The Political Science Reviewer • Volume 47, Number 2 • 2023
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Opening the American Heart: Considering Tocqueville's *intérêt bien entendu* in Christian Terms

Sarah H. Gustafson
The Catholic University of America

In *Democracy in America* (1835 and 1840), Alexis Tocqueville elaborated the first modern theory of democratic society.[1] Although the concept of *intérêt bien entendu* is not unique to Tocqueville, it is nearly synonymous with his name and is regarded as among his most important concepts.[2] He uses related terms throughout Volume I, but he deploys *intérêt bien entendu* only in its final chapter. It then reappears in Volume II, Part II, linking his discussions of individualism and association to his treatment of religion and of spiritual and material well-being. Tocqueville argues that *intérêt bien entendu* explains how practical, anti-philosophical Americans pursue their personal interests while also pursuing the common good. In other words, self-interest, if not selfless, is not necessarily a vice. If *intérêt* is "*bien entendu*," it promotes personal as well as common ends, strengthening political and civil association, political liberty, and what could be called democratic well-being.

Arthur Goldhammer comments that Tocqueville left *intérêt bien entendu*'s meaning "ambiguous, I think deliberately."[3] The concept's ambiguity has led to a variety of readings, perhaps unsurprising given the subtleties and even elusive quality of Tocqueville's liberalism and style.[4] One might even argue the challenge of interpreting *intérêt bien entendu* exemplifies the challenge of understanding Tocqueville.[5] This article contributes to the interpretations of *intérêt bien entendu*. Building from Tocqueville's anthropology, in which interest and man's natural inclinations to politics and

religion are central, it draws from the published text and largely uncited manuscript notes to detail his working out of *intérêt bien entendu* in Christian terms. This departs from some interpretations of *intérêt bien entendu*. However, it enhances the meaning (even meanings) of *Democracy* and adds rich possibilities for further examination. Detailing Tocqueville's formulation of *intérêt bien entendu* in Christian terms puts in fresh perspective his distinctive art of writing as well as his understanding of the relationship between utility and virtue. It also suggests new ways in which we might understand Christianity's contribution to the democratic social state as he envisions it, particularly to civil society.

Understanding Tocqueville's *intérêt bien entendu*

The literature on *intérêt bien entendu* is wide-ranging and deep. Some readers interpret it as a political concept, for example as Madisonian, pluralist, or republican, though the nuances of these readings are themselves contested.[6] Roger Boesche argues Tocqueville does not follow Smith, Mandeville, Madison, or "modern pluralists" who view the public interest as constructed from private interests. Rather, Boesche's Tocqueville sees *intérêt bien entendu* as entailing respect for and participation in the political common good.[7] For Sheldon Wolin, *intérêt bien entendu* amounts to the ego seeing its interests served by the common interest; demotic politics is "rooted primarily in self-interest."[8] Tocqueville seems to have initially thought of American interest in light of Montesquieu, raising the question in his early letters from America whether republican civic virtue was possible under modern democratic conditions.[9] But is *intérêt bien entendu* comparable to civic republican virtue? Jon Elster argues, "Civic duty is absent from [Tocqueville's] work," and J.L. Kimpell maintains Tocqueville "[stepped] outside of the republican polarity of civic virtue versus self-interest."[10] Others prefer to evaluate *intérêt bien entendu* in terms of rights and honor, arguing that Tocqueville aimed to "expand the modern notion of rational self-interest to include a sense of honor"—problematic because honor is aristocratic. In Delba Winthrop's words, "That American moral doctrine

is a doctrine of self-interest well understood is as much a statement of a problem as it is a solution to it."[11]

Still others see strong parallels for *intérêt bien entendu* in Aristotelian virtue ethical or teleological frameworks.[12] On such a reading, *intérêt bien entendu* makes possible habituation in behaviors and dispositions that uphold political liberty and the common good. The common good is not, according to this view, a utilitarian aggregate of individual goods but its own good in which individuals participate and which is nonrivalrous to private goods.[13] For some, other moral and ethical frameworks better capture Tocqueville's posture toward the democratic soul and the "modern moral outlook."[14] Such readings especially approach *intérêt bien entendu* through his attentiveness to psychology and religion, chiefly the Christian tradition in the French and American contexts.[15] There is broad agreement Tocqueville "situates himself within a long French moral tradition" that was shaped by Christian theology and was particularly concerned with the morality of self-interest.[16] As a result, Tocqueville has been given the title of democracy's "spiritual director" operating in the tradition of Fénelon, Pascal, and others.[17] Nevertheless, interpretations of the possible religious character of *intérêt bien entendu* differ. Stressing Tocqueville's echoes of Augustine, Joshua Mitchell argues that "self-interest rightly understood is not political in origin. It is religious"; a free Tocquevillian liberal, commercial republic depends on prior theological foundations.[18] Others take the Jansenist and French moralist traditions as crucial but do not see *intérêt bien entendu* as necessarily religious in either origin or orientation. Peter Augustine Lawler, who stresses Pascal's influence on Tocqueville, contends *intérêt bien entendu* is "heartless" but opens the heart. While pretending to be utilitarian, it keeps "open the possibility of spiritual responses" to democratic life.[19] Lucien Jaume's Tocqueville is "broadly . . . utilitarian" yet deeply spiritual, his political science infused by Jansenist and Pauline themes, concerns, and style.[20] For Jaume, *intérêt bien entendu* creates "une belle illusion" that obscures the admixture of virtue and self-interest in the heart.[21] Alan Kahan's Tocqueville, like Françoise Mélonio, is a "Pascale politique."[22] Kahan insists

intérêt bien entendu is a "secular mechanism" that, like religion, offers checks and balances on the soul. That said, Kahan does not understand religion and *intérêt bien entendu* as rivals; he does not consider *intérêt bien entendu* virtuous but declares it can "lead a person to religion" and "contributes to, and encourages, real virtue and greatness."[23] Catherine Zuckert articulates a related view that "[t]he specifically religious content of 'interest well understood' was minimal but irreplaceable" and that the "necessary beliefs are few, simple, and we should note, not distinctively Christian."[24]

Still others who stress Tocqueville's role as democratic moralist argue compellingly that *intérêt bien entendu* is not in harmony with or conducive to religious or moral virtue and devotion, whether specifically Christian or otherwise. Dana Jalbert Stauffer voices one iteration of this view. For her, *intérêt bien entendu* seems necessary in democracy given the "modern moral outlook." In fact, however, it "fails to provide a rationale for devotion; it opposes it and undermines it."[25] Jean M. Yarbrough offers a countervailing perspective. Against the functionalist interpretations of Tocqueville, she contends he is concerned with both human grandeur *and* the immortality of the soul; both liberty and religion respond to the needs of the soul.[26] In her view, it is "tempting to conclude" Tocqueville "lost faith" in Christianity's ability to moderate democratic materialism. However, the "lowly doctrine of self-interest" does not make disinterested contemplation or sincere "love of God" impossible.[27]

The task of interpreting *intérêt bien entendu* thus is closely related to interpreting the intents of Tocqueville's political science and his role as a moralist working within the constraints of the democratic social state, including the constraints of language and style.[28] His was a "new kind" of liberalism in style as much as substance.[29] Hence the distinctive Tocquevillian "art of writing" that is simultaneously approachable and charming but also subtle and slippery.[30] This is perhaps among the reasons not just *intérêt bien entendu* but his "characterization of civil society remains poorly understood," despite the amplification of Tocquevillian civil society on Right and Left in the last century.[31] As Richard Boyd

notes, the "bumper sticker Tocqueville" is so familiar that his theory has been romanticized and idealized without it or its implications being fully grasped.

