Chapter V dealt with Chesterton's criticism of some literary artists and a few social and political leaders. We refrained from describing those works as literary criticism, though on literary artists. The focus in those works is centred on a social panorama - England of Chesterton's vision. In this chapter, we deal with Chesterton's works with a strong literary bias. The subject are literary artists. The treatment is evaluatory, though not always literary. Along with evaluating their literary quality which is Chesterton's main concern, he also makes soundwise remarks about what the artists believed in. Thus, since the critical faculty of Chesterton has a sizable content of his own convictions; wherever the artist's beliefs and Chesterton's beliefs collide, Chesterton pauses to remark on the wisdom of such opinions. This may sound unliterary. But a large part of the value of literary criticism comprises the insights of the critic. It is difficult to ignore Chesterton's insightful literary criticism. Insight is a two-way mirror. It receives not merely
the work of art but its maker whole. We can choose only literary passages and ignore what he says about the whole man. But it has its own inherent dangers. It is better to take Chesterton's literary criticism as a whole, so that we know Chesterton's personality better. In the following pieces, we have followed Chesterton's criticism as a whole.

Cheserton on Shakespeare:

Cheserton, as a literary critic, comes to the forefront by writing on Browning, Dickens, Chaucer, and Cabell. His work on Shakespeare is not that systematic and exhaustive as the other works. He looks on Shakespeare as a dramatist, and actor, and his entire approach to him is 'original'.

Cheserton as a Shakespearean critic can not be compared with Sradley, Barker or Brooks, even though he touches upon certain tragedies for example Hamlet, Macbeth, King Lear, and comedies such as A Midsummer Night's Dream, Much Ado About Nothing and As You Like It, his observations cannot be strictly described as those of a literary critic.

His approach is totally different from those of other critics. He dwells on basic issues and subtle
problems of life with which Shakespeare was familiar. His main job is to discuss a few controversial characters, his plots, the review of criticisms and their drawbacks - and a few other things such as Shavian controversy, the problem of costumes (whether they can be applied to the modern stage) and a few extraordinary qualities of Shakespeare, which made him a universal playwright transcending of time and place.

"Chesterton sees Shakespeare as a man of the theatre, as actor and playwright, as poet, as a writer of thrillers, as a man of the late Renaissance of whom very little is known." 1

Chesterton finds enough of classical tradition in the works of Shakespeare. Hence he refutes the charge levelled against Shakespeare that he knew little Latin and less Greek. Not only this; the way he preferred Monarchy to Democracy itself speaks of his love of classical tradition:

"It was often said that Shakespeare is the typical Englishman in the fact that he had 'small Latin and less Greek'. That is the only quality in which an average Englishman like myself can claim to share. He had 'small Latin and less Greek', but he had plenty of Plutarch, and he was stuffed to bursting with the classical spirit. Consider, for instance, that he was of the Tudor time which worshipped monarchy and was always saying, 'There's such divinity doth hedge a king.' And then consider what a revolution the mere reading of Plutarch in a translation

could effect, in making the same man write:

There was a Brutus once that would have brooked.
The eternal devil to keep his state in Rome,
As easily as a King.

But in a much deeper sense, Shakespeare was
classical, because he was civilized. Voltaire
criticized him as a barbarian. But he was not
a barbarian. The Germans have even admired him
as a German. The point here, however, is that
the classical spirit is no matter of names of
allusions. 2

Another sign of Shakespeare's classical tradition
is his diction. The idiom of Shakespeare carries more
meanings than the context and the expression need it.
It surpasses human comprehension. It is not confined
to mortal life but goes beyond that. It is eternal and
transcendental. Thus, the phrases chosen by him speak
of his cosmic mind. They speak of universal truth and
they are the instruments of a classicist. They cannot
be replaced by any other words. If any other word is
used in the place of Shakespeare's word, it will cry
out the smallness of the man. Chesterton has given one
bewildering example of Othello's speech before he kills
his wife. The word Promethean cannot be replaced by
any other word.

