



G. K. CHESTERTON

&

FREEDOM

“It was my instinct to defend liberty in poor nations and poor families; that is, to defend the rights of man as including the rights of property; especially the property of the poor. I did not really understand what I meant by Liberty, until I heard it called by the new name of Human Dignity.”

—*Autobiography*

“The free man owns himself.

He can damage himself with either eating or drinking;
he can ruin himself with gambling.

If he does, he is certainly a damn fool,
and he might possibly be a damned soul; but if he may not,
he is not a free man any more than a dog.”

—*Broadcast talk, June 1935*

“Most modern freedom is at root fear. It is
not so much that we are too bold to en-
dure rules; it is rather that we are too
timid to endure responsibilities.”

—*What's Wrong With the World*

“The man of the true religious tradition understands two things:
liberty and obedience.

The first means knowing what you really want.
The second means knowing what you really trust.”

—*G. K.'s Weekly, August 18, 1933*

FR. LAN BOYD ON CHESTERTON & FREEDOM

“The two ideas upon which Christian theology was based were the ideas of Reason and Liberty.” So said Chesterton in November 1911 in his address to a meeting at Cambridge organized by a student club who called themselves “The Heretics.” He went on to say that Reason was real. In his opinion, it was a simple fact apparent to the human mind. As for Liberty, Chesterton called it something “much more dangerous and difficult. [It] was itself a supreme and sacred thing that they could really admire and for which they would risk things, even terrible things.” Chesterton then described the role of freedom in the very Creation of the World. “In this manner they (Christians) said God might wish to make the world—if indeed there be a God and a purpose in the Universe as, the Universe would be relieved to hear, Mr. Shaw admitted—desiring not so much to control His world as to free it, desiring to make his creatures creators in their turn, responsible for the worlds they created. And, according to the old Christian theory, He was standing aside to-day from the evils of the world, not (as far as he could make out Mr. Shaw suggested) because He was unable to interfere with things bigger than Himself, but as a great magnanimous King who said, “I have sent my son into the fight, and he must do His best.”

He was pointing out to them that that was the old Christian theory.



“A child is the very sign and sacrament of personal freedom. He is a fresh free will; . . . He is something that his parents have freely chosen to produce and which they freely agree to protect . . . He has been born without the intervention of any master or lord . . . People who prefer the mechanical pleasures, to such a miracle, are jaded and enslaved. They are preferring the very dregs of life to the first fountains of life.”

**G. K. CHESTERTON
WAS BORN IN LONDON,
ON MAY 29, 1874**



“Bowing down in blind credulity, as is my custom, before mere authority and the tradition of the elders, superstitiously swallowing a story I could not test at the time by experiment or private judgment, I am firmly of opinion that I was born on the 29th. of May, 1874 on Campden Hill, Kensington; and baptized according to the formularies of the Church of England in the little church of St. George, opposite the large Waterworks Tower that dominated that ridge.”

—*Autobiography*

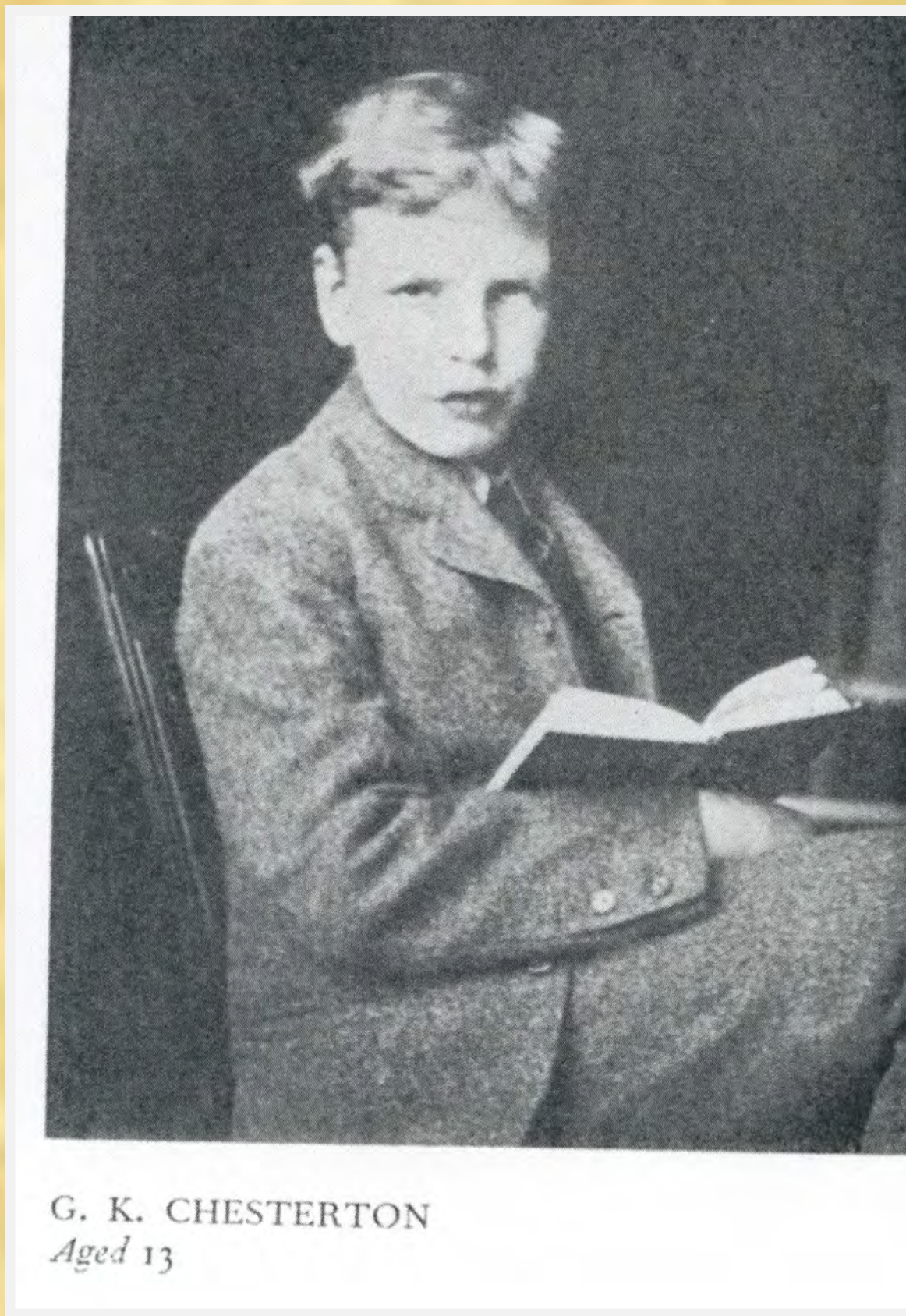


CHESTERTON & HIS BROTHER CECIL

“It is reported of me that when I was told that I possessed a brother, my first thought went to my own interminable taste for reciting verses, and then I said: ‘that’s all right; now I shall always have an audience.’”

—*Autobiography*

STUDENT AT ST. PAUL’S



“... But I do remember coming, almost seriously, to the conclusion that a boy must go to school to study the characters of his school masters.”

—*Autobiography*



CHESTERTON & IMAGINATION



“The baby
has known the dragon
intimately
ever since he had an
imagination.
What the fairy tale
provides for him
is a St. George
to kill the dragon . . .”

CHESTERTON & IMAGINATION

“Exactly what the fairy tale does is this: it accustoms him by a series of clear pictures to the idea that these limitless terrors have a limit, that these shapeless enemies have enemies, that these infinite enemies of man have enemies in the knights of God, that there is something in the universe more mystical than darkness, and stronger than strong fear.”

—The Red Angel
Tremendous Trifles



CHESTERTON & HIS FAMILY

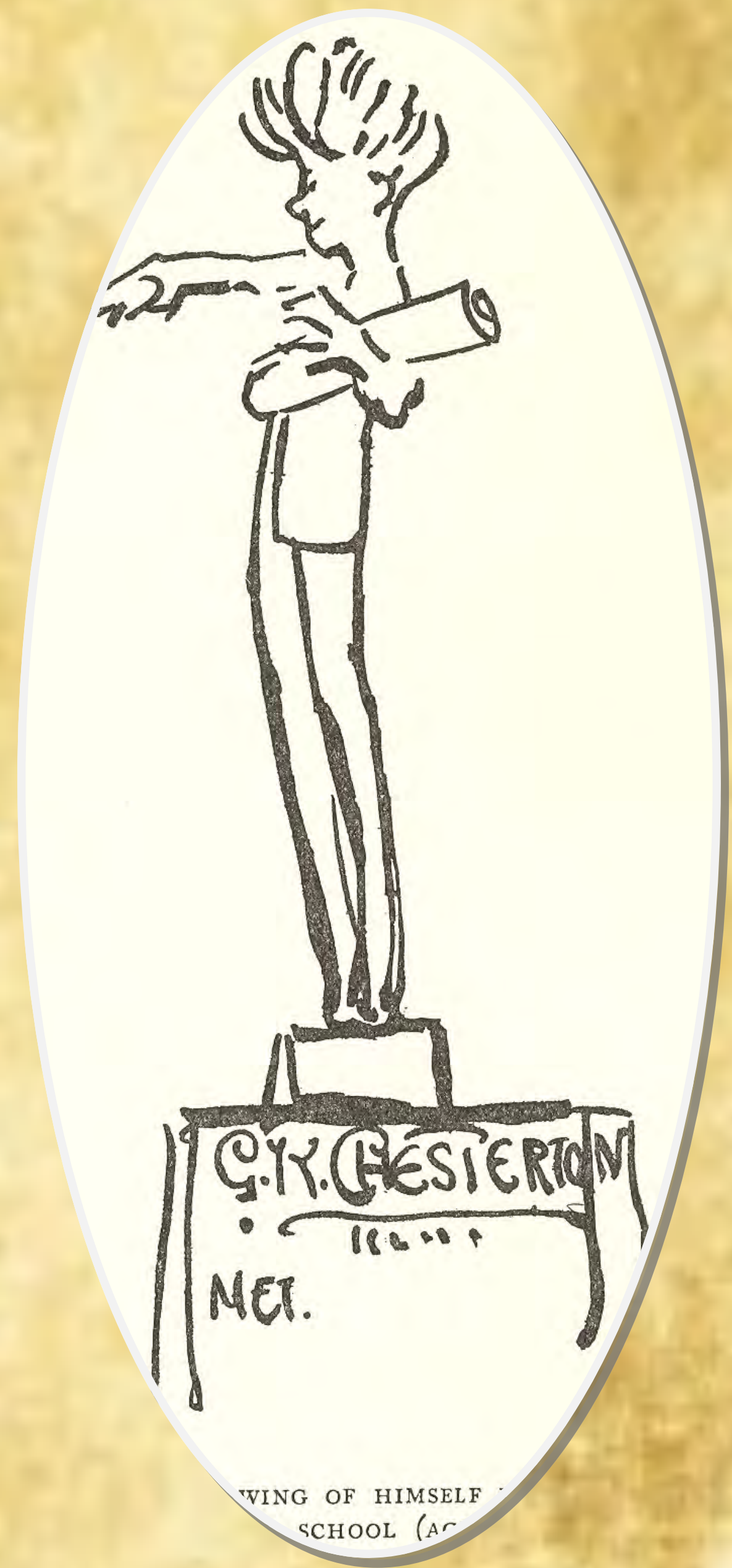
“ . . . He had an ideally happy home;
he was devoted to his friends,
and they to him;
he had not an enemy;
he had at least
a double dose of the faculty
of enjoying things, from a
nineteenth-century
sausage-and-mash to a
fifteenth century
Madonna and Child . . .
laughter was never far away,
in my recollection . . . ”



G. K. CHESTERTON

1892-1895 ATTENDS THE SLADE SCHOOL OF ART, LONDON

“ . . . Even as a boy, he knew the peculiar delight of creative work, both with a pencil and with pen; even as a boy, his sense of humour was enormously developed as were his sense of beauty and his sense of reverence . . . ”



“At this time I did not very clearly distinguished between dreaming and waking; not only as a mood, but as a metaphysical doubt, I felt as if everything might be a dream. It was as if I had myself projected the universe from within,”

THE NEW WITNESS

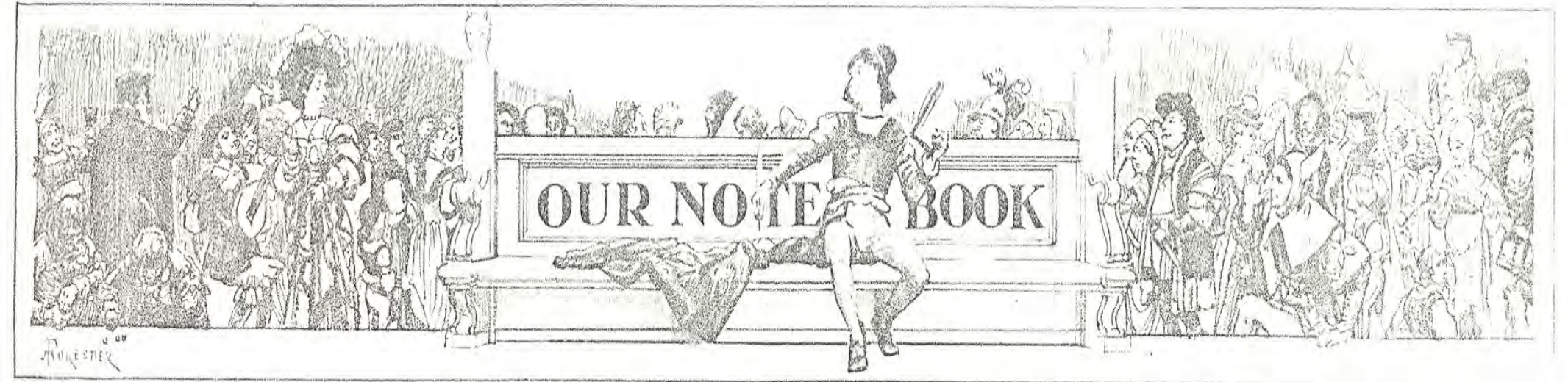
Vol. XVI. No. 416. FRIDAY, OCTOBER 29, 1920. [Registered at the G.P.O. as a Newspaper.] One Shilling.

