



# The DEFENDANT

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'I have found that humanity is not incidentally engaged, but eternally and systematically engaged, in throwing gold into the gutter and diamonds into the sea. . . . ; therefore I have imagined that the main business of man, however humble, is defence. I have conceived that a defendant is chiefly required when worldlings despise the world – that a counsel for the defence would not have been out of place in the terrible day when the sun was darkened over Calvary and Man was rejected of men.'

G.K. Chesterton, 'Introduction', *The Defendant* (1901)

## A Global Chesterton

by Karl Schmude

One of the fascinating features of the revival of interest in Chesterton is its international scope.

The extent of his appeal is truly worldwide – European (embracing such countries as France, Spain, Italy and Poland), North and South America, Asia, Africa, and of course Australia.

It is of striking importance that Chesterton should exert such a global appeal. In keeping with his great size, he has become, in the 21st century, an author of global dimensions!

There is the paradox, suitably Chestertonian, that a writer so deeply, so quintessentially English should reach out and speak

powerfully to such varied peoples on virtually every continent. Chesterton's wisdom is of such universal value that his writings wear the clothes of every culture.

One of the most remarkable signs of this phenomenon is the deep interest that was shown by the Argentinian writer, Jorge Luis Borges (1899-1986). Borges admired Chesterton greatly. He translated some of his works into Spanish, and he wrote an illuminating essay on Chesterton which appeared in a collection of essays entitled *Other Inquisitions: 1937-1952*.

Despite their many differences of experience and outlook, Chesterton and Borges shared certain interests, including a fondness for detective stories and a profound and penetrating awareness of mystery and allegory.

Borges was impressed by Chesterton's grasp of allegory as a literary form. While allegory is a vehicle for dramatising moral truth,



A small town called Ponchatoula, in the American state of Louisiana, boasts the only life-size statue of Chesterton in the world. It stands prominently in front of an events hall called **Chesterton Square**, and is the brainchild of a local doctor, Robert Benson, who was inspired to honour Chesterton as a result of reading his writings on marriage and family in the anthology, *Brave New Family* (Ignatius Press, 1990).

Louisiana also has an active Chesterton society in the capital, Baton Rouge, testifying to the remarkable extent of Chesterton's popularity in different parts of the United States. It is shown nationally - and internationally - by the American Chesterton Society, whose President is Dale Ahlquist, and its journal, *Gilbert*, and by the G.K. Chesterton Centre for Faith & Culture at Seton Hall University, and its journal, *The Chesterton Review*, edited by Fr Ian Boyd CSB.

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which has appealed to the imaginations of many great writers, Chesterton helped Borges to understand why – that a genre which presents deeper meanings at work below the surface of things is really a way of affirming the objectivity of reality; that words are not empty signs or labels, random and unreliable, but they represent the real. They speak of truths that exist, even if we do not recognise them.

Borges showed a special appreciation of *The Paradoxes of Mr. Pond*, the final collection of Chesterton's detective stories, which Borges translated into Spanish. His favourite story was 'The Three Horsemen of the Apocalypse', which impressed Borges especially by the way in which Chesterton depicted 'a fascinating struggle of the wills'.

'I think of Chesterton first as a poet,' Borges remarked. 'But he was a poet all the time. Especially when he wrote detective stories... [A] mystery that so imaginatively suggests an impossible, fantastic occurrence is interesting for more than

the logical explanation contained in the last few lines.'

Perhaps it took an author from a very different country and culture to recognize certain depths in the mind and heart of Chesterton that have been overlooked or under-emphasised by the English-speaking world.

Borges helped to deepen our understanding of a crucial side of Chesterton - that, in addition to the jovial man who was playful and amiable and who understood that humour was an indispensable part of life, there was another Chesterton: a man of spiritual anguish and alarm, who had a profound insight into reality, even at its harshest.

