



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)

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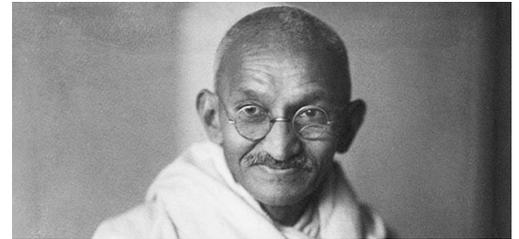
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The Unexpected Chestertonians

by Karl Schmude

Chesterton had a singular gift for inspiring and not simply influencing his readers. Most, one would assume, were people who instinctively shared his perspectives and values, but there were also those who would have to be regarded as surprisingly affected by his writings.

Two such figures were Mahatma Gandhi and Michael Collins. Both played a crucial part in the independence movements of their respective countries, India and Ireland, and both acknowledged the inspirational impact of Chesterton at decisive moments in their lives.



Mahatma Gandhi



Michael Collins

Gandhi was deeply impressed by an article on Indian nationalism that Chesterton wrote for the *Illustrated London News* in 1909.

Come to Campion - for the 2016 Conference

The next conference of the Australian Chesterton Society will take place at Campion College on **Saturday, October 29**, and a flyer is inserted with this issue of *The Defendant*.

One of the papers will focus on Chesterton and **Flannery O'Connor** (1925-1964), the American Catholic writer of novels and short stories. A long-time student of both authors, **Gary Furnell**, will compare them, exploring several themes, including their different depictions of the spiritual significance of violence – as he outlines in this summary.



Flannery O'Connor

Violence was not incidental to O'Connor but central to her purpose of getting humanity's attention to the great issues of life and death. But for Chesterton, violence was more incidental and the action of grace was largely cerebral, as in many of the Father Brown stories where a dead body is discovered and the story then revolves around Father Brown's observations and thought-processes. It's a more rationally-based elucidation of some aspect of grace rather than a traumatic and intuitive stab of grace.

In O'Connor's fiction, violent *bodily* trauma alerts the person's dull spirit to its own lostness. In Chesterton's fiction, a crisis of *conscience or reason* alerts the person to the need of grace or truth.

'The principal weakness of Indian Nationalism,' argued Chesterton, 'seems to be that it is not very Indian and not very national.' In his judgment, the movement was too much of a reaction against British imperialism, leading to an adoption of British models, and not sufficiently imbued with the ideals and traditions of Indian culture.

There is, Chesterton wrote, 'a national distinction between a people asking for its own ancient life and a people asking for things that have been wholly invented by somebody else.'

Gandhi was reportedly thunderstruck by the article. He translated it into his native Gujarati language and, as recounted by P.N. Furbank in *G.K. Chesterton: A Centenary Appraisal* (1974), was spurred to write the book *Hind Swaraj* [Indian Home Rule], in which he first outlined a specifically 'Indian' solution to the problems facing his country.

As Furbank suggested:

'Thus you might argue, not quite absurdly, that India owed its independence, or at least the manner in which it came, to an article thrown off by Chesterton in half-an-hour in a Fleet Street pub.'

Chesterton and Irish Independence

Michael Collins was similarly inspired by Chesterton. He read the novels, *The Napoleon of Notting Hill* and *The Man Who Was Thursday*, and his youthful imagination was captivated by Chesterton's vision of local loyalties, which activated Collins' sense of Irish national identity.

At the 1921 peace talks between Ireland and Britain, Collins told a British official that he had learned much from *The Man Who Was Thursday*; and, hearing of this, the Prime Minister Lloyd George gave copies of Chesterton's book to his Cabinet colleagues to provide insight into the mind of the Irish nationalist leader.

Collins was especially struck by an utterance of the anarchist in *Thursday* – that 'if you didn't seem to be hiding nobody hunted you out.' The idea of concealing oneself by not concealing oneself led Collins to move openly around Dublin while engaging in covert struggle against British authorities.

On the centenary of *Thursday* in 2008, the American journalist Allen Barra noted in the *Wall Street Journal* that the novel was largely ignored when it first appeared, but that, in time, it attracted an enormous cult following.