Editorial Offices: 20-21, Essex Street, Strand, W.C. Telephone: City 1763

Edited by G. K. CHESTERTON

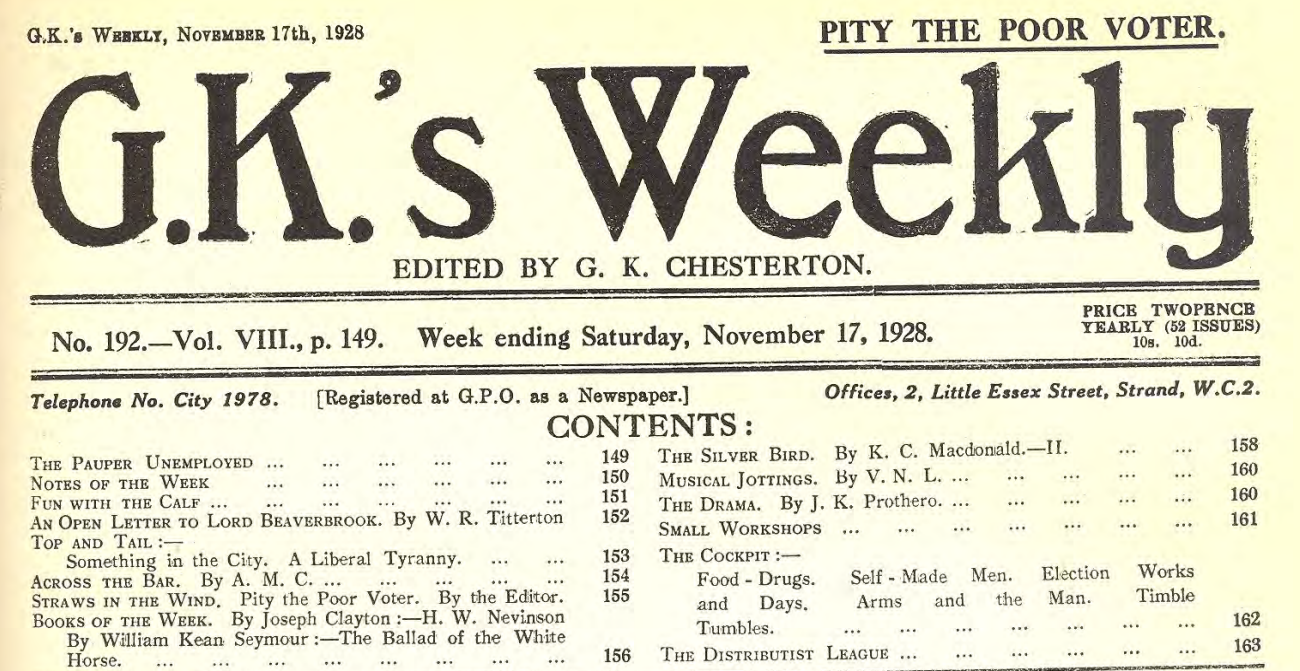
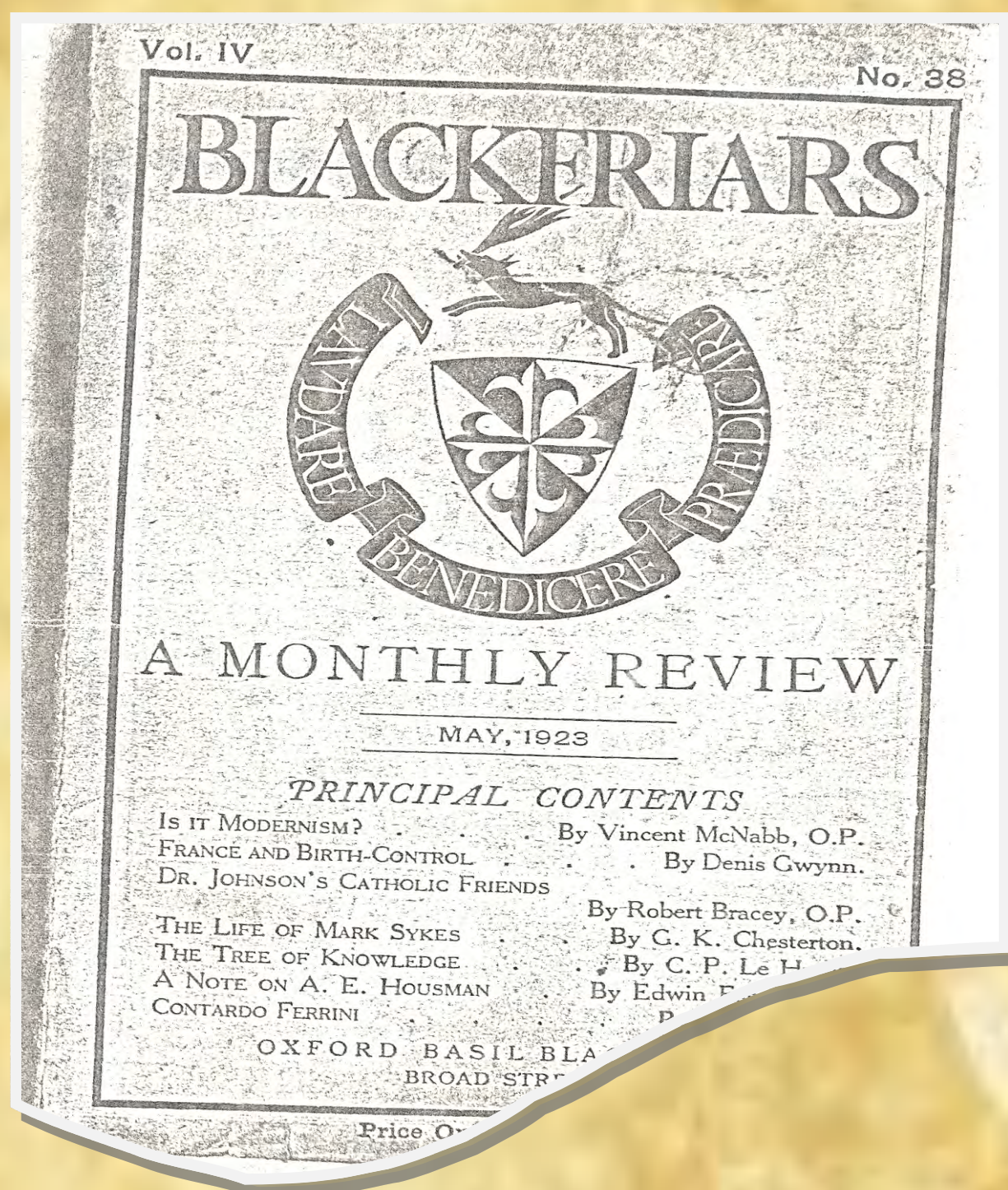
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By G. K. CHESTERTON.

CHESTERTON AS A FLEET STREET FIGURE



THE PAUPER UNEMPLOYED.

THE debate on the Address in reply to the King's Speech on the opening of the present Parliamentary session centred on what is commonly called the unemployment problem. That most pressing problem was treated throughout as a political problem, one with which to bait the Government and on which to fight elections. The Chancellor of the Exchequer justly said that the Opposition made no constructive suggestion, except that we should renew relations with Russia. Both sides discussed their remedies as palliatives, all hope of a cure being completely absent from the minds of Government and Opposition alike. The execution of work in advance of normal requirements by public bodies must soon end, particularly since Government assistance ceases when the local unemployment figure falls below 10 per cent.—a significant admission of helpless pessimism. Assisted emigration can absorb only an insignificant proportion of the unemployed; transference to other areas has no permanent effect, merely precipitating the need for further transference. All attempts at absorption of the unemployed miners into other industries must fail to solve the problem, for the same reason that the coal industry has failed—because the rest of the world is becoming independent of our industries as of our coal. The Chancellor of the Exchequer points out that the coal industry has recently dispensed with the services of 280,000 miners to its advantage, since it is now able to supply the whole demand for coal with its reduced staff. Every other industry of any size in this country is potentially in the same position—except one. The problem seen thus appears to be devoid of solutions—except one. The key to the problem lies in a phrase spoken by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, but he was too "inbriated with the exuberance of his own verbosity" or too doped with the air of that lethal Chamber to see the key, much more find the keyhole. He said that "the real problem was not the coal industry itself but that of the displaced coalminers and their dependants. That profound truth applies to the unemployed of all industries. The problem is one not of the industries but of persons, not one of the condition of industries but of the condition of men, women, and children, of families. In other words the "unemployment problem" so-called is not a problem of unemployment. It is not a question of finding work for the unemployed. There is a vast population of unemployed, not on the registers of the Labour exchanges, that gives no trouble to our consciences or to the Government. It is a nice, clean, orderly body of unemployed; not living in squalor, rebellious and discontented, in South Wales or the industrial areas, but residing around London and in the South Coast and County towns. It is not we but the Chancellor of the Exchequer who groups these two classes of unemployed together. He said in the debate, "In fact, that class [on the registers] has exactly the same right to draw their insurance benefits during temporary periods of unemployment, or when moving from one job to another, as those who draw dividends from the investments they have made." The difference lies in the fact that the registered unemployed, those of the



“Fleet Street crowds have been used to the ways of great men since Dr. Johnson and Dean Swift trod the paving stones. Chesterton is enveloped in an abstraction so mighty that it neutralizes the attention of the passer-by. His huge figure, enveloped in its cloak and shaded by a slouch hat, rolls through the streets unheeding his fellow beings. His eyes stare before him in a troubled dream; his lips move, muttering, composing, arguing . . . “

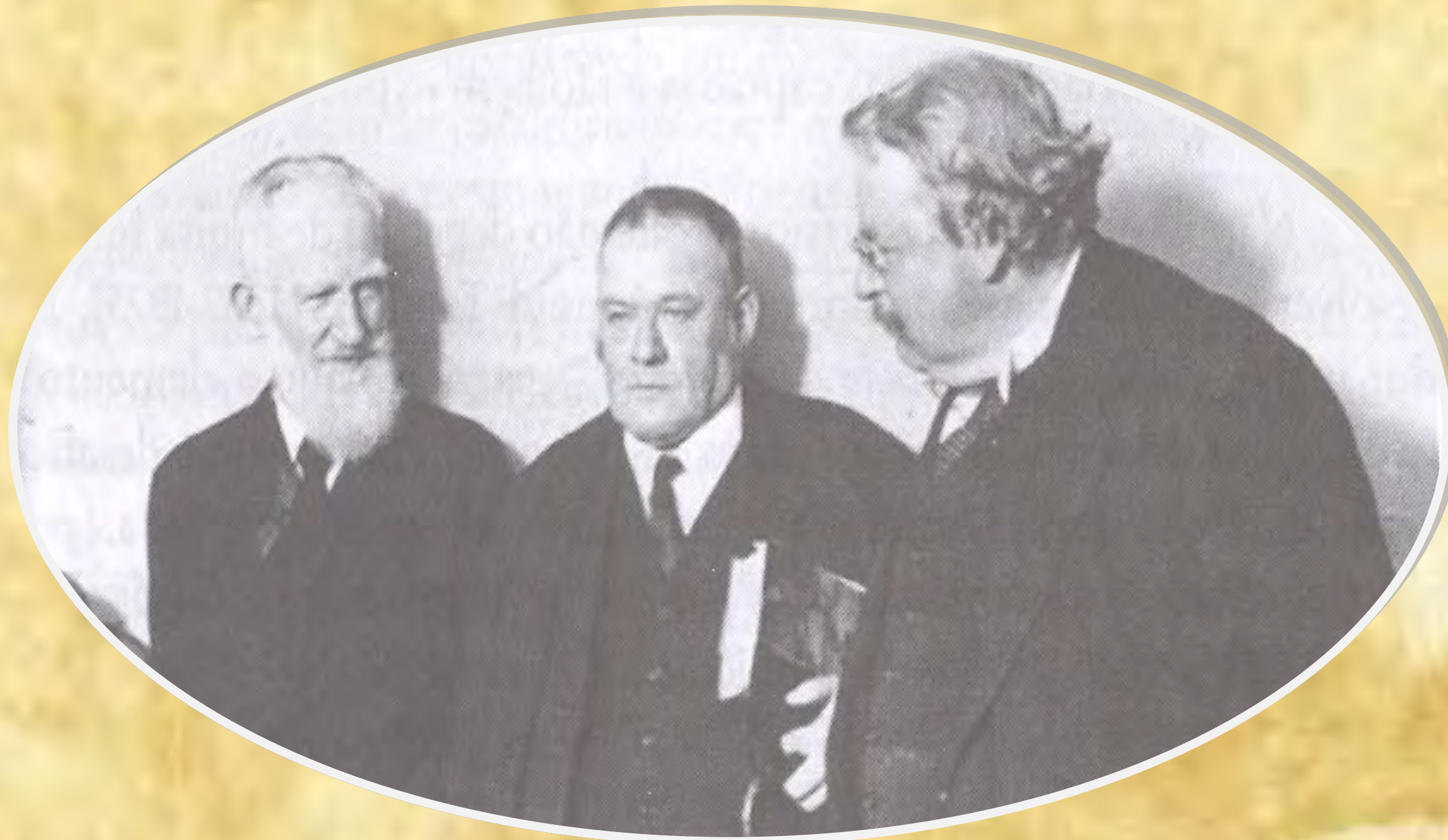


“... He is an imposing figure;
of immense proportions,
almost balloon-like with a fine
impetuous head which rises
over the surrounding crowds;
his hair is properly shaggy,
his countenance open and
frank, wearing indeed a curious
childlike unconsciousness in
spite of the though intensity
that clouds his brow.”