In the spirit of exploring what remains poorly understood, this article articulates an approach to *intérêt bien entendu* that draws from the text of *Democracy in America* and a set of neglected notes to highlight Tocqueville's theorization of *intérêt bien entendu* in terms of Christian virtue. This is consistent with what has become tradition in Tocqueville scholarship—namely, relying on notes or unpublished writings to clarify the published text's possible meanings. This interpretation of *intérêt bien entendu* departs from some interpretations but finds common ground with existing literature that (1) examines Tocqueville's commitment to natural interest and the natural religious impulse; (2) emphasizes his concern for the soul and the religious and moral character of democracies; and (3) draws attention to his style, which often introduces philosophical and metaphysical questions "by intimation."[32] Addressing a democratic audience meant Tocqueville wrote carefully, even "modestly." It also means he "consistently couched his analysis in terms of interest," rather than in terms of philosophy, virtue, or "rarer human inclinations and desires."[33] Whether *Democracy* can be said to contain a view of "man simply" is contested, and Tocqueville does not engage in abstracted state-of-nature theorizing.[34] Yet he offers myriad statements that together suggest a substantive, if veiled, account of human nature.[35] His modesty does not preclude his presentation of a philosophy. Similarly, his writing in terms of interest does not preclude his thinking in terms of virtue about what he also evaluated and presented in terms of interest. To paraphrase what he wrote of God, perhaps in the eyes of Tocqueville, the beautiful is also the useful.[36] This alternative approach to *intérêt bien entendu* therefore sheds light on Tocqueville's understanding of the relationship between interest and virtue and how it manifests in his style.

The article proceeds as follows. First, it examines Tocqueville's view of natural interest, highlighting its relationship with sociability and religiosity. Then it details Tocqueville's presentation of *intérêt*

bien entendu and his working out of the concept in Christian terms.[37] It concludes by offering suggestions for what this addition to our understanding of *intérêt bien entendu* might entail for his broader theory and for his twenty-first-century readers.

Self-Interest, the "fixed point in the human heart"

Alexander Jech suggests that when we seek "Man simply" in Tocqueville, we should seek not a "third man" but rather "principles inherent in humanity in virtue of which human nature is transformed by its circumstances."[38] The social state, like a classical regime, builds on nature, giving form to the underlying human matter, including "self-interest and the religious impulse."[39] Tocqueville comments, in "Of the Idea of Rights in the United States," that interest is the only fixed point in the human heart:

> Don't you see that religions are growing weaker and that the divine notion of rights is disappearing? Don't you find that mores are becoming corrupted and that, with them, the moral notion of rights is fading away? . . .
>
> If, in the midst of this universal disturbance, you do not succeed in linking the idea of rights to personal interest, which offers itself as the only fixed point in the human heart, what will you have left for governing the world, if not fear?[40]

This passage offers a compelling foundation for a Tocquevillian anthropology based on interest. In stressing personal interest, Tocqueville follows early liberal theorists such as Hobbes and Locke.[41] Simultaneously, "Of the Idea of Rights in the United States" alerts the reader to Tocqueville's differences from his liberal antecedents and similarities to classical and Christian antecedents.[42] The section begins not with rights or interest but with virtue: "After the general idea of virtue, I do not know any more beautiful than that of rights, or rather these two ideas merge. The idea of rights is nothing more than the idea of virtue introduced

into the political world."[43] Virtue and rights are linked, as are rights and interest. By a transitive property, so too, then, would virtue and interest be. Tocqueville further differentiates his view of interest from earlier liberalisms. Citing *homo puer robustus*, he alludes to Thomas Hobbes, but Hobbes, with his materialist human anthropology and famous accounts of the brutality of men by nature and of the necessary authorization of the sovereign, is an object of Tocqueville's implicit criticism of governments founded upon fear and force.[44]

As for Hobbes, interest is essential to Tocqueville's account of human nature. For Tocqueville, interest becomes more important under democracy because personal interest will "become more than ever the principal, if not the sole motivating force of the actions of men."[45] That is to say, the democratic social state makes interest the principal way in which men understand themselves, though it is unclear whether interest is really the sole motivating force. Tocqueville famously argues Americans claim to act out of self-interest but often "give themselves to the disinterested and unconsidered impulses that are natural to man."[46] Tocqueville concludes that though the framework of interest will predominate, because the time of "blind devotions and instinctive virtues is fleeing from us," "how each man will understand his individual interest remains to be known."[47] Instructing democratic peoples in their "true interests" is one of the central purposes of his new political science.[48] Men's interests, however, are complex and are for Tocqueville (unlike for Hobbes) irreducible to sensation, material security, or fear for their material security. Furthermore, Tocqueville's statements throughout *Democracy* indicate that interest is one of several qualities he considers natural to man qua man. Not discounting the influence of the social state, man has "instincts" that "exist despite his efforts."[49] Just as interestedness is a given, so too it seems are the inclination to political society and the spiritual and religious impulse givens.

For example, Tocqueville presents the township as the "only association that is so much a part of nature . . . wherever men are gathered together." "Town society exists therefore among all

peoples . . . [and] seems to come directly from the hands of God."[50] Townships have a "happy existence." Their free institutions "recall constantly and in a thousand ways to each citizen that he lives in society . . . by working for the good of your fellow citizens, you finally acquire the habit and taste of serving them."[51] Therefore, "although private interest directs most human actions, in the United States as elsewhere, it does not rule all." Man's natural sociability is also seen in the "conjugal association" and the family, which, like the township, are natural.[52] These natural associations provide a backdrop to the manifold voluntary associations of civil society. Against that backdrop, voluntary associations, which arise from the natural diversity of personal interests, build a thick social fabric. Because of this diversity, it is impossible and futile to attempt to "force [all men] to lead a common existence," but in the township, man's self-interest is nevertheless educated through sharing in common life.[53] As Mitchell emphasizes, Tocqueville has a keen sense of the political and social implications of the biblical profession that "it is not good for men to be alone."[54] Thus while Tocqueville says personal interest is "the only fixed point in the human heart," personal interest cannot be educated, well understood, or fulfilled atomistically.

Because however "habits of thinking in one realm spill over onto another," that education is not only political and social.[55] In Tocqueville's words, "Sentiments and ideas are renewed, the heart grows larger, and the human mind develops only by the reciprocal action of men on each other."[56] The education of natural human interest is necessarily a moral education, and for Tocqueville mores derive from religion. Tocqueville argues repeatedly that religiosity or the religious impulse is as natural to the human heart as personal interest and that the two are intertwined.[57] Interest is a fixed point in the heart, but men also have "an immense interest in forming very fixed ideas about God, their soul, their general duties toward their creator and toward their fellows."[58] Knowledge of one's *intérêt bien entendu* in the form of a Pascalian wager—perhaps more sometimes than sincere love of God, "for who can read the recesses of the heart?"—brings Americans to "the foot of the altar."[59]

Religion appears twice in *Democracy*, Volume II, first under the intellect, then under the heart and sentiments. Organized religion responds to man's natural religiosity as well as to the social need for binding widely held dogmatic beliefs.[60] In democracy, religion "reigns . . . less as revealed doctrine than as common opinion," though this does not make religion and opinion the same. Whereas religion is a form of "law" and obedience to it "the free choice of a moral and independent being," majority opinion "moves . . . haphazardly." The omnipotence of the majority is "arbitrariness" unless bounded by a higher law, be it political or religious.[61] In Volume I, Tocqueville entreats readers to take religion seriously because "the divine notion" of rights is "disappearing" as "religions are weakening." Rights, like religion, are an aristocratic inheritance to be treasured; we should be interested in rights and therefore interested in religion. However, he also defends religious faith on nonfunctionalist grounds as responding to and channeling the natural aspirations of man.

> Never will the short space of sixty years enclose all of the imagination of man; the incomplete joys of this world will never be enough for his heart. Among all beings, man alone shows a natural distaste for existence and an immense desire to exist: he scorns life and fears nothingness. These different instincts constantly push his soul toward the contemplation of another world, and it is religion that leads him there. So religion is only a particular form of hope, and it is as natural to the human heart as hope itself. It is by a type of mental aberration and with the help of a kind of moral violence exercised over their own nature, that men remove themselves from religious beliefs; an irresistible inclination brings them back to beliefs. Unbelief is an accident; faith alone is the permanent state of humanity.
>
> So by considering religion only from a human viewpoint, you can say that all religions draw from man himself an element of strength that they can never lack, because it is due to one of the constituent principles of human nature.[62]

The religious impulse, like hope and self-interest, is "irresistible." Unlike in Hobbes, for whom religion is a consequence of fear and anxiety over one's present material security projected into "invisible powers," for Tocqueville religion reflects man's attraction to the eternal and natural capacity for hope, not fear.[63] The human mind, if we "allow [it] to follow its tendency . . . will seek" not "to *harmonize* earth with Heaven" but to make the heavenly kingdom come.[64]

Later, Tocqueville explains that the human soul occasionally breaks the "material bonds" that keep Americans in pursuit of worldly security.

