what she wants with her own body"; "We want to be free". Free, but without responsibility — not even financial responsibility, which they attempt to foist onto the public at large. Again, our actions are significant only insofar as we are responsible for them: if we deny that our decisions have consequences (in itself a pernicious delusion), then our power of choice is irrelevant; 'morality' is meaningless. Or, as someone once observed, "Power ['freedom'?] without responsibility has been the prerogative of the harlot throughout the ages". In the name of "personal wholeness", let us by all means elevate wanton (irresponsible) destruction into a status symbol; let us indulge in degradation of what is potentially "human" in us.

The test of a belief is where it leads: too often, "liberal humanism", postulating "comfort" or "pleasure" as a criterion for action, reveals itself to be lukewarm bugwash which clouds more than clarifies "human values".

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Our Policy

SEED aspires to fulfil a unique role transcending the functions of other magazines and journals.

Our purpose is neither to propagandize in the sense of promoting some fixed point of view or body of thought nor

merely to comment on current events.

Our partisanship does not extend beyond two considerations. Firstly, we believe that reality does exist: it is not a matter of opinion and will assert its authority over all opinions that contradict it. All sanctions reside in reality; opinion has none. Secondly, we believe in the desirability of extending human freedom. Genuine freedom is contingent upon our comprehension of reality, since to the extent that men disregard reality, they court personal and social disaster. In other words, far from conforming to the modern

In other words, far from conforming to the modern view that value judgments are to be avoided, SEED will intentionally consist of a succession of value judgments, which will constitute the principal criterion of its success. Man cannot approach truth without rigorous formation of value judgments and perfecting of definitions. Discovery and refinement of the correct principles for human action and association will be the focus of our attention within the field of reality. If we carry our investigation of the nature of reality far enough, we shall illuminate the way to the formulation of sound policy.

We have no delusions about the facility of the course on which we are embarking. It is possibly the most difficult course open to us. However, its value should be proportional to the efforts it requires. If the distractions to intelligence and will which characterize contemporary society are, as we believe them to be, fundamentally unsatisfying, we are confident that some seekers of truth will involve themselves in the experiment that SEED represents. Such persons are the only ones capable of responding to such an experiment.

We approach our undertaking in the spirit of making an offering that will call forth latent creative capacities. If the ideas that SEED disseminates have validity and settle in good soil, they will grow. Moreover, their growth will be progressive and cumulative. SEED will serve as a medium permitting the cross-fertilization of adventurous intellects, thereby diminishing the effects of the entropic phenomenon that paralyzes development by compelling men to struggle to find truths that they have lost sight of and had to rediscover repeatedly during the past.

If our project is conducted correctly, it will at the least generate a new conceptual vigour among a segment of the community — and perhaps even result in the formation of new men.



'Chauvinism'

Recently, a news item on CBC's "The National" reported that a study had revealed the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation itself to be as "chauvinistic" as private industry. This is no doubt true: as a state-operated broadcasting system regulated by the CRTC's prescriptions regarding "Canadian content", the corporation is questionless "Nationalistic". This, of course, is not what Lloyd Robertson meant when he used the word: he meant what is implied in the epithet "male chauvinism" which has come into currency over the past several years.

That the word "chauvinism" (without the qualifying adjective 'male') should now be accepted even by the august CBC as a specific term for a certain attitude of mind regarding sex is interesting. "Chauvinism," denotatively, is extreme and uncritical nationalism; it it "exaggerated patriotism of a bellicose sort; blind enthusiasm for national glory or military ascendancy" (OED). The word is derived from the name of Nicolas Chauvin of Rochefort, a demonstrative devotee of Napoleon's empire celebrated in Cogniard's La Cocarde Tricolore (1831). Note that the term originally applies to an attitude towards the collectivity of the state; Chauvin's relations with members of the female sex are not elaborated in the OED.

