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Chesterton and *Orthodoxy:* Legends and Realities

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Chesterton has been described as one of the greatest spokesman for Christian Orthodoxy of the modern age. Bernard Shaw has also described him as "a colossal genius." But there are difficulties that come with being a genius, and one of these difficulties concerns the way in which contradictory legends grow up around a genius. Yet this very process of legend-making is itself significant. As a recent critic has pointed out, legends must be respected because they are "the ordinary way of expressing the manifestation of genius in certain people, who cannot be described in ordinary terms" (Spark 11). Chesterton himself was conscious that there were competing legends about him. He was aware of the difference between the legendary self, and the private self who experienced feelings of guilt and anxiety. Writing to his mentor, Ronald Knox, at the moment of crisis which preceded his reception into the Catholic Church in 1922, Chesterton commented on the difference between his confident public self, on the one hand, and his private and real self, on the other:

> I am in a state now when I feel a monstrous charlatan, as if I wore a mask and were stuffed with cushions, whenever I see anything about the public GKC; it hurts me; for though the views I express are real, the image is horribly unreal compared with the real person who needs help just now. I have as much vanity as anybody about any of these superficial successes while they are going on; but I never feel for a moment that they affect the reality of whether I am utterly rotten or not; so that any public comments on my religious position seem like wind on the other side of the world; as if they were about somebody else-as indeed they are. I am not troubled about a great fat man who appears on platforms and in caricatures, even when he enjoys controversies on what I believe to be the right side. I am concerned about what has become of a little boy whose father showed him a toy theatre, and a schoolboy whom nobody ever heard of ... and all the morbid life of the lonely mind of a living person with whom I have lived. It is that story, that so often came near to ending badly, that I want to end well. (Waugh 207-8)

The continuing existence of legends about Chesterton presents a similar problem to the critic who attempts to evaluate Chesterton's work as a teacher of Orthodox Christianity. There is still a legendary Chesterton who seems very different from the Chesterton revealed in biography and scholarship. In fact, there are a number of legendary Chestertons. Yet each of the legendary Chestertons is a repository of valuable truths. The work of criticism, therefore, is not to explode such legends but to discover their underlying meaning. Such legends tend to dominate the public imagination for a time and then to fade rather abruptly. Also, each legend, as long as it is dominant, claims to provide the only authentic truth about the writer; and

each legend, as long as it does exist, blots out the memory of earlier and equally valid legendary images, which express equally valuable truths about the writer of genius. In these circumstances, there is a danger that the claims for a writer and the attempts to define his meaning will become a sort of contest between vivid yet apparently contradictory legends about him.

There were at least two important legends about Chesterton the teacher of Christian Orthodoxy which existed during his own life. Each of them embodies valuable truths about the real writer, truths that were perhaps more manifest to the general public than they were to the diffident and humble Chesterton, who could not recognize himself in the idealized versions of himself which his admiring readers seem to have created. The first of the legendary images was the one which existed at the time of Chesterton's death on June 14, 1936. This public image was that of the great apologist and spokesman for Catholic Orthodoxy. He was the Catholic polemicist who carried on seemingly endless controversies with Dean Inge, Bishop Barnes and Professor Coulton, as well as much more relaxed controversies with such friendly enemies as Bernard Shaw and H.G. Wells. Some of this religious controversy took place at public debates and meetings; some of it was broadcast over B.B.C. radio where Chesterton's talks became a regular and popular feature of English broadcasting in the early thirties. In these talks and in the debates with Shaw, Bertrand Russell or and with himself, he reviewed books in the radio talks or commented on the events of the day. But most of the debate and discussion helped form the public legend about Chesterton as a teacher who was primarily a controversialist. Some of his greatest writing originated in such debates. *The Everlasting Man* (1925), for example, is at one level, at least, simply an answer to the irreligious evolutionary version of history which H. G. Wells presented to a vast popular audience in the early twenties in his *Outline of History.*

Nevertheless, in the final decades of his life, the view of Chesterton the teacher was that of a doctrinaire defender of the Church. More and more, as his reputation declined among a Protestant and increasingly secular public in his own country, it grew internationally among Catholic readers. Chesterton's triumphant tours of Ireland, of Poland, of Canada, and of the United States in the twenties and again in the early thirties confirmed a public impression that he was above all a polemicist. In 1930, for example, when he visited Toronto for the second time, his visit was sponsored by a Catholic college and he met privately with the Catholic Archbishop of Toronto, with the great Catholic philosopher Etienne Gilson, and with the local Catholic religious community of the Basilian Fathers who were his hosts during that visit. The books written during these later years also tended to confirm the same public view of him as a religious teacher. The later volumes of the Father Brown stories, for example, emphasize the distinctive religious doctrines which divided the Catholic minority in the English-speaking world from the non-Catholic majority among whom they lived.