> Man has not given himself the taste for the infinite and the love of what is immortal. These sublime instincts do not arise from a caprice of the will; they have their unchanging foundation in his nature; they exist despite his efforts. He can hinder and deform them, but not destroy them.
>
> The soul has needs that must be satisfied; and whatever care you take to distract it from itself, it soon becomes bored, restive, and agitated amid the enjoyments of the senses.[65]

Here Tocqueville's similarities to the classical and Christian traditions appear more clearly, his difference from Hobbes the more striking. Man is a desiring, restless, spiritual animal placed on the ladder of creation between beast and angel. His instincts have an "unchanging foundation" that neither he nor the social state can destroy, though he and the social state can distort their expression. This nature makes possible a form of grandeur specific to him qua human being, even in and even because of his restlessness.[66] Therefore, even from the "purely human point of view," man has an "interest" in "fixed ideas" of God because they aid in achieving "enduring things."[67] Religious peoples demonstrate it best: "concerning themselves with the other world," they have "the great secret of succeeding in this one."[68] To gain one's life, it helps to lose it.

All positive religions, as Tocqueville sees them, give specific form and content to the ineradicable human desire for the eternal and transcendent. However, not all religions are equally suited, in Tocqueville's eyes, to this purpose generally or to fulfilling this purpose in democracy specifically. The democratic social state is a product, in some ways accidentally, in others intrinsically, of Christianity. Christianity, under the separation of church and state, is therefore well suited.[69] However, the Christian religion is not useful in the way all religions are useful, because Tocqueville seems to think or entertain that Christianity is true. "I believe Christianity comes from God," he writes in his notes, "and that it is not a particular state of humanity that gave birth to it."[70] If Christianity is not the product of a social state, it is not partial; its teachings transcend the partial truths of aristocracy and democracy. This would distinguish Christian ideas of virtue from those of honor. Tocqueville in fact makes that distinction. In his notes on honor in the United States, he reveals himself at pains to make sure readers understand he does not think "true and false, just and unjust, good and evil, vice and virtue are only relative things . . . , a result that I would be very upset to reach, for I believe it false; and in addition such an opinion would be in clear contradiction to the ensemble of my opinions."[71] Honor is "in view of opinion"; it is what men praise and blame, and thus relative and conventional.[72] Virtue, by contrast, "is in view of God and of yourself."[73] Because honor comes from mores, and mores from religion, the honorable and the virtuous may coincide. They remain conceptually distinct, however. Thus Tocqueville takes Christianity as expressing and directing the natural religious impulse to good ends in democracy. He also takes it as reflecting truths of the human condition that rise above the social state and therefore are not merely conventional.

The "unchanging foundations" of human nature notwithstanding, Tocqueville appreciates the social state's power to mold its citizens qua citizens and qua persons. The social state may alter hearts and minds in a variety of ways that undermine political liberty and degrade human welfare.[74] Democratic peoples are particularly vulnerable to the "dangerous sickness" of intellectual

materialism.[75] They are liable to theorize that the "brain secretes thought," the soul is a falsehood, and the universe is one simple whole.[76] In the tumult of everyday life, they are also liable to neglect their souls. Lest men gradually become "without discernment and without progress, like the animals," and lose their capacity for political liberty, he maintains they need to be guided by nonmaterial and immortal principles; even belief is insincere or a Pascalian wager.[77] Again Tocqueville seems to prevaricate in this functionalism. Commenting on Plato's doctrine of the immortality of the soul, he argues that "[t]he instinct and taste of humanity uphold this doctrine" because

> [t]he heart of man is vaster than you suppose; it can at the same time enclose the taste for the good things of the earth and the love of the good things of heaven; sometimes the heart seems to give itself madly to one of the two; but it never goes for a long time without thinking of the other.[78]

It is clear Tocqueville's anthropology makes personal interest central. However, the nature of that interest is clarified and contextualized by Tocqueville's other striking comments, reflections, and intimations about man's political and religious nature. His is a "liberalism with soul," aiming at a kind of "reconciliation of body and soul."[79] Tocqueville clearly also thinks the democratic mind is shaped by the language and framework of interest; virtue appeals to democratic minds less.[80] Democrats cannot follow their aristocratic forefathers in all things but rather "must work hard to attain the type of grandeur and happiness that is appropriate" for them.[81] We might interpret this as democracy replacing virtue with interest and even making conditions of virtuous action impossible.[82] However, the goal of Tocqueville's new moral and political science is to educate democratic peoples in their "true interests" and "to counterbalance our particular defects"—to educate against the social state.[83] This opens another possibility: although Tocqueville as an astute spiritual director "couched his analysis" in the framework

of interest, in order to educate against the social state, he may still have evaluated interest and *intérêt bien entendu* in terms of virtue. If so, it may imply, as some scholarship has suggested, that *intérêt bien entendu* is not necessarily opposed to virtue or even leads to it.[84]

"The love of God which makes men virtuous"

We find evidence for Tocqueville's theorization of *intérêt bien entendu* in terms of virtue, specifically Christian virtue, in his notes on a few key chapters in *Democracy in America*, Volume II, Part II. First, let us consider the first use of *intérêt bien entendu* in Volume I and the logic and structure of Volume II as it develops toward those key chapters. Tocqueville, ever the careful writer, often speaks through the order of his chapters.

An important early appearance of *intérêt bien entendu* occurs in Volume I's "On the Future of the Three Races," where Tocqueville discusses the mix of ideas, sentiments, mores, and institutions that maintain the Union. Tocqueville argues "a tight bond exists among the material interests" of the states, but "opinions and sentiments"—that is, the "immaterial interests of man"—form a tighter bond. When material and political interests wane, shared belief and sentiment preserve social unity. Americans are Christian either by philosophy or by genuine profession, so "they agree on the general principles" that guide their politics and the "moral opinions that regulate the daily actions of life." These principles include the belief that "knowledge of one's self-interest well understood [*intérêt bien entendu*] is enough to lead man toward the just and the honest. . . . [T]hey admit that what seems good to them today can be replaced tomorrow by something better that is still hidden."[85] In this initial formulation, *intérêt bien entendu* is a shared moral belief about how democratic people, individually and collectively, discover and align themselves with the good and the "better that is still hidden."[86] It matters therefore what Americans understand their interest to be, distinct from what it *is*. It also matters that their idea of their interest, the good, is open-ended, subject to education.

Volume II begins with the intellect and Americans' unwitting Cartesianism.[87] Americans habitually "scorn forms" and prefer their private judgment. However, they also defer to the crowd's intellectual authority, for "without common ideas there is no common action, and without common action there are still men but not a social body."[88] Christianity is a religion Americans accept "without examination"; from it flows "a great number of moral truths."[89] Because of man's epistemological limitations, this is "necessary" and "desirable."[90] Christianity, he notes, may alter its form, responding to the "influence exercised . . . on religious beliefs" by the social state.[91] However, the core of Christian teaching—"the relationships of men with God and with each other"—he argues, has persisted across social states. This makes it an irreplaceable source of forms and a teacher of virtues that democratic people habitually need reinforced, like devotion, perseverance, and forbearance.[92]