This transmutation of the connotation of the word "chauvinism" prompts at least two reflections. In the first place, of course, it leads to another example of "the technique of the essential adjective" if "chauvinism" tout court is now to be accepted as a specifically sexual attitude, what term can be used for the state of mind which it originally described? "Nationalist chauvinism"? Once more, this is ridiculous—as ridiculous as (to use Dr. Dobbs' analogy) to speak of canine dogs or bovine cows: it involves a tautological use of language, indicative of a breakdown of logical process.

More important, perhaps, is the fact that the application of the term "chauvinism" to sexual relations assumes the tacit acceptance of a particular ideological position: the politicization of gender. Whether the term can be used more than metaphorically when applied

Evil and Strategy

The concept of "evil" is in such ill-repute today that to bring it up in "polite company" or among "enlightened" persons is to court derision. Even among those who do still credit the moral category, the notion of evil is often vaguely apprehended. Since what we believe influences what we do, it is important that our concepts be clearly defined. This article, by referring to two traditional ways of understanding evil, suggests the type of practical consequences that are likely to issue from each.

C.H. Douglas once observed that "one of the curious, not to say sinister, features of the current period is the prevalence of that form of Black Magic which consists in saying and affirming that evil does not exist". While this observation is a necessary corrective to the "anything goes" school of philosophy, which tends to annihilate moral distinctions, it does require careful qualification. In what way can "evil" be said to exist?

Autonomous Evil

There are perhaps two ways of answering this question, and how it is answered is crucial to the strategy to be adopted in dealing with manifestations of evil. One way is to say that evil is autonomous, that it is a primary principle existing independently of anything else, that it is original in the sense that "good" or God is original. This doctrine, which has historically been called Manicheism, maintains that there are two independent principles—one of good, the other of evil—in constant conflict. The fact that it identifies the evil principle with the created world is also no doubt very important; for the moment, however, we should note that evil in this view can exist on its own. The "devil", in other words, is self-sustaining.

The Privation of Good

The second way of looking at evil might be called the orthodox Christian view: this view holds that evil has no autonomous existence of its own; it is not original, but derivative. The position has been clearly asserted by several Church fathers. Basil of Caesarea, for example, states:

...do not imagine that evil has any substantive existence of its own. Wickedness does not exist as if it were a kind of living creature: we cannot produce its essence in real subsistence. For evil is the privation of good...as blindness supervenes on destruction of the eyes, so evil, having no independent existence, supervenes upon mutilations of the soul. It is not ingenerate, as they impiously as-

sert who put the nature of wickedness on an equal footing with that of good, in making both equally underived and independent of generation.²

Similarly, Gregory of Nyssa argues that "it is impossible to conceive the origin of evil except as the absence of virtue...as long as the good is present in the nature, evil has no existence in its own right..."3. and St. Augustine, who states his "intention of opposing, with all [his] powers, those who try to blame God for creating a nature endued with its own principle of evil", argues that "the disease [of the soul] which destroys the power to live a good life is not really a part of nature, but a perversion of nature; just as bodily infirmity is a perversion..."4. This conception of evil as being a privation or a perversion of good is in fact fundamental: it implies that evil has no existence apart from the good which it perverts or frustrates. Evil, therefore, is not a principle having independent power; it "exists" only as incompleteness or In this view, then, 'good' is identified with "rightness" and with "wholeness"; 'evil', on the other hand, is identified with a lack of wholeness or of truth: evil absolute is nothingness.

The question which this raises is: how can a 'privation' be destroyed? Can incompleteness be obviated other than by wholeness? Can "absence" be overcome other than by "presence"? Can perversion be corrected by any method other than straightening? Can "nothing" be annihilated, or is it already (by definition) annihilated?

