



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)

Remembering the 'Chesterbelloc'

by Karl Schmude

G.K. Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc would no longer be so readily associated in the public mind as they once were.

When the term 'Chesterbelloc' was coined by George Bernard Shaw in 1908, it captured the strong connection – and even interdependence – that was readily recognised between them.

Shaw did not intend the term as praiseworthy. He regarded Chesterton as 'a man of colossal genius' whose conversion to Catholicism in 1922 was 'going too far', and he believed that Belloc was 'wasting prodigious gifts in the service . . . of the Pope'.

Yet he knew that both writers were of indisputable importance and power. They



Shaw, Belloc and Chesterton

were united in support of Catholic Christianity, both its fundamental beliefs and its cultural expressions, and they posed formidable obstacles to the surging hopes of Shaw and others in a utopian future, freed from traditional constraints and set to fulfil a new transcendental ideal of state-regulated happiness.

Yet, as Shaw himself acknowledged, Chesterton and Belloc were distinctly

Remembering the 'Chesterbelloc'
Pages 1-2

Reflections on the 'Chesterbelloc'
Pages 3-4

My Path to Belloc
Page 5

Belloc in Australia
Page 6

The Prophetic Insights of Hilaire Belloc
Page 7

Chesterton the Metaphysician
Page 8

Next Conference in Sydney - October 29, 2016

A World of Wonder: Chesterton and the Literary Imagination

This year's conference will focus on Chesterton as a literary artist, exploring such works as the Father Brown stories, and offering comparisons with a range of other authors - in particular, Flannery O'Connor, Fyodor Dostoevsky, and Georges Bernanos.



Greg Sheridan

The keynote address will be given by Greg Sheridan, Foreign Editor of the *Australian*, on 'Chesterton – The Journalist as an Artist'.

The conference will be held at Campion College in Old Toongabbie, Sydney, on Saturday, October 29, 2016, from 8.45am to 5.30pm.

different. This issue of 'The Defendant' focuses on Belloc and the enduring value of his neglected achievements – and how his contributions enabled the whole of the 'Chesterbelloc' to be greater than the sum of the parts.

* * * *

Chesterton was an artist and a journalist. He was quintessentially English, and his 'path to Rome', as a convert, was resolutely intellectual. By contrast, Belloc, a cradle Catholic with European roots, undertook his 'path to Rome' as a physical and cultural journey.

Certainly Belloc was deeply intellectual – as his experience at Balliol College and President of the Oxford Union testified – but he was unmistakably a man of action. He travelled widely and incessantly, and his restless energy found expression in an extraordinary range of literary output.

Essays, poetry, histories, biographies, religious apologetics, political and economic tracts, travel books, novels (for which Chesterton produced the accompanying illustrations) – Belloc's output almost exceeds the imagination. The only category he did not embrace was plays (unlike Chesterton, who wrote three).

As the English poet and literary critic Sir John Squire once remarked, 'the man who attempts to survey the writings of Belloc will think he is undertaking to write the literary history of a small nation.'

Faith and culture

Of the greatest importance was the synthesis of faith and culture in Belloc's make-up – manifested vividly in his life and his writings.

He was profoundly at home with the Incarnation – the embodiment of God in human life. His spirit rebelled fiercely against any form of Puritanism.

His way of being Catholic was the *incarnational* way – a vital intersection of the divine and the human, with all the rich paradoxes that this entailed. He was, at once, as Robert Speaight noted, radical and traditional, firm and forgiving, confident and humble, realistic and hopeful, obedient and free.

His sense of religion was deeply – and inescapably – cultural. He saw that the extension of the Incarnation in time and history was the result of a *Church* – a body, not merely a spirit or a belief; an institution, not only a faith – and he believed that the dismemberment of the Church and the dissolution of a Catholic people, centred on a recognizable community of believers, would bring about the re-paganisation of society – and a new night of despair.