Even the circumstances of Chesterton's death combined to strengthen the public image of him as a Catholic educator. By the spring of 1936, it was clear to everyone that he was aging, even though at sixty-two he was still not really old. The

suddenness of his death was a shock. But it had become increasingly clear that he had never completely recovered from the heart and kidney ailment which had almost taken his life in the autumn of 1914. The earlier illness, with its drama of months of coma, had been a national event in Britain. The final illness was somehow a more domestic and more Catholic event. During the final years, pictures of him in newspapers were likely to be pictures of his visits to Catholic schools and hospitals. A recent biography contains a typical picture of a very sick-looking Chesterton surrounded by nuns at the opening of a Beaconsfield Catholic hospital (Barker). When death did occur, the Catholic aspects of his death were emphasized. Maisie Ward would point out that he had just returned from a pilgrimage to Lisieux and that Pope Pius Xl's telegram of sympathy to his widow describing him as "gifted defender of the Catholic Faith" conferred on him the same royal title which an earlier pope had given to Henry VIII. Then there was the report about Father Vincent McNabb's visit to his deathbed. It was said that Father Vincent first chanted the *Salve Regina,* as though Chesterton were a dying Dominican friar, and that, seeing Chesterton's pen on the table next to his bed and remembering the great book about St. Thomas that Chesterton had written a few years earlier, he then picked up the pen and kissed it.

These were the sorts of stories which helped confirm one particular legend about Chesterton, a writer who was pre-eminently a teacher of Orthodox Catholic truth. They were also the sorts of stories which provoked a fairly swift reaction to the legend. George Orwell, who was always sympathetic to some of Chesterton's political ideas and whose own earliest writing was published in Chesterton's magazine *G.K.'s Weekly,* was only expressing a conventional opinion when he described Chesterton as "a writer of considerable talent who chose to suppress both his sensibilities and his intellectual honesty in the cause of Roman Catholic propaganda" (365-66). Nor did his legendary status help Chesterton for long among his fellow Catholics. As the years wore on, many Catholic readers began to regard him as an embarrassment: he was the champion of a minority who were beginning to resent the need for such help.

However, the most striking effect of the image about Chesterton as a Catholic educator was the way in which it obscured the memory of an earlier and equally significant image of him. If Chesterton had died (as he almost did) in November of 1914, he would be remembered as a very different public figure than that of a Roman Catholic controversialist. The image of an aging and ailing Catholic apologist of the twenties and thirties replaced the memory of another public image, that of the *wunderkind* whose meteoric rise to fame in the early years of the century made him one of the best-known literary figures of the age. For it was the literary and imaginative character of his work which was most highly regarded in those Edwardian years; and it was literary and imaginative writing which he poured out in almost inexhaustible abundance for his Edwardian readers. During those years before the First World War, he wrote his Browning and Dickens biographies, and almost all his Dickens criticism; his critical study of Bernard Shaw; the best of the Father Brown stories; the best of his verse, including his greatest poem, *The Ballad of the White Horse* (1911); and all but one of his novels; in addition to a seemingly

inexhaustible flood of journalism, so vast that even today some of the best of it remains hidden in a score or so of the obscure journals on which he loved to lavish his best and wittiest writing. No wonder, then, that these were the years of Chesterton's greatest influence.