As this issue of *The Defendant* newsletter reveals, Chesterton has registered a remarkable impact across the globe. It would seem likely, as occurred through the Argentinian Borges, that new facets of his thought will thereby be revealed – and new understandings provided of the seemingly inexhaustible richness of his insights. ■

## Next Chesterton Conference - October 29

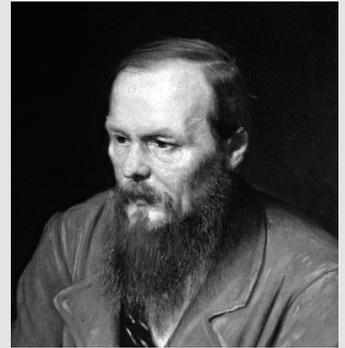
The next conference of the Australian Chesterton Society, '**A World of Wonder: Chesterton and the Literary Imagination**', will focus on him as a literary artist, including his creation of Father Brown as a 'detective who philosophised' and comparisons of him with such authors as Dostoevsky and Flannery O'Connor.

Symeon Thompson will be speaking on 'God Is Dead: Dostoevsky, Chesterton and Modernity':

**'God is dead!' is the cry of Friedrich Nietzsche, a cry of both rejoicing and lamentation - rejoicing for we are free of a supposed tyrant who is Himself an illusion, but lamentation that we have nothing to put in its place. Nietzsche sees this as the inevitable end of secularism and rationalism, a purification of mankind.**

**For G. K. Chesterton and Fyodor Dostoevsky, God was most definitely not dead, but His supposed death creates a vacuum that is filled by inhuman modern philosophies. In their philosophical thrillers the two writers wrestle with this conflict, by showing dramatically what this means and challenging it.**

Campion College in Old Toongabbie, Sydney, will once again host the conference, on Saturday, October 29, 2016, from 8.45am to 5.30pm. The cost is \$65 (including lunch and teas); \$25 student concession.



### Executive of the Australian Chesterton Society

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### Society Membership

The annual membership fee of the Australian Chesterton Society is \$25.00. Subscriptions may be sent to the Secretary/Treasurer, Mr Ray Finnegan, at the address opposite, or by electronic transfer –

**BSB:** 062-908 (CBA Woden ACT)

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# Chesterton in Oxford

by Aidan Mackey

*For some years, a Chesterton library was developed in the city of Oxford, as the result of a strong partnership of Aidan Mackey with Stratford Caldecott. Stratford's signal contribution to an appreciation of Chesterton's writings was celebrated in the Winter 2014 issue of The Defendant.*

*Aidan Mackey (pictured) has a unique place in modern Chesterton studies. He has a direct link with Chesterton's own generation and many of the key figures who supported Chesterton's writing and work during his lifetime.*

*This article, written specially for The Defendant by Aidan Mackey, provides a first-hand insight into the Chesterton library which he has been instrumental in building up over many decades.*

The G.K. Chesterton Library is now established permanently, we hope, in the centre of Oxford, and this achievement is one of the many things we owe to the efforts of the late, great Stratford Caldecott.

The archive has been gathered from several sources, so I correct those who refer to it as being mine.

An elder brother had introduced me to G.K.C's writing just before my 14th birthday in 1936, and I have been reading him and propagating his work since that far-off time and met many other enthusiasts and several people who had met and worked with him. I was fortunate in becoming friends with two who were of his family circle; Dorothy Collins, who came in the 1920's as G.K.'s secretary, but quickly became as the daughter Gilbert and Frances had longed for but were unable to have despite Frances undergoing an operation in the hope of making a family possible, and his eccentric sister-in-law, Mrs Cecil Chesterton. I am fairly confident that I am now the only survivor to have properly known those two people.

In the 1970's, after our seven daughters had left for careers and higher education, I turned the ground floor of our family home in Bedford into The G.K. Chesterton Study Centre.

I had received a couple of enquiries about Chesterton's work from The British Library (B.L.) and had been able to help. Then, to my high astonishment, I was telephoned by Dr Richard Christopher, Curator of their G.K.C. holdings, and told that they had decided that some of their realia would be better in my hands, and it would be handed over on permanent loan if I would collect it.

I was told that there would be half-a-dozen fairly large boxes, so I went, in a spacious car, on March 3rd 1998 and was shown, stacked on the external loading bay, eight big boxes with a simply scrawled note that they were for me.

The great richness included pairs of Chesterton's little pince-nez, a couple of his walking-sticks, things found in his pockets and on his bedside table after his death, his rosary, his fob watch, and his cased Papal medal from Pius XII.

My own holdings had, despite my very limited means and a large family to support, grown over the decade.