Belloc was always conscious of his sceptical nature and the perpetual struggle to cultivate a spiritual life. While recognising that the greatest saints and mystics could enjoy the experience of the divine without reliance on the senses, he declared:

'I cannot boast myself to be of such a kind, and on my own poor level it is landscape, the sea, human love, music, and the rest, that help to make me understand: and in their absence I am very empty indeed.'

A place of vital significance in Belloc's life, which helped to shape and inspire his mind and sensibility, was Sussex. This association began in boyhood and, in his early 30s, he moved there with his family – to a house called 'Kings Land' in the village of Shipley.

Sussex offered a memorably beautiful landscape, a fascinating sea and shore, a rich history, and a home for writers. In the concluding part of his book, *The Four Men*, which records the journey of four men (really different aspects of Belloc himself) through the Sussex countryside, he ponders the effects of this land on his soul:

'[I]f a man is part of and is rooted in one steadfast piece of earth, which has nourished him and given him his being, and if he can on his side lend it glory and do it service (I thought), it will be a friend to him for ever, and he has outflanked Death in a way.'

By comparison with Chesterton, Belloc now seems to be an almost entirely neglected and even demeaned figure. Yet, among the lines of verse for which he is famous, and which may in time be applied to his enduring value – as a man of faith and poetic sensibility and historical insight – are the following:

'He does not die that can bequeath
Some influence to the land he knows.' ■

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Reflections on the 'Chesterbelloc'

by Ralph McInerny

The following article by the late Ralph McInerny (pictured), Professor of Philosophy at the University of Notre Dame (USA), appeared in the May/June 1998 issue of Catholic Dossier magazine, and was later republished by Ignatius Press in its online newsletter, Ignatius Insight. (see: http://www.ignatiusinsight.com/features2006/rmcinerny_chesterbelloc_aug06.asp). It is reprinted here in an edited form with the kind permission of the CEO of Ignatius Press, Mark Brumley.

Chesterton died relatively young, with his authorial boots on, whereas Belloc lived on to enormous old age. There are several evocations of him in the diaries of Evelyn Waugh. 'He has grown a splendid white beard . . . But the great man had become garrulous and obsessed. . . He talked incessantly, proclaiming with great clarity the grievances of forty years ago.'

That was in 1945. Some seven years later, there is this. 'Enter old man, shaggy white beard, black clothes garnished with food and tobacco. Thinner than I last saw him . . .'

Old age, Charles de Gaulle was to say, is a shipwreck. In these lines of Waugh we certainly see the captain of [Belloc's boat] the 'Nona' beached and bewildered in a present in which he only fitfully lived.

Somehow they seem a not altogether inappropriate coda to the years of ferocious literary activity. That had ceased now, but it was Belloc's achievement as a writer - among other things - that elicited the admiration and piety of Waugh.

We have been spared the sight of Chesterton grown senile and a bore, but of course that would not have affected our estimate of his achievement. No more do these glimpses of a shuffling old man detract from the enormous achievement of Hilaire Belloc.

The two men were linked, by themselves and others, and fused into the Chesterbelloc. Perhaps the most charming examples of their collaboration are to be found in those novels of Belloc that were illustrated by Chesterton.

One thinks of the portrait by Gunn in which Chesterton is seated at a table, drawing, with Belloc to his left, looking on, and behind the two, egg bald and somewhat aloof, Maurice Baring. Maybe Baring seems a little embarrassed to be there when the two seated giants are so visibly enjoying themselves.

There are three common notes characteristic of Gilbert Keith Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc.

First, there is their fecundity, the seemingly ceaseless flow of words from their pens. Second, is the variety of their literary products. Third, is the Christian vision that was as natural to them as the air they breathed.

There is a sense in which it does not matter whether an artist produces much or little: the quality of his opus is the salient thing.



Chesterton, Baring and Belloc

Mere quantity is neutral in the sense that some artists produce a very great deal and it is only mediocre or bad, whereas others labour over one or two works which achieve perfection. Obviously it is large amounts of good stuff that one means when he invokes fecundity as a mark of greatness.

