

Thoughts from
T.G.K. Chesterton



Epilogue :

At the midnight in the silence
of the sleep time,
When you set your fancie
free,
Will they pass to where - by
death, fools think in
- imprisoned -

How he lies who once so
loved you, whom you
loved so, -

- PITY ME?

Oh to love so, be so loved, yet
So mistaken?

What had I on earth to do
with the boastful, with the
mawkish, the unmanly?
Like the aimless, helpless
hopeless, did I drive
- Being - who?

Chunnam.

1929.


One who never turned his
back but marched breast
forward,
even doubted clouds would
break,
knew dreamed, though right
were worsted
wrong woned triumph
did we fall to rise, are baffled
to fight better
sleep to wake.

No, at noonday in the
bustle of man's work
check the unseen with a
cheer!

Bid him forward, breast
back as either should

Strive + strive" say
"Speed - fight on fare
ever.

There as here!




SESAME BOOKLETS

17

**LATEST ADDITIONS TO
SESAME BOOKLETS**

41. Rab and his Friends. *Brown.*
42. Marjorie Fleming. *Brown.*
43. Poems of the East.
44. Gems from Balzac.
45. Thoughts from Tolstoi.
46. Thoughts from Jerome K. Jerome.
47. Thoughts from H. G. Wells.
48. Thoughts from E. F. Benson.
49. Thoughts from Augustine Birrell.
50. Thoughts from G. K. Chesterton.



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G.K. Chesterton

SESAME BOOKLETS

Thoughts
from
G. K. Chesterton

Selected by
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Thoughts from G. K. Chesterton

EVERYONE on the earth should believe that he has something to give to the world which cannot otherwise be given.

Robert Browning

Comradeship is at the most only one half of human life; the other half is love, a thing so different that one might fancy it had been made for another universe.

What's Wrong with the World




We are too fond nowadays of committing the sin of fear and calling it the virtue of reverence.

The Defendant

Religious people speak of worldlings as gay and careless: but such religious people pay the worldlings far too high a compliment.

Introduction to Thackeray

When society is in rather a futile fuss about the subjection of women, will no one say how much every man owes to the tyranny and privilege of women, to the fact that they alone rule education until education becomes futile? For



a boy is only sent to be taught at school when it is too late to teach him anything. The real thing has been done already, and, thank God, it is nearly always done by women.

Orthodoxy

When a man begins to think that the grass will not grow at night unless he lies awake to watch it, he generally ends either in an asylum or on the throne of an Emperor.

Robert Browning

The pride of a good mother in the beauty of her daughter is one of those adamantine tendernesses which are the



touchstones of every age and race.

What's Wrong with the World

No one was ever in love without indulging in a positive debauch of humility.

The Defendant

It is absurd to call a man cynical whose object it is to show that goodness, even when it is silly, is a healthier thing than wickedness when it is sensible.

Introduction to Thackeray

Christianity is always out of fashion because it is always sane; and all fashions are mild insanities. When Italy is mad



on art the Church seems too Puritanical; when England is mad on Puritanism the Church seems too artistic.

The Ball and the Cross

Love of humanity is the commonest and most natural of the feelings of a fresh nature, and almost everyone has felt it alight capriciously upon him when looking at a crowded park or on a room full of dancers.

Robert Browning

The way to lessen sorrow is to make a lot of it. The way to endure a painful crisis



is to insist very much that it is a crisis.

What's Wrong with the World

The moment we really believe in democracy, it will begin to blossom, as aristocracy blossomed, into symbolic colours and shapes. We shall never make anything of democracy until we make fools of ourselves. For if a man really cannot make a fool of himself we may be quite certain that the effort is superfluous.

The Defendant

The most dreadful and blood-chilling thing in this world is a tired kindness.

Introduction to Thackeray



The Church always seems to be behind the times, when it is really beyond the times; it is waiting till the last fad shall have seen its last summer. It keeps the key of a permanent virtue.

The Ball and the Cross

The ridiculous theory that men should have no noble passions or sentiments in public may have been designed to make private life holy and undefiled, but it has had very little actual effect except to make public life cynical and preposterously unmeaning.