The Chesterton Library, containing books from his own collection, many of them carrying his drawings and doodles not only in margins but across the text, original work, and many artefacts, is now housed in the splendidly built new wing at The Oratory in the heart of Oxford.

Recently we were visited by Colin Dexter, author of the fine detective novels featuring Inspector Morse. Colin Dexter admired Chesterton's work, telling me that he considered 'The Donkey' to be one of the greatest ever poems, and he had contributed an important and very perceptive introduction to the Folio Society edition of the Father Brown stories.

The rewarding and valuable work of the Chesterton Library in Oxford is being carried on by the Oratorians and trustees of the library. As yet, however, sufficient funds have not been forthcoming for the erection of permanent fine shelving and other requirements, such as the appointment of a full-time Curator. Support for this needed completion is called for. ■

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***The Australian Chesterton Society will pass on to the Chesterton Library in Oxford any financial donations which members might wish to make. Contributions can be sent by electronic transfer to our bank account (details on page 2 under 'Society Membership'), or by cheque to the Secretary/Treasurer, Mr Ray Finnegan (address details also on page 2).***

# The Italian Connection

This report on a Chesterton school in Italy draws on an article by Jennifer Janikula, which appeared in *The Catholic Spirit* (September 9, 2014), the weekly newspaper of the Catholic Archdiocese of St Paul and Minneapolis in Minnesota.



Marco Sermarini

For more than 20 years, the Presidents of the American and the Italian Chesterton Societies, Dale Ahlquist and Marco Sermarini, pursued their personal vision of a Chesterton-inspired educational initiative.

They had no knowledge of each other's existence and no consciously shared approach to the creation of distinctive schools; but they did have in common a desire to establish classical schools named in honour of Chesterton.

'We are like twins separated at birth,' Dale Ahlquist has said. As President of the American Chesterton Society, he is not only a co-founder of the Chesterton Academy in Edina, Minnesota, but has played a significant part in helping to found a Chesterton school in the town of San Benedetto del Tronto on Italy's Adriatic coast two hundred kilometres north-east of Rome.

In 2014, a delegation from the Italian school visited Minnesota, visiting various cultural sites in the region and even playing a soccer match between the Americans and the Italians.

John Niemann, the headmaster of the Chesterton Academy in Minnesota, acknowledges the global solidarity that is reflected in the relationship with the Chesterton school in Italy.

'We know we're not alone,' he says. 'Our students are very conscious of the fact that their education is different – we take a different approach.'

'It's very interesting that this can bubble up on its own in another place. It gives a global perspective to what we are doing, with the same vision and the same goals.'



From left: Dale Ahlquist, Bishop Peter Doyle, and Marco Sermarini. The Most Rev Peter Doyle is Bishop of the English Diocese of Northampton. In 2013 he appointed Fr John Udris, who had served in Chesterton's old parish of Beaconsfield, to begin the investigation of Chesterton's cause for canonisation.

A key figure in the Chesterton link between America and Italy is an American priest, Fr Spencer Howe, who arranged a meeting between Dale Ahlquist and Marco Sermarini in March 2013 in St Peter's Square in Rome, just days before Pope Francis' election.

At that meeting, Ahlquist and Sermarini stood face to face and felt like they were looking in a mirror - their identical paths and shared vision of life, faith and education reflected back. ■

## The Wisdom of Chesterton

'In truth there are only two kinds of people; those who accept dogmas and know it, and those who accept dogmas and don't know it. My only advantage over the gifted novelist [Arnold Bennett] lies in my belonging to the former class.'  
(*Fancies versus Fads*, 1923)



'Truths turn into dogmas the instant that they are disputed. Thus every man who utters a doubt defines a religion. And the scepticism of our time does not really destroy the beliefs, rather it creates them; gives them their limits and their plain and defiant shape.' (*Heretics*, 1905)

