



G. K. Chesterton: A Biography

Ian Ker

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G. K. Chesterton is remembered as a brilliant creator of nonsense and satirical verse, author of the Father Brown stories and the innovative novel, *The Man who was Thursday*, and yet today he is not counted among the major English novelists and poets. However, this major new biography argues that Chesterton should be seen as the successor of the great Victorian prose writers, Carlyle, Arnold, Ruskin, and above all Newman.

Chesterton's achievement as one of the great English literary critics has not hitherto been fully recognized, perhaps because his best literary criticism is of prose rather than poetry. Ian Ker remedies this neglect, paying particular attention to Chesterton's writings on the Victorians, especially Dickens. As a social and political thinker, Chesterton is contrasted here with contemporary intellectuals like Bernard Shaw and H. G. Wells in his championing of democracy and the masses. Pre-eminently a controversialist, as revealed in his prolific journalistic output, he became a formidable apologist for Christianity and Catholicism, as well as a powerful satirist of anti-Catholicism.

This full-length life of G. K. Chesterton is the first comprehensive biography of both the man and the writer. It draws on many unpublished letters and papers to evoke Chesterton's joyful humour, his humility and affinity to the common man, and his love of the ordinary things of life.

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Holley Shipman:

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