It appealed to people whom one might have expected were not natural admirers of Chesterton. One was George Orwell who, while notably anti-Catholic, praised *The Napoleon of Notting Hill*, a work that Chesterton wrote in 1904 but which was set in the year 1984.

A second was Franz Kafka, the German-Czech novelist of alienation and existential gloom, who famously said that Chesterton was 'so happy that one might almost believe he had found God.'

(<http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB123032986340736063>)

How remarkable that any writer could claim a fan club that includes an Indian pacifist of Hindu background, an Irish Catholic revolutionary, an English writer of agnostic leanings, and a German-Czech novelist of Jewish tradition – as well as many others, including even Christian apologists such as C.S. Lewis! ■

For the information on Gandhi, I am indebted to an informative blog of the American Chesterton Society in 2009, contributed by Nancy C. Brown.

(<http://americanchestertonsociety.blogspot.com.au/2009/01/gandhi-reference.html>).

The blog contains many additional details of interest on the Chesterton-Gandhi connection.

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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 –

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Documenting Chesterton's Writings: An Interview With His Bibliographer

Assembling a Chesterton bibliography is a formidable task. **Geir Hasnes**, a Norwegian research scientist and freelance writer, has been undertaking such a work for many years, and is now close to having it published.

In a special interview with *The Defendant*, Geir Hasnes discussed his long-standing interest in Chesterton and the bibliography he has been preparing, pointing out that it is not simply a listing of his writings, but also a documentation of his life and a testimony to his growing popularity throughout the world.

Defendant: *Could you tell us how you came to discover G.K. Chesterton? What writings of his did you first encounter?*

GH: In my first year at university in the city of Trondheim in Norway, I met with a friend who shared my passions for literature and music. It was he who came upon Chesterton's name everywhere, mentioned in passing in so many different topics; and one summer, after he had read C. S. Lewis' praise for GKC, he came up to Trondheim for a new term after having looked for Chesterton books in every secondhand store in Oslo and not found any.

'Have you tried the library', I asked immediately, not being aware of the multitude of other ways of finding books, and off we went to the public library and found half a shelf.

Of course, my friend's enthusiasm made me try GKC, but I wasn't immediately hooked by *Father Brown*, finding the stories a bit grotesque. But then I read *Orthodoxy* in a good Norwegian translation and was mesmerized.

I also loved the essay collections from the start - and better than the fiction, actually, which was a bit hard to read for my rudimentary English knowledge. *The Everlasting Man* was also available in Norwegian, in a translation by Sigrid Undset, the Nobel Prize winner, and it was just as great.

So when I had graduated and had some money to spare, I went to England and into antiquarian and secondhand booksellers and spent way too much money on cheap Chesterton books. Visiting Top Meadow in Beaconsfield, I got Aidan Mackey's address, and since then my pursuit of Chesterton's works has continued.

Defendant: *Does Chesterton have a noticeable following in Norway - and in Scandinavia generally? Are many works of Chesterton's available in Norwegian?*

GH: I don't think there was any following in his time, but many prominent persons certainly knew of him and read him in English. Norway is a very protestant country and there is little room for Chesterton's joyful and even jolly Christianity, but Chesterton was Sigrid Undset's favourite author and a

favourite with many literary persons. He was much more popular in Denmark and Sweden.

Orthodoxy and *The Everlasting Man* have been republished recently and some Father Brown collections exist, but those who read Chesterton do it mostly in English.

Back in the university days and after, we told our friends about Chesterton and many of them became eager fans, and when the *Collected Works* started to appear, we were among quite a number who subscribed to it. So we used to meet and talk to each other about the books we read, in a way like the Inklings who inspired us did.

"The universe opens up for one who reads Chesterton"

Defendant: *What do you think are the reasons for the widespread interest in Chesterton in our time?*

GH: It is hard to sum up Chesterton. He was in many ways unique, like Bach was unique. He was a deep thinker who was also humble and grateful, and he had a tremendous way of expressing himself, so that whatever truism it was, it became a shining truth.