Robert Browning




The average man has to be a specialist; he has not only to learn one trade, but to learn it so well as to uphold him in a more or less ruthless society.

What's Wrong with the World

Humility is the luxurious art of reducing ourselves to a point, not to a small thing or a large one, but to a thing with no size at all, so that to it all the cosmic things are what they really are—of immeasurable stature.

The Defendant

Caricature is a serious thing;
It is almost blasphemously



serious. Caricature really means making a pig more like a pig than even God has made him.


William Blake

What is the difference between Christ and Satan? It is quite simple. Christ descended into hell: Satan fell into it. One of them wanted to go up and went down; the other wanted to go down and went up.

The Ball and the Cross

Smoke, like the modern city that makes it, is not always dull or ugly, but it is always wicked and vain.

Manalive




If prosperity is regarded as the reward of virtue it will be regarded as the symptom of virtue.

Preface to the Book of Job

Not only life, but every detail of life is most a pleasure when it is studied with the gloomiest intensity.

G. F. Watts

The world is not a lodging house at Brighton, which we are to leave because it is miserable. It is the fortress of our family, with flag flying on the turret; and the more miserable it is the less we should leave it. The point is not that this




world is too sad to love or too glad not to love; the point is that when you do love a thing its gladness is a reason for loving it, and its sadness a reason for loving it more.

Orthodoxy

I talk of every man being the image of God; and you talk of every man being a citizen, enlightened enough to govern. But if every man typifies God, there is God. If every man is an enlightened citizen, there is your enlightened citizen. The first man one meets is always man. Let us catch him up.

The Ball and the Cross



Men flee from the embrace of a great optimist as from the embrace of a bear. Nothing brings down more curses than a real benediction.

Manalive


The riddles of God are more satisfying than the solutions of man.

Preface to the Book of Job

The new art gallery is too like a museum of freaks, it is too wild and wonderful, like a realistic novel.

G. F. Watts

Progress should mean that we are always walking towards the New Jerusalem. It does



mean that the New Jerusalem is always walking away from us. We are not altering the real to suit the ideal. We are altering the ideal : it is easier.


Orthodoxy

A man will not reach eloquence if he is afraid of bombast, just as a man will not jump a hedge if he is afraid of a ditch.

Twelve Types

Babies are not always strong on the point of dignity, and grown-up men are quite un-presentable.

What's Wrong with the World




This belief, that all would go right if we could only get the strings into our own hands, is a fallacy almost without exception, but nobody can justly say that it is not public spirited.

Robert Browning

You need not strangle a man if you can silence him. The branded shoulder is less effective and final than the cold shoulder: and you need not trouble to lock a man in when you can lock him out.

What's Wrong with the World

The fundamental modern fallacy is that the public life must be an artificial life. It is




like saying that the public street must be an artificial air. Men like all the great heroes only breathe in public. What is the use of abusing a man for publicity when he utters in public the true and the enduring things? What is the use, above all, of prying into his secrecy, when he has cried his best from the housetops?

G. F. Watts

Brevity may be the soul of wit; but it would be quite as true to say in such cases that lengthiness is the soul of satire.

Introduction to Thackeray

You may come to think a




blow bad because it humiliates. You may come to think a murder wrong, because it is violent and not because it is unjust.

The Ball and the Cross

A man's good work is effected by doing what he does, a woman's by being what she is.

Robert Browning

Education is violent; because it is creative. It is creative because it is human. It is as ruthless as playing on the fiddle; as dogmatic as drawing a picture; as brutal as building a house. In short, it is what



all human action is: it is an interference with life and growth.

What's Wrong with the World

Shutting out things is all very well, but it has one simple corollary—that from everything we shut out, we are ourselves shut out.


The Defendant

Worldliness and the worldlings are in their nature solemn and timid. If you want carelessness you must go to the martyrs.

Introduction to Thackeray

The Cross cannot be defeated, for it is defeat.

The Ball and the Cross



To anyone who thinks, the pleasures of life, trivial and soon tasteless, are bribes to bring us into a torture chamber.