Volume II, Part II, on democracy's influence on the sentiments, begins with the democratic love of equality before proceeding to three chapters on democratic individualism, three chapters on political and civil associations, and two chapters on *intérêt bien entendu* as a tool against individualism and on its application in religion. The following eight chapters address understandings and misunderstandings about spiritual and material well-being that arise from Americans' love of material well-being. Those eight culminate in chapter 17's plea that "in times of Equality and Doubt, It Is Important to Push Back the Goal of Human Actions." The argument here presupposes and implies the arguments of Part I—namely, the influence of the democratic social state on ideas and the subsequent causality of democratic ideas themselves. Consequently, Tocqueville evaluates egoism and individualism on the basis of their origins and their manner of forming faulty judgments. Egotism is a vicious version of natural self-interest.[93] A "vice as old as the world. It hardly belongs more to one form of society than to another" and is "born of blind instinct."[94] Like Christianity, it is not derived from a particular social state. Individualism, however, is a "sickness peculiar to the heart in democratic times."[95]

It reflects not base unthinking selfishness but rather "erroneous judgment" and "failings of the mind as much as . . . vices of the heart."[96] Individualism is tranquil. It does not seem vicious at first, unlike egotism, but rather reveals its consequences over time, as citizen after citizen "withdraws" from and "abandons" society.[97] If it does not necessarily make a man's heart grow smaller, it locks him inside; it "threatens finally to enclose [him] entirely within the solitude of his own heart."[98]

The democratic heart thus both expands and contracts, its compassion for humanity widening as its personal bonds weaken and contract. Whatever the advantages of a broader, more compassionate conception of humanity, the attenuation and shrinking of personal moral bonds undermines political liberty. For "there is no vice of the human heart that pleases [despotism] as much as egoism"; a despot "easily pardons the governed for not loving him, provided that they do not love each other."[99] Again, habits of one domain of life spill over into the others. A democratic habit of individualism means "indifference" toward one's fellow citizens, one's neighbors, and becomes understood as a "kind of a public virtue."[100] Free political institutions buttress the natural inclinations to politics and society that democratic equality, individualism, and the love of material well-being work against.

> The free Institutions that the Inhabitants of the United States possess, and the political rights that they use so much, recall constantly, and in a thousand ways, to each citizen that he lives in society. They lead his mind at every moment toward this idea, that the duty as well as the interest of men is to make themselves useful to their fellows; and, as he sees no particular cause to hate them, since he is never either their slave or their master, his heart inclines easily in the direction of benevolence. You first get involved in the general interest by necessity, and then by choice; what was calculation becomes instinct; and by working for the good of your fellow citizens, you finally acquire the habit and taste of serving them.[101]

The subsequent chapter on civil associations argues analogously regarding "the art of pursuing in common the object of their common desires."[102] Tocqueville observes, "Sentiments and ideas are renewed, the heart grows larger, and the human mind develops only by the reciprocal action of men on each other."[103] The heart, under democratic conditions, must be continually reopened.

Tocqueville only then turns to *intérêt bien entendu* itself. Having established man's interest in fixed ideas about God, the soul, and "general duties" toward God and neighbor, Tocqueville contrasts older doctrines of vice and virtue with the doctrine of *intérêt bien entendu*. The first contrast is with the doctrines of theologians and moralists—one thinks of Augustine, Aquinas, Fénelon, and Bossuet—who wrote in aristocratic times. Then, men once "took pleasure in professing that it is glorious to forget self and that it is right to do good without interest, just like God." Only secretly did they admit such virtue and charity were also useful, for they focused on the "beauties of virtue" and made its beauty the "official doctrine."[104] In democratic times, however, moralists "no longer dare to offer [this idea of sacrifice] to the human mind." Arguments about the goodness or beauty of disinterested virtue, Tocqueville suggests, will fall on deaf ears, for the "imagination soars less" and each person "concentrates on himself" more. Each person is literally and figuratively *self*-centered. It is "necessary" instead for moralists "to show how particular interest merges with general interest" and that sacrifice is as necessary and beneficial for the person as it is for the good of all.[105] For example, Americans "never say virtue is beautiful," but they do say it is useful and prove its utility. The veil of utilitarianism nevertheless allows perceptive minds to perceive the potential virtue underneath:

> The doctrine of self-interest well understood does not produce great devotions, but it suggests little sacrifices each day; by itself it cannot make a man virtuous but it forms a multitude of citizens who are regulated, temperate, moderate, farsighted, masters of themselves; and if it does not lead directly to virtue through the will, it brings them near to it insensibly through habits.[106]

Insufficient for perfect virtue, *intérêt bien entendu* offers training in virtue. This is not "contrary to the disinterested advance of the good. These are two different things but not opposite," he writes in his notes.[107]

Tocqueville also writes in his notes that like Christianity and egotism and unlike democratic individualism, *intérêt bien entendu* seems to rise above the social state. As an idea, it "has presented itself to the human mind from time to time in all centuries," though in "democratic centuries it besieges the mind."[108] The published text cites Montaigne to suggest the doctrine "is not new."[109] Thus, although it is not democratic in origin, like Christianity it is especially fit for democracy. Like democracy itself, it can elevate the many, though it may be insufficient for the few "great souls." "Not very lofty," what it lacks in sublimity it gains in clarity and accessibility; "within reach of all minds," it "[accommodates] itself marvelously to the weaknesses of men."[110] It therefore is "imperfect" but fitting for democratic men and will be the maxim of the age. Yet it "remains to be known" how men will define their interests.[111] Given the effects of materialism and individualism on the heart, the task of moralists is to help democrats define their interests well, to prevent the closing of the American heart by encouraging a genuinely "enlightened love of themselves" that will lead to better forms of interest, even to disinterested love for other people.[112]

It is on the note of defining interest well that Tocqueville turns to the application *intérêt bien entendu* in religion. Religion, however, was already on his mind. Tocqueville's extensive unpublished notes on the preceding chapter about *intérêt bien entendu* simply make that clear. Speaking of the "extreme efforts" legislators must make "in democracies to spiritualize man," Tocqueville notes there are "distinctions . . . between the different doctrines of *intérêt*"—not *intérêt bien entendu* but *intérêt* generally.[113] He sketches out for himself a set of three doctrines. The first is a "crude egoism that hardly merits the name of doctrine"; it teaches a man to force others to yield to his interest and claims there is no good beyond his personal interests. Next is a doctrine that teaches that "the best way to be happy is to serve your interest, and [that]

to be good, honest . . . requires you often to sacrifice your interest . . . [:] in a word, that *intérêt bien entendu* requires you often to sacrifice your interest, or rather that to follow your interest overall, you often have to neglect it in detail." Last, he sets out a "doctrine infinitely purer, more elevated, less material" than crude, animalistic egoism or *intérêt bien entendu*.[114] A person comes to the highest doctrine by "[penetrating] divine thought with his intelligence." He

> sees that the purpose of God is order, and he freely associates himself as depending on his strength, in order to fulfill his destination and to obey his mandate. There is still personal interest there, for there is a proud and private enjoyment in such points of view and hope for remuneration in a better world; but interest there is as small, as secretive, and as legitimate as possible.[115]

Interest remains present in man's heart, even as man conforms himself to God, but it is simultaneously lessened and justified to the degree possible for human nature.

Tocqueville indicates that positive religions teach and enforce this higher doctrine, finding clever ways to "facilitate its practice." He provides the example of Christianity, which says that "it is necessary to do good *out of love of God* (magnificent expression of the doctrine that I have just explained) and also to gain eternal life."[116] Tocqueville's notes reveal prevarication about the relationship of Christianity to this highest doctrine and *intérêt bien entendu*. He seems first to indicate that Christianity is the best expression or manifestation of this doctrine. However, he then adds,

> Thus Christianity at one end touches the doctrine of *intérêt bien entendu* and at the other the doctrine that I developed afterward and that I could call with Christianity itself the doctrine of the love of God. In sum, a religion very superior in terms of loftiness to the doctrine of *intérêt bien entendu* because it places interest in the other world and draws us out of this cesspool of human and material interests.[117]

The Atonement, while not mentioned, is strongly implied; Jesus Christ's crucifixion and atonement provide the relevant model of selfless love that with hope and faith becomes the central virtue and aim of the devout Christian life. *Intérêt bien entendu* in its highest forms then seems not only compatible with but touches the Christian doctrine of the love of God. Tocqueville also seems to suggest that Christianity in practice can overlap with *intérêt bien entendu*, such that those who act from *intérêt bien entendu* and those who act from a purer love of God may be confused with each another. The human heart is not transparent, nor are human deeds; the precise mixture of self-interested and disinterested motives for action is difficult to determine. Religion, however, knows the human heart and knows human nature. Tocqueville suggests it knows to speak of interest in eternal life *and* of the goodness of a sincere love of God that minimizes personal interest to the degree possible. Religion also knows to take advantage of and capture the highest instincts of human nature. He writes in the notes,