"I will take only one example to show what
I mean by saying that Shakespeare was every bit
as classical as Milton. Just before Othello
kills his wife, he utters those words:

2. Ibid., pp. 16-17.
If I quench thee, thou flaming minister,
I can again the former light restore,
Should I repent me; but once put out thy light,
Though cunning at pattern of excelling nature,
I know not where is that Promethean heat
That can thy light relume.

Let me explain why I find it convenient to my
argument to take this phrase as a type of the
classical. Every classical phrase means much
more than it says; in contrast with the too vivid
and violent modern phrase, which says much more
than it means. Whether it be romanticism in the
nineteenth century, or realism in the twentieth
century, its weakness is that it says so much
more than it means. The phrase of Shakespeare,
like the phrase of Virgil, is always much greater
than its occasion. The cry of Othello goes far
beyond the death of Desdemona; it goes far beyond
death itself; it is a cry for life and the secret
of life. Where is the beginning of that bewilder­ing
splendour by which we are; why can we not
make life as we can make death?" .....................

But the point for the present is that this
profound resonance, striking such echoes out
of such hollows and abysses, could not be thus
achieved without a very deep understanding of
classical diction. It could not be done without
the word "Promethean"; without the legend of
Prometheus; without those rolling polysyllables
that are the power of Homer and Virgil." 3

This great poet and dramatist not only had 'Greek'
and 'Latin' 'culture', but he had enough of Italian and
French. He tapped all the resources that were available
to him. And his philosophy is synthetic and combines
every thing. He was never insular like other Eliza­
thans. Rather, he was of every time, place and

3. Ibid., pp. 17-18.
civilization. He modelled his work on such a majestic style that the effect on his work of his forerunners is hardly traceable. His greatness is indisputable. He cannot be imitated by any one.

"Shakespeare borrowed from anybody or anything and often from the same French or Italian sources as his forerunner. The answer indeed is obvious and tremendous: that if Shakespeare borrowed, he jolly well paid back......In the case of Shakespeare as of Cervantes, his contemporaries and immediate successors seem to have been struck by something sweet or kindly about him, which they felt as too natural to be great in the grand style. He is chiefly praised and occasionally rebuked, for freshness and spontaneity." 4

His style is so grand that it has surpassed human limitations. It is above human civilization and culture. The universal theme with which he dealt, is

\[ \text{universal theme with which he dealt, is} \]

used in any other literature. One starts reading Hamlet, King Lear or Othello with exhilaration as did the Elizabethan spectators who witnessed them.

Chesterton is a religious critic who finds in the works of Shakespeare the elements of Christianity. Many critics are of the opinion that Hamlet was a weak, 'procrastinating' and a mentally diseased person. But according to G.K.Chesterton, every word he spoke was

sensible. He finds him saner than an average man.

Above all, he is a great optimist, and feels that some day he will succeed in his mission.

"It is perhaps, the most optimistic passage in all human literature. It is the absolute expression of the ultimate fact of the faith of Hamlet; his faith that, although he cannot see the world is good yet certainly it is good; his faith that, though he cannot see man as the image of God, yet certainly he is the image of God. The modern, like the modern conception of Hamlet, believes only in mood. But the real Hamlet, like the Catholic Church, believes in reason." 5

On 'The Heroines of Shakespeare' Chesterton observes that Shakespeare's women were full of divinity. Perhaps they are more practical, reasonable and above all, more divine than men. The sole reason of their being wise is that they are embodiments of 'faith' and tradition.