But all the while another legend about him was being slowly created. The exuberance and fun of the young Chesterton were decisive elements in the creation of this public image. He had acquired what he himself regarded as the surest sign of being a sort of classic: he was quoted by people who had never read his work. His sayings were rapidly becoming proverbs. Everyone knew a Chesterton joke or a joke about Chesterton. He was the delight of the cartoonist. He was one of the few writers who was recognized simply by his initials. It was said that the fame of his weekly article signed *"GKC"* in the Liberal London's *Daily News* required that twice the usual number of that newspaper be printed for the Saturday edition in which his column appeared. In 1908, he published two of his most brilliantly imaginative autobiographies: the novel *The Man Who Was Thursday,* which succeeds both as a fictional autobiography and as a meditation and retelling of the Book of Job; and a personal philosophical treatise, *Orthodoxy,* which tells the story of his attempt to invent a new religion and of his subsequent discovery that it had already been invented and was called Christianity. "I did not make it," he writes. "God and humanity made it and it made me" *(Orthodoxy* 12). In November 1911, in Cambridge, an audience of nearly a thousand people came to hear him speak to a student club about the future of religion and heard him say that the Christian religion, which the secular world thought dead, was about to rise again from the dead: "Personally 1 think we shall win," he told his young audience. [The text of this talk, as it was reported in the *Cambridge Magazine* of January 20, 1912, was reprinted in the August, 1985, issue of the *Chesterton Review,* pp. 285-300. Chesterton's comment is found on page 289.] In 1913, at the insistence of his friend Bernard Shaw, he wrote his first play, *Magic.* Again, there were strong autobiographical elements to this imaginative writing, but the play was also an extension of the sort of public debate (about the reality of the supernatural) which Chesterton loved to provoke and which he had been conducting for years (with writers such as Robert Blatchford, Belfort Bax, and Bernard Shaw), in the pages of newspapers and magazines.

Yet this literary achievement was only one aspect of Chesterton's Edwardian reputation as the Orthodox educator of a nation. The most endearing characteristic of his public image was the sense in which it expressed his deep commitment to, and positive engagement with, the on-going life of his age. It was as though the abundance of his imaginative creation, the generous and even careless abandon with which he worked in a half-dozen literary *genres,* and the laughter and fun which irradiated his work were only outward signs of some inner quality which his public valued more than any of the hastily written literary works which expressed it. It was Chesterton whom they loved rather than any particular Chesterton book or essay or poem. The Edwardian Chesterton was the embodiment of what the Edwardians valued most about themselves and about their own national tradition. The young journalist had become the repository for the hopes and ideals of his readers. He

expressed for them the spirit of one of the most exuberant ages since the Elizabethan. He embodied Edwardian energy and optimism and the spirit which he was later to describe in his biography of St. Thomas Aquinas as "the universal hunger and even fury for life" (113).

He also embodied Edwardian fears about the threat to their Christian traditions. In his important book about Chesterton, Professor John Coates writes of an Edwardian cultural crisis. He points out that the people for whom Chesterton wrote and on whom he relied for his enormous popularity were an inwardly confused people. No longer guided by the sources of Christian wisdom, they had not yet abandoned the Orthodox Christian moral tradition which they had inherited but which they scarcely understood. Intellectually curious but only recently educated, they were absorbing uncritically the alien and irreligious ideas contained in the poisonous newspaper trash which they were reading in this, the first age of mass journalism. Yet at the same time and in the same newspapers and magazines, they were also reading Chesterton and savouring the intellectual food which he provided as a sort of antidote to that poison.

Chesterton's legendary fame in the Edwardian era was ultimately based on this role as a moral teacher and as a defender of an endangered orthodox tradition. It is appropriate that he should later write a play about Dr. Samuel Johnson and that he should once appear in an Edwardian pageant dressed as that great eighteenth-century moralist whose thinking was so closely akin to his own. Although he was fond of argument and was a formidable debater, he understood that the malaise of the age could not be dealt with by ordinary argumentation alone. Something else was needed to cleanse the moral atmosphere of the age in which he lived. He, and the Anglo-Catholic group with whom he worked, understood that it was useless to evangelize individuals, unless ways were also found to evangelize the moral atmosphere which affected individuals as decisively as did the physical atmosphere in which they lived. Chesterton saw his literary vocation as being essentially pastoral. Like one of the Victorian sages whom he so closely resembled, he saw literature as a form of prophecy. The controversies with Robert Blatchford and Shaw, the writing of *Heretics* and *Orthodoxy,* and indeed all his writing during these pre-War years were part of a single effort to exercise influence on the moral and religious shape of a new and irreligious age which he sensed was coming into existence. As he later explained in his 1927 University of London centenary lecture, "Culture and the Coming Peril," the essential task was, in his words, “training the minds of men to act upon the community” and “making the mind itself a source of creation and of critical action.” And since the collective mind that he was attempting to influence was still in some sense Christian, his work was essentially a work of an Orthodox Christian educator. In his *Autobiography,* he writes about the religious atmosphere of the age in prophetic language: "I have been granted, as it were, a sort of general view or vision of all that field of negation and groping and curiosity. And I saw pretty much what it all really meant. There was no Theistic Church; there was no Theosophical Brotherhood; there were no Ethical Societies; there were no New Religions. But I saw Israel scattered on the hills as sheep that have not a shepherd" (Chesterton 175).