> The doctrine of *intérêt bien entendu* can make men honest.
>
> But it is only the love of God that makes men virtuous. The one teaches how to live, the other teaches how to die, and how can you make men who do not want to die live well for long?
>
> Religions have, by design, made such an intimate union of the doctrine of the love of God and that of interest, that those who are sincerely devout are constantly mistaken, and it happens that they believe that they are doing actions solely in view of the reward to come, actions that are principally suggested to them by the most pure, most noble, and most disinterested instincts of human nature.[118]

The difficulty in distinguishing from external actions what is motivated by *intérêt bien entendu* and what is motivated by the "love of God that makes men virtuous" does not mean we should not

distinguish them theoretically. The theoretical distinction is significant. Tocqueville does not appear interested in eliding this distinction with arguments about the effectual truths of *intérêt bien entendu* or the love of God that makes men virtuous. But as Tocqueville wrote in Volume I, "who can read the recesses of the heart?"[119] The answer is, only God; epistemologically, humans proceed through a glass darkly.[120] Tocqueville additionally suggests, in another note, that he "cannot believe that God put in our souls the *organ* of the infinite . . . in order to give our soul eternally only to the *finite*, that he gave it the *organ* of hope in a future life, without future life."[121] Hope for immortality reflects a species of self-interest, but Christian hope is a virtue, not a vice. Tocqueville in these notes broaches the subjects of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century French *pur amour* and quietism debates, theological debates that hinged on the nature of self-interest, hope for heaven, and love of God, that shaped early modern and Enlightenment moral and political philosophy, and with which he is rarely put in conversation.[122] While aiming to encourage in men the "love of God that makes men virtuous," Tocqueville's Christianity does not scorn interest as necessarily egotistical. It admits interest's centrality to human nature and its role in promoting virtue. Rather, it builds on and elevates that nature; *intérêt bien entendu* and the "disinterested advance of the good" are not "contrary." Great souls do not need interest as a motivation for virtue, but ordinary souls do. *Intérêt bien entendu* helps to elevate ordinary souls. Mitchell argues that for Tocqueville, what is good in worldly terms will comport with what is good in the "economy of salvation" and that "Christianity is a training in self-interest rightly understood."[123] On the basis of these passages, one might also say the opposite: that *intérêt bien entendu* can be a training for the love of God that makes men virtuous.

Many of these notes are echoed in the following chapter on *intérêt bien entendu*'s application in religion, though there are differences. For example, rather than arguing that it "touches" and leads to Christianity, Tocqueville writes in the published text that "Christianity tells us you must prefer others to self in order to gain

heaven . . . [and] that you must do good to your fellows out of love of God," and he declares, "I do not see clearly why the doctrine of *intérêt bien entendu* would put men off from religious beliefs, and it seems to me on the contrary that I am sorting out how it brings them closer."[124] Whereas earlier he cited Montaigne, in this chapter he cites Pascal's wager. He describes the wager as not "worthy of the great soul of Pascal," though it "sums up perfectly the state of souls" when religious beliefs are faltering as doubt spreads. This implies the wager is an argument to which Pascal's doubtful readers would assent.[125] Again, great souls do not need interest to pursue virtue; only "ordinary souls" do.[126] In other words, Pascal, a "great soul," did in his *Pensées* what Tocqueville now attempts: to "speak to the needs of the soul by appealing to a motive that democratic readers most readily understand."[127]

This analysis of *intérêt bien entendu* in terms of virtue, specifically Christian virtue, is buttressed further by, for example, Tocqueville's 1843 correspondence with Arthur de Gobineau about modern moral philosophy. Christianity, he says, is the germ of all modern moral philosophy, including utilitarianism.[128] The important break in the history of moral philosophy is not between ancients and moderns but between ancients and Christians. Christianity "placed the purpose of life after life and gave a more pure, more immaterial, more disinterested, higher character to morality," and "modern morality . . . has done nothing other than to develop, extend the consequences of Christian morality without changing its principles. Our society is much more distanced from theology than from Christian philosophy." *Intérêt bien entendu* represents, he says, a recognition that in ages when men doubt and cannot "with security place" the sanction of the moral life "entirely" in the next life, a sanction must be found in this life. English utilitarians are witness to this trend, while Christian moralists, he writes, remain somewhat behind the curve. The compatibility of *intérêt bien entendu* with utilitarianism and Christian moral philosophy is even raised in the final pages of *Democracy* where Tocqueville suggests God might be a democrat and a utilitarian: "Who knows if, in the eyes of God, the beautiful is not the

useful?"[129] If utilitarian arguments are true, it is because they conform to the good that God sees and desires. Ralph Hancock observes that the "apparently straightforward idea" that Tocqueville is more interested in religion's political utility than in its truth becomes "problematic" when one recognizes that for Tocqueville utility is not entirely or principally utilitarian and materialistic.[130] Rather, "what is useful to human beings" and the "question of religious or metaphysical truth may not be entirely separate." Tocqueville's presentation of *intérêt bien entendu* in Christian terms and understanding of utility's compatibility with virtue reinforces Hancock's observation.

Tocqueville follows *intérêt bien entendu* with a series of chapters explicating how materialism and individualism distort ideas of well-being that, contra Hobbes, Spinoza, and other "materialists" Tocqueville has in mind, cannot be defined in solely material terms.[131] Democratic peoples' well-being is threatened by an "excessive love" of material well-being that will finally "degrade" them.[132] Tocqueville consequently advises erring on the side of spiritualism in order to recover a properly human path between Saint Jerome's ascetic spiritualism and Hegliogabus's hedonic materialism.[133] The task of correction falls especially to legislators and moralists, who must "clearly [discern] in advance" the "natural inclinations" of democratic peoples and counteract them.[134] This task includes encouraging citizens to believe in the soul's immortality, and where that is doubted or doubtful, to cultivate honest habits and a "taste for the future" through work and ambition.[135] By stimulating a longing for this-worldly success, work nourishes men's natural capacity to hope and to "cast their sight" beyond immanent desires and their immediate temporal horizon. By accustoming citizens to think about "the future in this world," they are led "little by little, and without their knowing it, to religious beliefs. . . . [T]he means that, to a certain point, allow men to do without religion, [it] is perhaps after all the only one that remains to us for leading humanity back by a long detour toward faith."[136] Habits of the heart spill over in both directions, from religion to mores to political society and possibly in reverse. Without

mentioning *intérêt bien entendu*, Tocqueville subtly reinforces its logic, again tying the cultivation of this-worldly interests rightly understood to the needs of the soul and to the soul's fulfillment in the transcendent.

Better Understanding *intérêt bien entendu*

This article has not taken a position that *intérêt bien entendu* is the "central doctrine" of *Democracy in America*, nor that the interpretation offered here is the only possible interpretation.[137] Tocqueville's political theory is rich, complicated, interlocking, and mutually reinforcing. Once one becomes attentive to the circular causality and spillover effects that characterize his way of thinking, it becomes challenging to isolate any one part of his theory from any other.[138] *Intérêt bien entendu* is one of Tocqueville's most notable contributions to liberal and democratic theories, if among his more ambiguous. If he understands it (at least in part) in the terms of Christianity and Christian virtue, as some previous scholarship and this study suggest is possible, the potential significance of that finding is worth weighing. This article has articulated how this interpretation sheds light on his role as a democratic moralist and his understanding of the relationships between interest and virtue, utility and virtue, and Christianity and democratic morality. In closing, let me suggest, not in the manner of a proof but in that of an invitation for further thought, two areas for consideration that fall beyond the scope of what this article can offer.