It will, of course, be said that neither Belloc nor Chesterton had time to agonize over any particular work. They wrote under financial pressure or to make deadlines and had to get the thing done. That makes the high quality of most of their work all the more impressive. But it is the sheer fun the two seemed to have had in doing most of what they did that characterizes them.

Try and imagine either Belloc or Chesterton with writer's block or talking about the agony of creation. They did not have time for the mannerisms of the second-rate.

Belloc had aspired to be a don, for years hoping for election as a fellow of an Oxford College. That did not happen and this failure bothered him for many years. Had he won the sinecure of an Oxford fellowship he would have been able to write in a more leisurely and academically acceptable fashion. That was his claim. But surely from time to time it must have occurred to Belloc that failure to become an Oxford don was one of the best things that ever happened to him.

As a member of Parliament he came to despise the company he had to keep. It is doubtful that he would have found prolonged proximity to the dons he excoriated in his poetic defence of Chesterton any more palatable.

In their different ways, Belloc and Chesterton became free lances, fighting battles of their own choosing on multiple terrains.

Chesterton said that the world of Charles Dickens was the best of all impossible worlds, and something similar is often thought of his. After all, he was an optimist, he wrote a rollicking prose that often runs away from sense to become a music that mystifies and delights.

Chesterton was not born Chesterton, nor was his future persona thrust upon him. The choice he made was between being Chesterton or going mad.

Turning from darkness and evil towards the light

What would going mad have been like? He was attracted to the sensuous decadence of Swinburne. There is a point in his young manhood of which he wrote almost allegorically when he turned from darkness and evil towards the light.

The chapter in his autobiography called 'How to be a Lunatic' covers the years during which he studied art at the Slade School in London and became enthralled with spiritualism and the Ouija board. In the period of despair through which he went, Chesterton dabbled in diabolism; later he came to think that he was one of the few who really believed in devils. His emergence from this slough of despond is what made him seem an optimist.

What remained to him of religion was the 'one thin thread of thanks.' Wonder. Gratitude.

Wonder, it has been said, is the origin both of philosophy and of poetry. It turned Chesterton into an exuberant poetic philosopher of gratitude. To see being against the background of nothingness is to see it as created.

Second, there is the variety of their output. Poems serious and comic, novels, book length essays, monographs, collections of essays, memoirs, literary criticism, biography, apologetics, political philosophy, economics - these are genres in which both men wrote.

Chesterton even tried history in *A Short History of England*, and it can be said without too much stretching that Belloc wrote detective fiction.

To say that the two men overlapped may seem a pun, but they did, even where they seemed most to differ. But if we consider only the kinds that both wrote lots of, it is striking.

Their poetry deserves more attention than it has received, though it has not been overlooked. Garry Wills some years ago wrote a marvellous essay on Chesterton's poetic works.

Belloc's verse for children has been so popular that his other verse is almost eclipsed by it. But *Tarantella* is a hauntingly beautiful poem, intricate in its prosody, sustained in its music.

Catholic outlook

Third, there is the Catholic outlook that defines the bulk of the work of these two men. In this post-conciliar time, when Catholics are alleged to have moved out of the ghetto so as to address the modern world with renewed confidence, the apologetic voice is all but silent. More seriously still, there seems to be missing the robust confidence that the faith is an inestimable gift.

Belloc and Chesterton were ferocious Catholics, unequivocal Catholics, confessing Catholics, labelled and known to be such. This was the source of their catholicity, not an obstacle to it.

Were ever two thinkers less denominational and sectarian? Neither man thought of the faith as one option among many. It was for everyone.

Their missionary zeal was based on the realization that they did not own Christianity; they knew that there are only brethren and separated brethren. It is in very small degree the defects of those in the Church that explain that separation. Men and women have been seduced by the siren song of modernity, to which the faith is an antidote.

Try to imagine either Belloc or Chesterton suggesting that, while modernity is a great thing and enjoying success after success, nonetheless we ought to turn back to the Middle Ages and to a discredited view of things. It can't be done. Yet how often this seems to be the choice believers pose to their contemporaries.