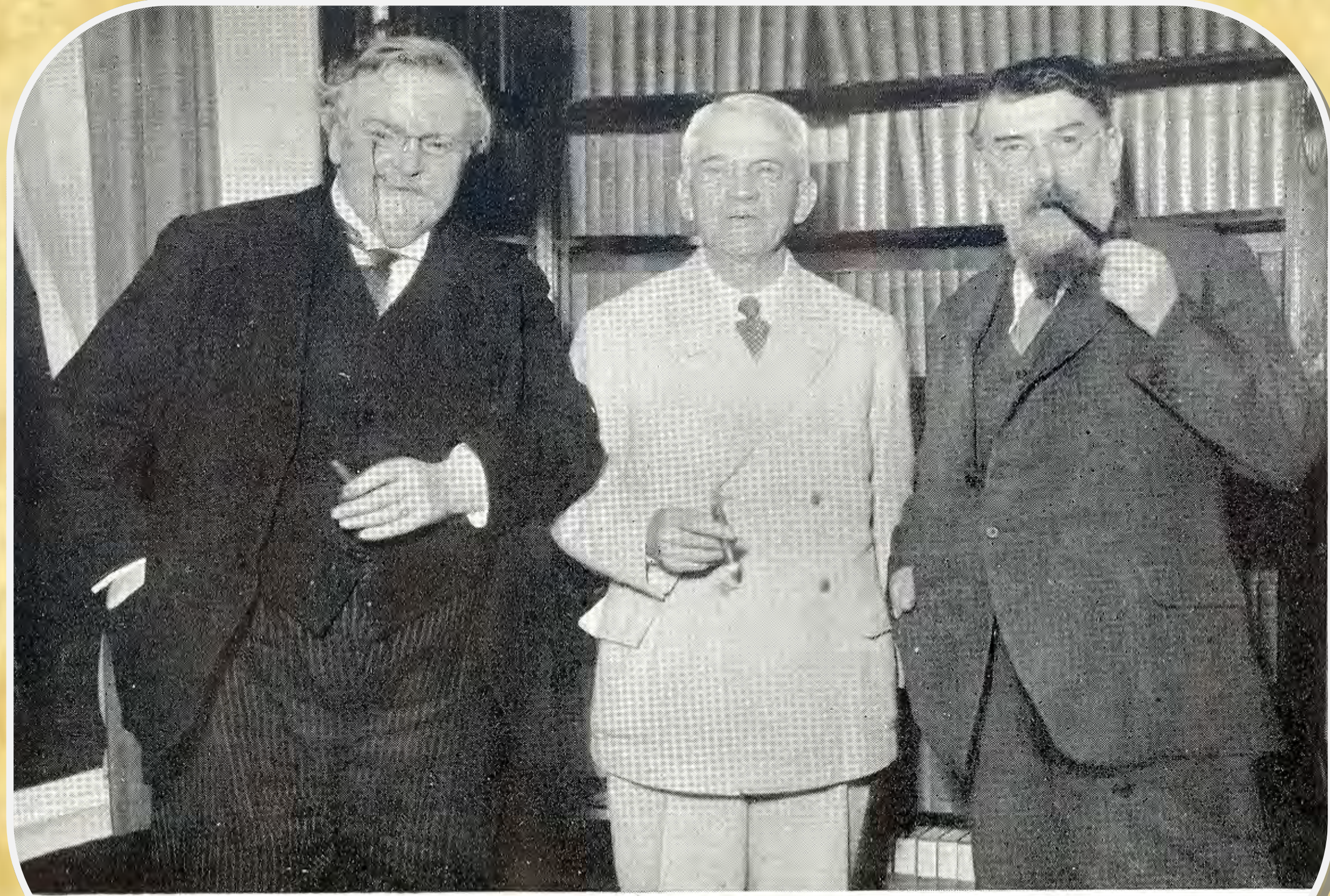
—Constance Smedley
T.P.'s Weekly
November 12, 1909

CHESTERTON'S FRIENDS

“Belloc and I must be horribly fascinating men. We never suspected it ourselves; but I have been forced to the belief by the discussion in the New Age. We offered certain objections to Socialism. We were honoured by being answered, not only by the most brilliant Socialists alive, but two of the most brilliant writers alive, who both happen to be Socialists. Bernard Shaw and H.G. Wells undertook to reply to us about Socialism.”



George Bernard Shaw, Hilaire Belloc and G. K. Chesterton



Chesterton

William Lyon Phelps

A.E. (George Russell)

“They both forgot to say anything whatever about Socialism, but they insisted on talking—with the outmost humour and luxuriance— about us. The fact can be tested by anyone who cares to look up the file of this paper and compare the articles. My article may have been vague and mystical, but it was about Socialism; Well’s article was all about me. Belloc’s article may have been harsh or academic, but it was about Socialism; Shaw’s article was about Belloc.”

— GKC



I may describe him as a Star
My best, my only friend
We wore one Hat, smoked one Cigar
(one standing at each end)
I always boldly ate the pears
An let him climb the tree
One hope, one toil
One pair of boots
Joined us eternally -



CHESTERTON & CONVERSION



Are you a Christian?

Certainly

What do you mean by
the word Christianity?

*A belief that a certain human
being whom we call
Christ stood to a
certain superhuman being
whom we call
God in a
certain unique
transcendental relationship
which we call sonship.*

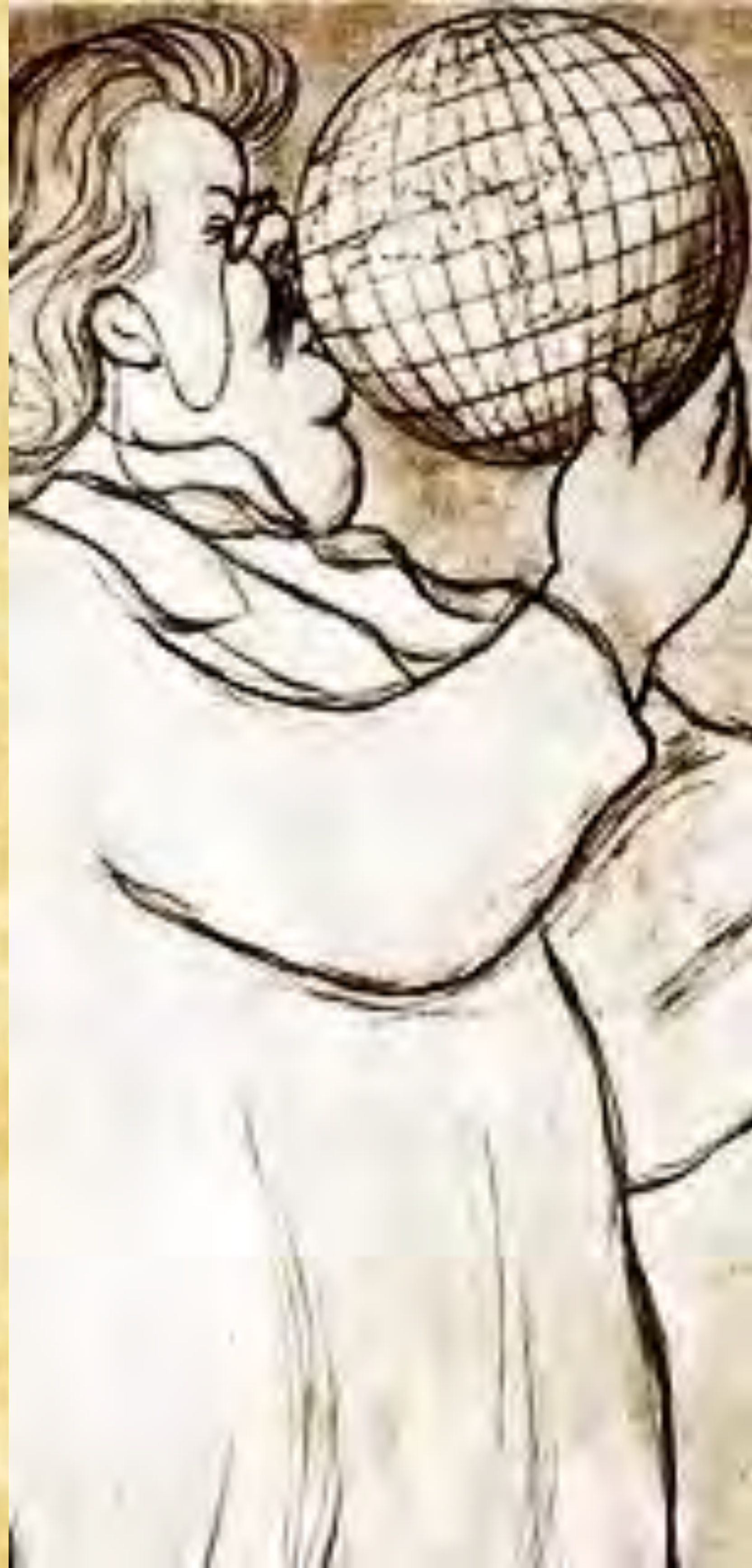
CHESTERTON & CONVERSION

What do you believe?

*I believe in a number of things.
I believe in religious matters,
I believe in Christianity and a
large number of other mystical
dogmas, ranging from the
mystical dogma that man is the
image of God to the mystical
dogma that all men are equal
and that babies should not be
strangled.*

Why do you believe it?

*Because I perceive life to be
logical and workable with
these beliefs and illogical and
unworkable without them.*



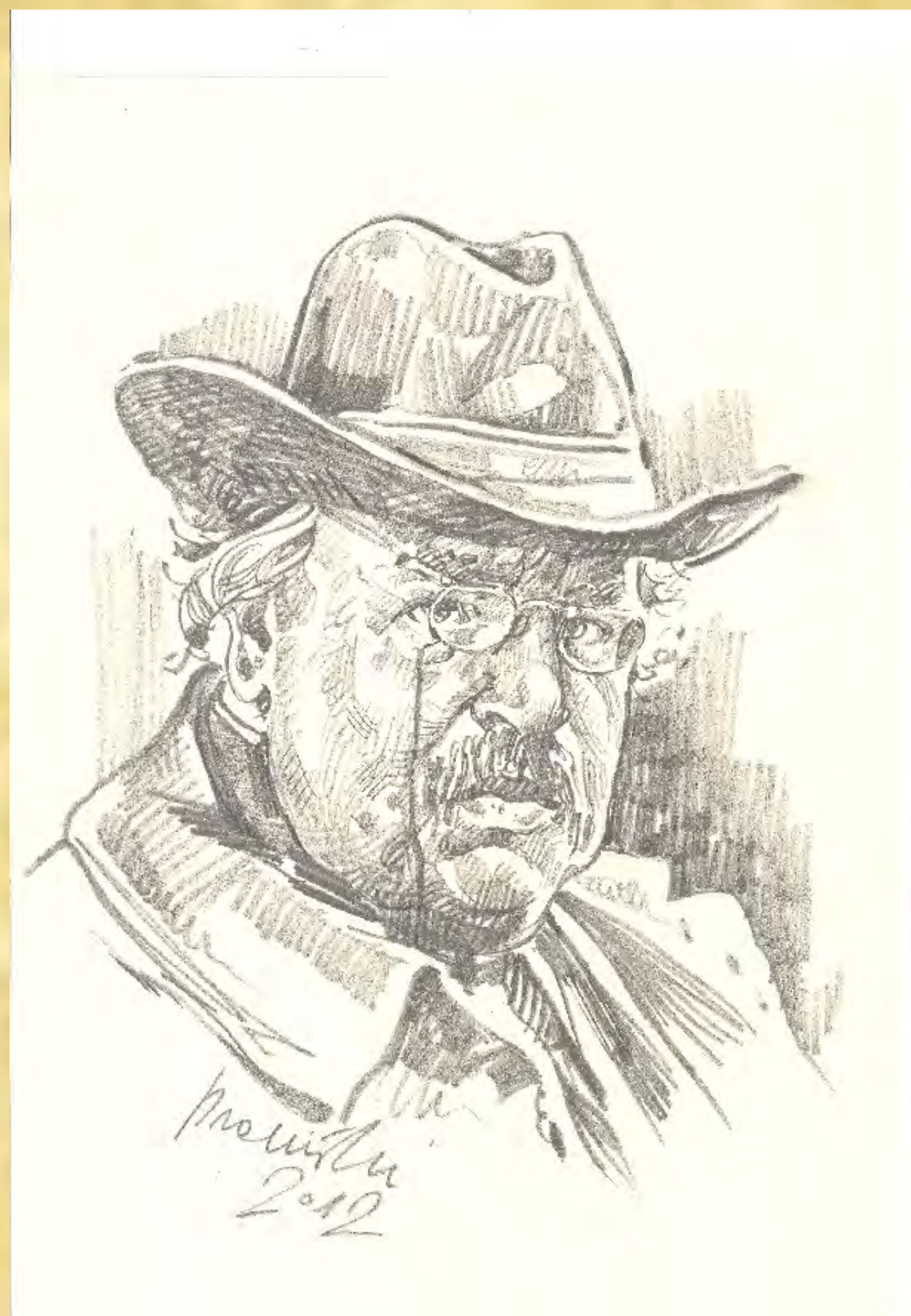
G. K. Chesterton was received into the Church on July 30, 1922.

When asked why he became a Catholic he replied:

“To get rid of my sins.”

CHESTERTON & CONVERSION

“When one believes in a creed, one is proud of its complexity, as scientists are proud of the complexity of science. A stick might fit a hole or a stone a hollow by accident. But a key and a lock are both complex. And if a key fits a lock. You know it is the right key.”



“The spike of dogma fitted exactly into the hole in the world—it had evidently been meant to go there—and then the strange thing began to happen. When once these two parts of the two machines had come together—all the other parts were repeating that rectitude, as clock after clock strikes noon. Instinct after instinct was answered by doctrine after doctrine.”

—*Orthodoxy*

CHESTERTON & HAPPINESS



*“You must learn to be
happy
in the quiet moments
when you remember
that you are
alive.”*

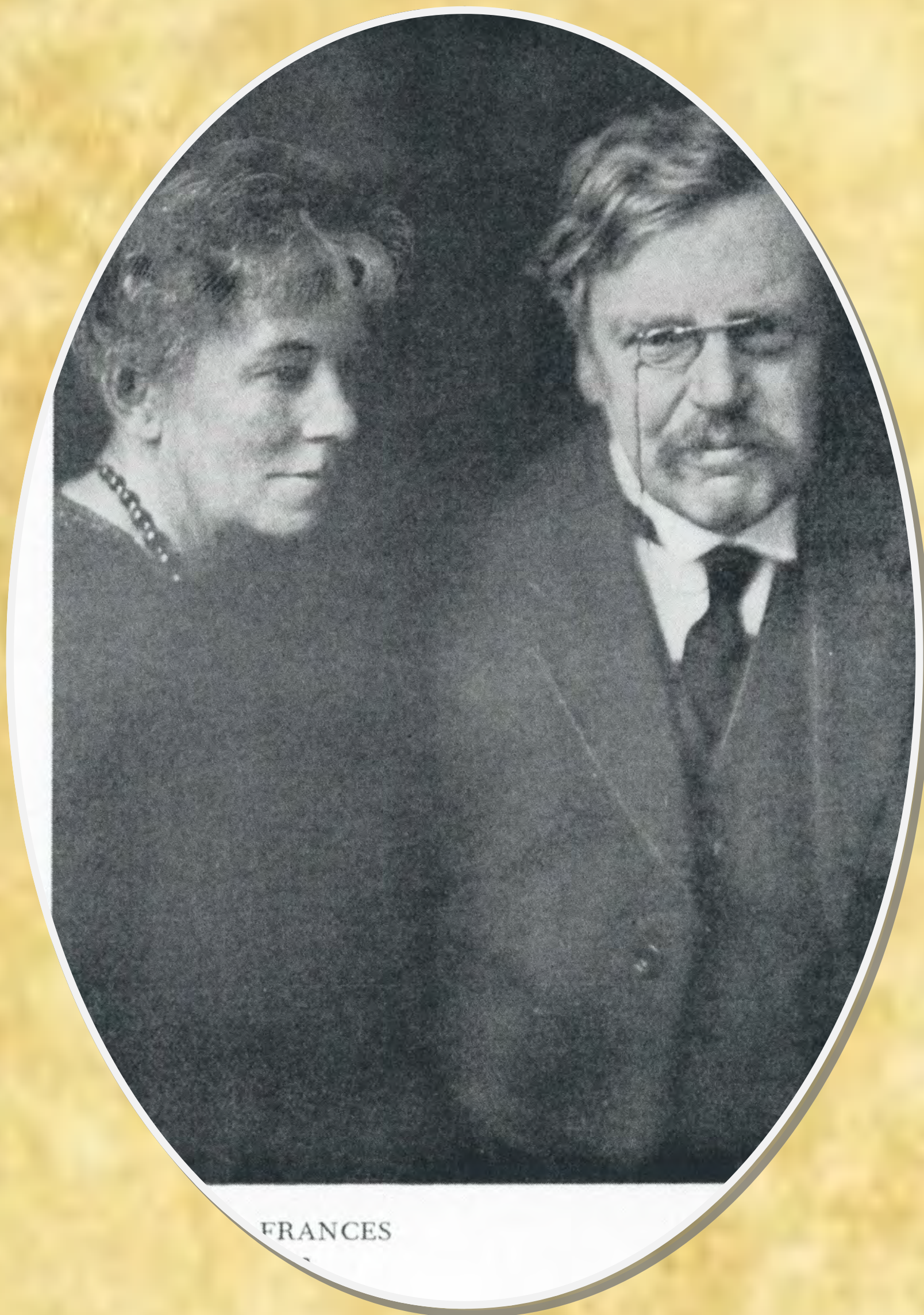
—Last *BBC* Broadcast, 1936

**CHESTERTON
&
MARRIAGE**



**1901
AFTER A LONG COURTSHIP
CHESTERTON MARRIES
FRANCES BLOG**

“I could never . . . tolerate any Utopia which did not leave to me the liberty for which I chiefly care, the liberty to bind myself. Complete anarchy would not merely make it



impossible to have any discipline or fidelity; it would also make it impossible to have any fun . . . the perils, rewards, punishments, and fulfillments of an adventure must be real, or the adventure is only a shifting nightmare. If I bet I must be made to pay, or there is no poetry in betting . . . if I vow to be faithful I must be cursed when I am unfaithful, or there is

no fun in vowing . . . for the purpose even of the wildest romance, results must be real; results must be irrevocable.