As a matter of intellectual history, reading the text of *Democracy in America* with the help of these notes underscores the great degree to which Tocqueville continues not just the classical French moralist tradition but also and more specifically seventeenth- and eighteenth-century French theological debates about the nature of interest, hope, and love of God. Although this episode in intellectual history has always had its devotees, historians and scholars of political thought and political philosophy have recently begun to reexamine these debates, particularly by recovering Fénelon's contributions to Christian and Enlightenment philosophy and political economy.[139] The wide and rich literature on religion in

Tocqueville's new political science would be enriched by considering how Tocqueville, while still addressing himself to his nineteenth-century democratic context, takes up topics central to one of the last great Christian theological debates.[140]

As a matter of Tocquevillian and neo-Tocquevillian theory, one struggles to grasp the dynamic phenomena of Tocquevillian civil society without *intérêt bien entendu*. Despite *intérêt bien entendu*'s ambiguity, the necessity of civil associations to "check the ravages of unmitigated self-interest" is "absolutely clear."[141] Classic neo-Tocquevillian treatments of civil society, such as Michael Walzer's "civil society argument" and Robert D. Putnam's *Bowling Alone*, take the pluralistic character of civil society as fundamental.[142] Walzer said of prevailing accounts of civil society what is also true of liberalism: they have their "origins in the struggle for religious freedom."[143] Tocqueville is undoubtedly a liberal, but his liberalism does not neatly conform to Enlightenment theories in which we find the philosophical bases for liberal toleration. On this, Dana Villa has argued that Tocqueville, despite doing "theoretical heavy lifting" for a "pluralist conception of politics," lacks "real *moral* pluralism."[144] For Mitchell, Tocqueville's "mediational politics" prioritizes civil society association because of the ways Christianity had altered the conditions of human relationship.[145] This study has demonstrated Tocqueville theorized *intérêt bien entendu* at least partly in Christian terms and as possibly opening and moving the American heart to greater love and virtue. "Sentiments and ideas are renewed, the heart grows larger, and the human mind develops only by the reciprocal action of men on each other," and a despot "easily pardons the governed for not loving him, provided that they do not love each other."[146] In other words, Tocqueville thinks love and care matter as much for political liberty as for a people's private ethical character. Further developing this reading of *intérêt bien entendu* may bring our understanding of Tocquevillian civil society into a productive and closer conversation with civil society accounts grounded not in philosophical liberalism but in Christian and natural law theories, areas that recent efforts to examine the status and health of liberalism make important. It also may focus our vision on

the kinds of love and care that may, on Tocqueville's terms or ours, be vital for an honest, even virtuous shared democratic life.[147]

Notes

1. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, ed. Eduardo Nolla, trans. James T. Schleifer (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund, 2010). Henceforth DA.
2. George Anastaplo, "On the Central Doctrine of *Democracy in America*," in *Interpreting Tocqueville's "Democracy in America,"* ed. K. Masugi (Savage, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1991), 425–61; and James T. Schleifer, *The Making of Tocqueville's Democracy in America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 252–57.
3. Arthur Goldhammer, "Tocqueville, Associations, and the Law of 1834," *Historical Reflections* 35, no. 3 (2009): 74–84.
4. Many treatments of Tocqueville contend with these characteristics of his thought. Examples include Roger Boesche, *The Strange Liberalism of Alexis de Tocqueville* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987); Aurelian Craiutu, "Tocqueville's Paradoxical Moderation," *Review of Politics* 67, no. 4 (Fall 2005): 599–629; Sanford Lakoff, "Tocqueville, Burke, and the Origins of Liberal Conservatism," *Review of Politics* 60, no. 3 (1998): 435–64; Lucien Jaume, *Tocqueville*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013); Harvey C. Mansfield, "Intimations of Philosophy in Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*," in *Tocqueville's Voyages*, ed. Christine Dunn Henderson (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund, 2014), 202–41; Sheldon Wolin, *Tocqueville between Two Worlds* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001).
5. William Galston puts it nicely: "Tocqueville is more often quoted than understood." William Galston, "Civil Society and the 'Art of Association,'" *Journal of Democracy* 11, no. 1 (2000): 64–70. I use Tocqueville's own *intérêt bien entendu* because the term has a variety of translations. See Jon Elster, *Alexis de Tocqueville: The First Social Scientist* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 48. For one commentary on translating Tocqueville, see Arthur Goldhammer, "Translating Tocqueville: The Constraints of Classicism," *Tocqueville Review* 26, no. 1, (2005): 499–531.
6. Marvin Zetterbaum, *Tocqueville and the Problem of Democracy* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1976), 101–12; Max Lerner, "Tocqueville's *Democracy in America:* Politics, Law, and the Elite," *Antioch Review* 25 (1965): 43–565. Select views on Tocqueville and the founding: James Ceaser, "Alexis de Tocqueville and the Two-Founding

Thesis," *Review of Politics* 73, no. 2 (2011): 219–43. James Ceaser, "Alexis de Tocqueville on Political Science, Political Culture, and the Role of the Intellectual," *American Political Science Review* 79, no. 3 (1985): 656–72; Rory Schacter, "Tocqueville's 'New Political Science' as a Correction of *The Federalist*," in *Exploring the Social and Political Economy of Alexis de Tocqueville* (Cham, Switzerland: Springer International, 2020), 9–36.

7. Boesche, 194–211.
8. Wolin, 195–97, 216.
9. Alexis de Tocqueville to Ernest de Chabrol, in Alexis de Tocqueville, *Selected Letters on Politics and Society*, ed. Roger Boesche, trans. James Toupin and Roger Boesche (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 37–41. See also Schleifer, 290–322. On a similar theme, Brian Danoff, "Lincoln and Tocqueville on Democratic Leadership and Self-Interest Properly Understood," *Review of Politics* 67, no. 4 (2005): 687–719. Danoff agrees with Richter that Tocqueville hoped self-interest could be left behind altogether. Melvin Richter, "The Uses of Theory: Tocqueville's Adaptation of Montesquieu," in *Essays in Theory and History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970), 97.
10. Elster, 59. J. L. Kimpell, "Republican civic virtue, enlightened self-interest and Tocqueville," *European Journal of Political Theory*, 14, no. 3 (2015): 345–67.
11. Delba Winthrop, "Rights: A Point of Honor," in *Interpreting Tocqueville's Democracy in America*, 394–424. Delba Winthrop, "Rights, Interests, and Honor," *Tocqueville's Defense of Human Liberty*, ed. Peter Augustine Lawler and Joseph Alulis (New York: Garland, 1993), 203–22.
12. Bruce Frohnen, *Virtue and the Promise of Conservatism* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1993). Alexander Jech, "'Man Simply': Excavating Tocqueville's Conception of Human Nature," *Perspectives on Political Science* 42, no. 2 (2013): 84–93. Examinations of Aristotelianism in Tocqueville include James Ceaser, *Liberal Democracy and Political Science* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press), 1990; Robert Eden, "Tocqueville and the Problem of Natural Right," *Interpretation: A Journal of Political Philosophy* 17, no. 3 (1990): 379–87; Robert P. Kraynak, "Tocqueville's Constitutionalism," *American Political Science Review* 81, no. 4 (1987): 1175–95; Pierre Manent, "Tocqueville, Political Philosopher," in *The Cambridge Companion to Tocqueville*, ed. Cheryl B. Welch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006):108–20; Harvey C. Mansfield and Delba Winthrop, "Editor's Introduction," in Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000); Paul Rahe, *Soft Despotism, Democracy's Drift*

(New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 221–40. For examples of mapping ancient concepts of virtue onto Tocqueville's theory, see Richard Avramenko and Brianne Wolf, "Disciplining the Rich: Tocqueville on Philanthropy and Privilege," *Review of Politics* 83, no. 3 (2021): 351–74; Richard Avramenko, *Courage* (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2011); Shannon R. Krause, *Liberalism with Honor* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002).