The radical significance of this distinction of concepts to strategy should now be clear. If, for example, one adopts the view that 'disease' is an autonomous evil principle (as, say, allopathic medicine tends to), then the strategy for dealing with that disease will consist in an attempt actively to destroy it: thus, the practitioner will administer some kind of 'drug' in an effort to kill the offending organism or surgically remove the offended organ. In passing (and

this, surely, is the point), one should note the effect of the drug or of the surgery *itself* on the patient's overall physical well-being. Attempting to overcome evil with evil, this strategy as often as not results in a greater privation of health. On the other hand, the practitioner who believes that disease is an absence of health will seek to discover in what ways the wholeness (or health) of the patient is being perverted or deprived and to restore conditions in which health (the normal "good" of the body) will express itself. One view regards the body as a battlefield; the other sees it rather as a garden.

The Political Issue

This distinction, exemplified in the case of 'medicine", applies equally in the case of politics. The first attitude is epitomized, for example, in Ezra Pound's application of the medical metaphor to what he regarded as the political issue: "USURY is the cancer of the world," he claimed, "which only the surgeon's knife of Fascism can cut out of the life of nations"5. The implications of such an assertion are staggering: evil (usury) is supposed to have real power which can only be destroyed by an ostensibly greater and "opposite" force, namely, "Fascism". The question remains, of course, what kind of "surgery" will eradicate the cancer of "Fascism"? The Marxist-Leninist would say that "revolution" is the answer (or "the surgeon's knife"). His belief is, explicitly, that progress results from the violent confrontation of powerful oppodialectical materialism is merely Manicheism in an updated and cruder form.

We should, I think, notice two things about each of these "enemies". In the first place, they are all really variations of the same thing: the monopoly of credit, fascism, and commu-socialism are all manifestations of the same tendency, namely, the concentration or centralization of power. In the second place, their confrontations are non-creative: energy is dissipated, not conserved, by violent conflict. Tudor Jones has summed up the consequences in this observation: "Annihilation is the only possible end to 'titanic struggles'". We are taught to believe that reality consists in conflict: the "left" opposes the "right", females oppose males, unions oppose corporations, socialism opposes capitalism— and we are invited (or exherted) to join the battle. Usually, we waste

our energy in replacing one evil system with another; we in fact actively espouse evil by acquiescing in the dualist strategy.

But what of the doctrine that there is only one source of power, and that is good? Sir John Fortescue, Henry VI's chancellor, observes: "For, as Boethius said, There is no power unless for good, so that to be able to do evil, as the king reigning regally can more fully do than the king ruling his people politically, diminishes rather than increases his power". This is a radical notion: "There is no power unless for good". It implies that what poses as "power"-fascism, sovietism, "usury" - is in fact 'powerful' only insofar as it conforms to "good", only insofar as it follows the right principles of association from which power derives. It would not, I think, be blasphemous to assert that it is only the grace of God that allows a dictator to pull his jackboots on in the morning; that those jackboots are a symbol of the dictator's policy of frustrating the grace of God at every opportunity (as if this were in any ultimate sense possible) is evidence of the perversity of his will, not of the autonomy of evil. To the extent (and one supposes that it is great) that "power" ignores or perverts the principles of association, it tends to disintegrate: evil, having no autonomous energy or power of its own, is self-contradictory; it can only destroy itself.

Force and Make-believe

What this means is that evil or perverted political systems or organizations are not autonomous: feeding on the source of energy (good), they at the same time attempt to frustrate the laws according to which that energy operates, to frustrate the full or integrated realization of good. Essentially non-creative and impotent, they sustain themselves by perverting that energy: their techniques of perversion are, it has been observed, "force" and "make-believe". One recalls Reginald Scot's assertion in The Discovery of Witchcraft that the devil, having no creative powers himself, has to rely on illusion and intimidation. Thus, for example, dispensations like that of Nazi Germany or Soviet Russia must resort to deception and force to frustrate the expression of "personal power": totalitarian regimes cannot tolerate personal self-expression; this

"Divine Judgement"

In this conclusion of an article begun last month, the author tries to demonstrate by example the way in which verdicts, from which no appeal may be possible, are pronounced upon human action.