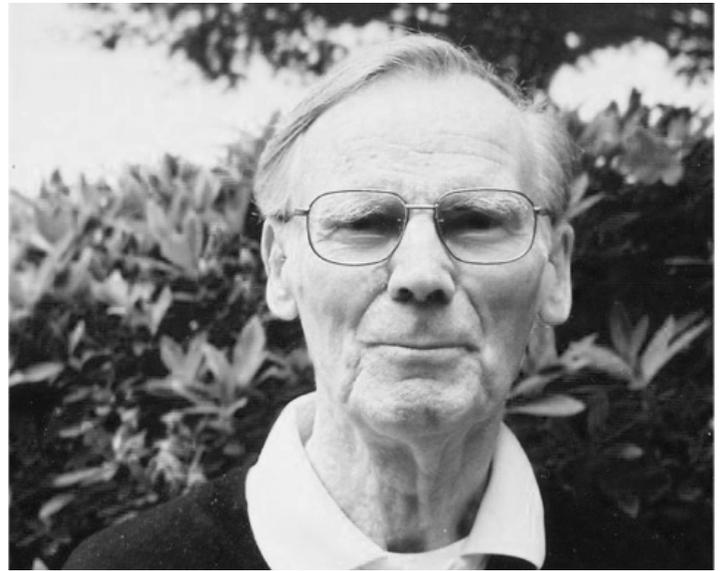
'In the things of conviction there is only one other thing besides a dogma, and that is a prejudice.' (*The Common Man*, 1950)

# Chesterton Society in Japan

by Peter Milward SJ

A noted English literary scholar, Peter Milward SJ (pictured), played a vital part in establishing a serious interest in Chesterton among Japanese scholars and students. Fr Milward taught at the Jesuit university in Tokyo, Sophia University, from the 1960s, and is an emeritus professor of English Literature at that university.

In this special article for *The Defendant*, Fr Milward recounts the birth – and, at least at this point, the demise – of the Chesterton Society in Japan.



It all began with the fourth centenary of Shakespeare's birth in 1964.

I had been deputed to arrange the celebrations for the event at Sophia University in Tokyo. By the time the celebrations were over, I was worn out, and discovered that I had TB.

While in hospital I was confined to light reading, at first P.G. Wodehouse's *Summer Lightning* and then G.K. Chesterton's Father Brown stories. They put me in such a good humor that friends of mine, coming to visit me in the heat of summer, were astonished to see me looking so well.

That was the beginning of the G.K. Chesterton Society in Japan. But I wasn't the only teacher at Sophia University interested in Chesterton. I had only to broach the subject to them on my return from hospital, and they willingly consented to cooperate with me. On my return to Japan in 1966, following a sabbatical year back in Britain for further studies on Shakespeare, I was able to initiate the proceedings of the Chesterton Society.

Our plan was not so much to engage in meetings from time to time for discussion on the writings of Chesterton, as to write ourselves on various aspects of his writings.

Our first work of collaboration was published in 1970. Needless to say, it was in Japanese under the title (in English), "The World of G.K. Chesterton". My own contribution took the form of introductions I had previously published to selections from Chesterton's *Essays on Shakespeare* (1968) and his *Orthodoxy* (1969).

Once this work of collaboration was brought out by the prestigious publisher for books on English literature, Kenkyusha, at the publication party I was introduced to another well-known publisher, Shunjusha. He made the proposal for the members of the G.K. Chesterton Society to bring out a series of translations of Chesterton's more thoughtful writings.

The Father Brown stories had long since been translated by various translators, including a good friend of mine who was also a well-known translator of Shakespeare, Tsuneari Fukuda.

So it only remained for us to translate *The Napoleon of Notting Hill*, with *Orthodoxy*, *The Everlasting Man*, *Heretics*, *Tremendous Trifles with Essays on Shakespeare*, *The Autobiography*, *St Francis of Assisi with St Thomas Aquinas*, *The Resurrection of Rome*, *The Victorian Age in Literature*, and *An Outline of Sanity*.

These titles amounted to ten volumes, which came out successively in the 1970s. Altogether individually they sold no fewer than 40,000 volumes, with the star performance going to Professor Anzai's translation (under the name of Mr Fukuda) of *Orthodoxy*.

That encouraged Shunjusha to go ahead with another five volumes of Chesterton's literary biographies, including *Chaucer*, *Dickens*, *Blake and Browning*, *Shaw*, and *Stevenson*, which came out from 1991 to 1998. But the reading public had evidently moved away from an interest in Chesterton, and these additional volumes failed to achieve best-selling status.

Anyhow, by that time (1995) I had come to the end of my tether (tenure) at Sophia University, having reached the venerable age of seventy – as had also several members of our Chesterton Society. So we naturally dissolved, without any more of the formality with which we had begun.

