



SHIELD OF FAITH

"Take Up the Shield of Faith" - Paul

Friday, November 8, 2019

So I drew the soul of a cow; which I saw there plainly walking before me in the sunlight; and the soul was all purple and silver, and had seven horns and the mystery that belongs to all beasts. — G.K. Chesterton from his essay entitled "A Piece of Chalk"

The Mystery of All Beasts

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I recently learned that G.K. Chesterton's book *Everlasting Man* helped persuade the great English writer, C.S. Lewis, to abandon atheism in favor of Christianity. I read the book a number of years ago a couple of times. I gave it to Bill Nemitz, a popular Leftist Roman Catholic newspaper columnist in Maine. We discussed Christianity during one of my prayer walks along the Kennebec River. I thought he might find the book helpful.

In one of his columns he referred to me as "St. Michael the Dark Angel." He wrote many columns critical of my politics over my two decades in Maine politics. He strongly objected to my critique of sexual liberation. Our prayer walk together came near the end of my career as Executive Director of the Christian Civic League of Maine. It was a delight to be able to talk with him face-to-face.

Chesterton's work made it possible for me to enjoy a walk with my enemy. He didn't feel like an enemy that day. Bill, like everyone, is a mystery. If the soul of beasts are mysterious then a man's soul is infinitely so.

I learned in my walk with Bill that he'd raised five children alone. His life, like everyone's, wound it's way through highs and lows. His politics became ferociously Leftist as he aged. He told me his Faith remained Catholic.

Now I'm not saying Bill is a cow, but this irony in him illustrates Chesterton's point above. If I were to draw Bill's soul it would be "all purple and silver, and have seven horns." When we were thrown out of God's Garden we all became monsters of one sort or another.

The Chesterton essay from which the quote above is taken is about the vivid ... joyous transcendent world that lies behind and within everything, even a simple piece of white chalk, or a cow. We exist in a creation. Echoes of that original goodness are everywhere. It reverberates in the soul of every living thing God created. Mankind was cast out of the Garden of Eden. We were not cast out of God's creation.

Religion is an imperfect crusade clawing it's way back to that original beauty and harmony. We all know and feel it is there.

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Paul the Apostle put it this way at the end of his thoughts on love in his letter to the Christians living in Corinth, “For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.”

I will never surrender to the idea that baby killing and sodomy are moral goods. All we need is common sense to see that. Because his sense is uncommon Bill and I will remain enemies forever on that point. But this doesn't mean that God's image — which is goodness, truth and beauty itself — doesn't blaze like lightening through the cracks in Bill's blackened crust.

No soul that I meet is already lost to hell. God is the judge of men's souls. I'm not. Only God knows the heart of a man.

In war men must kill the enemy. This does not mean that the soldier on either side is practicing hate. The most powerful soldier on the battlefield is doing his duty to God and country. He loves virtue.

The soul of a nation is no less monstrously glorious than that of a cow. The Christian path forward on America's map will be drawn in white chalk. Our politics color the background.

Amen

This column will mean more to you if you take five minutes to read Chesterton's essay “A Piece of White Chalk.” It is online. <https://www.chesterton.org/a-piece-of-chalk/>