The Example of War

The thought that our most inoffensive-seeming daily activities may actually be preparing a terrible reckoning is disconcerting. Yet it is certain that, in many respects, we all "know not what we do". The passage of time is one factor that may obscure consequences: the connection between an "immediate" result and its cause may be obvious; but the relationship of a remote result to a cause to which it is linked by many intermediate stages will require more concentration and analysis to discern. That man can apprehend his position in time confers many potential advantages upon him. It enables him to benefit from experience and anticipate outcomes. However, in order to perceive some causal relationships we must extend our sense of time beyond the normal.

Dorothy L. Sayers has written that, "War is a judgment that overtakes societies when they have been living upon ideas that conflict too violently with the laws governing the universe." This important statement not only cuts through the deceptive propaganda and emotional passion encumbering the question of war (making nonsense of, for example, the hope that we can be spared without having to modify the policies that have invariably culminated in war in the past); it also indicates the level at which the problem of avoiding war must be tackled. War is the effect of accumulated systemic stress generated by persistence in unrealistic policies.

Perversion of Policy

Warmongers are catalysts, rather than causes, of war. Tales about one man, such as Hitler, bringing about war are the pabulum of weak minds. The conditions which induced, or compelled, the German people to acquiesce in militaristic adventures constitute the real source of the Second World War.

The perversion of policy making for war can be identified at various levels; but, at its most basic, it is the endeavour to make the economic system serve as a system of government over men's lives rather than what it should be—namely, the system that satisfies mater-

ial requirements. This artificial political intrusion into the economic domain is rendered effective by the monetary system, whose manner of operation imposes the necessity of not only continual, but accelerating, economic expansion on penalty of recession and deprivation. Under current rules of income distribution, we can never rest content with work already accomplished, however monumental, because the machinery of distribution provides access to only a fraction of its benefits.

Rather than devising means of relieving this expansionary pressure, our society has endeavoured to adapt Our entire culture has been deformed by the attempt. Economics-'making a living'-has become the principal preoccupation of our lives. Educational programs are geared to fitting the individual to some occupational slot instead of releasing his various potentials to the utmost. Energy and inventiveness have increasingly been diverted into destructive channels, such as building premature depreciation into goods. A theory of exaggerated competitiveness has been elaborated to justify the enormous amounts of effort wasted in most disruption, dismantling, and re-assembly of plant. Advertising firms systematically encourage every weakness and perversity to which mankind is susceptible in order to keep people in a condition of hypnotic suggestibility conducive to enhanced manageability of markets.

Dealing with the Machine

Now, in the present context, there are really only two ways of contending with the tremendous output of the machine. The first is to thwart it—to put ten men idling where only one is needed and to steer human energy into such sterile functions as exchanging bits of paper and composing reports upon previous reports. However, putting people to work on useless tasks has its limitations: anybody retaining a spark of creativity or common sense will eventually revolt against the dead weight of purposelessness bearing down upon him.

The second way is to let the forces of production churn out goods more or less at maximum capacity, in

which case some way must be found to dispose of surpluses. In this regard exportation is of restricted utility: not every country in the world (a closed system) can simultaneously have a "favourable balance of trade". Therefore, some sink-hole must be found into which the production can be dumped. War serves the purpose almost perfectly: the factories can spew out goods ceaselessly when these are being moved as quickly as possible to a battle front to be blown to smitherens. Perhaps at some time wars were fought for ideals, but those waged recently have more to do with "liquidating inventories". This is the prosaic truth behind the ritual and high-flown declarations of principle which characterize modern military conflicts.

Wars are means of maintaining prosperity at home and keeping operational an economic system which, lacking such an outlet, founders on what has recently been dubbed "stagflation". "After 1940, how was the United States able to become the 'arsenal of democracy' and to enjoy civilian living standards higher than ever before? Largely by taking up the slack in unemployment." The same observation can be made regarding the American involvement in Vietnam. While the United States was pouring \$150 billion of manpower and material into that country, the American economy flourished. Withdrawal from the conflict coincided with the beginning of the current "mini-depression."