Manalive

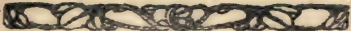
The modern habit of saying "This is my opinion, but I may be wrong" is entirely irrational. If I say that it may be wrong I say that it is not my opinion.

Preface to the Book of Job

The true task of culture to-day is not a task of expansion, but very decidedly of selection and rejection.

What's Wrong with the World

The great Free-thinker with



his genuine ability does not in practice destroy Christianity, what he does destroy is the Free-thinker who went before.

The Ball and the Cross


A man can no more possess a private religion than he can possess a private sun or moon.

Preface to the Book of Job

There is no fact of life from the death of a donkey to the General Post Office, which has not its place to dance and sing in, in the glorious carnival of theology.

G. F. Watts


Truth must necessarily be stranger than fiction; for



fiction is the creation of the human mind and therefore congenial to it.

A Club of Queer Trades

Seriousness is not a virtue. It would be a heresy, but a much more sensible heresy, to say that seriousness is a vice. It is really a natural trend or lapse into taking one's-self gravely, because it is the easiest thing to do. It is much easier to write a good *Times* leading article, than a good joke in *Punch*. For solemnity flows out of men naturally, but laughter is a leap. It is easy to be heavy: hard to



be light. Satan fell by the force of gravity.

Orthodoxy


One does not permit beauty to pervade one's whole life, just as one does not pave all the roads with ivory or cover all the fields with geraniums.

Manalive

It is the idea that innocence has about it something terrible which in the long run makes and remakes empires and the world.

Preface to the Book of Job

The back is the most awful and mysterious thing in the universe: it is impossible to



speak about it. It is the part of man that he knows nothing of; like an outlying province forgotten by an Emperor.

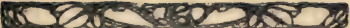
G. F. Watts

“Tommy was a good boy” is a purely philosophical statement worthy of Plato or Aquinas. “Tommy lived the higher life” is a gross metaphor from a ten-foot rule.

Orthodoxy

The thing from which England suffers just now more than from any other evil is not the assertion of falsehoods, but the endless and irrepres- sible repetition of half truths.


G. F. Watts



With any recovery from morbidity there must go a certain healthy humiliation. There comes a certain point in such conditions when only three things are possible: first a perpetuation of Satanic pride, secondly tears, and third laughter.

The Man who was Thursday

I never said a word against eminent men of science. What I complain of is a vague popular philosophy, which supposes itself to be scientific when it is really nothing but a sort of new religion and an uncommonly nasty one. When people




talked about the Fall of Man, they knew they were talking about a mystery, a thing they didn't understand. Now they talk about the survival of the fittest: they think they do understand it, whereas they have not merely no notion, they have an elaborately false notion of what the words mean.

A Club of Queer Trades

Marriage is a stage—doubtless a suitable stage—in the long advance of mankind towards a goal which we cannot as yet conceive.

Manalive

Everyone on this earth should



believe, amid whatever madness and moral failure, that his life and temperament have some object on the earth.

Robert Browning


There is a spirit abroad among the nations of the earth which drives men incessantly on to destroy what they cannot understand, and to capture what they cannot enjoy.

G. F. Watts

A man may just fail to be a gentleman; and yet be the very opposite of a cad.

Introduction to Thackeray

Many modern Englishmen talk of themselves as the




sturdy descendants of their sturdy Puritan fathers. As a fact they would run away from a cow. If you asked one of their Puritan fathers, if you asked Bunyan, for instance, whether he was sturdy he would have answered with tears that he was as weak as water. And because of this he would have borne tortures.

Heretics

Poetry can tell us whether the happiness is the happiness that sends a man to a restaurant, or the much richer and fuller happiness that sends him to Church.

Robert Browning



Faith is always at a disadvantage; it is a perpetually defeated thing which survives all its conquerors.

G. F. Watts

To batter the worldly castle with the artillery of open derision is a much swifter task than to blow it up from within with one carefully constructed bomb of irony.

Introduction to Thackeray

Every detail points to something, certainly, but generally to the wrong thing. Facts point in all directions, it seems to me, like the thousands of twigs on a tree. It is only the




life of a tree that has unity and goes up—only the green blood that springs, like a fountain, at the stars.