The odd contemporaneity of these two men lies above all in their faith. It is our shared faith that makes what they say seem inevitable even when no one else ever said it half so well.

C. S. Lewis said of his return to the faith that it put him in possession of the outlook of the writers whose works it was his task to teach. A bonus.

There is more than this in the case of Belloc and Chesterton. They enable us to recover gratitude for the faith and wonder at its possession.

Not only do we see the role it played in their own efforts. We begin to see the role it should play in ours. All the time. Exuberantly.

Wherever the Catholic sun doth shine,
There's always laughter and good red wine.
At least I've always found it so.
Benedicamus Domino!

- Hilaire Belloc, 'The Catholic Sun' ■

My Path to Belloc

by Tony Evans

In 'The Defendant' (June 2003), Tony Evans remembered how, as a young man in England, he nearly met Belloc. Tony established the Chesterton Society in 1993 and, as its inaugural President, converted it into a national association in 2000. He was also the founding editor of 'The Defendant' until his retirement in 2013.

Although I was too young to remember the day that Chesterton died in 1936, the day when Hilaire Belloc died, Thursday 16th July 1953, remains vividly in my mind.

In those days when BBC radio in England was still the only mass medium, news bulletins gave updated reports of Belloc's condition over the three days he lay dying in a Franciscan nursing home in Guildford.

We learned that he had fallen in his study at his home, Kingsland, near Horsham on the previous Sunday. Although the bulletins didn't say he was dying, we knew that the end was near. Cycling each day to work, aged 21, I was much affected.

Although Belloc had not published any books for eleven years and had remained a recluse – a 'private gentleman', as A.N. Wilson describes him in his biography – he was still a major literary figure and someone of importance.

I didn't actually hear of the death until sometime on Friday 17th because his end came on the previous evening. I was determined to be at the funeral because the lovely church of Our Lady of Consolation at West Grinstead where he was to be buried was not far from where I was working in Brighton. In the event I could not go. This has always been a matter of deep regret for me.

While I can't claim that I read Belloc in my cradle, I was hardly out of it before I came under his spell.

My boarding school in Sussex did not possess a central library as all schools do now, but each classroom had a glass cabinet holding a selection of good classics that we were encouraged to read.

Whenever it rained (often) or when it snowed (sometimes), or a master was prevented by illness from giving a lesson, we had periods of 'silent reading'. Silent reading figured large in our curriculum.

And that is how I first read *The Four Men* in the small blue Nelson edition. At the age of twelve it seemed pure magic: although I don't think I followed all the arguments, nor did I understand that the four men were four different aspects of the writer's character.

Our English teacher, a Belloc reader, promised that Mr Belloc, who lived in the same county, would visit the school. But even then, towards the end of World War II, he was old and probably the idea of visiting a lot of scruffy, ignorant schoolboys would not have appealed to him.

Another schoolmaster, who taught us sailing on Chichester Harbour after the war, declaimed Belloc's poetry, essays and excerpts from *The Cruise of the Nona* as we sheltered in leaky tents, waiting for the rain to clear.

I was hooked. I bought my own Bellocs, cheap editions from second-hand bookshops and I discovered Distributism. Belloc became my hero much as pop stars become the heroes of today's youth (but they surely, with much less justification). In maturity I discovered the warts: his belligerence, his intransigence, and his bullish dismissal of those who did not agree with him. He might have been difficult to live with.

But I forgive him all these for his poetry, his fearlessness, his defence of the Faith, and the clarity and elegance of his prose.

It has been said that among his hundred and more books, some of them were potboilers, and repetitive; but he never wrote a bad sentence. Who can read the opening sentences of *The Path to Rome*, or the opening essay in *Hills and the Sea*, or the introduction to *The Old Road*, or the voyage through Bardsey Sound in *The Cruise of the Nona*, and not feel like the wedding guest in *The Ancient Mariner* compelled to continue reading on?