In primitive times of folklore, and in some feudal periods, this larger man was the conquering hero, the strong man who slew dragons and oppressors. To the old Hebrews this sacred being was the prophet; to the men of the Christian ages it was the saint. To the Elizabethans this sacred being was the pure woman." 6

Critic after critic has presumed that Macbeth was a great criminal and murderer who slaughtered innocent children, and his benefactor. It was a cold and brutal

6. Ibid., p.93.
action of his. There is not a single action of Macbeth which can raise him from the level of a hardened criminal. Charlton, unlike Chesterton, maintains that Macbeth had very weak moral sense.7

G.K. Chesterton, however, as a true Catholic Christian, feels that Macbeth is a totally Christian Tragedy. Macbeth is quite conscious of his action. This awareness is the basic element of Christianity. Every one is responsible for his action. Here 'Fate' does not play the dominant role but 'Free will'. He commits these murders on his own. Destiny does not play any role. He could have stopped himself from these ghastly crimes, as the soliloquy before murdering the King Duncan suggests.

"For the play of Macbeth is, in the supreme and special sense, the Christian Tragedy; to be set against the Pagan Tragedy of Oedipus. It is the whole point about Oedipus that he does not know what he is doing. And it is the whole point about Macbeth that he does know what he is doing." 8

G.K. Chesterton as an upholder of Christianity and morality finds in the works of Shakespeare the germs of Christianity. For example critics comment that the

story of The Merchant of Venice is old fashioned, very crude and 'barbarous' as one thinks about taking out a 'pound of flesh'. It may appear to an unimaginative man as an old-world theme of legalised crime and detection. But Chesterton finds it an important theme. It is not just a laughable material. It is pretty serious. Chesterton finds it very instructive. Perhaps it is one of the gravest lessons of Christianity. As Christianity disapproves of usury so is The Merchant of Venice. In this respect G.K. Chesterton stands as a contrast to other Shakespearean critics. He is obviously radical in the evaluation of Shakespeare.

"Shakespeare enjoyed the old stories. He enjoyed them as tales are intended to be enjoyed. He liked reading them as a man of imagination and intelligence today likes reading a good adventure story, or still more a good detective story. The idea is embodied in all those truly Christian laws about earnings and livelihood which were the glory of the Middle Ages. The story is excellent, simply as an anecdote working up to a climax and ending in an unexpected retort. And the end is a truth and not merely a trick. You do prove the falsity of pedantic logic by a reductio ad absurdum." 9

Professor Bradley maintains that Shakespearean 'heroes' (particularly of his great tragedies) have some extraordinary gift. They are from great families but they also have some 'tragic traits' which are fatal to them.

But Chesterton as a literary and 'moral' critic totally differs from him. He feels that man is normally weak. His weaknesses are the sign of his greatness. Not merely Shakespearean 'heroes' or but every human being is weak and has some 'tragic flaw' in himself. But that is his strength.

"The whole meaning of tragedy is that every man is of necessity a weak man." 10

G.K. Chesterton as a literary critic is highly impressed by the tragedy of *King Lear*. The protest of King Lear against the ungrateful child in the context of Regan and Goneril is heart-rending. The way they cheated their father is the climax of tragedy. And this tragic scene can melt the heart of man.

"It is not an accident that Lear is a king as well as a father, and that Goneril and Regan are not only daughters but traitors. Treason, or what is felt as treason, does break the heart of the world; and it has seldom been so nearly broken as here." 11

Chesterton as a moral critic praises Shakespeare for purpose he pursued in art. For example, *As You Like It* has been called the 'sunniest' comedy. It has

the forest of Arden. It has the 'sweet temper' of
Rosalind. It is far from the 'madding crowd'. It has
the sweet songs of birds and brooks. But Chesterton
finds some purpose even behind this hilarious comedy.

"Men and women must stand in some serious
and lasting relation to each other for great
passions and great problems to arise; and all
this anarchy is as bad for art as it is for
morals. Rosalind did not go into the wood to
look for her freedom; she went into the wood
to look for her father. And all the freedom;
and even all the fun of the adventure really
arises from that fact. For even an adventure
must have an aim." 12

Chesterton, as a classicist compares Shakespeare
with Milton both, according to him had enough of Greek
and Latin culture. Shakespeare did not have the oppor-
tunity of receiving higher education as did Milton.
Both had different creeds. Milton is the representative
of Puritanism unlike Shakespeare. The greatest thing
about Shakespeare is his humour which Milton lacked.