Even Chesterton's apparent limitations were a help to him in performing this immense task of Orthodox Christian education. Since his marriage to Frances Blogg, a devout Anglo-Catholic, he had been in contact with the Anglican theologians who were working out a strategy for evangelization of English culture. He lectured and wrote for the Christian Social Union and wrote for their journal, the *Commonweal,* as well as for less congenial journals, such as the *Church Socialist Quarterly,* the *Hibbert Journal,* and A. R. Orage's Socialist *New Age;* and he was friend of many of the Anglican social theologians, including Henry Scott Holland, Bishop CharlesGore, Charles Masterman, and that radical Christian, Conrad Noel. He learned much from them, and it seems clear that they learned a great deal from him. But he was never an Anglican in the ordinary sense of the word. He seems seldom to have attended Anglican religious services; he was never confirmed as an Anglican; and in many ways his religious position still possessed some of the vagueness of the Liberal Unitarian universalism which characterized his childhood home. But if these things were weaknesses, they were weaknesses which made him a reassuring and comfortable figure to the vaguely religious Edwardian reading public for whom he wrote.

It was an additional advantage that he was not clearly identified with any religious group. He was a sacramental Christian who could speak to evangelical Protestants and other non-sacramental Christians unthreateningly, because he was not a Roman Catholic. Through his writings, he could work out a religious position which was all the more persuasive, because he seemed to include in it every good thing which he saw in contemporary life. He was one of the liberals whom Orthodox Catholics feared, but he was also one of the Catholic Christians whom the liberals persecuted. In his own person he seemed to include a genial friendliness to apparently irreconcilably hostile points of view, and yet he also vigorously opposed any attempt to tone down or to compromise strongly held views. It is somehow typical of him that his novels seldom have a single hero or a single point of view. It is as though he himself were the hero of his early novels. He is both Adam Wayne and Auberon Quin, the heroes of his first novel, *The Napoleon of Notting Hill* (1904); he is also Evan MacIan and James Trumbull, the heroes of his first directly religious novel, *The Ball and the Cross* (1910). He is both the fanatic and the critic of fanaticism; the Catholic extremist and the militant Socialist hostile to such extremism. Somehow he is able to sympathize with both sides of most important questions. He is like the Church that he describes in *Orthodoxy,* welcoming every point of view and seeking ways of reconciling apparently opposite points of view with each other. Always, his genius is inclusive, and he remains a genial embodiment of a singularly ecumenical sort of orthodoxy: "When the word 'orthodoxy' is used here," he writes cheerfully in his book by that name, "it means the Apostles' Creed, as understood by everybody calling himself Christian until a very short while ago, and the general historical conduct of those who held such a creed" *(Orthodoxy* 18).

His way of writing also confirmed the Edwardian legend about him as a sort of amusing and good-natured teacher of Christian Orthodoxy, one who loved to use

the cryptic language of riddle and parable. This language of the imagination was for him a means of discovering truths which were inaccessible to discursive reason. Trained as an artist at the Slade School of Art, he seldom exercised his skill professionally. Yet, in another sense, all his best writings are examples of a professional artist's work. Moreover, the preference for picture and parable was clearly connected with his view of life. In one of his earliest essays, he writes, "All men are allegories, puzzles, earthly stories with heavenly meanings" ("The Literary Portraits of G. F. Watts" 80). His imaginative and inclusive view of life was expressed through a literary practice which was also imaginative and inclusive. The hero of his novel *The Poet and the Lunatics* explains, "I doubt whether any of our action is really anything but an allegory. I doubt whether any truth can be told except in a parable" (92). Everything therefore was grist for Chesterton's journalistic mill. He was spinning a life-enhancing art open to everything that was happening in a rapidly changing world. As a defender of tradition and as a critic of modernity, he had nevertheless found a way of interpreting modern life in a positive light as an on-going revelation of religious truths. All this was immensely attractive and reassuring to his troubled readers. What the Edwardian Chesterton was accomplishing was a work which is difficult to describe in ordinary language: he was a creator of parables who insisted that life itself was a parable; he was a lover of legends who, being a figure larger than life, could be described only in legendary terms. For T. S. Eliot, he was the man who kept alive the Christian minority; for Gilson, he was "one of the deepest thinkers who ever existed" (Ward 526); and for ordinary readers he was simply "our Chesterton" (Ward 553).