A Club of Queer Trades

From such books we can discover what a clever man can do with the idea of aristocracy. But from *The Family Herald Supplement* literature we can learn what the idea of aristocracy can do with a man who is not clever. And when we know that we know English History.

Heretics

It is always the humble man who talks too much; the



proud man watches himself too closely.

The Man who was Thursday

A philosopher cannot talk about any single thing down to a pumpkin, without showing whether he is wise or foolish; but he can easily talk about everything without anyone having any views about him beyond gloomy suspicions.

G. F. Watts

The oldest thing in the universe is its energy.

Introduction to Thackeray

We had talked for about half an hour about politics and God; for men always talk




about the most important things to total strangers. It is because in the total stranger we perceive man himself; the image of God is not disguised by resemblances to an uncle or doubts of the wisdom of a moustache.

A Club of Queer Trades

Human Nature simply cannot subsist without a hope and aim of some kind; as the sanity of the Old Testament truly said, where there is no vision the people perisheth. But it is precisely because an ideal is necessary to a man that the man without ideals is in permanent danger of fanaticism.

Herotics



What we want most is to be lost: to find ourselves in untrodden paths, and to do unprecedented things; to break with the past and belong to the future.

Manalive


The rare strange thing is to hit the mark; the gross obvious thing is to miss it.

The Man who was Thursday

There is, as a ruling element in modern life, in all life, this blind and asinine appetite for mere power.

G. F. Watts

It is one of the simplest and silliest of the modern mistakes



to connect the word "old" with the word "stale" or the word "weary."


Introduction to Thackeray

The evil of aristocracy is not that it leads to the infliction of bad things or the suffering of sad ones; the evil of aristocracy is that it places everything in the hands of a class of people who can always inflict what they can never suffer.

Heretics

We are never free until some institution frees us, and liberty cannot exist till it is declared by authority.

Manalive




It is strange that men should see sublime inspiration in the ruins of an old church and see none in the ruins of a man.

Twelve Types

There is no such thing as fighting on the winning side; one fights to find out which is the winning side.

What's Wrong with the World

Men trust an ordinary man, because they trust themselves. But men trust a great man because they do not trust themselves. And hence the worship of great men always appears in time of weakness and cowardice; we never hear of great



men until the time when all other men are small.

Heretics


The sin and sorrow of despotism is not that it does not love men, but that it loves them too much and trusts them too little.

Robert Browning

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

What's Wrong with the World

Ordinary men will always be sentimentalists: for a senti-



mentalist is simply a man who has feelings and does not trouble to invent a new way of expressing them.

The Defendant

The very definition of hell must be energy without joy.

Introduction to Thackeray

That is the awful thing about women—they refuse to be emotional at emotional moments upon some such ludicrous pretext as there being some one else there.

The Ball and the Cross

When men begin to grow desperate in their love for the people, when they are over-



whelmed with the difficulties and blunders of humanity, they fall back upon a wild desire to manage everything themselves.


Robert Browning

To anything worth calling a man nothing can be conceived more cold or cheerless than to be King of your Company.

What's Wrong with the World

Simple ignorance and indifference does not inflate the character with pride. A man does not walk down the street giving a haughty twirl to his moustaches at the thought of his superiority to some variety of deep-sea fishes.

The Defendant



Aristocracy does not have snobs any more than democracy. But we have neither securely closed our house nor boldly opened it. We have merely let it be whispered that a window is unbarred at the back: and a few burglars break in and are made peers.

Introduction to Thackeray

Insanity, like forgetfulness, is simply a quality which enters more or less into all human beings; and for practical purposes it is more necessary to know whose mind is really trustworthy than whose has some accidental taint.

The Ball and the Cross




Our wisdom, whether expressed in private or public, belongs to the world, but our folly belongs to those we love.

Robert Browning

A man cannot indulge in a sham joke, because it is the ruin of a joke to be unintelligible.