"Nearly all Englishmen are either Shakes-
peareans or Miltonians. I do not mean that they
admire one more than another; because every one
in his senses is possessed with what is, I
suppose, the first and finest idea of Protes-
tantism - the idea of the individual soul actually
testing and tasting all the truth there is, and
calling that truth which it has not tested or
tasted truth of a less valuable and vivid kind.
But Shakespeare is possessed through and through
with the feeling which is the first and finest
idea of Catholicism - that truth exists whether

12. Ibid., p.301.
we like it or not, and that it is for us to accommodate ourselves to it. Milton, with a splendid infallibility and splendid intolerance, sets out to describe how things actually are to be explained;

But when Shakespeare speaks of the divine truth, it is always as something from which he himself may have fallen away, something that he himself may have forgotten.

"...that the Everlasting had not fix' d
His canon 'gainst self slaughter;...

Chesterton as a literary critic finds in Shakespeare enough sense of humour which is a great quality in a writer. This extraordinary quality of Shakespeare cannot be found anywhere else. Even in the most tragic plays one hears pools of laughter issuing from the audience. Laughter is a great remedy to drown the tense and the most tragic moments.

"Hamlet meets the Grave-digger, and realizes quite as well as any modern that serious things can be laughed at even by those who are closest to them." 14

Chesterton, as a literary critic and as a true Catholic, defends Shakespeare from the charges made by Shaw. Shaw maintained that Shakespeare did not give any message through his plays, as the great philosophers of the world such as Kant, Hegel and Marx did. Shaw,
throughout his life time, had been preaching 'life force', 'Free will' and believed in the creation of a Superman. On the contrary, Chesterton maintains that the greatness of man is not his enormous power but his weakness.

"The great poet is alone strong enough to measure that broken strength we call the weakness of man." 16

Chesterton, further, refutes Shaw's charge of pessimism made against Shakespeare. In all the plays of Shakespeare there is hope, there is action, humour, the capacity to laugh even at the most critical juncture. Shakespeare cannot be a pessimist. May be some depressing speeches very relevant from a theatrical point of view are found in his plays. The example quoted by G.B.Shaw is wrong, such as the speech of Macbeth before his defeat and the calamity which was to befall him.

"I deny altogether that Shakespeare was a pessimist; the worst that you can say of him is that he was a poet.

Mr. Shaw has no right to call Shakespeare a pessimist for having written the words "Out, out, brief candle"; he might as well call Shakespeare a champion of the ideal of celibacy for having written the words, "Get thee to a nunner". He might as well call Shakespeare a philosophical apostle for the duel for having written the words, "Kill Claudio". It is not

15. Ibid., p.29.
Shakespeare's fault that, having to write pessimism for the purpose of a theatrical point, he happened to write much better pessimism than the people who are silly enough to be pessimists.  

Chesterton deprecates Shaw in comparison to Shakespeare, not because of his shallowness but because of his exceptional qualities, serious intent. He criticises him for having written plays which had ideas to convey. Shakespeare's greatness is in his smallness. Besides being a great poet, Shakespeare was also a humble man. Perhaps this is the quality of a great man.

"Mr. Shaw may be quite as extraordinary a man as Shakespeare; but he is only an extra-ordinary man. Shakespeare, like all the heroes, was an extraordinary man and an ordinary man too."  

Chesterton lived in an age of controversy, of open debate, therefore, though by nature he was a pure critic, he nevertheless had to encroach upon social criticism. But his work on the pure artists helps us to know what a great literary critic he was.

WILLIAM BLAKE

Some writers do not pose social problems. But they pose very acute problems in pure art, each throwing...
bright light on human situations; therefore, Chesterton as a pure literary critic meets these writers on the level of their art.