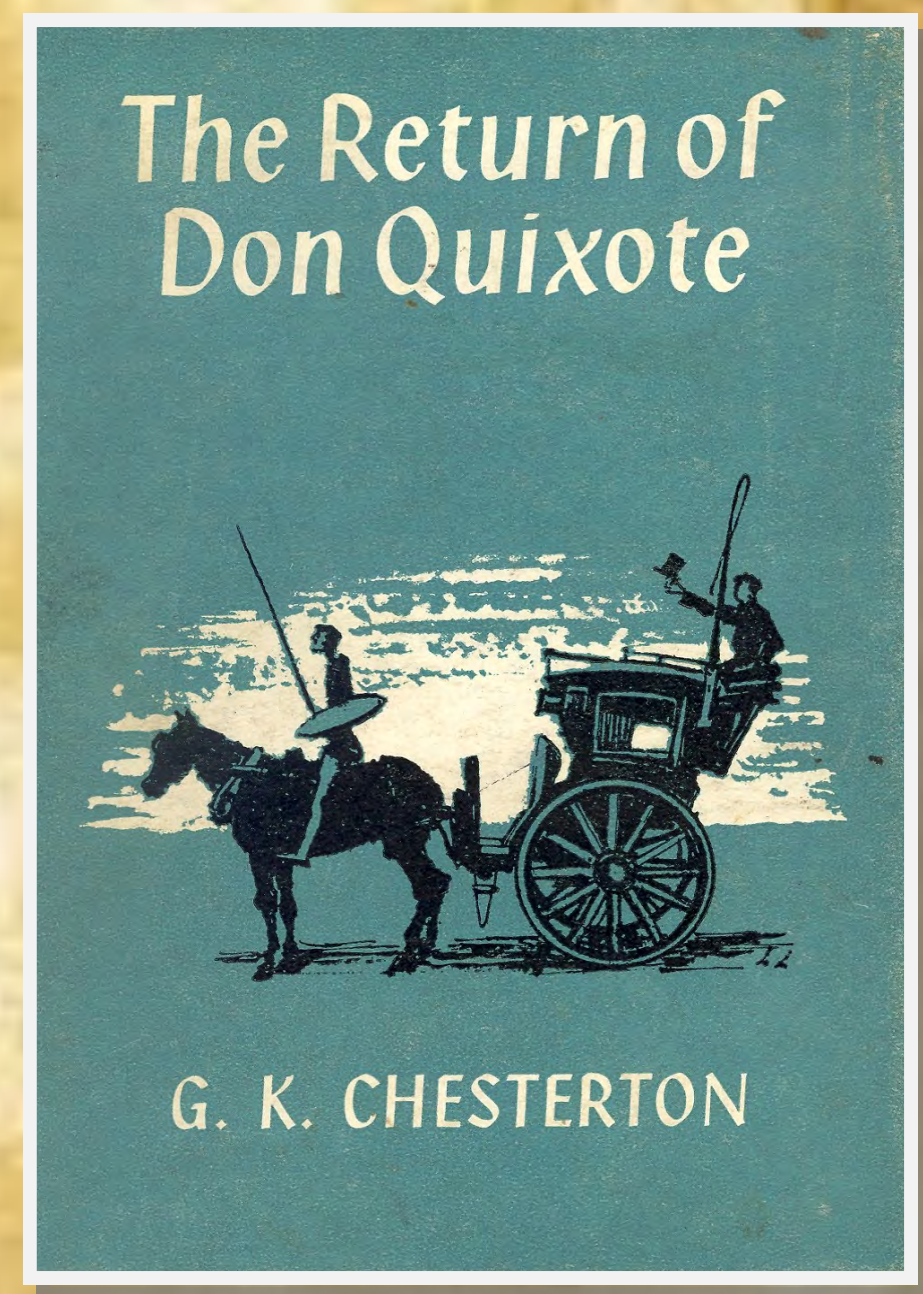
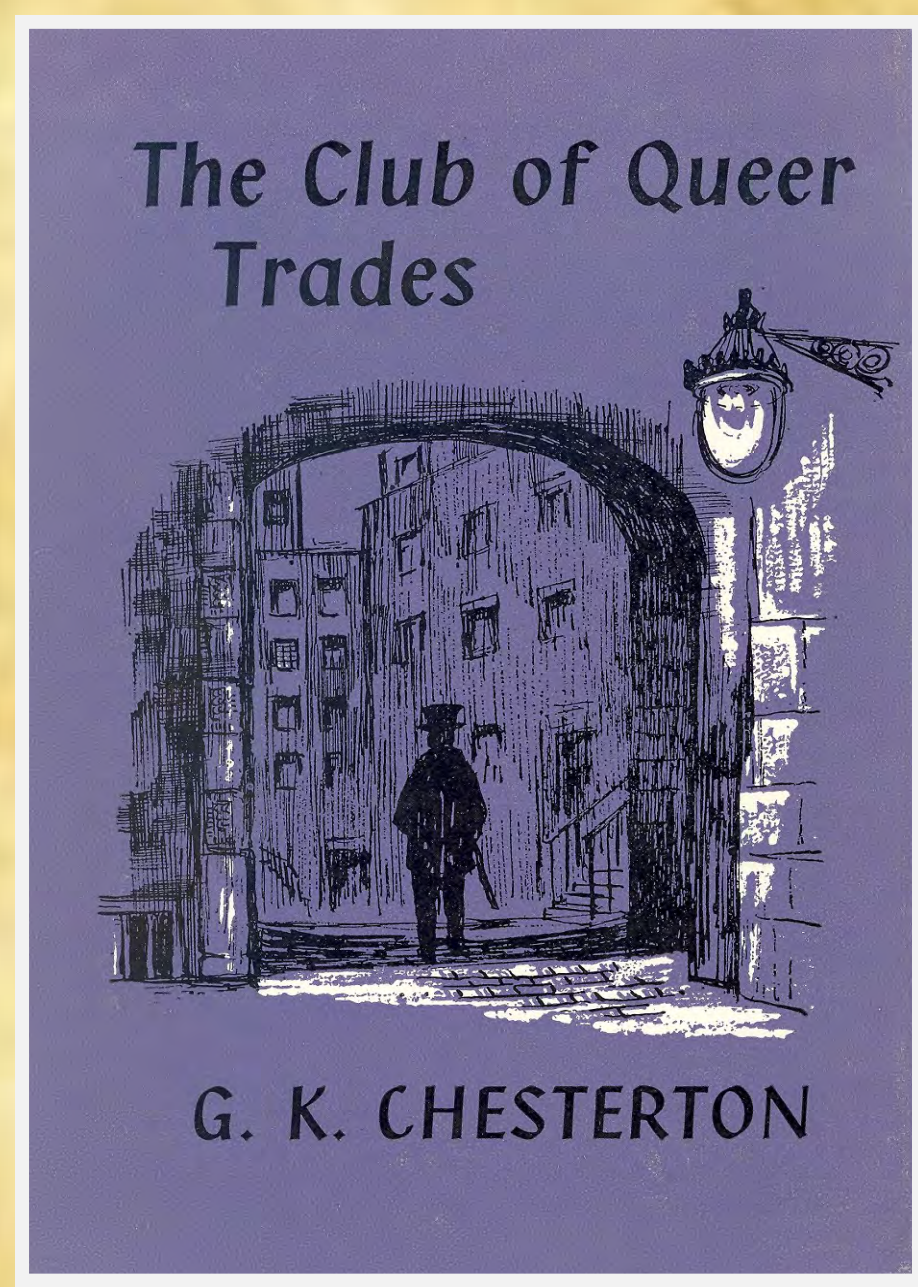
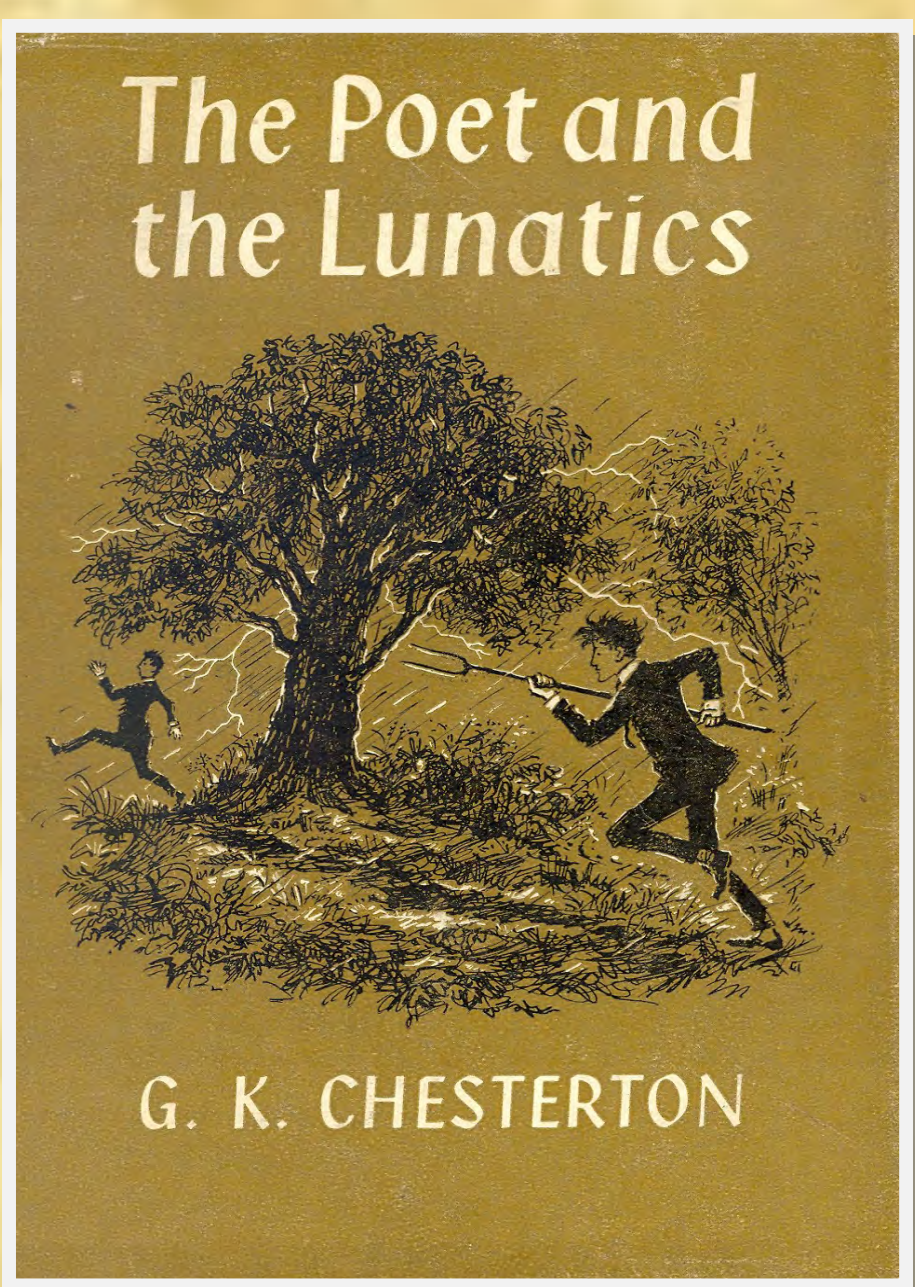
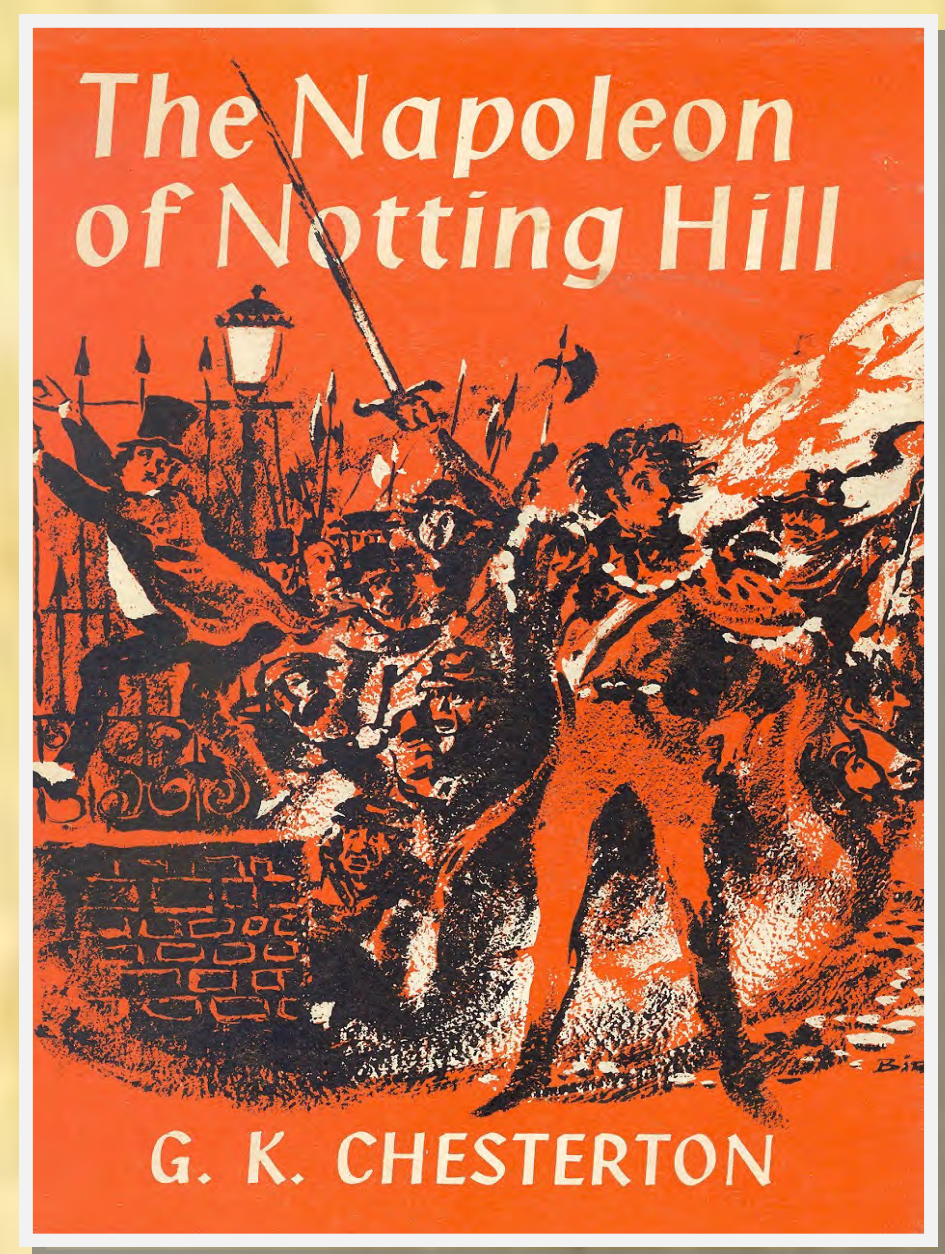
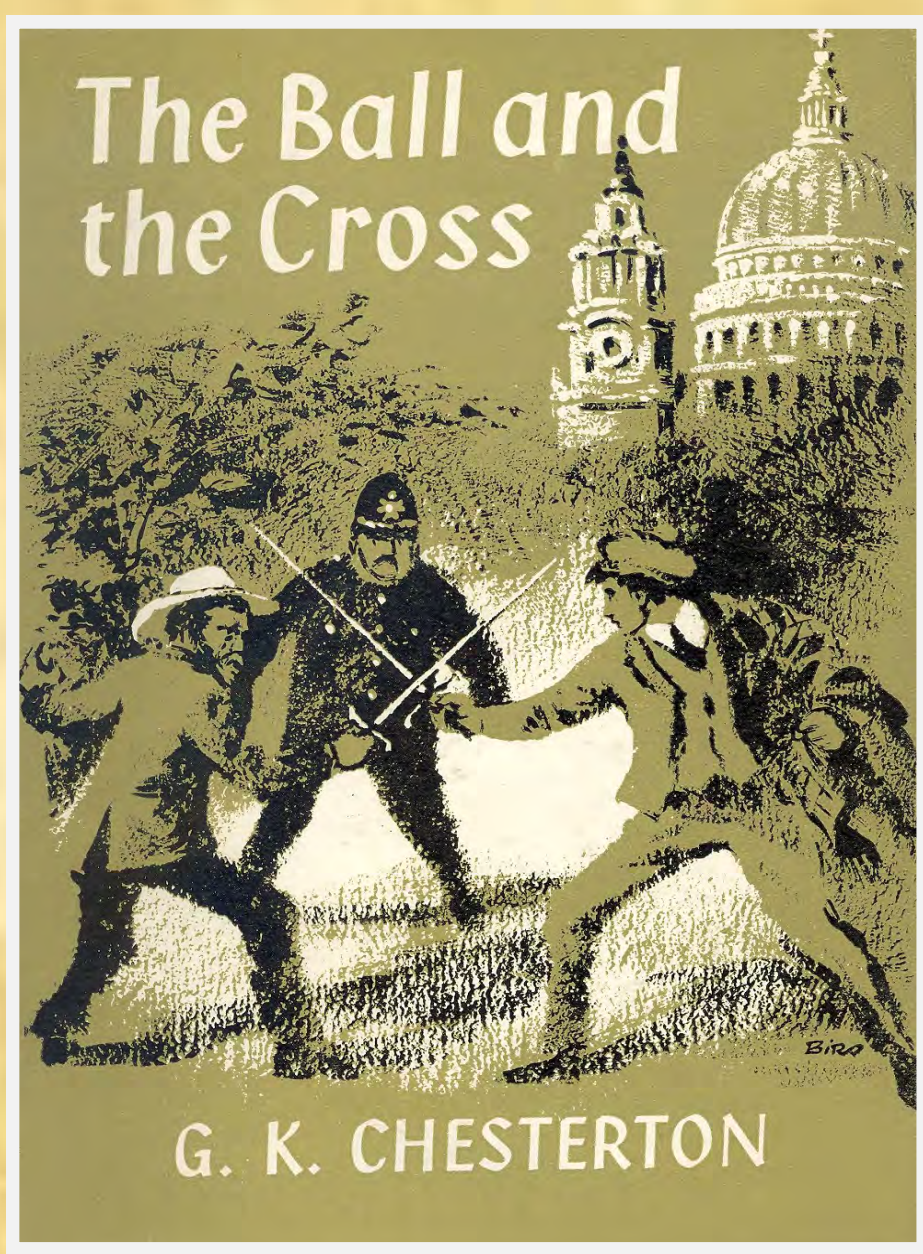