In other words, war is not some blight that afflicts us as a matter of chance. It is no alien interloper in our affairs: it is an integral part of them. War is included in the package of our present economic sys-In fact, the conditions prevailing in wartime production are what, in peacetime, most men view as ideal. They clamour for the factories to be run to capacity, so that they will have work and incomes. And, when the problem of putting food in one's mouth and clothes on one's back is both urgent and unending, and the rewards for assembling bombs are greater than those for growing crops, one ends up in the bomb factory. So eventually men get the frenzied economic activity they demandwith, as it turns out, some attendant unpleasantness they would rather have done without.

Breaking the Trance

War is the penalty men suffer for contravening the rules of same economic activity. In this sense, it is a judgment—on people's idiotic prayers to be put working

at anything that yields a regular pay-cheque, on their consenting to serve as instruments of those few who have access to large blocks of financial credit, and on their resting content to resolve today's problem in a way that compounds tomorrow's.

Contemporary economic policies seem not only to propel men along courses that prove destructive in the long rum, but also to possess power to entrance them. The number who ever question what appear to be "given" conditions of our existence is but a tiny fraction of the population.

Undoubtedly, certain reforms would provide a more congenial environment for the development of the kind of searching, directed consciousness needed to defeat the forces (both external and internal) attracting us towards lowered awareness. Yet it is increasingly obvious that we shall not achieve one without the other. The reforms will not be forthcoming until some raising of general levels of consciousness is achieved. Thus, the road to improvement may be longer than we care to think.

R.E.K.

("Evil", continued from p. 4)

must be suppressed. But, because they have frustrated the power of persons, their "control" is control over impotence. Conversely, when the power of the individual personality does assert itself, the monolithic state must disintegrate. The centralization of power, because it violates the principles of association by which genuine power is realized, destroys power; the distribution of power is a "conservative" policy. Similarly, as I have suggested, evil perpetuates itself by falsehood (the absence of truth): this is why tyrannical regimes cannot tolerate 'art', but allow propaganda. The objective is to distort the "truth" which alone has power, and which can be disguised, but not indefinitely.

One of the most effective aspects of this distortion of truth, this 'make-believe', is the popular myth that reality is essentially dualistic. If people can be convinced that this, that, or another thing is the 'enemy',

(continued p. 8)

²"Why Work?" from Creed or Chaos?, and Other Essays in Popular Theology (London: Methuen, 1947), 48.

³Paul A. Samuelson, *Economics: An Introductory Analysis* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967), 20.

("Chauvinism", continued from p. 2)

to sexual relations is highly doubtful; nevertheless. proponents of one school of political ideology have taken the metaphor literally (and everybody else seems to be following their example). In this ideology, relationship becomes a matter of collectivities in confrontation, of groups in violent conflict. In other words, the complex of ideas and actions surrounding "chauvinism" in its popular acceptation is an instance of "dialectical" philosophy. Moreover, note that the terms established by, say, 'feminists' guarantee that this situation can only be perpetuated: by insisting on collective solidarity, they are pursuing precisely the policy which they claim to excoriate-"sexual chauvinism". Again, by treating people as groups, as collectivities, they implicitly deny the basis of human association, which is essentially personal.

The ease with which "chauvinism"—as a piece of ideological jargon—has insimuated itself into the popular vocabulary is no doubt evidence of a dissolving power of the population to discriminate either words or policies. That the CBC should use the term so indiscriminately leads one to wonder (if he had not already) where our tax money is going.

D.R.K.

See C.G. Dobbs, "On the Corruption of Words", The Social Crediter, August 29, 1942.

No Comment?

Not too long ago, it was my fortune to witness a panel discussion dealing with the relationship of the Bible to "secular literature" in general. While much of the conversation was desultory, at least one statement is worthy of note, if only for negative reasons.