I determined to meet Belloc. The chance came when I joined two fellow enthusiasts walking on the South Downs from east to west. We walked late into the night declaiming as much of Belloc as we could remember. Finally we rested in a haystack near Storrington not far from Belloc's home. We breakfasted on fresh bread from a bakery and arrived at Kingsland about 10 in the morning.

The three of us, scruffy, unshaven and with straw in our clothing, aroused the suspicions of Reginald Jebb, Belloc's son-in-law, who came out of the house and curtly asked us our business. He soon learned that we were friends rather than foes and invited us inside. We sat in Belloc's study, a large oak-beamed room with an ingle nook, oak furniture and threadbare carpet. Jebb had been a headmaster and was sympathetic to young literary enthusiasts whom, he probably felt, deserved encouragement. He called his wife, Eleanor, Belloc's daughter, who brought scones and tea.

As exciting as it was to sit in Belloc's study and talk with his family we could not be satisfied until we had met our hero. Mr Jebb told us that he was upstairs in his room and that he would ask him if he would come down to speak with us.

Continued on Page 6

Belloc in Australia

In a special Belloc issue of the Chesterton Review (May 1986), Maureen Taylor of Sydney contributed the following letter. It serves to highlight the influence which Belloc exerted on several generations of Australians.

Recently, Bruce Stewart, a New Zealand actor and writer, who now works in Britain for television and the stage, presented a one-man show in Sydney, Australia entitled 'The Chesterbelloc'. [Editor's note: Mr Stewart died in England in 2005 at the age of 80.]

Chesterton died on June 14, 1936. On that same night, Belloc had to give a lecture in Brighton. Mr. Stewart's show dramatizes that lecture as Mr. Stewart explains that his one-man show recreates that extraordinary night.

The audience is the audience in Brighton. Both Belloc and Chesterton are portrayed, and the audience re-lives their triumphs, their failures, the joys and sorrows of Belloc's and Chesterton's long association.

Readers may be interested in this account of Bruce Stewart's performance.

Mr. Stewart came on stage, which is not really a stage because the Sydney Theatre (if you haven't been there) is a theatre-in-the-round and seats about a hundred or so. He just formally but friendly acknowledged us and then went straight into his act.

He said the year is 1936 and Gilbert Chesterton has just died. Hilaire Belloc was delivering an oration and was interrupted with this news. Mr. Stewart immediately took on the role of Belloc and although quite broken up by the news continued his talk. He turned his back on the audience and when he turned back he had on the pince-nez of Chesterton and looked remarkably like him, and he cleverly carried on a conversation between the two, changing all the while from one to the other. This continued for the whole performance, but with intermittent narrations, and even complete acting out of a poem.

My Path to Belloc (continued from page 5)

When Jebb reappeared he was alone; the news he brought was disappointing.

Mr Belloc was not very well that day and would have to remain in his room. To help us over our disappointment he took us on a tour of the old house described in detail by Belloc's biographers; and then we clambered over Belloc's old mill.

He also delivered quite a few poems by both writers. Never once were we at a loss to guess who was who or at what point he was.

I had lots of nostalgic reminders such as "Do you remember an Inn, Miranda"? I had an Irish nun who taught that to me years ago, and I think I rendered it in a school concert! Mr. Stewart certainly had rehearsed well because he never faltered and it was a long performance. He had us in stitches and we all wanted to stay on for the evening performance of course. A rare treat indeed!