He made Christians feel joyful about being Christians and he made complicated theological points so easy to understand and accept. He brings a joy and independence of the world into the Christian world today which so many so-called Christian clergy and preachers have lost. He makes Christianity attractive, and history, philosophy, theology and literature with it. The universe opens up for one who reads Chesterton.

Defendant: *What was it that inspired you to undertake a Chesterton bibliography?*

GH: It was Chesterton who inspired me. I wanted to get an overview over his writings, and John Sullivan's three

bibliographical volumes (published in 1958-1980) needed to be put together and corrected and added to. So I just begun to do it for myself in my spare time. Then with the arrival of more books and the internet and the Chesterton societies, the scope just widened.

I shudder to think of all the time I have used and the money I have spent. When I thought I had drawn the line, so much more became available. I certainly didn't think there was so much, and then more and more articles have become available as scans on the internet.

Every year the scope has widened, but now I am converging. For instance, I gave up on collecting information on the translation, and then Dale Ahlquist told me I had to. So I spent some months on it and came up with 1250 titles in 2000 editions in 38 languages, nearly 80 more pages to the book. I expanded it to list published photos and caricatures of GKC. I list printed music, give a filmography, have one chapter with objects like busts and paintings and houses he lived in and worked in, a chapter of all kinds of ephemera; and I've gone so far as to list books that have been announced and never published, and then parodies and impersonations too – there are many more of these than one could believe.

Defendant: *Will the bibliography be published in print as well as online?*

GH: It will only be published as a printed book. I value the printed books and they will last much longer than the flighty internet.

It will be approximately 960 pages – on thin paper so that it will be possible to handle. Remember that a bibliography is a tool, so this work will be easy to use for the thousands of

antiquarian booksellers that need it, and something to work with for hundreds and maybe thousands of people who need to research aspects of Chesterton.

Collectors are not that many, and I doubt the common Chesterton fan will care about it. It will be great for curing insomnia, though!

Defendant: *I understand that the bibliography will have a 32-page colour supplement. What will it comprise?*

GH: In order to make the book a bit more attractive, I thought that I should include photographs of the books in dust-jackets, pamphlets, periodicals etc. It will make it so much easier to get a grasp of the Chesterton treasures, to what it was to live in a world where the printed items were valued much more than today. And the book is not only a bibliography, but also a documentation of his life and his tremendous popularity, which is only growing and growing.

Defendant: *What are the books of Chesterton's that are your personal favourites?*

GH: *Orthodoxy* and *The Everlasting Man* still come first. I return to them again and again. The eleven *Illustrated London News* volumes in the *Collected Works* and the complete *Daily News* in four volumes are especially dear to me.

But remember that you are talking to somebody who is trying to find everything by Chesterton in print. There are gems everywhere. Every article in some obscure and long forgotten journal is a jewel. With the help of the American Chesterton Society I am tracking down things I never thought I would be able to find, and it is all so great to read. ■

Chesterton on the largest jewels in the smallest casket

'Books, like all other things which are the friends of man, are capable of becoming his enemies, are capable of rising in revolt, and slaying their creator. . .

'A book is assuredly a sacred object. In a book certainly the largest jewels are shut in the smallest casket. But that does not alter the fact that superstition begins when the casket is valued more than the jewels. This is the great sin of idolatry, against which religion has so constantly warned us.'

- 'Lunacy and Letters,' in *Lunacy and Letters* (1958). This essay was originally published in 1901 and was among the first that Chesterton wrote for the *Daily News* newspaper.





Campion College Librarian Keziah Doughty perusing a volume of 'Chesterton at the Daily News'

Chesterton at Campion College

by Keziah Doughty

Since its foundation in 2006 as Australia's first Catholic Liberal Arts college, Campion has developed a range of special library collections, including one devoted to Chesterton. The College Librarian, Keziah Doughty, who is herself a graduate of Campion with a Major in Literature and additional qualifications in teaching and librarianship, describes the nature and scope of the Chesterton collection at the College.

Those attending the forthcoming conference at Campion College on Saturday, October 29, will have an opportunity to inspect the collection in the Library.

The Library at Campion, named in honour of one of the College's first and most generous donors, Fr Leo Kelly of Melbourne, has given attention from the outset to building up a significant collection of works by and about G.K. Chesterton.