The major problem with Blake was mysticism versus Christian orthodoxy. But Chesterton had already humanized so much Christian orthodoxy that it would not seem a great contradiction that with Blake his main task was to show that Blake promoted Christian orthodoxy in his own fashion. For both Chesterton and Blake had a single abiding faith. The suffering humanity sustains the deepest faith mainly by its own hidden divine nature.

William Blake is famous amongst English readers as a poet, painter, engraver, visionary and mystic. His father was a small hosier belonging to the middle class 'bourgeois' family. Blake educated himself mostly. The school where he was sent did not suit his genius. The atmosphere was too convention-ridden for Blake.

Blake was a great visionary right from his childhood. Once he told his mother that he saw angels in the fields where he was stranded. He had to pay very heavy price for saying that.

Blake began seeing visions right from his young age which habit continued throughout his life. On one
occasion, he declared that he talked to the angels and had been in the company of Moses, Shakespeare and Milton.

"...He claimed to have talked, face to face, with Moses, Milton, Shakespeare and other mighty figures from the past........" 18

The three artists - Thomas Stothard, John Flaxman, Fuseli and John Heinrich Füssli had great impact on Blake.

Chesterton pays compliments to the diligence and honesty of Blake which he possessed even during his boyhood. Idleness was alien to Blake.

He doubt Blake was deeply impressed by the three great figures Flaxman and Stothard but he surpassed them all. He developed his own style. He left behind Flaxman. His formula of art was quite opposite that of Flaxman.

"Blake was a greater man than Flaxman, though a less perfectly poised man. He was harder than his master, because he was madder. The figure upside down blowing the trumpet is as perfect as a Flaxman figure; only it is upside down. Flaxman upside down is almost a definition of Blake." 19

Blake had tremendous courage and nervous energy. He had 'unbending deportment' due to which he could

denounce his enemies as well as his benefactors. Once he beat a man severely because he had insulted a woman. Similarly, he assaulted a guard in his garden. He had a bad temper and was violent throughout.

"....For instance, in spite of his sedentary trade and his pacific theories, he had extraordinary physical courage. Not that reasonable minimum of physical courage which is guaranteed by certain conventional sports, but intrinsic contempt of danger, a readiness to put himself into unknown perils. He would suddenly attack men much bigger and stronger than himself, and that with such violence that they were often defeated by their own amusement. He attacked a huge drayman who was harsh to some women and beat him in the most excited manner. He leapt upon a Lifeguards man who came into his front garden, and ran that astonished warrior into the road by the elbows. The vivacity and violence of these physical outbreaks must be remembered and allowed for when we are judging some of his mental outbreaks." 20

But with all this tremendous courage, Blake was a kind-hearted man. Cruelty was not his way.

"....Courage, (which is, with kindness, the only fundamental virtue in man), is present and prodigious in both. No coward could have drawn such pictures." 21

Blake's marriage was a coincidence. It did not take a pretty long time. Nor did the formal marriage rites took long. It was 'love at first sight'. His wife was the daughter of a gardener, who proved to be

21. Ibid., p.22.
a successful mate of Blake. Later on he trained her in his profession. She was a great asset to him in his professional activities.

Blake's wife made a very good companion to him. She gave all comforts within the limitations under which they were living. She had completely identified herself with the personality of her husband. She saw similar visions as did her husband. Perhaps this faculty was taught to her by Blake. 22

Blake's Poetical Sketches belongs to his juvenile period. Songs of Innocence shows maturity in themes, natural expression of feelings. G.K. Chesterton has paid great tributes to his imaginative quality which grew after his marriage.

Blake's work is prodigious. He went on producing books one after another. Marriage of Heaven and Hell, The French Revolution, Visions of the Daughters of Albion America, Songs of Experience, Europe, Martin, and The Book of Los, are melodic and lyrical. But the books of later period became more and more imaginative and mystical.