I'm sure there are many who are sorry now that they missed the performance as people will no doubt talk about it for some time to come. It certainly revived interest for us, and gave a new meaning to some poems which we might otherwise have almost overlooked for something we thought better. ■

Belloc on life, friendship and faith

Loss and Possession, Death and Life are one,
There falls no shadow where there shines no sun.
- *Epigrams 49: 'On the Same', Sonnets & Verse (1923)*

When friendship disappears then there is a space left
open to that awful loneliness of the outside world
which is like the cold space between the planets. It is
an air in which men perish utterly.
- *The Four Men: A Farrago (1912)*

Steep are the seas and savaging and cold
In broken waters terrible to try;
And vast against the winter night the wold,
And harbourless for any sail to lie. . . .
But you shall lead me to the lights, and I
Shall hymn you in a harbour story told.
This is the faith that I have held and hold,
And this is that in which I mean to die.
- *Ballade to Our Lady of Czestochowa, Sonnets & Verse (1923)*

As we parted from Eleanor and Reginald Jebb he advised us that it was better that we young men should carry with us an image of Belloc as he was in his active period and not see him in his shuffling, decrepit last years.

As it transpired, it was not 'last years', but last months. Less than a year later, while at work in Brighton, I learned that Hilaire Belloc, the hero I nearly met, had died. ■

The Prophetic Insights of Hilaire Belloc



Paganism despairs. Man turned loose finds himself an exile. He grows desperate, and his desperation breeds monstrous things. . . . If all Paganisms end in despair, ours is accepting it as a foundation. That is the special mark we have been seeking to distinguish this New Arrival. Hence the lack of reason which is intellectual despair, the hideous architecture and painting and writing which are aesthetic despair, the dissolution of morals which is ethical despair.

- *Survivals and New Arrivals* (1929)

"The Barbarian hopes — and that is the mark of him, that he can have his cake and eat it too. He will consume what civilization has slowly produced after generations of selection and effort, but he will not be at pains to replace such goods, nor indeed has he a comprehension of the virtue that has brought them into being. Discipline seems

to him irrational, on which account he is ever marvelling that civilization should have offended him with priests and soldiers.... In a word, the Barbarian is discoverable everywhere in this, that he cannot make: that he can befooled and destroy but that he cannot sustain; and of every Barbarian in the decline or peril of every civilization exactly that has been true.

We sit by and watch the barbarian. We tolerate him in the long stretches of peace, we are not afraid. We are tickled by his irreverence; his comic inversion of our old certitudes and our fixed creed refreshes us; we laugh. But as we laugh we are watched by large and awful faces from beyond, and on these faces there are no smiles.

- 'The Barbarians,' in *This and That and the Other* (1912)

It has always seemed to me possible, and even probable, that there would be a resurrection of Islam and that our sons or our grandsons would see the renewal of that tremendous struggle between the Christian culture and what has been for more than a thousand years its greatest opponent. . . . I cannot but believe that a main unexpected thing of the future is the return of Islam. Since religion is at the root of all political movements and changes and since we have here a very great religion physically paralyzed but morally intensely alive, we are in the presence of an unstable equilibrium which cannot remain permanently unstable. . . .

In Islam there has been no such dissolution of ancestral doctrine — or, at any rate, nothing corresponding to the universal break-up of religion in Europe. . . . The final fruit of this tenacity, the second period of Islamic power, may be delayed: — but I doubt whether it can be permanently postponed.

- *The Great Heresies* (1938)

Christopher Dawson Centre for Cultural Studies

An important new centre has been established in Hobart to promote awareness of the Catholic intellectual tradition and the patrimony of Western culture as essential components of human civilization.

Founded at the instigation of Archbishop Julian Porteous of Hobart, the Christopher Dawson Centre for Cultural Studies is named in honour of the English historian, Christopher Dawson.

Dawson felt a deep affinity with Chesterton. When he published *The Making of Europe*, a study of ground-breaking insight into the so-called Dark Ages, in 1932,



Christopher Dawson

Dawson sent a copy to Chesterton. In an accompanying letter, he recalled how, as an Oxford undergraduate, Chesterton's *Ballad of the White Horse* 'brought the breath of life to this period' for him.

Chesterton, in turn, expressed on occasions his appreciation of Dawson's historical works, particularly his studies of prehistoric man and his biography of St Thomas Aquinas.

The Dawson Centre is directed by Dr David Daintree, a Classics scholar who most recently served as President of Campion College. More information is available from the Centre's website, www.dawsoncentre.org.