Twelve Types

Most of us have suffered from a certain sort of lady who, by her perverse unselfishness, gives more trouble than the selfish; who almost clamours for the unpopular dish and scrambles for the worst seat. Most of us have known parties



or expeditions full of this
seething fuss of self-effacement.

What's Wrong with the World

If you throw one bomb
you are only a murderer; but
if you keep on persistently
throwing bombs, you are in
awful danger of at last be-
coming a prig.

William Blake

The vulgar people want to
enjoy life just as they want to
enjoy gin—because they are
too stupid to see that they are
paying too big a price for it.
That they never find happiness
—that they don't even know how
to look for it—is proved by the



paralysing clumsiness and ugliness of everything they do.

Manalive

Many waters cannot quench love.

Twelve Types

Piety is one of the popular virtues, whereas soap and socialism are two hobbies of the upper middle class.

What's Wrong with the World

In a world without humour, the only thing to do is to eat. And how perfect an exception! How can these people strike dignified attitudes, and pretend that things matter, when the total ludicrousness of life is



proved by the very method by which it is supported? A man strikes the lyre and says, "Life is real, life is earnest" and then goes into a room and stuffs alien substances into a hole in his head.


The Napoleon of Notting Hill

The Saint with a tile loose is a bit too sacred to be parodied.

Manalive

It is the standing peculiarity of this curious world of ours that almost everything in it has been extolled enthusiastically, and invariably extolled to the disadvantage of everything else.


Twelve Types



“If Americans can be divorced for incompatibility of temper” I cannot conceive why they are not all divorced. I have known many happy marriages, but never a compatible one. The whole aim of marriage is to fight through and survive the instant when incompatibility becomes unquestionable. For a man and a woman, as such, are incompatible.

What's Wrong with the World

The wise man will follow a star, low and large and fierce in the heavens, but the nearer he comes to it the smaller and smaller it will grow, till he



finds it in the humble lantern
over some little inn or stable.
Not till we know the high
things shall we know how
lowly they are.

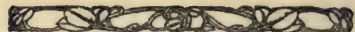
William Blake

The most rigid and ruthless
woman can begin to cry, just
as the most effeminate man can
grow a beard. It is a separate
sexual power, and proves
nothing one way or the other
about force of character.

Manalive

Workhouses and lunatic
asylums are thronged with men
who believe in themselves.

Twelve Types



I gravely doubt whether women were ever married by capture. I think they pretended to be; as they do still.


What's Wrong with the World

There is more of the song and music of mankind in a clerk putting on his Sunday clothes, than in a fanatic running down Cheapside.

William Blake

People talk of the pathos and failure of plain women; but it is a more terrible thing that a beautiful woman may succeed in everything but womanhood.

Manalive




Politeness has indeed about it something mystical: like religion, it is everywhere understood and nowhere defined.

Twelve Types

As a part of personal character, even the moderns will agree that many-sidedness is a merit and a merit that may easily be overlooked.

What's Wrong with the World

The personal is not a mere figure for the impersonal: rather the impersonal is a clumsy term for something more personal than common personality. God is not a



symbol of goodness. Goodness
is a symbol of God.


William Blake

So with the wan waste grasses
on my spear,
I ride for ever, seeking after
God.

My hair grows whiter than my
thistle plume,
And all my limbs are loose ;
but in my eyes
The star of an unconquerable
praise :

For in my soul one hope for
ever sings,
That at the next white corner
of a road
My eyes may look on Him.

The Wild Knight




Until we love a thing in all its ugliness we cannot make it beautiful.

Twelve Types

If we all floated in the air like bubbles, free to drift anywhere at any instant, the practical result would be that no one would have the courage to begin a conversation.

What's Wrong with the World

It is true that all sensible women think all sensible men mad. It is true for the matter of that, all women of any kind think all men of any kind mad. But they do not put it in telegrams any more than they



wire to you that grass is green
or God all-merciful. These
things are truisms and often
private ones at that.


A Club of Queer Trades

For human beings, being
children, have the childish
wilfulness, the childish secrecy.
And they never have from the
beginning of the world done
what the wise men have seen
to be inevitable.