One of the panelists, an ex-Jesuit whose thesis was that the Bible is "not enough", made the interesting observation that, while the New Testament enunciates the importance of the economic principles of "charity" and "sharing", only the technical ingenuity of a modern economist could devise the graduated income tax.

We cannot but agree. Our only query would be whether this is an argument for or against trusting economists (or Jesuit education). Anyone who cannot distinguish between the principle implicit in a dictum such as 'no one is compelled and the offering is voluntary' (Tertullian) and the theory of modern taxation is probably beyond the power of instruction.

To Those Who Share Our Concern

The publication of SEED is an enterprise which we feel is of cardinal importance to the revitalization of our culture. This endeavour represents the concern of a few individuals sensible of their responsibility to reverse, where possible, what they perceive to be the deterioration of the ideological and practical bases of this culture, and prepared to make personal sacrifices in the accomplishment of this objective.

However, our success can only be in proportion to our resources, which — particularly in their financial aspect — are quite limited. We are determined to proceed, even within those limitations. But we would like to do more.

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("Evil", continued from p. 6)

which must be 'fought', the emergence of good will be delayed. If, for example, I can be persuaded that 'so-cialism' is evil, but that finance capitalism is 'good', and that I must take sides in this 'antithesis', it is certain that I shall dissipate my energies in vain. I shall, in fact, be fostering the policy of evil by accepting the falsehood that evil has real power; I shall be contributing to the perversion of good by denying its nature. Unless one accepts the particularly pernicious doctrine that means are independent of ends, he cannot anticipate that evil will result in good.

The Relevant Questions

The questions to be asked, then, are these: What is the nature of evil? Given the nature of evil, what is the most realistic strategy to adopt in dealing with evil (assuming, of course, that my policy is to overcome evil—which it may not be, and which is where the question of will comes in)? If one believes that evil is original and autonomous, then he will, presumably, rededicate himself to the "dialectic". If, on the o-

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30x 3184, Sherwood Pa Alberta, Canada T8A 2 ther hand, one believes that evil is derivative, illusory—a perversion of good—he will necessarily approach it in a different manner: in fact (if he desires good) he will attempt to realize good; he will try to discover and apply the principles of correct association; he will not accept the devil's terms and lose himself in 'titanic struggles'.

In conclusion, we should note the three-fold nature of 'the problem of evil'. The first question to be asked is 'religious' or, perhaps, philosophical: 'What is the nature of evil?" The second is political: "Is my objective the perpetuation of evil or the realization of good?" The third question is strategic, or "administrative": "What means are appropriate to my policy?" We should note, also, the interdependence of the three aspects of the question: my belief about the nature of evil will determine the means by which I shall deal with it. Similarly, my beliefs will determine my policy: if, for example, I hold the conviction that evil is derivative and tends towards emptiness or nothingness, I shall (unless I am a fool) be reluctant to pursue it as a policy. Conversely, of course, the means which I adopt are the effective or practical expression of both my philosophy and my policy: should I adopt means appropriate to a dualist philosophy or to an evil policy, my philosophy and my policy will be effectively limited by those means-whatever my 'professions" to the contrary. No doubt the most pressing issue before each person is the clear identification of philosophy, and the integration of means and ends with that philosophy. D.R.K.

The effect, which is everywhere apparent in the world today, of making other people's choices instead of one's own, is to destroy the personality.

-C.G. Dobbs, On Planning the Earth, 94

¹The Social Crediter, August 20, 1949.

²Quoted in *The Later Christian Fathers*, ed. and trans. Henry Bettenson (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), 60-1.

³*Ibid.*, 131. ⁴*Ibid.*, 198.

What is Money For? (London: Peter Russell, 1951), 12.

^{6&}quot;The Mastery of the Event", The Social Crediter (September 26, 1953), 3.

⁷De Laudibus Legum Anglie, ed. and trans. S.B. Chrimes (Cambridge: University Press, 1949), 35.