Chesterton the Metaphysician

by John Young

John Young is a frequent contributor to The Defendant and various journals and newspapers in Australia and overseas. He is the author of Reasoning Things Out (1982) and The Natural Economy (1997).

If God had not given the human race a Supernatural Revelation, the highest knowledge attainable would have been philosophy, and the most sublime part of philosophy is metaphysics. It is not surprising, then, that philosophical errors are the most devastating, for they are a corruption of the most fundamental truths.

Yet even among Catholics with a good knowledge of the Faith and well-read in orthodox Catholic authors it is rare to find people with a sound grasp of philosophy: or more specifically, of the perennial philosophy endorsed by the Popes, and whose greatest exponent is St Thomas Aquinas.

Take the famous Five Ways of proving the existence of God, as expounded by St Thomas. Each of these is based on a fact perceived by the senses, different for each proof, and two self-evident principles – one principle proper to each proof and one common to all five. Each of the Five Ways is conclusive: to doubt it is, logically, to doubt either a self-evident truth or an obvious fact such as the fact that there is movement.

But how many people know this, even among well-informed and orthodox Catholics? Of those who have examined the arguments, how many see that they are absolutely conclusive? Not many. And the basic reason is a lack of metaphysical insight. We live our lives immersed in a superficial society that never goes beyond the surface of things, and our understanding must inevitably be weakened and distorted by that society unless we immerse ourselves in the truth.

Metaphysics is the deepest part of philosophy, dealing as it does with the most ultimate realities insofar as human reason can penetrate them.

A striking thing about G. K. Chesterton is his intellectual affinity with metaphysical realities. He did no formal scholastic studies, yet he had an insight into the depths of reality superior to that of most people who have devoted years of formal study to these questions.

True philosophy is a development of the common sense knowledge that we all have unless we are brainwashed out of it, and Chesterton had strong common sense. Philosophy also demands dedicated and prolonged meditation into the fundamental realities, and he had that.

In his book *A Preface to Metaphysics* the great French Thomist Jacques Maritain discusses, in the Second Lecture, the qualities needed by a metaphysician. It is interesting to note how these apply to Chesterton. I'll give some brief quotes.

Maritain says: "The part played by the senses is, you see, absolutely indispensable...A metaphysician deprived of the senses or their use, a metaphysician asleep or dreaming, is for St Thomas a sheer impossibility, a monster, an absurdity." Chesterton was keenly aware of the world as presented by the senses, of the colours and shapes of things: he presents deep truths through the medium of the visible and tangible.

The metaphysician, says Maritain, "...should be plunged into existence, steeped ever more deeply in it by a sensuous and aesthetic experience as acute as possible, and by experiencing the sufferings and struggles of real life, so that aloft in the third heaven of natural understanding he may feed upon the intelligible substance of things."

As a young man Gilbert Chesterton experienced a dark period filled with horrible images, in which he seemed to be going mad. That experience points to the intensity and depth of his inner life.

Maritain: "The Thomist philosopher is dubbed scholastic, a name derived from his most painful affliction. Scholastic pedantry is his peculiar foe. He must constantly triumph over his domestic adversary, the Professor." Chesterton was too immersed in reality to be a pedant.

Speaking of Thomism as an existential philosophy, Maritain points out that one sense of this term is when the thinker "...lives this truth, draws and assimilates it into his subjective being." This was eminently the case with Chesterton. From his earliest years he lived the truth. Or perhaps we should say that every child lives the truth, but reality becomes less real to many of us as we grow older. Chesterton retained the wonder and realism of the child as he saw into the depths of being. ■

2015 Conference Papers available

The papers from the Chesterton conference on Chesterton, Newman and Manning, are now available in both video and printed form.

The papers can be purchased for \$12.00 (incl. postage) from the Secretary/Treasurer, Mr Ray Finnegan, and viewed at the following links:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=luAg0rVI_os
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ggy7c4Lav1w>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QL7aT7IBweA>
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