## Spokes in a wheel of Chestertoniana

I might add that during that whole period I had established relations with various Chestertonians in England and America – Dorothy Collins at Top Meadow, John Sullivan in London, Stratford Caldecott at his Chesterton Centre for Faith and Culture at Oxford, Fr Ian Boyd at the offices of *The Chesterton Review* in Seton Hall University, and Dale Ahlquist of the Chesterton Society of America in Minneapolis.

These might be regarded as so many spokes in a wheel of Chestertoniana reaching out from what I had seen (on my arrival in Japan in 1954) as an intellectual backwater to the ends of the earth.

And of course, Chesterton wasn't alone in this respect, as my literary interests extended from Shakespeare to Hopkins,

from St Thomas More to Cardinal Newman, as I came to find that in Japan nothing was easier than to found societies in honor of such celebrities, centring on what I named "The Renaissance Institute" at Sophia University.

Now at the age of ninety, I am in a state of convalescence, and the Chesterton Society is no more. As John Donne puts it, "All things to their destruction draw." ■

## A Chesterton Centre in Africa

*One of the more unexpected places influenced by Chesterton's thought is the west African country of Sierra Leone. Apart from its historical importance in serving as a departure point for the transatlantic slave trade, Sierra Leone more recently suffered from a long and terrible civil war that ended in 2002 but only after killing or maiming tens of thousands of its people and devastating its economy.*

*An article published in the online Chesterton journal, The Distributist Review (April 2016), reported on the initiative of a young African man, John Kanu, who was inspired by Chesterton's social philosophy to establish the **Sierra Leone Chesterton Centre**.*

*The article was written in Italian by Rodolfo Casadei and translated into English by Laura Ahlquist. This summarised version appears in The Defendant with the kind permission of the Editor of The Distributist Review, Richard Aleman.*



John Kanu

In the aftermath of the civil war in Sierra Leone, John Kanu managed to gain entry to Oxford University where he received a Master's degree in Applied Social Science.

Whilst at Oxford he met Stratford Caldecott, who introduced Kanu to Chesterton's thought. It was this discovery that persuaded Kanu to return to his own country – despite a job offer in the UK. As he said:

'I wanted to apply [Chesterton's] ideas about man and economics to my country. Three themes struck me in particular: the need for, as much as possible, the wider distribution of property among all members of society; the importance of the local economy and the artisans who live by the work of their hands; and the vision of the family as the main unit of society and consequently the base of a more extended multi-generational family.

'I told myself, "This is the best of the traditional African culture, reflected in the economic philosophy of a Catholic writer born at the end of the 19th century. And we are about to lose him."

I started to think that, when I returned to my homeland, I would found a Chesterton Society in Sierra Leone.'



This he achieved in 2006.

The Centre is an independent community organisation that puts emphasis on long-term development and changing popular attitudes through the teaching of improved agricultural techniques and the organisation of cooperatives among farmers.

It aims to build up local capability, and is planning the construction of two professional schools in the village from which, John Kanu explains, 'will come carpenters, masons, mechanics, and other technicians, who pledge not to migrate to the city, but to render their service in the rural community from which they came.'

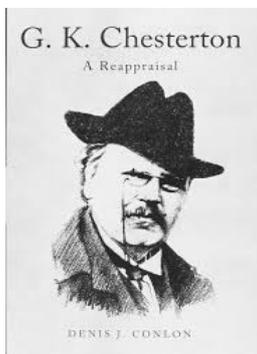
Kanu recently visited Italy, at the invitation of the Italian Chesterton Society, to seek financial support, particularly for tools and machinery to equip the proposed schools. He spoke primarily about the philosophy of development that enlivens and guides the Sierra Leone Chesterton Centre, and the distinctively family approach it takes to their various programs.

'The role of the family is central,' Kanu, a father of four, explains. 'In Africa, we don't have welfare systems like in Europe: the family is our welfare system; it is our credit card, our bank, our safe.'

'If anyone needs a loan, one does not go to the bank, where one will be exploited; one goes to his family circle. The family is where he feels at home, it is the key to his moral education — it is the bridge from folly to stability.'