The problem for admirers of Chesterton's educational work is the reconciliation of these two apparently contradictory legends about him as a teacher of Orthodoxy. The aggressive champion and apologist for Catholicism appears to be an utterly different person from the relaxed Edwardian figure who seemed to include in his person every point of view without being identified with any one of them. The parable-creating artist with an incurable curiosity about and friendliness towards the variety and comedy of human existence seems to have little in common with the religious controversialist who argues endlessly with the liberal rationalists of the twenties and thirties. Even his journalism in the last decades of his life seemed different and somehow narrower. The weekly articles in the *Illustrated London News* and a score of other journals and newspapers, which had made him so much a part of the English cultural scene, continued, but the later Chesterton seemed to devote more and more of his flagging energies to the support of the Distributist League and to his magazine, *G. K.'s Weekly*, the magazine which was the league's organ. To the puzzlement of friends and critics, he insisted on centering his career and his journalism on the maintenance of a small and seemingly unimportant magazine and on an apparently doomed social movement, a movement, which seemed to many then as it seems to many today to be the most hopeless and quixotic of all the lost causes which he had ever supported. There was a sort of Chestertonian paradox here. It seemed as though the later and more Catholic Chesterton was less Catholic and more sectarian than the early and religiously uncommitted non-Catholic Chesterton.

The attempt to understand and perhaps to resolve that conflict ought to be the main work of all Chesterton criticism. Inevitably, there will be disagreements about which view of Chesterton the teacher of Orthodoxy represents the more valuable and more permanent aspects of his achievement, but it should also be possible to rescue all that is best in each of the competing views. Chesterton is, after all, a single human being as well as a single writer. There may have been development or decline in his life, but his life also represented continuity and integration. There must be some underlying principle to explain both the sharp divisions which gave rise to such contradictory public images and the hidden unity which somehow integrated an apparently fragmented and contradictory personality.

Chesterton criticism has only touched upon this problem. L'Abbé Yves Denis, whose book *G. K. Chesterton: Catholicisme et Paradox* gives him special authority to speak on the subject, insists that Chesterton is primarily a Catholic writer. Brocard Sewell, who, in the late twenties and thirties, knew Chesterton personally and who worked on the staff of *G. K.'s Weekly*, insists that Distributism was the central preoccupation of Chesterton's life. John Coates, the author of *G. K. Chesterton and the Edwardian Cultural Crisis*, finds the key to Chesterton's work in the Edwardian years. Other critics make little attempt to connect the teacher as controversialist with the teacher as reconciler. Yet there is scope here for biographical criticism and especially for that sort of biographical criticism which would explain the ways in which “madness” was for Chesterton both an inner and deeply felt personal threat, and a metaphor for the disorders which he recognized in the world outside his own mind. There are other threads of continuity between his early and his later work. The controversialist of the final years is foreshadowed in his early and prophetic work as a social critic, including his lonely opposition to the sinister Eugenics movement and his insights into the treatment of prisoners in Edwardian times, insights that are being rediscovered today by modem Christian sociologists.

Criticism will find other clues to the underlying unity in Chesterton's life in the ways in which all his work continues to attract the interest of widely divergent groups of readers. More ought to be said about what he means to Protestant Christians and to the Jewish community, which, offended by some of his writing, are often unaware of his noble defense of the Jewish people both at the beginning of his career during the Russian pogroms and at the end of his career when the Hitlerite persecution was just beginning, a defense which won a blessing for his memory from the American Zionist leader, Rabbi Stephen Wise. (Rabbi Wise's tribute to Chesterton, found in a letter to Cyril Clemens, dated September 8, 1937, is quoted by Ward 228.)

Perhaps the best hope for reconciling the two images of Chesterton’s educational work is found in criticism that pays closer attention to Chesterton's sacramental religious faith. It is this sacramental viewpoint which provides the best explanation for the underlying unity of his entire career as a writer. Sacramentalism

explains both his development as a thinker and his literary practice as great spokesman for Catholic Orthodoxy. Convinced that a revelation of God was to be found in material realities, he developed a kind of natural mysticism about the way in which these apparently profane realities are really sacramental signs of God. In an extremely early and very typical poem, he carries on a conversation with himself about the ultimate meaning of the material universe. He addresses himself as a sort of poet-seer, the mystic visionary who has discovered the secret meaning of ordinary life:

> Speller of the stones and weeds,
> Skilled in Nature's crafts and creed,
> Tell me what is in the heart
> Of the smallest of the seeds.