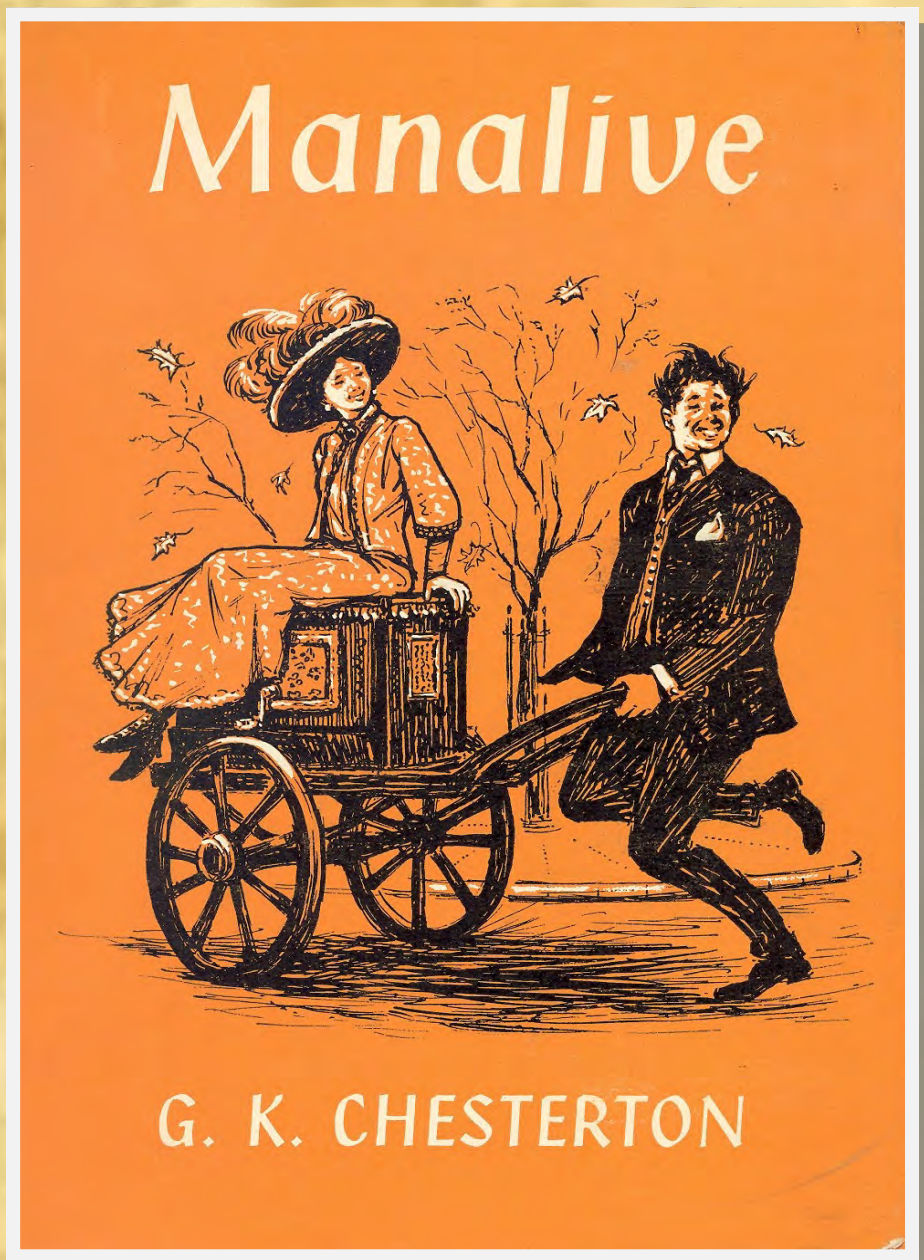
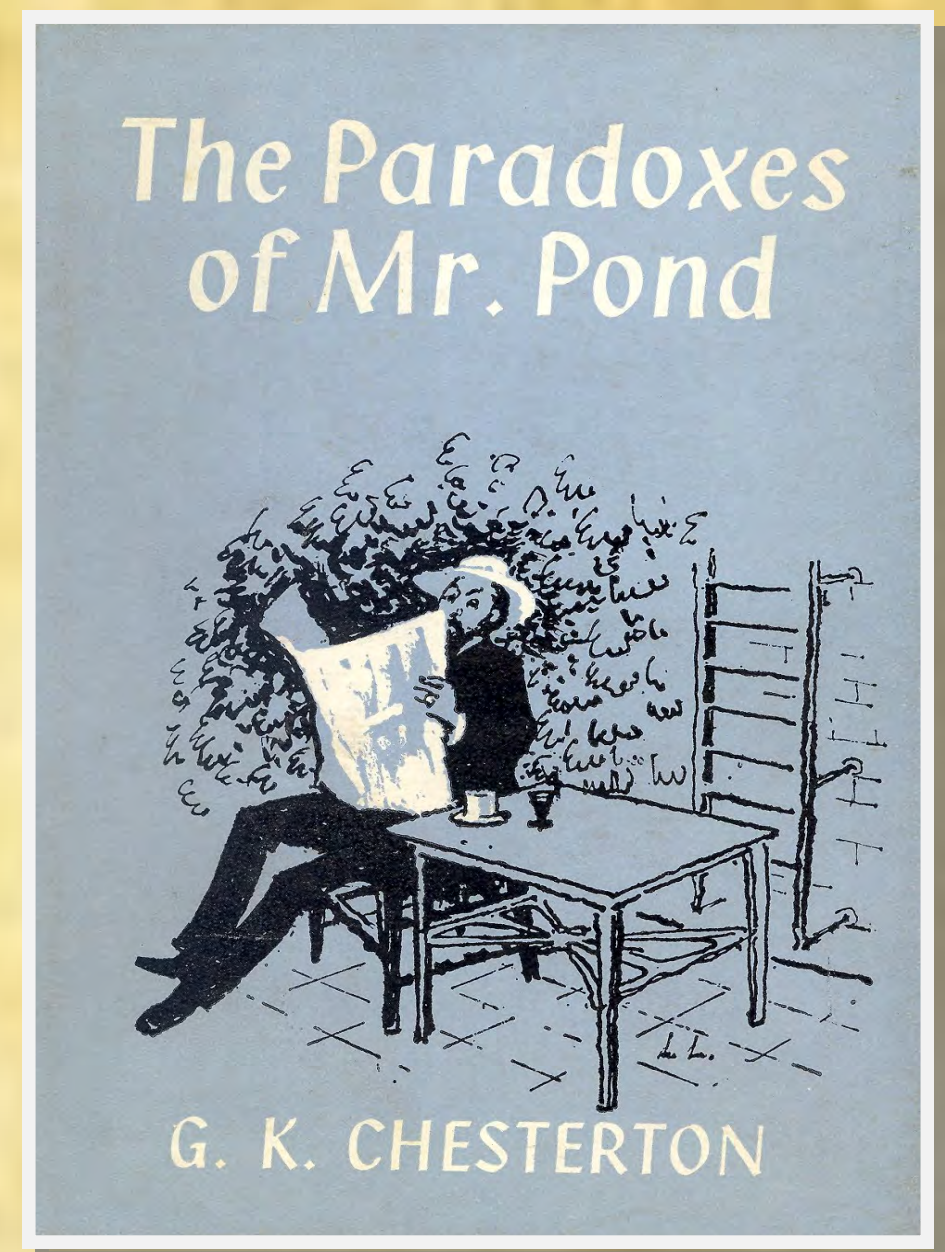
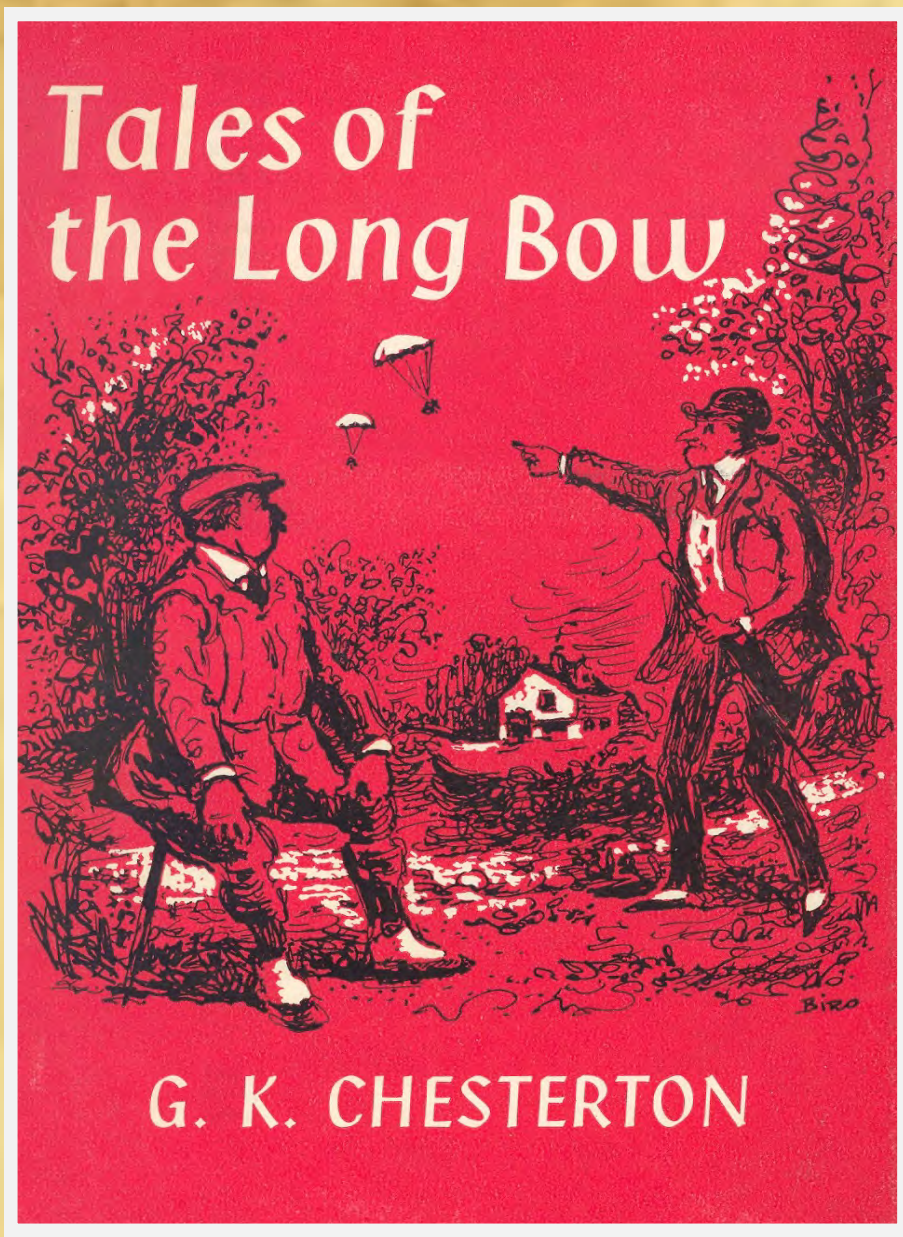
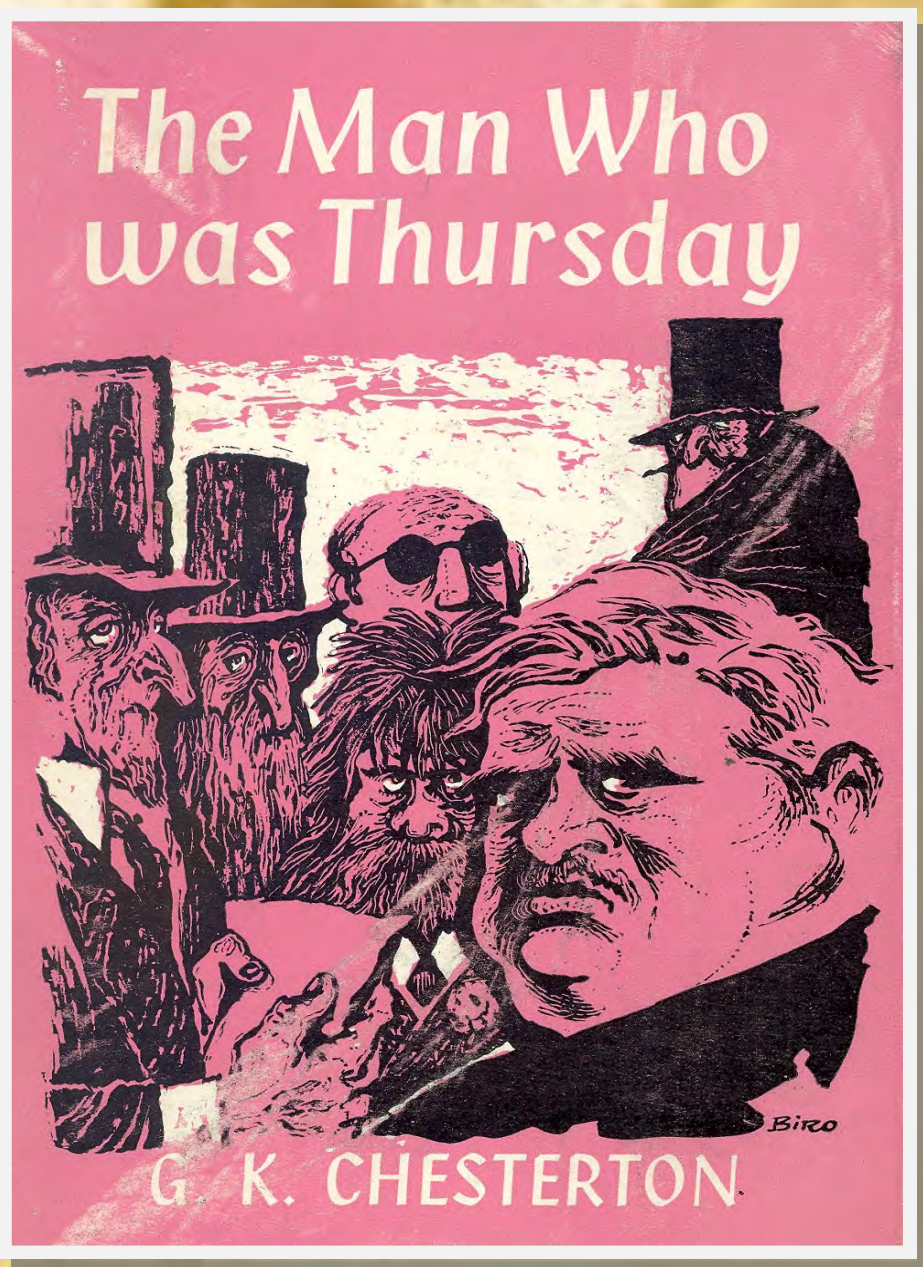
Christian marriage is the great example of a real and irrevocable result.”