'When I was a child, I begged my father to send me to school. 20 members of my extended family got together and, after a long consultation, they decided to sign me up at a school in a local neighbourhood. In Sierra Leone, 70% of the population is Muslim. We Catholics are only 15% and the others are Protestants.'

'But we all share the same connection; the family is the primary fount of life.' ■



# A New Biography of Chesterton

by Garry Nieuwkamp

A new biography of Chesterton is always an important event. **Garry Nieuwkamp**, who previously reviewed biographies of Chesterton in *The Defendant* (Spring 2014), evaluates a new study by Denis Conlon, a well-known Chesterton scholar.

Garry Nieuwkamp is a doctor on the NSW Central Coast, and a long-time member of the Australian Chesterton Society.

The first question that anyone with an interest in Chesterton might legitimately ask, after a veritable library of recent biographies have become available is, do we need another?

What more could we possibly learn about Chesterton's life that hasn't already been included in previous biographies. There are so many books we could read and so little time. Why peruse this one?

Well, Denis Conlon provides us with a reason. It is a reappraisal of Chesterton, and as such, aims at answering particular questions.

With Conlon, we are in good hands. He is Emeritus Professor of English Literature and Culture at the University of Antwerp in Belgium. He is a Chestertonian through and through, and, according to the book's blurb, has served as chairman of the Chesterton Society from 1996 until 2008. He has written extensively on Chesterton and, with this latest volume, he has added to that large body of work.

A good biography tells us the truth about its hero (as Chesterton might want to say), so what exactly is the truth at which Conlon is aiming?

The book consists of three parts. Part One is a conventional biography that begins under the water tower at Campden Hill and ends with Chesterton's death. The closing paragraphs examine the cause of Chesterton's canonization.

Part Two is titled 'The Man of Letters'. It examines Chesterton's writings in six fields - as novelist, playwright, storyteller, poet, essayist and critic.

## Chesterton – Anti-Semitic or Pro-Semitic

Part Three is where the work as a corrective takes place. In the preface, Conlon makes clear that his aim is to go back to original sources to strip away 'misleading accretions' about Chesterton. He particularly wants to correct the perception that Chesterton was anti-Semitic. This is the most interesting part of the book.

Chesterton himself claims not to be an anti-Semite. 'From my first days at school I very largely had the name of a Pro-Semite' (p.350). The problem for the modern reader is Chesterton's

use of language. It leaves the reader suspicious. In defending himself against the claims of anti-Semitism, Chesterton provides an example from his childhood whereby he protected a Jew. He writes: 'I remember once extricating a strange swarthy little creature with a hooked nose from being bullied.' No doubt the language is flamboyant and slightly theatrical, but to the modern reader schooled in the use of inclusive language, reference to 'hooked noses' is anathema and hints at racism.

Chesterton claims to have ended as he began: a pro-Semite, but the reader remains suspicious. In Part Three, Conlon sets the case before the reader and suggests that it is only by examining all of Chesterton's 'opinions, writing and social contacts' that we can come to a valid conclusion about Chesterton's perceived anti-Semitism. For this alone, the book is worth reading.

With every new biography, a detail here, a detail there, is added to our understanding of Chesterton.

I particularly enjoyed reading about the junior debating club that Chesterton and his mates established in the 1890s. Lifelong friendships were established in this club and the reader gets the impression that learning and fun were combined in equal measures.

The more I read about the junior debating club, the more I wanted to sit like a fly on the wall and see how this early version of 'Good Will Hunting' might appear. I wanted to take part in the cut and thrust of debating. I wanted to present a paper on some obscure topic and have Chesterton critique it. I could almost hear the laughter; the gaiety, the backslapping, the beer guzzling, and I wanted my book club to be like that.

The entire middle section of the book is a potted summary of Chesterton's life work. It is worth reading if only to get one's bearings. It also reminds us of the frenetic pace of his writing. He seems never to be without a deadline.

Conlon's book is certainly worth reading. It is clear that author and subject share much in common. ■

**Denis J. Conlon, G.K Chesterton: A Reappraisal (London; Methuen, 2015)**

# Chesterton in Debate - the Continuing Contest for Truth

by Karl Schmude

The Edwardian era leading up to the First World War was a time of extraordinary intellectual vitality in which a culture of lively debate, in print and in public, generated a huge popular following.

