

The New Criterion

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Week in review

by Mene Ukueberuwa



J. C. Bridgewood, St. John's Church, 1836.

Recent links of note:

“Moral Minority”

Patrick J. Deneen, *First Things*

In a feature for the current issue of *First Things*, the political scientist Patrick J. Deneen uses two landmark court cases to bookend the decades-long shift of fortunes for conservative Christians. “Unlike *Roe*, which was decided while public opinion was divided . . . *Obergefell* was decided with the backdrop of consistently growing popular support for marriage between homosexuals, with particular enthusiasm among a younger generation that will inherit the nation.” Having thus set the scene, Deneen goes on to review three recent books by Christian traditionalists, each of which suggests a different approach to sustaining life in the shadow of an antagonistic mainstream culture. The trio of treatises—from Rod Dreher, Anthony Esolen, and the Catholic Archbishop Charles Chaput—balance their grim descriptions of how the traditional culture has diminished with some frank but hopeful thinking about what a long rebuilding project might look like.

“The Exhaustion of American Liberalism”

Shelby Steele, *The Wall Street Journal*

Lest conservatives imagine that theirs is the only movement in a state of disarray, Shelby Steele of the Hoover Institution has authored an essay that describes the collapse of political progressivism in the nascent Trump era. Unlike the challenges that have stymied conservative values, such as hostility from academia and the media, the problem that Steele believes is plaguing progressivism is largely self-inflicted: shallow, identity-based moralism that alienates “Everyday Americans.”. Reading Steele’s assessment, one wonders whether the shrinking relevance of organized progressivism might leave just enough room for the resurgence that cultural conservatives have only dreamed of so far.

From our pages:

“From St. Petersburg (not Florida) with love”

Jay Nordlinger

On the St. Petersburg Philharmonic at Carnegie Hall.

Mene Ukueberuwa was the Hilton Kramer Fellow in Criticism at *The New Criterion*.