The collection now comprises over 200 volumes, including individual books and periodical subscriptions. A key resource is the *Chesterton Review*, which since 1974 has contributed to the growing body of scholarship on Chesterton's writings.

Books containing illustrations, prefaces and introductions by Chesterton are included in the collection, which highlight the range and depth of Chesterton's knowledge. He was a man who could turn his hand - and mind - to so many topics, covering a great range of subjects and concerns in his writings and literary pursuits.

As well as works by Chesterton, the Library collects biographies about him and commentaries on his work, including those by Maisie Ward, Dudley Barker, Michael Coren, Dale Ahlquist, Margaret Canovan, and Ian Ker.

The Library is constantly seeking to acquire new works as they are published, so as to ensure the continued development of the collection.

A number of generous benefactors and bequestors have supported the building of the Chesterton collection at Campion, providing funds as well as books and journal runs, which testify to the deep affinity that many readers have with Chesterton, and the extent to which he attracts the appreciation of new generations, including Campion students.

There are two items in the collection of notable interest.

One is the *G. K. Chesterton Collected Works*, published since 1986 by Ignatius Press and comprising both his fiction and non-fiction. Apart from the reprinting of previously published books, this collected edition has consolidated in a convenient form many of his periodical writings, such as his weekly column, 'Our Notebook', in the *Illustrated London News* from 1905 to 1936.

A second is the 4-volume set of *G.K. Chesterton at the Daily News: Literature, Liberalism and Revolution, 1901-1913*, which the Campion Library recently acquired. Edited by Dr

Julia Stapleton, it contains Chesterton's regular contributions to the London newspaper, the *Daily News*, founded in 1846 by Charles Dickens.

Dr Stapleton carried out her work of editing with great detail and skill. As Sheridan Gilley points out, 'this is a major work of scholarship in its own right... Dr Stapleton's notes form a kind of universal almanac of its era.'¹

Whilst the republication of Chesterton's writings in the *Daily News* is significant as a body of literature in itself, it is also valuable as an insight into Chesterton's contribution as a journalist to the foremost Liberal newspaper of his time.

His growing disappointment with the shifting focus of the Liberal Party is evidenced in his writings over this period, which highlight his view that the Liberal party's "commitment to liberty was eclipsed by an increasing commitment to the regulatory State."²

As Dr Stapleton notes, Chesterton was not restrained with his criticisms. Towards the end of his time at the *Daily News*, he produced a number of compelling essays that clearly conflicted with the editors of the paper and their political stance.

The collected works of Chesterton's contributions to the *Daily News* illuminate the audience for which he wrote as well as the important issues of his era that he addressed, many of which are still in discussion today.

As Dr Stapleton writes, there remain many valuable insights to be gained from the study of Chesterton's collected writings, 'for his world is still our world, and his perceptiveness in identifying the destructive currents within it is precious.'³

It is for these reasons that Campion has continued building its Chesterton collection, which, it is hoped, will be a vital source for all who wish to draw upon the wisdom of this great literary figure. ■

¹ Sheridan Gilley, "G. K. Chesterton at the *Daily News*: Literature, Liberalism and Revolution, 1901-1913," *Chesterton Review*, Vol. 39, No. 3&4, Fall-Winter, 2013, p. 64.

² *Ibid.*, p. 67.

³ Julia Stapleton, "Chesterton at the *Daily News*," *Chesterton Review*, Vol. 39, No. 1 & 2, Spring - Summer 2013, p. 60.

The Most Famous Chesterton Quote - But Was it Chesterton's?

One of the most common aphorisms attributed to Chesterton speaks of a lack of belief in God leading to a pervasive credulity.

It has been cited in various forms, perhaps most commonly as:

'When a man ceases to believe in God, he doesn't then believe in nothing, he believes in anything.'

Seeking the origins of the statement tests the forensic enthusiasm of any reader of Chesterton. The American Chesterton Society's Quotemeister has explored this at length, and it is detailed on the Society's website at <http://www.chesterton.org/ceases-to-worship/>. But the oft-quoted wording has so far eluded clear identification.

