

Discussion Notes
from
September 14, 2008, Chapter 1: Everything Else
G. K. Chesterton's *Orthodoxy*

What is the main proposition of the chapter, "I. Introduction in Defence of Everything Else"?

The newest truth is the oldest.

We tend to resist what is handed down to us, and prefer to find it for ourselves. Children don't want to accept parents' experiences. "We're all two-year-olds."

As said by T. S. Eliot, our end is in our beginning.

If we examine the beauty of the world, how people converse, the accidents of politics, and love and poetry, it leads us to orthodoxy.

It is natural to us as humans, that we want to *reach* for something better, rather than to be completely comfortable.

"Everything else"—that is, without reasoning from authority—can be brought to bear in support of the Christian faith to which Chesterton eventually came.

How is the main proposition supported?

By Chesterton's examination of what he saw around him and by what he experienced, rather than by reliance upon authority, edict or proclamation.

Regarding the discussion quotations:

Which ones do you challenge, and why?

I question whether people really do want a mixture of what is strange and what is secure. It is easy to live in the comfort of old ways.

I question whether people really do want a life that is full of "poetical curiosity". Curiosity can drive others mad, but we all daydream.

An active and imaginative life: It is a common desire? One can't live an examined life if scrabbling for survival.

An active and imaginative life: I often tell my clients, "Your mind belongs to you, and you can use it any way you want to," but that surprises them. I question whether today's person desires an imaginative life.

Desire for comfort and astonishment: We need balance; I want to be astonished, but not every second, nor to be eternally comfortable.

With which ones do you agree, and why?

I had to find Christianity for myself, after living on my parents' experience.

I've just had an ah-ha moment. What is today called the "Emerging Church" represents a desire on the part of some to experience for themselves, but what they have found anew is what was old.

About the mixture of wonder and welcome, I think we are hard-wired to desire something better.

"Poetical curiosity": God's creative image is our creative capacity. The light is always on, but we can walk toward or away from it. I interpret "poetical curiosity" as being creative intent.

"Poetical curiosity": Don't confuse being informed with being enlightened.

An active and imaginative life: It is a common desire? The same imagination is used whether we are getting our daily bread or examining the function of the atom.

Difficult problems can be solved by flights of poetical curiosity.

Which ones surprise you?

All of Chesterton's humor.

Which ones are like/unlike statements that are commonly made in contemporary discourse?

Orthodoxy is comparable to the search for a valid foundation for political life. Compare the French Revolution with the American Revolution.

Just about all of the discussion statements are unlike contemporary discourse.

Chesterton reasoned from his experience and his observations of others. Was he right to do so?

Why or why not?

His approach is consistent with the "Wesleyan Quadrilateral", by which we deploy, to ascertain what is true, Scripture, Christian tradition, reason, and collective human experience, in that descending order.