13. Maura Priest, "Alexis de Tocqueville's Citizenship: A Model of Collective Virtue," in *Exploring the Social and Political Economy of Alexis de Tocqueville*. See also Michael Pakaluk, "Natural Law and Civil Society," in *Alternative Conceptions of Civil Society*, ed. Simone Chambers and Will Kymlicka (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2020), 131–48.
14. Dana Jalbert Stauffer, "Tocqueville on the Modern Moral Situation: Democracy and the Decline of Devotion," *American Political Science Review* 108, no. 4 (2014): 772–83.
15. Aaron L. Herold, "Tocqueville on Religion, the Enlightenment, and the Democratic Soul," *American Political Science Review* 109, no. 3 (2015): 523–34. Also Mansfield, "Intimations of Philosophy." For biographical treatments of Tocqueville's religiosity, see Hugh Brogan, *Alexis de Tocqueville* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006); André Jardin, *Tocqueville* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1988); Olivier Zunz, *The Man Who Understood Democracy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2022).
16. Elster, 52. See also Ryan Patrick Hanley, "Tocqueville and the Philosophy of the Enlightenment," in *The Cambridge Companion to "Democracy in America,"* ed. Richard Boyd (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), 47–68. See also Ryan Patrick Hanley, *The Political Philosophy of Fénelon* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), and Ryan Patrick Hanley, *Love's Enlightenment: Rethinking Charity in Modernity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017).
17. Aurelian Craiutu, "Tocqueville's Dialogues," in *The Cambridge Companion to "Democracy in America,"* 69–99. Ralph Hancock suggests Tocqueville wants to "save democratic souls" but takes Tocqueville's "governing intention" as political, not moral. Ralph Hancock, "The Uses and Hazards of Christianity in Tocqueville's Attempt to Save Democratic Souls," in *Interpreting Tocqueville's "Democracy in America,"* 348–93.
18. Joshua Mitchell, *The Fragility of Freedom* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 81, 190. Also Joshua Mitchell, "It Is Not Good for Man to Be Alone," in *Friendship and Politics*, ed. John Von Heyking and Richard Avramenko (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008), 268–84; Joshua Mitchell, "Tocqueville's Puritans," in *The Cambridge Companion to "Democracy in America,"* 347–66.

19. Peter Augustine Lawler, "Tocqueville on the Doctrine of Interest," in *Homeless and at Home in America* (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine Press, 2007), 152–67. Lawler wrote on Pascalian themes in Tocqueville repeatedly. See Peter Augustine Lawler, "The Human Condition: Tocqueville's Debt to Rousseau and Pascal," in *Liberty, Equality, Democracy*, ed. Eduardo Nolla (New York: NYU Press, 1992), 1–20. Peter Augustine Lawler, *The Restless Mind* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1993). Peter Augustine Lawler, "Tocqueville on Pride, Interest, and Love," *Polity* 28, no. 2 (1995): 217–36.
20. Jaume, *Tocqueville*, 156, 146–91.
21. Lucien Jaume, "Le 'Cœur Démocratique' Selon Tocqueville," *La revue Tocqueville* 27, no. 2 (2006): 35–44.
22. Alan Kahan, *Tocqueville, Democracy, and Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 11, 75. Alan Kahan, "Checks and Balances for Democratic Souls," *American Political Thought* 1, no. 4 (2015): 100–119. Alan Kahan, "Democratic Grandeur," in *Tocqueville's Voyages*, 177–201. Françoise Mélonio, "'Une sorte de Pascal politique': Tocqueville et la littérature démocratique," *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France* 105, no. 2 (2005): 273–84.
23. Kahan, *Tocqueville, Democracy, and Religion*, 60–61.
24. Catherine Zuckert, "The Saving Minimum? Tocqueville on the Role of Religion in America—Then and Now," *American Political Thought* 5, no. 3 (2016): 464–518.
25. Stauffer, "Tocqueville on the Modern Moral Situation," 772.
26. Jean Yarbrough, "Tocqueville on the Needs of the Soul," *Perspectives on Political Science* 47, no. 3 (2018): 123–41. William Galston also contests the functionalist arguments. William Galston, "Tocqueville on Liberalism and Religion," *Social Research* 54, no. 3 (1987): 499–518.
27. Yarbrough, "Tocqueville on the Needs of the Soul," 133–34.
28. On Tocqueville's democratic language, see e.g., Richard Avramenko, "The Grammar of Indifference: Tocqueville and the Language of Democracy," *Political Theory* 45, no. 4 (2017): 495–523; Salih Emre Gercek, "Alexis de Tocqueville's Reluctant 'Democratic Language,'" *Review of Politics* 83, no. 1 (2021): 21–44; Jaume, *Tocqueville*, 193–226.
29. See Herold, "Tocqueville on Religion, the Enlightenment, and the Democratic Soul," and Mansfield, "Intimations of Philosophy in Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*."
30. Jaume, *Tocqueville*, 188–90; Mansfield, "Intimations of Philosophy in Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*," 207–11.
31. Richard Boyd, "Introduction," in *The Cambridge Companion to Democracy in America*, 24–25. See also Richard Boyd, *Uncivil*

Society: The Perils of Pluralism and the Making of Modern Liberalism (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2004). On Tocqueville's adaptation by the American Right and Left, see Richard Boyd, "Tocqueville's Conservatism and the Conservative's Tocqueville," in *The Cambridge Companion to "Democracy in America,"* 133–56, and Robert T. Gannett Jr., "Tocqueville and the Political Left in America," in *The Cambridge Companion to "Democracy in America,"* 157–77.

32. Mansfield, "Intimations of Philosophy in Tocqueville's *Democracy in America,"* 210–11.
33. Zuckert, "The Saving Minimum?," 506.
34. On Tocqueville's human anthropology, see Pierre Manent, *Tocqueville and the Nature of Democracy*, trans. John Waggoner (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1996); and Pierre Manent, "Democratic Man, Aristocratic Man, and Man Simply: Some Remarks on an Equivocation in Tocqueville's Thought," trans. Daniel J. Mahoney and Paul Seaton, *Perspectives on Political Science* 27 (1998): 80. Jech contests Manent's argument. See Jech, "'Man Simply,'" 84–85. See also Avramenko, *Courage*, 198–99. Tocqueville's lack of a state of nature is a widely held view among Tocqueville scholars. For a well-articulated alternative view, see Raul G. Rodriguez, "Tocqueville's State of Nature Foundation," *American Journal of Political Science* 66, no. 2 (2002): 352–64.
35. For one description of discovering, connecting, and discerning the pattern of these "statements, phrases, words, implications, and suggestions," see Mansfield, "Intimations of Philosophy in Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*," 206. For a discussion of the effect of the social state on nature, see Michael Zuckert, "On Social State," in *Tocqueville's Defense of Human Liberty*, ed. Peter Augustine Lawler (New York: Garland, 1993), 3-17.
36. DA, 1282, note f.
37. Tocqueville in the relevant passages uses the term *Christian*, not specifying Catholic or Protestant, or any specific Protestant denomination.
38. Jech, "'Man Simply,'" 85. Jech's argument relies on Zuckert, "On Social State."
39. Ibid.
40. DA, 391.
41. See Albert O. Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interests* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), 119–24, on interest's construction as a modern answer to the classical framework of passion, virtue, and vice.
42. Jech, "'Man Simply,'" 89. Mitchell, *Fragility*, 74–87. See also Rahe, *Soft Despotism, Democracy's Drift*, 158, for a nice statement of Tocqueville's

closeness to the "outlook of the ancients." See also Mansfield, "Intimations of Philosophy," and Harvey C. Mansfield, "Tocqueville on Religion and Liberty," *American Political Thought* 5, no. 2 (2016): 250–75.