The puzzle of a 'sourceless' quotation was first raised by the Chesterton scholar, Aidan Mackey. Soon afterwards, the Chesterton bibliographer, Geir Hasnes, brought to light an interview with the Italian novelist, Umberto Eco, who said that he had based his novel, *Foucault's Pendulum*, on this very epigram.

Dr Pasquale Accardo of New York tracked the quotation back to its earliest known appearance - in the 1937 study of Chesterton by Emile Cammaerts, *The Laughing Prophet*, in this form:

'The first effect of not believing in God is to believe in anything.'

While the quotation itself has remained untraceable in Chesterton's writings, there are various hints in his cavernous output of such an insight.

Certainly it sounds like something Chesterton would have said. And, if we consider how extravagant his talent was, how so many of his memorable insights did not appear in his 'greatest' books (such as *Orthodoxy* and *The Everlasting Man*), and how difficult it has been - as Geir Hasnes testifies (on pages 3-4) - to unearth all of Chesterton's output (perhaps especially such utterances that were made in his radio broadcasts, which have now been lost, and his off-the-cuff interviews), then we gain some idea of how an oft-quoted statement remains elusive.

The American scholar, John Peterson, has argued that the quote is a blend of three separate passages:

'There may have been a time when people found it easy to believe in anything. But we are finding it vastly easier to disbelieve anything.' (*Illustrated London News*, March 21, 1914)

'The nineteenth century decided to have no religious authority. The twentieth century seems disposed to have any religious authority.' (*Illustrated London News*, April 26, 1924)

'A man who refuses to have his own philosophy will only have the used-up scraps of somebody else's philosophy.' (*The Revival of Philosophy*, *The Common Man*, 1950)

An alternative suggestion has come from Robin Rader of Zambia - that the epigram emerges from two adjacent Father Brown stories:

'It's the first effect of not believing in God that you lose your common sense.' (*The Oracle of the Dog*, 1923)

'You hard-shelled materialists were all balanced on the very edge of belief - of belief in almost anything.' (*The Miracle of Moon Crescent*, 1924)

Certainly there is a coincidence of wording between Cammaerts' version and that cited by Ms. Rader. Both contain the words, *'...the first effect of not believing in God...'* Cammaerts was discussing this very story, "The Oracle of the Dog," when he quoted Father Brown:

'It's drowning all your old rationalism and scepticism, it's coming in like a sea; and the name of it is superstition.' *The first effect of not believing in God is to believe in anything: 'And a dog is an omen and a cat is a mystery.'*

The elusive words, it is worth noting, lie embedded between two quotations. It is not presented as a quotation, but as a paraphrase. The switch is easy to miss in the original text.

In his 1970 book, *The Mind of Chesterton*, Christopher Hollis presents the epigram as:

'As Chesterton said, "He who does not believe in God will believe in anything."'

Hollis lists only 13 books in his bibliography of secondary sources, *The Laughing Prophet* being among them.

The American Chesterton Society Quotemeister believes that the source of the fugitive quotation is Emile Cammaerts. His ambiguous typography misled Christopher Hollis, and through him others (including, at last, all of the rest of us), into the mistaken conviction that a thought repeated over and over by Chesterton had a specific epigrammatic form that Chesterton never precisely gave it.

The Quotemeister further believes that the source of the fugitive epigram is 'The Oracle of the Dog,' as codified by Emile Cammaerts. And it notes a nice irony - that so many critics have chastised Chesterton over the years for misquoting other writers, and yet he is now himself the most misquoted writer of all!

Perhaps the irresistible conclusion is - to adapt Voltaire's famous statement about God - that, if the quotation were not Chesterton's, it would be necessary to attribute it to him! ■



Walking in the Path of Belloc

by Francis Phillips

This article first appeared on the 22 March 2016 blog of the leading reviewer for the London Catholic Herald, **Francis Phillips**, and is reprinted, in a slightly shortened form, with her kind permission.

Recently I have had the pleasure of reading *In Belloc's Steps*, by Jim Malia, published by New Millennium for £7.99. As his title indicates, Jim walked from Toul to Rome (with some help from wheeled transport when desperate) in honour of Hilaire Belloc, starting in 2000 and concluding, after a break, in 2003.

