



SHIELD OF FAITH

"Take Up the Shield of Faith" - Paul

Monday June 24, 2019

Progress should mean that we are always changing the world to fit the vision, instead we are always changing the vision. — G.K. Chesterton

The Exhilaration of a Vice

Early twentieth century England produced some fascinating thinkers. Among the most inspiring to me is G.K. Chesterton. I don't remember when I first became acquainted with his work. It was many years ago. I've read a number of his books and essays.

A prolific writer, his mind produced this famous nugget, "The Christian ideal has not been tried and found wanting; it has been found difficult and left untried." And this, "These are the days when the Christian is expected to praise every creed except his own." Lastly, "The truth is, of course, that the curtness of the Ten Commandments is an evidence, not of the gloom and narrowness of a religion, but, on the contrary, of its liberality and humanity. It is shorter to state the things forbidden than the things permitted: precisely because most things are permitted, and only a few things are forbidden."

While I'm on the subject of Chesterton's views on religion I want to throw this one in about Islam. Don't overlook the fact that London now has a Muslim Mayor. "The effort of the Crusades was sufficient to stop the advance of Islam, but not sufficient to exhaust it. A few centuries after, the Moslem attacked once more, with modern weapons and in a more indifferent age; and, amid the disputes of diplomatists and the dying debates of the Reformation, he succeeded in sailing up the Danube and nearly becoming a central European Power like Poland or Austria. From this position, after prodigious efforts, he was slowly and painfully dislodged. But Austria, though rescued, was exhausted and reluctant to pursue, and the Turk was left in possession of the countries he had devoured in his advance."

Chesterton observed that Islam succeeded because they attacked in a "more indifferent age ... amid the disputes of diplomatists and the dying debates of the Reformation." If the West was weak then due to religious conflicts, weak politics and indifference then I'd say we're in a heap of trouble today! The West has never been more vulnerable to a unified "moral" attack by a monotheistic religion.

I was brainwashed as a youth in American public schools. I came to adulthood thinking that all religions are equal and that religion is a minor player on the cultural stage. The major influencer from my youth was popular culture ... music, movies and television. Media was the source of moral teaching because it captured my imagination. The

Column continues on the back

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Church was boring. It gained no foothold on my imagination until I was nearly twenty years old. And that foothold came as a result of the love of a woman, my wife. My teen years were littered with typical post-pubescent angst. Much of that “suffering” was unnecessary. It was fueled almost entirely by the forced delay of manhood.

I lost ground emotionally and intellectually during those formative years. Falling in love with a truly good woman saved me. She pointed me to Jesus Christ. I’ve been walking toward Him ever since, and discovering the most enriching nourishment for my life and imagination in his moral law and gospel.

It is unfair to all religions to pretend they are the same. Of all the world’s religions Christianity has been the most influential on Western culture since a few hundred years after Christ lived. It is downright evil to pretend that our society will improve if we replace it with “multiculturalism.”

A force that brought us to this sad state of affairs is “education.” Chesterton wrote, “A great curse has fallen upon modern life with the discovery of the vastness of the word Education.” Expand on this with his observation on morality, “A strange fanaticism fills our time: the fanatical hatred of morality, especially of Christian morality.”

That is a fair distillation of America’s attitude toward schooling and morals. Education is everything and morality ... especially Christian ... is hated fanatically.

What are hate crime laws anyway?

Government force against Christian morality. That’s what they are. Nothing more, nothing less.

I’ll close with a Chestertonism that always brings a smile to my face. “The act of defending any of the cardinal virtues has today all the exhilaration of a vice.” I can’t help it. One more. “A dead thing can go with the stream, but only a living thing can go against it.”