43. DA, 389.
44. DA, 392. Nolla indicates that Tocqueville cites *De Cive* though "*homo puer robustus*" is also cited in Rousseau's *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality*. On Hobbes and Tocqueville, see Mitchell, *Fragility of Freedom*, 40–66.
45. DA, 923.
46. DA, 921.
47. DA, 923, 967.
48. DA, 16.
49. DA, 940.
50. DA, 101, 103–4, 114. Tocqueville compares the township to the medieval parish. Alexis de Tocqueville, *L'ancien régime et la révolution* (Paris: GF Flammarion, 1988), 142.
51. DA, 893.
52. DA, 1064.
53. DA, 1068, 1268–69. See also Cyrille Ferraton, "L'idée d'association chez Alexis de Tocqueville," *Cahiers d'économie Politique* 1, no. 46 (2004): 45–65.
54. Mitchell, "It Is Not Good for Man to Be Alone."
55. Mitchell, *Fragility*, 24.
56. DA, 900.
57. I use these terms somewhat loosely, as Tocqueville does; however, spirituality suggests the general longing for the eternal and "contemplation of another world" to which religion, understood as an organized and (this is key) *directed* form of spirituality, leads.
58. DA, 743, 475.
59. DA, 475, 928.
60. DA, 711–20. Note again that I use these terms *spirituality* and *religion*, and *religious impulse*, somewhat loosely, as Tocqueville does; however, spirituality suggests the general longing for the eternal and "contemplation of another world" to which religion, understood as an organized and (this is key) *directed* form of spirituality, leads. For an examination of the "natural state of religion in democracy," distinct from man's natural religiosity, see Aristide Tessitore, *Journal of Politics* 64, no. 4 (2002): 1137–52.
61. DA, 720, note p.

62. DA, 482, 391.
63. Mansfield, "Tocqueville on Religion and Liberty," 261.
64. DA, 467.
65. DA, 940.
66. To treat restlessness and the anxieties of the soul as a disease to be eradicated fully destroys what is truly human. See Lawler, *The Restless Mind*.
67. DA, 966. See Alec Arellano, "Tocqueville on Intellectual Independence, Doubt, and Democratic Citizenship," *Review of Politics* 82, no. 1 (2020): 49–72; Sarah Gustafson, "A Tocquevillian Marketplace of Ideas?," in *Exploring the Social and Political Economy of Alexis de Tocqueville*, 101–30. On religion's ability to broaden temporal awareness, see Agnès Antoine, "Democracy and Religion: Some Tocquevillian Perspectives," in *Reading Tocqueville*, ed. R. Geenens et al. (New York: Palgrave, 2007): 132–41.
68. DA, 966.
69. Discussions of Christianity and civil religion in Tocqueville include Richard Avramenko, "Tocqueville and the Religion of Democracy," *Perspectives on Political Science* 41, no. 3 (2012): 125–37; Carson Holloway, "Religion in *Democracy in America*," in *The Cambridge Companion to "Democracy in America,"* 327–45; Galston, "Tocqueville on Liberalism and Religion"; Cynthia J. Hinckley, "Tocqueville on Religious Truth and Political Necessity," *Polity* 23, no. 1 (1990): 39–52; Jaume, *Tocqueville*, 65–81, 145–59; Jech, "'Man Simply'"; Kahan, *Tocqueville, Democracy, and Religion*; Sanford Kessler, "Tocqueville on Civil Religion and Liberal Democracy," *Journal of Politics* 39, no. 1 (1977): 119–46; Lawler, *The Restless Mind*; Jack Lively, *The Social and Political Thought of Alexis de Tocqueville* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962); Mitchell, *Fragility*, 162–214; Yuji Takayama, "Beyond 'Civil Religion'—on Pascalian Influence in Tocqueville," *History of European Ideas* 48, no. 50 (2022): 518–35; Zetterbaum, *Tocqueville and the Problem of Democracy*; Catherine Zuckert, "Not by Preaching: Tocqueville on the Role of Religion in American Democracy," *Review of Politics* 43, no. 2 (1981): 259–80; Zuckert, "The Saving Minimum?."
70. DA, 748, note f; 750, note g.
71. DA, 1095, note d.
72. DA, 1095–96, notes d, e, and f, for the distinctions Tocqueville draws between honor and virtue.
73. DA, 1096, note f.

74. DA, 831–42, 853–60, 711–26.
75. DA, 957.
76. DA, 477, 757–58, 831–42. See also Avramenko, "Tocqueville and the Religion of Democracy"; Cynthia J. Hinckley, "Tocqueville on Religion and Modernity," *Journal of Church and State* 32, no. 2 (1990): 395–41; Uner Daglier, "Tocqueville, Democratic Poetry, and the Religion of Humanity," *Utilitas* 34, no. 1 (2002): 1–18.
77. DA, 759–62, 831–42, 853–60, 987–94, 963–64.
78. DA, 960.
79. Harvey C. Mansfield, "Conversations with Bill Kristol," August 15, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SJ9dIYd-vUQ. See also Jaume, *Tocqueville*, 156, 152, 174–77, 187; Mitchell, *Fragility*, 1–33, 78–87.
80. DA, 926.
81. DA, 1283.
82. As Stauffer does. Stauffer, "Tocqueville on the Modern Moral Situation."
83. DA, 815–17, 965–68, 16.
84. For a similar suggestion, see Brian Danoff, "Alexis de Tocqueville and Authority in America" (PhD diss., Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey), 298.
85. DA, 597–600.
86. See Jaume, *Tocqueville*, 159–91, on obscurity and hiddenness in Tocqueville.
87. DA, 704.
88. DA, 713, 701.
89. DA, 707, 724.
90. DA, 715–16.
91. DA, 748.
92. DA, 742–53, 746, 750, 954–62, 965–68. Tocqueville repeatedly distinguishes "the most false and most dangerous religions," which nevertheless perform the most basic tasks of positive religion, from Christianity (754–56).
93. On individualism's origins, Koenraad W. Swart, "Individualism in the Mid-19th Century, 1826–1860," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 23 (1962): 77–86.
94. DA, 882.
95. DA, 881, note a2.
96. DA, 882.
97. Ibid.
98. DA, 884.
99. DA, 889.

100. Ibid.
101. DA, 893.
102. DA, 897.
103. DA, 900.
104. DA, 919.
105. DA, 918, 920.
106. DA, 921–22.
107. DA, 922, note k.
108. DA, 919, note f.
109. Ibid.
110. DA, 921.
111. DA, 922–23.
112. DA, 921.
113. DA, 925, note n.
114. Ibid.
115. Ibid.
116. Ibid.
117. DA, 927, note n.
118. DA, 924, note k.
119. DA, 475.
120. Jaume, *Tocqueville*, 174–75, 184–89.
121. DA, 959, note h. Compare with C. S. Lewis's *Mere Christianity*: "If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world." C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: HarperCollins, 2000).
122. See Hanley, *The Political Philosophy of Fénelon*, 170–97.
123. Mitchell, *Fragility*, 24, note 63; 190, note 96.
124. DA, 927.
125. DA, 928, note d.
126. DA, 922.
127. Yarbrough, "Tocqueville on the Needs of the Soul," 134.
128. DA, 746. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Lettres Choisies* (Paris: Gallimard, 2003), 515–18, 533–36.
129. DA, 1282, note f.
130. Hancock, "The Uses and Hazards of Christianity," 351–52.
131. DA, 957.
132. Ibid.
133. DA, 960.
134. DA, 955.
135. DA, 968.

136. Ibid.
137. See Anastaplo, "On the Central Doctrine of *Democracy in America*."
138. Mitchell, *Fragility*, 18–39.
139. See Hanley, *The Political Philosophy of Fénelon*; Benjamin Thompson and Robert Lamb, "Disinterestedness and Virtue: 'Pure Love' in Fenelon, Rousseau, and Godwin," *History of Political Thought* 32, no. 5 (2011): 799–819.
140. Charly Coleman, *The Virtues of Abandon* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2014). Jacques Le Brun, *Le Pur Amour de Platon à Lacan* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2002).
141. Goldhammer, "Tocqueville, Associations, and the Law of 1834," 78.
142. Michael Walzer, "The Civil Society Argument," *Thinking Politically* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), 115–33. Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000).
143. Walzer, 126.
144. Dana Villa, "Hegel, Tocqueville, and 'Individualism,'" *Review of Politics* 64, no. 4 (2005): 659–86.
145. Mitchell, "It Is Not Good for Man to Be Alone," and Mitchell, "Tocqueville's Puritans."
146. DA, 900, 889.
147. E.g., Pakaluk, "Natural Law and Civil Society"; and Michael Banner, "Christianity and Civil Society," *Alternative Conceptions of Civil Society*, ed. Simone Chambers and Will Kymlicka (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2020), 113–30.