Belloc, as lovers of his writings will know, did this same walk a hundred years earlier and wrote about it in *The Path to Rome*.

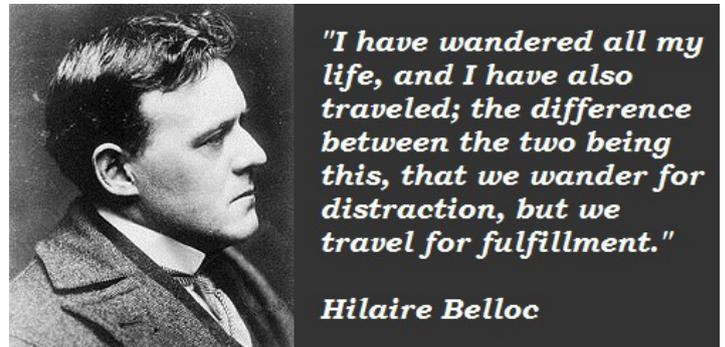
Jim, who had just retired from teaching aged 65, carried out a youthful ambition. He describes the blisters, the weather – always important to walkers and often uninviting: “In the mountains one does not presume on the weather; one hopes” – the wine, the people he met, and the incidents, pleasant and unpleasant.

It is a lively and sympathetic account, illustrated by short sketches of the route and comments on the hospitality savoured on the way. Apart from the fact that I am a poor map-reader, hopeless at erecting tents and have never tried cooking on a primus, Jim's account definitely makes me want to follow in his and Belloc's footsteps.

I suspect that Belloc is not much read today, so I ask Jim which of his many books he would recommend to modern readers. He tells me that he is not an expert on Belloc's writing, but that *The Path to Rome* (Belloc's own favourite) would be his first choice. He adds that he has enjoyed “the delightful *Cautionary Tales*, his histories, such as *The French Revolution*, *Oliver Cromwell*, *Danton*, which are very readable, with a wonderful eye to background and environment, though it is generally agreed they are also somewhat superficial and sometimes inaccurate.”

I quote from Belloc's famous statement, “Europe is the Faith. The Faith is Europe” and ask Jim what his own response to this view is, given his own pilgrimage through a very different Europe over a century later. He answers reflectively, “Rome built an empire. The barbarians tore it apart. Christian missionaries rebuilt it. Having rebuilt it, the Christian Church nurtured the land and its people: Celtic missionaries, nuns in enclosed convents, monastic communities which farmed the land and the building of the great cathedrals tells us of the Faith that was Europe.”

He continues: “Then came the Reformation, Belloc, brought up in England, saw only vestiges of that Faith. Even in France,



the land of his birth, he saw only its flickering flame. Then he came to the village of Undervelier and heard the vespers bell; as the bell tolled he saw all the villagers making for their church, where he joined them and sang the beautiful hymn praising God at the end of the light of day – and felt he was very much part of what had been Christendom.”

Warming to his theme, Jim adds that he too had “occasional glimpses of the practice of such faith: evening Mass in a full village church in the valley of Formazza; Castagne, with its tiny oratory where the villagers gathered for prayer and where occasionally they were privileged to hear Mass.”

But “it was in Parma that the dichotomy was revealed. On Holy Thursday I witnessed the solemn beginning of the sacred Triduum, the stripping of the altar, the empty tabernacle, the extinguishing of the sanctuary lamp, the darkened church and the prayerful silence – while outside there was the noise and bustle of holiday-makers, indifferent, moving among the expensive shops, the bright lights and the noisy traffic; the beginning of the Easter holiday.”

He concludes with a sigh, “Europe is now devoid of shared faith.”

Our conversation is coming to a close. What are Jim's final thoughts about his walk? He admits that his book “was a labour of love, in homage to an earlier masterpiece.”