His answer to his own question summarizes his sacramental mysticism:

> God Almighty, and with Him
> Cherubim and Seraphim, Filling all
> etemity,—
> *Adonai Elahim.* ("The Holy of Holies" lines 9-16)

It was this belief which gave unity to the many facets of his Edwardian journalism. The religious critique of life which he presents in all his writings is ultimately based on a belief that God is present in material creation through signs and symbols. He believed that at the heart of the most profane realities, one is able to find God. He seldom wrote directly about religious subjects, but in the events of everyday life or in a piece of chalk or in a city street he found the central religious mystery. The title of an early Yeats play, *Where There Is Nothing, There Is God*, provokes him to comment: "The truth presented itself to me, rather in the form that where there is *anything*, there is God" (Chesterton, *Autobiography 150-51).*

Sacramentalism also explains the connection between Chesterton's social thought and his literary work. "The basis of Christianity as well as of Democracy," he writes, "is that man is sacred" *(Vox Populi, Vox Dei* 265). This sacredness, Chesterton believed, is derived directly from the Incarnation of the Word of God. Ever since creation, God was revealed in the material world he created. But ever since the Incarnation, God is most clearly revealed in the Holy One who became an ordinary human being and who continues to live in the world through the lives of ordinary people who are the luminous signs of His continuing presence:

> The Child that was ere worlds begun
> (... We need but walk a little way,
>
> We need but see a latch undone ...)
> The Child that played with moon and sun
> Is playing with a little hay. ("The Wise Men" 29-33)

In his book on St. Thomas Aquinas, Chesterton writes, "The Incarnation has become the central idea of our civilization" (*St. Thomas Aquinas* 118-19). Ordinary everyday human life is a sacramental re-enactment of the Gospel story. Again, Chesterton expresses his belief in the divine Word, who was made flesh and dwelt among us, most movingly in his verse:

> If these dried hearts indeed forget that holy dew
> on dusty floor,
> The Four Saints strong about the bed, The God that
> dies above the door; Such mysteries as might dwell
> with men, The secret like a stooping face
> Dim but not distant; and the night
>
> Not of the abyss, but the embrace. ("The Pagans")

This was the "secret" about the people whom Chesterton called the "secret people." They were the bewildered and inarticulate ones for whom he was both guide and spokesman. But from the viewpoint of his sacramental faith they were also infinitly more than anything they imagined themselves to be, for Chesterton saw in them the One whom he called the Everlasting Man.

Sacramental faith in the Incarnation also explains the reason why the Edwardian Chesterton and Chesterton the Catholic apologist are ultimately the same person. The Chesterton of the Catholic folk memory is the real Chesterton. The stubborn popular conviction of both friends and enemies that he was above all a spokesman for Catholic Orthodoxy turns out to be perfectly true. But why should anyone be surprised? Had not Chesterton himself always insisted that popular beliefs are almost always usually right? The story of Chesterton's slow transformation from a genial Edwardian figure into the somewhat sadder and more mature Chesterton of Catholic memory is also the story of his full incorporation into the Christian community which he had come came to recognize as the unique Sacrament of God.

The story of the private Chesterton which he confided to Father Knox ended happily. In spite of age and illness and growing misgivings about what was happening in the world around him, the sacraments of the Church had restored to him the youthful innocence and happiness which the Edwardian legend had always attributed to him, but which, to his sorrow, he was conscious that he did not then rightfully possess. His final words on this subject were uttered in 1922 in his hometown of Beaconsfield on the day on which he was received into full communion with the Catholic Church, and they were words of triumph:

> The sages have a hundred maps to give
> That trace their crawling cosmos like a tree,

They rattle reason out through many a sieve
That stores the sand and lets the gold go free.
And all these things are less than dust to me
Because my name is Lazarus and I live. ("The Convert" 9-14)

Nevertheless, long after that happy harmony was achieved, the two views of Chesterton the teacher continue to chase each other around the world, like the two versions of Father Brown which Chesterton describes in his last volume of detective stories. Perhaps neither of these images represents fully the depth and complexity of this extraordinary man, but each of the images of a legendary teacher expresses truths about him that are worth pondering some seventy years after his death. Both the fighter for Christian Orthodoxy and the gentle Edwardian imaginative artist are indeed a single person who is well worth knowing.

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