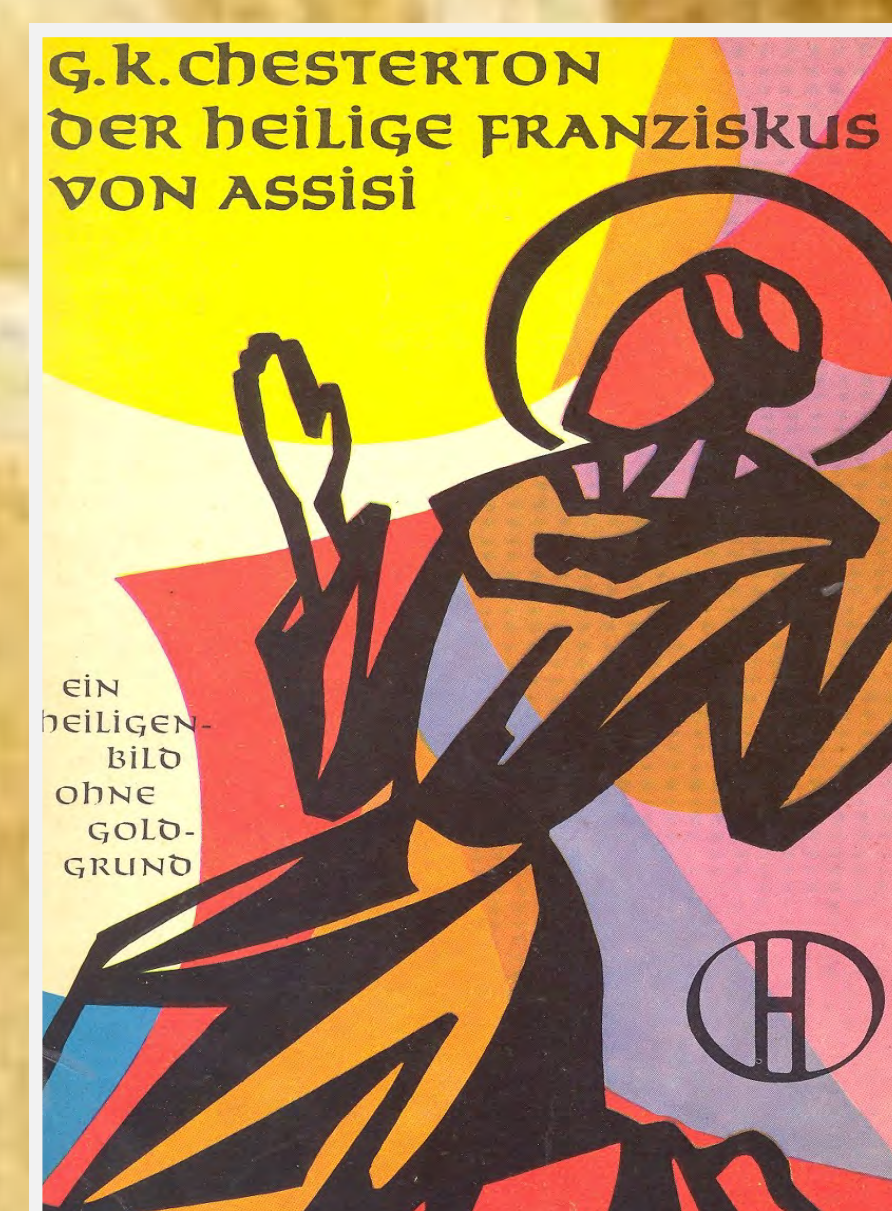
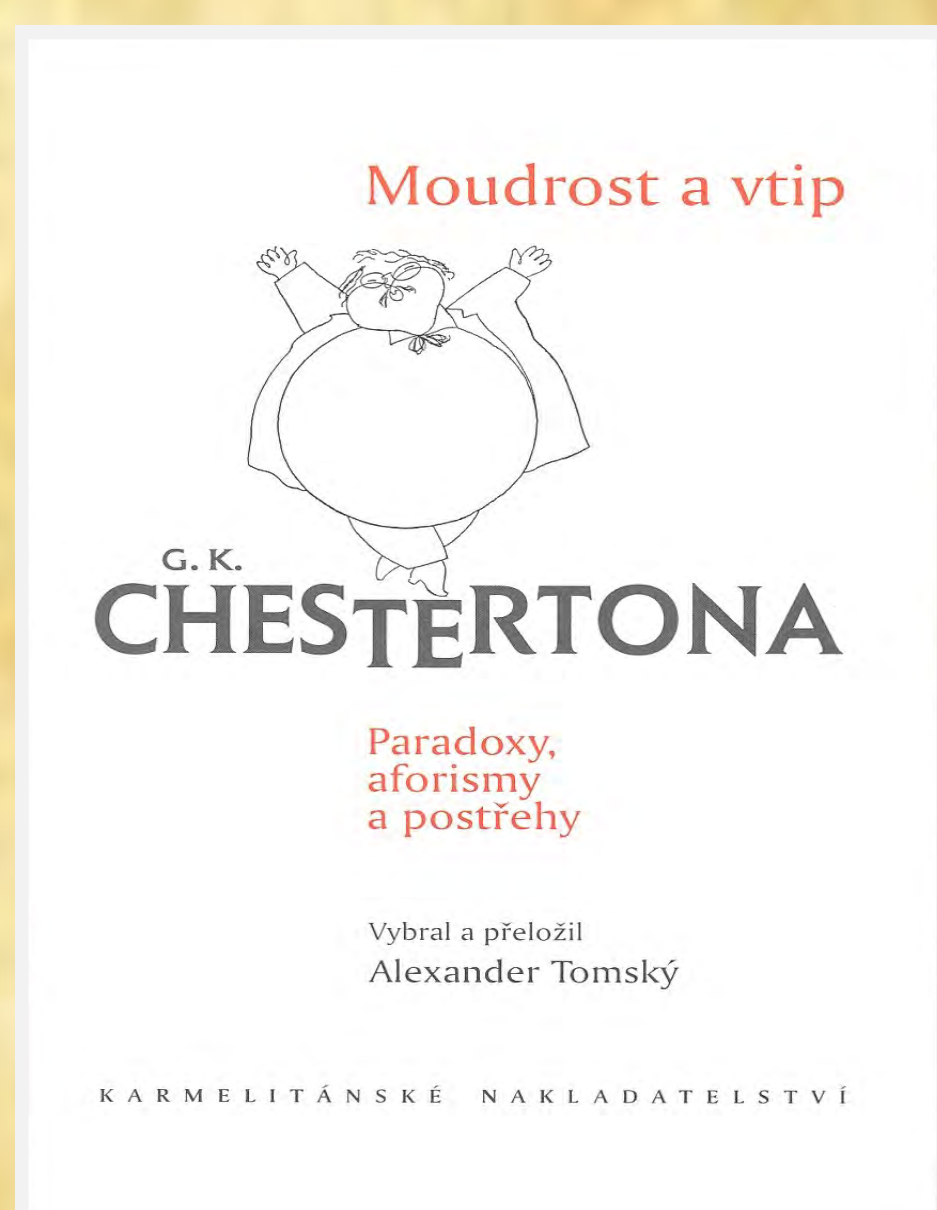
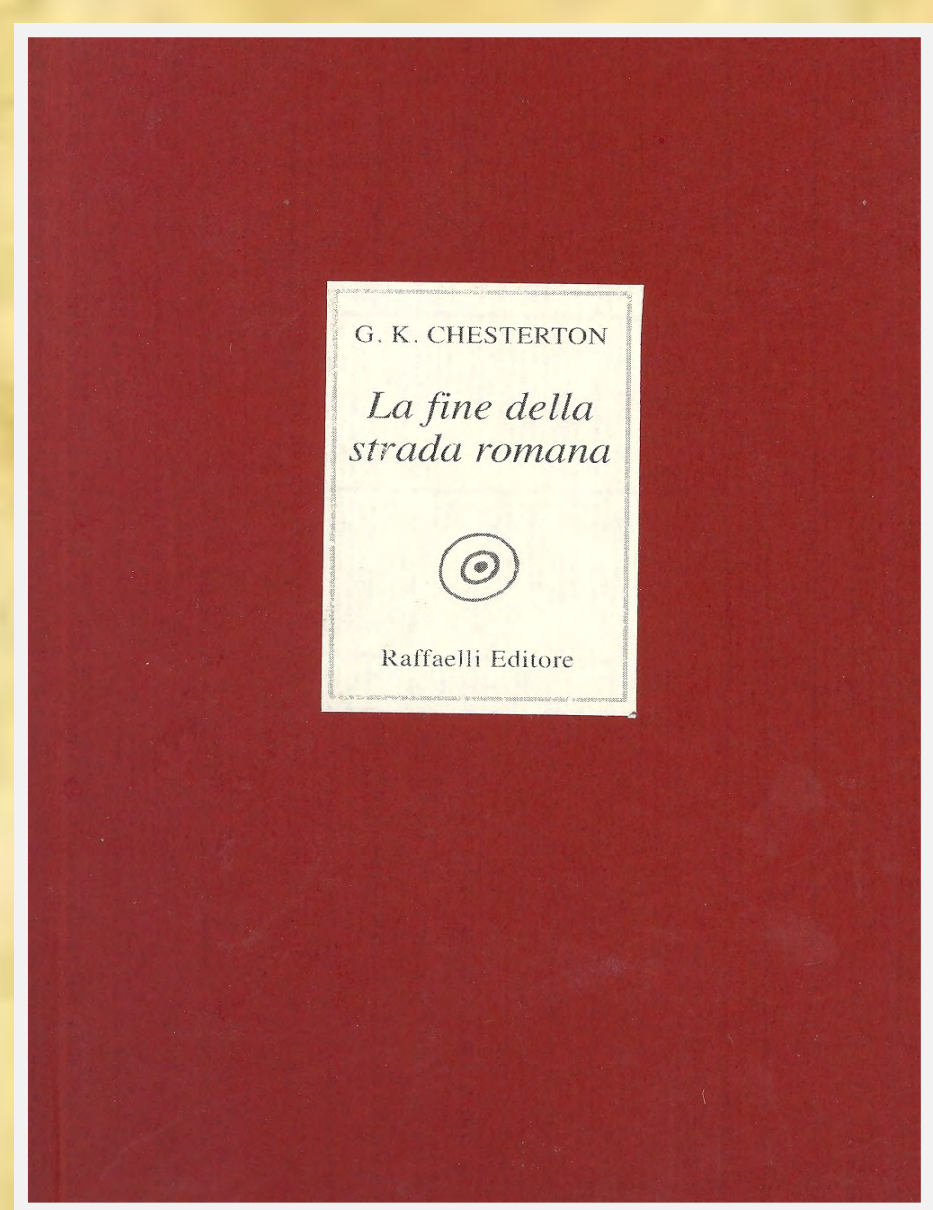
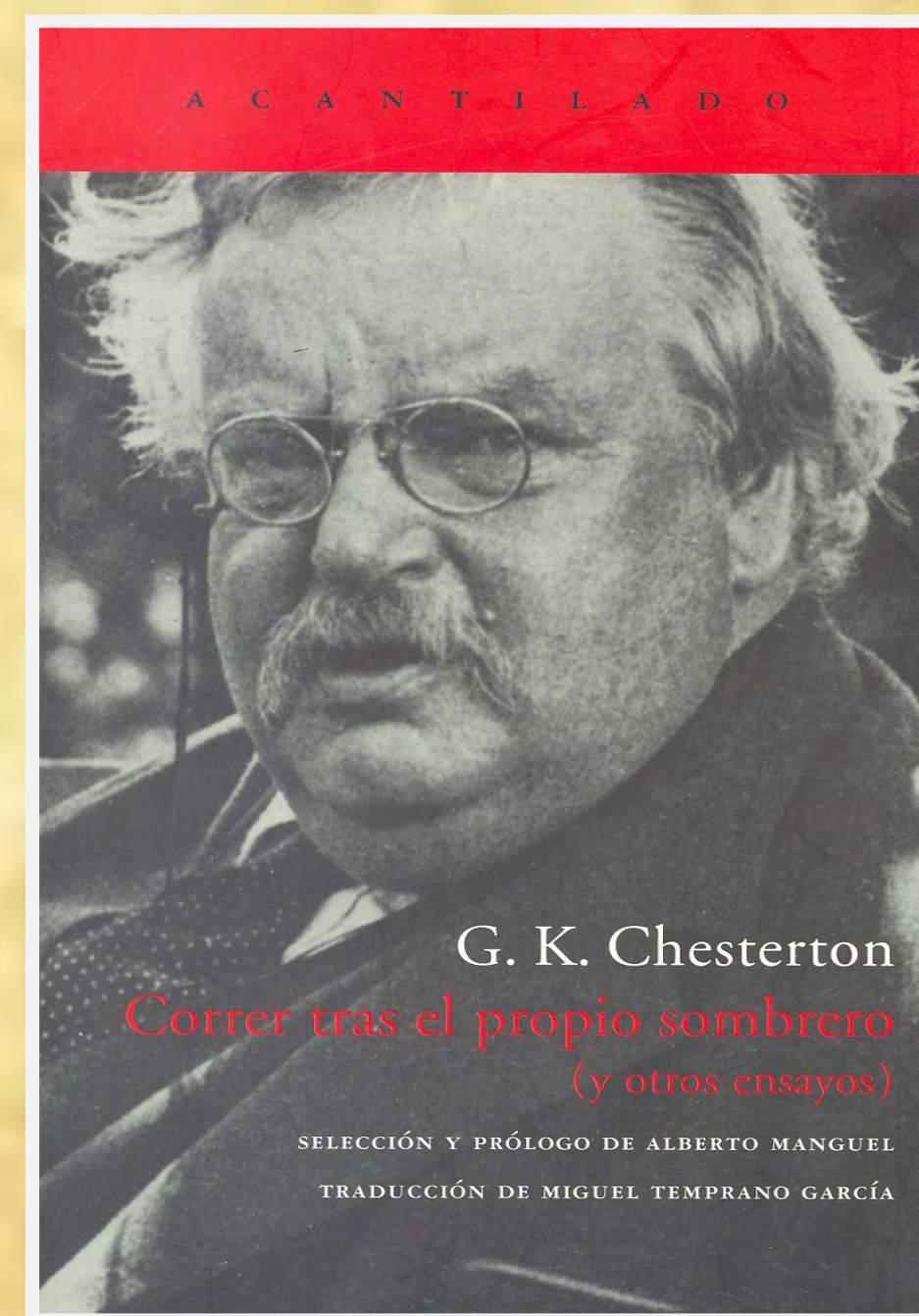
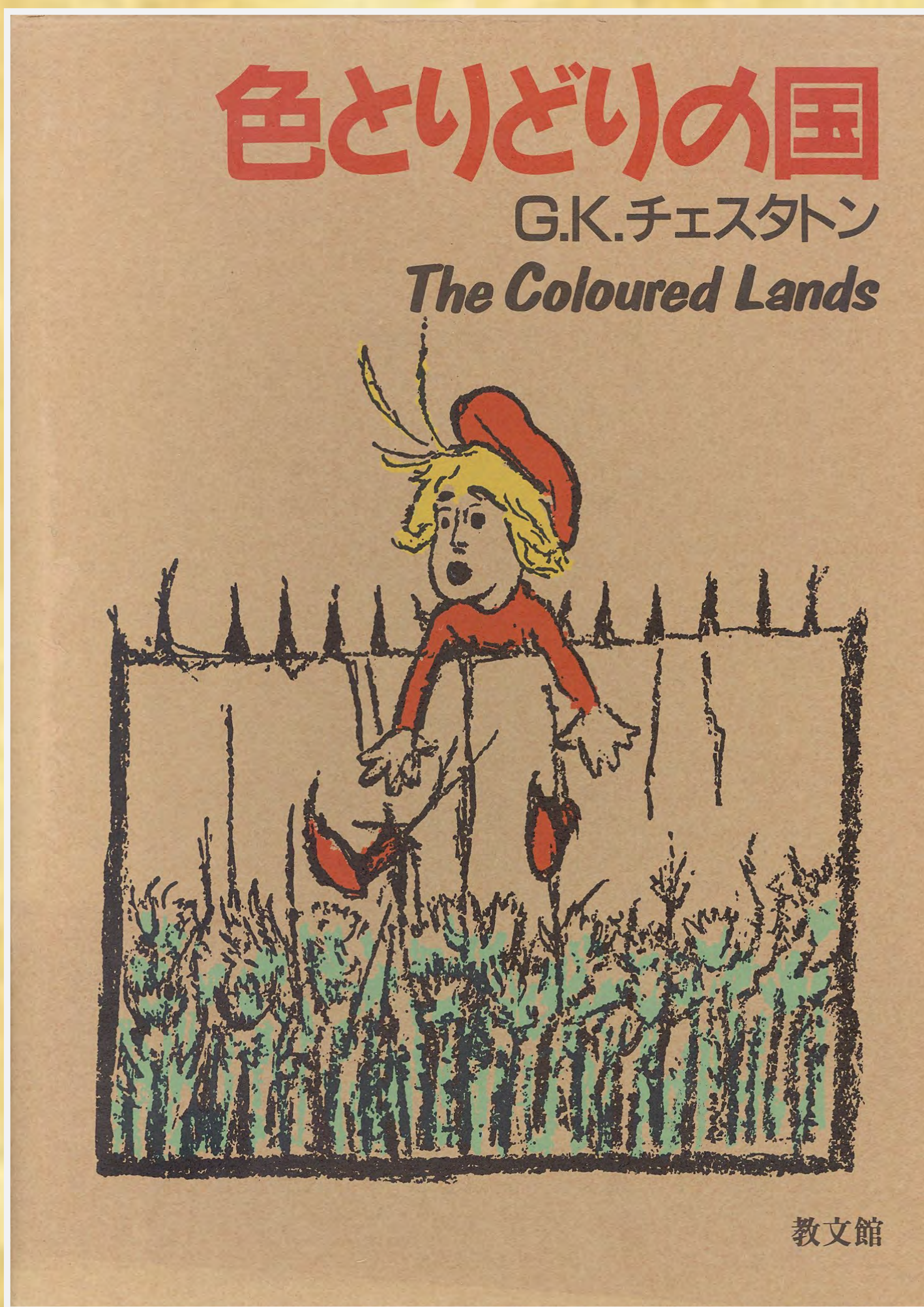