The highlights: “Sitting by the Moselle, talking to the fisherman and sharing a fine cognac in the cool of the evening till the stars came out; the visit to the exhibition of the Deportation at Charmes, which opened my mind to the suffering of a people under enemy occupation; the friendliness of people everywhere; their acceptance of a wandering foreigner and their generosity; the glorious sights and scenery and the thrill of the mountain-storm.” ■

Christopher Hitchens - An Intellectual Gadfly on Chesterton

A collection of reviews and essays, entitled *And Yet...*, by the late British journalist, Christopher Hitchens, has recently been published which includes an appreciative essay on Chesterton.

Hitchens had a well-founded reputation as an intellectual gadfly, who took turns in causing offence to different sides of the religious and political spectrum; criticizing individuals whom others exalted (such as Mother Teresa of Calcutta) and endorsing events which many found objectionable (for example, supporting George W. Bush and the Iraq War).

It may be surprising to find that Hitchens admired Chesterton. In particular, he applauded the 'high quality of Chesterton's poems', and was critical of Ian Ker's biography of Chesterton, 'because it understates [Chesterton's] magic faculty of being unforgettable.'

In a review of *And Yet...* in the *Times Literary Supplement* (April 15, 2016), Geoffrey Wheatcroft dismisses Hitchens' praise of the poem 'Lepanto'. He describes it as 'GKC at his bombastic worst, in the long and deplorable line of bellicose English versifiers who had never heard the proverbial shot in anger.'



Christopher Hitchens

This criticism provoked a Letter to the Editor from Leofranc Holford-Strevens, a Classics scholar who served as a publisher's reader for Oxford University Press and is reputed to be versed in 40 languages.

Holford-Strevens asked whether the TLS reviewer had ever read 'Lepanto' aloud, 'with full attention to the sound of the words as well as their meaning'.

The poem, he said, 'is a masterpiece of rhythmical variation', and 'Christopher Hitchens was right to admire it.'

'The Invisible Man' - and the Origins of Latin Literature

A famous Chesterton insight has been invoked by a reviewer in the London Times Literary Supplement (April 29, 2016) to illustrate the themes of a new book, *Beyond Greek: The Beginning of Latin Literature*, by Denis Feeney. The reviewer, Emily Wilson, teaches in the Department of Classical Studies at the University of Pennsylvania:

In a famous short story by G.K. Chesterton, "The Invisible Man", the murderer enters the house of the victim observed by several witnesses. But they all claim that they saw "nobody", because the killer was dressed as a postman.

The situation of watching a person in the correct uniform delivering the mail was too common to register as an event.

Chesterton's hero, Father Brown, specializes in noticing the commonplace things that nobody else can see because they have become too familiar.

Denis Feeney's new book, *Beyond Greek*, on the origins of Roman literature, is very much in the mode of Father Brown, asking us to be amazed and puzzled by things so familiar that we do not bother to think about them.

The book sheds surprising light on three interrelated well-known facts – three invisible postmen – in the history of Roman literature. The first is that the Romans wrote literature at all – a fact which, as Feeney makes clear, was by no means inevitable. The second is that they learnt Greek – the language of a people they had conquered. The third, which does not follow from the second, is that they also translated Greek literature into Latin, and imitated Greek literary models – an action unparalleled in the ancient world.

Australian Critic Peter Craven on Chesterton

In a review of Ian Ker's biography of Chesterton, published in the *Australian* (July 30, 2011), the literary and cultural critic Peter Craven offered his assessment of Chesterton.

He described him as 'a remarkable writer' and 'one of the greatest masters of journalism and the essay form'.

Chesterton's novels, *The Man Who Was Thursday* and *The Napoleon of Notting Hill* 'will live as classics', and his Father Brown stories were 'the best written and most imaginative

crime fiction penned, Raymond Chandler notwithstanding'.

While describing Chesterton as 'brilliant beyond words', Craven offered a qualification - that 'the virtuosity of the talent and the sheer authority and charm of the personal signature made him almost too big to be a great writer.'

He acknowledged that Chesterton's Catholicism 'will be a folly and a stumbling block for some people', but that his 'rapid quasi-literary remarks about Christianity could convert continents'.

'If you're entranced with Christopher Hitchens and Richard Dawkins and the other militant atheists', argued Craven, 'have a look at Chesterton: he is an immeasurably suppler debater.'