Chesterton was one of the most prominent debaters of this period. He established, as Garry Nieuwkamp highlights in his review (page 7), a junior debating club while at school, which dealt with literary and political subjects and prepared him for his later role as a journalist and public commentator immersed in the controversies of his time.

Two features stand out in Chesterton's approach to debating.

One was his recognition of the importance of such contests, as a way of clarifying and promoting truth. He did not shy away from intellectual battles nor wish to exclude debate or silence dissent, for it tends to avoid rather than answer the challenges to truth and fail to take up the opportunities for deepened understanding and the development of better arguments.

Thus Chesterton's *Heretics* (1905), a study of various popular writers of the time (such as Rudyard Kipling and H.G. Wells), revealed his way of clarifying intellectual truth.

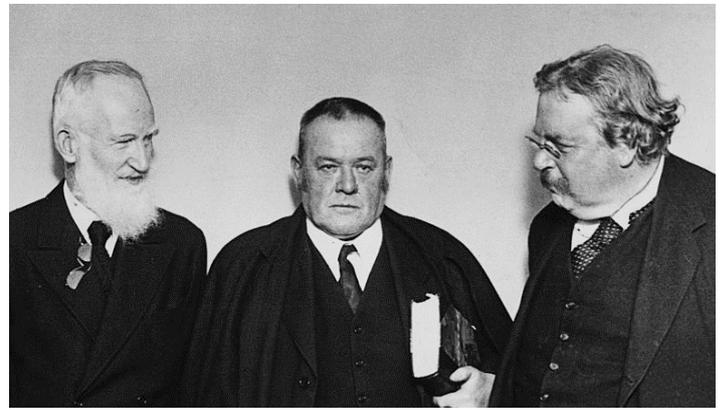
Chesterton engaged with philosophies he disputed, and thereby came to understand more fully those he termed 'heretics'; whose philosophy, he said, 'is quite solid, quite coherent, and quite wrong.'

A second feature of Chesterton's debating was his abiding courtesy for those with whom he disagreed.

He showed a great capacity to engage in contention without being contentious; to distinguish an argument from a quarrel, and to avoid personal rancour. As a character in one of his plays put it:

'I object to a quarrel because it always interrupts an argument.'  
(*Magic*, 1913)

A striking demonstration of Chesterton's respect - and finally love - for his opponents was his debates with George Bernard Shaw. The most famous took place in 1927 and was called 'Do We Agree?'. It addressed their differences of social and economic philosophy. The record of the debate (available at <http://www.cse.dmu.ac.uk/~mward/gkc/books/debate.txt>) reveals the power of Chesterton's salient qualities.



From left: Shaw, Belloc and Chesterton.

Firstly was his keen ability, under the pressure of contested argument, to capture the essence of an intellectual position and spell out philosophical distinctions - as when he noted the critical difference between his Distributism of widespread ownership and Shaw's Socialism of concentrated State ownership:

'Mr Bernard Shaw proposes to distribute wealth. We propose to distribute power.'

The second quality was his unfailing civility throughout the debate, which did not prevent his putting forward strong arguments.

A key quality, no doubt, was his sense of wit and humour. This was displayed in his comment on Shaw's argument - delivered in jest at a critical point in the debate - that he did not hit Chesterton with the umbrella he had with him because it was actually his wife's. Chesterton responded:

'When Mr Shaw refrains from hitting me over the head with his umbrella, the real reason - apart from his real kindness of heart, which makes him tolerant of the humblest of the creatures of God - is not because he does not own his umbrella, but because he does not own my head.'

The conditions of our time, nearly 80 years after this Chesterton-Shaw debate, would make such exchanges formidably difficult. A 'sound-bite' culture, full of intense and anxious haste, is not so conducive to good-humoured debate.

Yet Chesterton remains an impressive model of how such contests for truth should be conducted.

As he remarked in the Dedication he wrote to his friend, the journalist and politician, Charles Masterman, at the beginning of an underrated work of Christian sociology, *What's Wrong with The World*, which Chesterton published in 1910:

'... You will recognise the many arguments we have had; ... 'I offer [this book] to you because there exists not only comradeship, but a very different thing, called friendship; an agreement under all the arguments and a thread which, please God, will never break.' ■