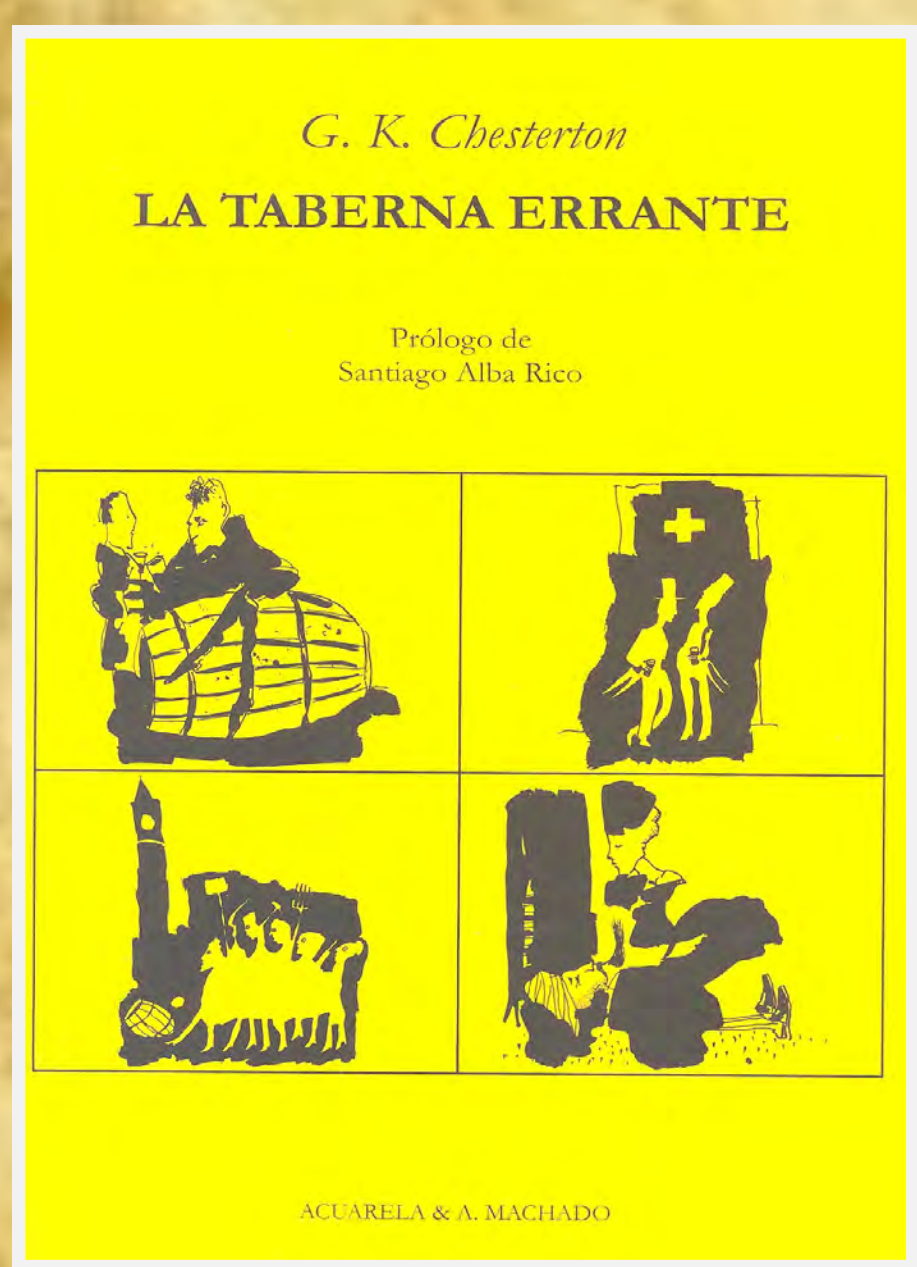
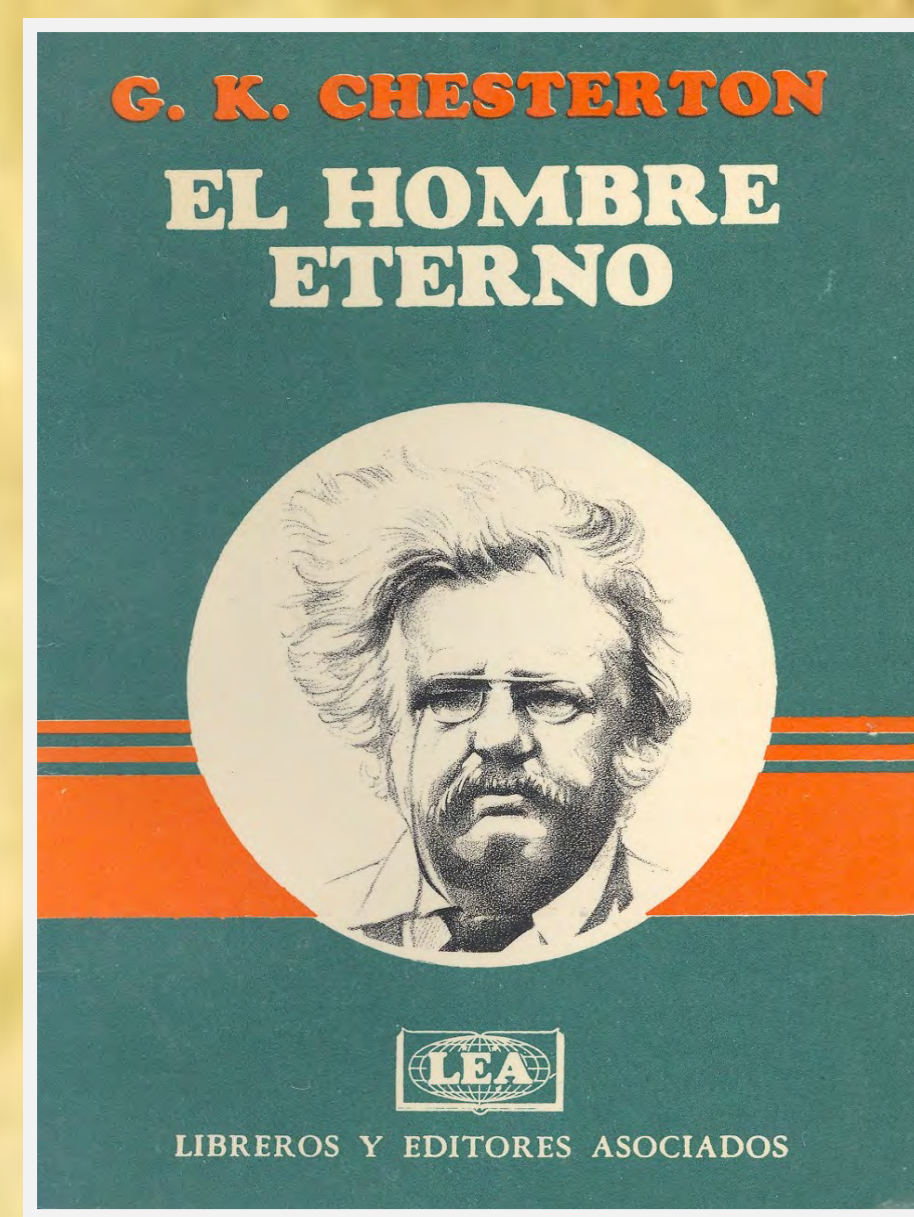
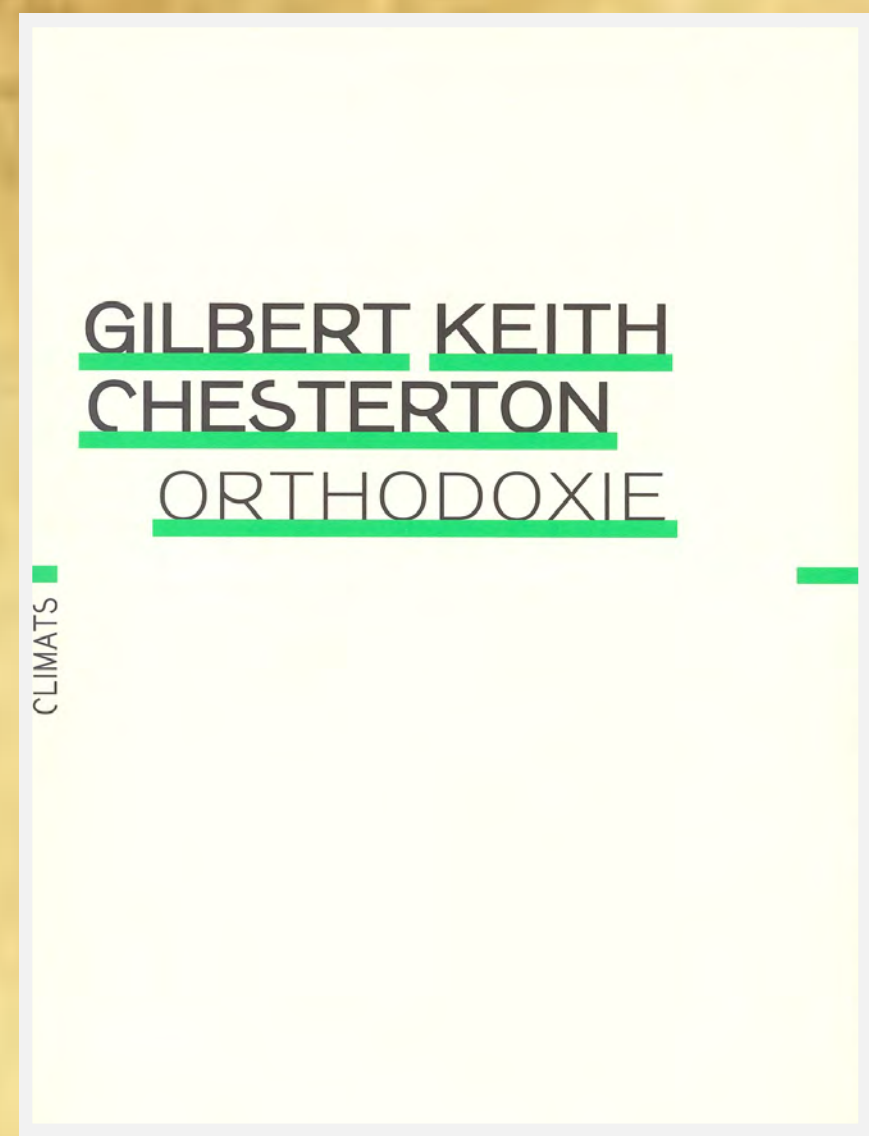
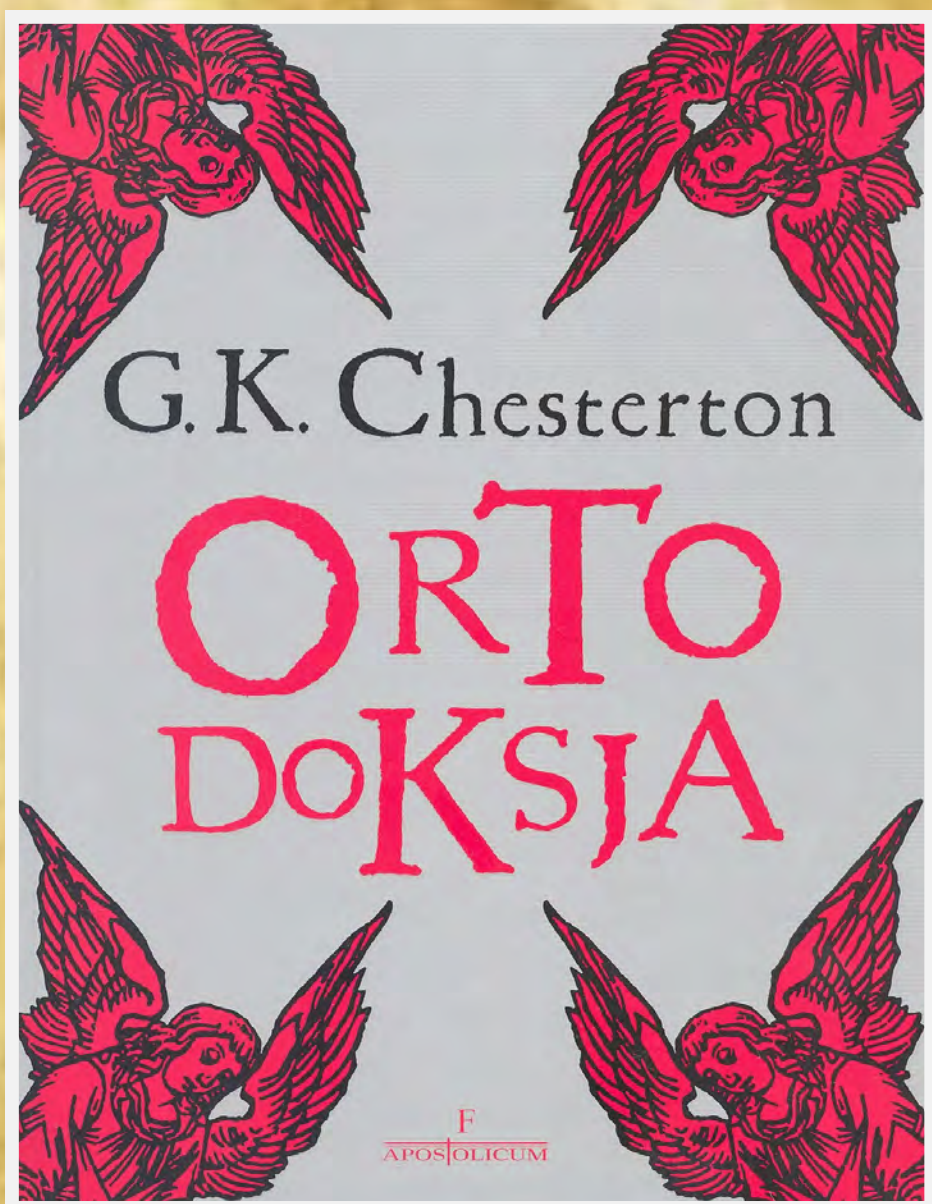
—*Orthodoxy*, (Ch. 7)