The Napoleon of Notting Hill

It is not enough for a
prophet to believe in his
message; he must believe in
its acceptability.

Twelve Types



Cleverness kills wisdom:
that is one of the few sad and
certain things.

What's Wrong with the World

Chaos is dull; because in
chaos the train might indeed go
anywhere, to Baker Street or
Bagdad. But man is a magician,
and his whole magic is in this,
that he does say "Victoria,"
and lo! it is "Victoria."

The Man who was Thursday

That which is large enough
for the rich to covet is large
enough for the poor to defend.

The Napoleon of Notting Hill

Why should I bow to the ages



Because they were drear and
dry ?

Slow trees and ripening
meadows

For me go roaring by,
A living charge, a struggle
To escalate the sky.

A Novelty (The Wild Knight)


The man who is popular
must be optimistic about some-
thing, even if he is only
optimistic about pessimism.

Twelve Types

In everything on this earth
that is worth doing, there is a
stage when no one would do it
except for necessity or honour.

What's Wrong with the World

The women were of the kind




vaguely called emancipated, and professed some protest against male supremacy. Yet these new women would always pay to a man the extraordinary compliment which no ordinary woman ever pays to him, that of listening while he is talking.

The Man who was Thursday

In this world of ours we do not go on and discover small things: rather we go on and discover big things. It is the detail that we see first: it is the design that we only see very slowly and some men die never having seen it at all.

William Blake



The worst tyrant is not the man who rules with fear; the worst tyrant is he who rules by love and plays on it as on a harp.

Robert Browning


A self-conscious simplicity may well be far more intrinsically ornate than luxury itself.

Twelve Types

Both men and women ought to face more fully the things they do or cause to be done; face them or leave off doing them.

What's Wrong with the World

Thieves respect property. They may wish the property



to become their property that they may more perfectly respect it. But philosophers dislike property as property; they wish to destroy the very idea of personal possession.

The Man who was Thursday

Individually men may present a more or less rational appearance, eating, sleeping and scheming. But humanity as a whole is changeful, mystical, fickle, delightful. Men are men, but Man is a woman.

The Napoleon of Notting Hill

There is one sin: to call a
green leaf grey.
Whereat the sun in heaven
shuddereth.



There is one blasphemy: for
death to pray,
For God alone knoweth the
praise of death.

Ecclesiastes (The Wild Knight)

Rum idea, this is, that tidiness is a timid quiet sort of thing; why tidiness is a toil for giants—you can't tidy anything without untidying yourself—Haven't you ever had a spring cleaning?

Manalive

Ease is the worst enemy of happiness and civilisation, potentially the end of man.

Twelve Types

The keeper of a restaurant




would much prefer that each customer should give his order smartly though it were for stewed ibis or boiled elephant ; rather than that each customer should sit holding his head in his hands, plunged in arithmetical calculations about how much food there can be on the premises.

What's Wrong with the World

Modesty is too fierce and elemental a thing for the modern pedants to understand. I had almost said too savage a thing. It has in it the joy of escape, and the ancient shyness of freedom.

William Blake



Often and often the thing a whole nation can't settle is just the thing a family could settle.


Manalive

It is not the man of pleasure who has pleasure; it is not the man of the world who appreciates the world. The man who has learnt to do all conventional things perfectly has at the same time learnt to do them prosaically.

Twelve Types

There are only three things in the world that women do not understand; and they are Liberty, Equality and Fraternity.

What's Wrong with the World




Teetotalism is a simplification; its objection to beer is not really that beer makes a man a beast. On the contrary its real objection is that beer most unmistakably separates a man from a beast.

William Blake

The vision of a halved host
That weep around an empty
throne;
And aureoles dark and angels
dead,
Man with his own life stands
alone.

“I am” he says his bankrupt
creed;
“I am” and is again a clod.



The sparrow starts, the grasses
stir,
For he has said the name of
God.

Ultimate (The Wild Knight)

Stick to the man who looks
out of the window and tries to
understand the world. Keep
clear of the man who looks in
at the window and tries to
understand you.

Manalive

**HERE ENDS NUMBER FIFTY
OF SESAME BOOKLETS**