G. K. CHESTERTON CHRONOLOGY

- 1874* *May 29—Birth of G. K. Chesterton, London*
- 1879 Birth of Cecil Chesterton
- 1887 Enters St. Paul's School, London
- 1892–5 Attends Slade School of Art, London
- 1901 *June 28—marries Frances Blog*
- 1904 Meets inspiration for Father Brown,
Rev. John O'Connor
- 1909 The Chestertons move to Beaconsfield
- 1918 Visits Ireland
- 1919 Visits Palestine
- 1921 Lecture tour in the United States
- 1922 *July 30—Reception into the Catholic Church*
- 1930 Starts North American tour
- 1931 Ends North American tour
- 1936 *June 14 —Death of G. K. Chesterton, Beaconsfield*

During his lifetime G. K. Chesterton wrote over one hundred books, four plays, many poems, works of literary criticism, numerous biographies, important theological treatises and innumerable articles for different publications, since after all he regarded himself primarily as a journalist.





“Is it possible you do not see that forgiveness, like every other virtue, stands and fall with free will?

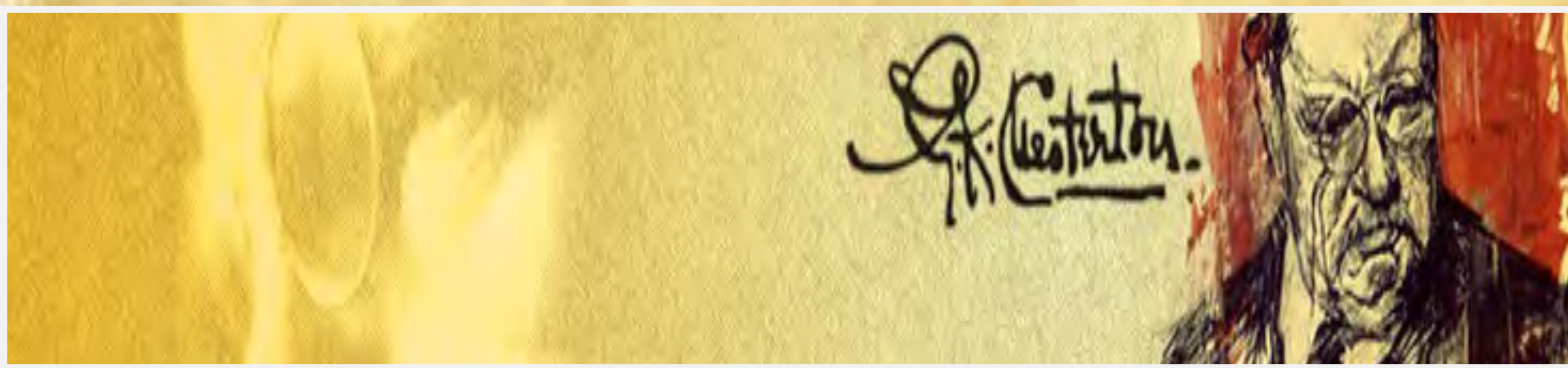
A man who forgives is noble,
but only because he could reproach if he liked.”



G. K. Chesterton

“The test of all happiness is gratitude; and I felt grateful though I hardly knew to whom. . . . We thank people for birthday presents of cigars and slippers.

Can I thank no one for the birthday present of birth?”



This is an exhibit of the
G. K. CHESTERTON INSTITUTE FOR FAITH & CULTURE
at Seton Hall University

The Chesterton Institute wishes to thank
Crossroads Cultural Center and *New York Encounter*
for inviting the Institute to present this exhibit
at the *2013 New York Encounter*

The G. K. Chesterton Institute for Faith & Culture, founded in 1974 is a not-for-profit educational organization incorporated in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom, is located at Seton Hall University in South Orange, NJ.

Its purpose is to promote the thought of G. K. Chesterton and his circle and, more broadly, to explore the application of Chestertonian ideas in the contemporary world.

Chesterton’s call for a deepened moral and social imagination speaks loudly to the cultural crisis of our time.

The Chesterton Review, founded in 1974, is the quarterly journal of the Chesterton Institute and it has been widely praised for both its scholarship and the quality of its writing. The Review is published twice annually in English and annual editions in Spanish, Italian, French and Portuguese.

President: Fr. Ian Boyd, C.S.B.

Assistant Director: Gloria Garafulich-Grabois

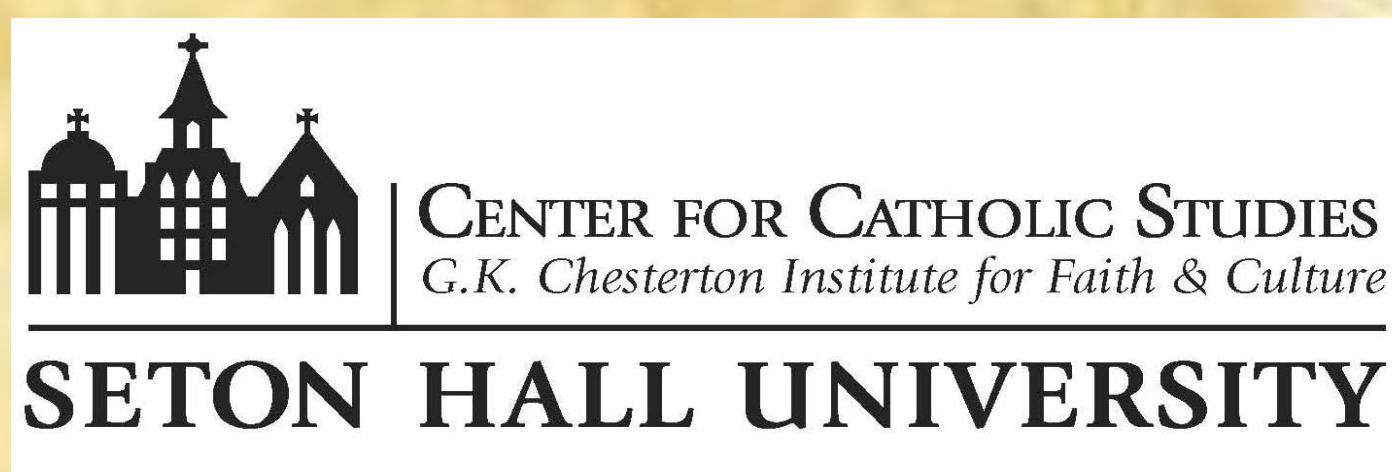


Exhibit Design: Gloria Garafulich-Grabois