Tiriel, The Book of Theel, the French Revolution, belong to the early period and are narratives. Marriage

of Heaven & Hell is his philosophical poem wherein he has promised salvation of human kind by mutual 'love', and friendship. It is known for his 'Christian humanism'.


Blake was a great genius and to understand him is not an easy task. Whether his paintings, engravings or poetry - every thing needs patience and concentration. His language was on par with his ideas and was cryptic. His language shows maximum expression in minimum of words. Chesterton has time and again praised his intellectual calibre. Commonplace is rare in his work. It needs deep study and powerful imagination to understand him.

"A brother artist said of Blake, with beautiful simplicity, "He is a good man to steal from". The remark is as philosophical as it is practical. Blake had the great mark of real intellectual wealth; anything that fell from him might be worth picking up. What he dropped in the street might as easily be half-a-sovereign as a half-penny. Moreover, he invited theft in this further sense, that his mental wealth existed, so to speak, in the most concentrated form. It is easier to steal half-a-sovereign in gold than in half pence. He was literally packed with ideas - with ideas which required unpacking. In him and his works they were too compressed to be intelligible; they were too brief to be even witty. And as a thief might steal a diamond and turn it into
twenty forms, so the plagiarist of Blake might steal a sentence and turn it into twenty volumes. It was profitable to steal an epigram from Blake for three reasons - first, that the original phrase was small and would not leave a large gap; second, that it was cosmic and synthetic and could be applied to things in general; third, that it was unintelligible and no one would know it again." 23

The language that Blake used was highly intense and all compressed. People may call it a secretive language but Chesterton does not believe so. Blake had mastery over diction. He never meant by a word the same thing as is given in a dictionary. Commonplace, boredom, and repetition were alien to him. On the contrary, readers had to think several times before they could interpret his verse. No doubt, his writings carried impact of Swedenborg, Cagliostro and Freemasons, and his paintings show the influence of Michelangelo, and Gothic structure considerably, but he developed his own style and he is highly original.

In his works an average reader may find obscurity; but Blake is less obscure than Browning and Henry James. He writes as if heaven and earth, for him, are continuous and contiguous. Some call this a digression. But generally in great works, it is sometimes absolutely

necessary to combine reality with imagination. One can understand his sentences but the concepts of his words need imaginative power; hence the writings of Blake are obscure for a common reader of a novel of Dickens or Maugham.

"Blake did not belong to a secret society; for to tell the truth, he had some difficulty in belonging to any society. But Blake did talk a secret language. He had something of that haughty and oligarchic element in his mysticism which marked the old pagan secret societies and which marks the Theosophists and oriental initiates to this day. There was in him, besides the beneficent wealth of Swedenborg, some touch of Cagliostro and the Freemasons. These things Blake did inherit from that break-up of belief that can be called the eighteenth century; we will debit him with these as an inheritance. And when we have said this we have said everything that can be said of any debt he owed. His debts are cleared here. His estate is cleared with this payment. All that follows is himself."

"The obscurity of Blake commonly consists in the fact that the actual words used mean one thing in Blake and quite another thing in the dictionary. Mr. Henry James wants to split hairs; Browning wants to tear them up by the roots. But in Blake the enigma is at once plainer and more perplexing; it is simply this, that if Blake says "hairs" he may not mean hairs, but something else — perhaps peacocks' feathers. To quote but one example out of a thousand; when Blake uses the word "devils", he generally means some particularly exalted order of angels such as preside over energy and imagination."

Geoffrey Keynes too has paid the most glorious tribute to Blake. He was so much misunderstood and

24. Ibid., pp. 125, 129, 130.
termed as a maniac by his contemporaries. His life of dedication and devotion to work is beyond the comprehension of superficial people. His poems or art cannot be enjoyed in an easy chair; it needs patience, alertness and deep analysis.

In the beginning, Blake was carried away by the French Revolution but was disillusioned by the Reign of Terror. He differed with Voltaire because the latter was a non-conformist and did not believe in the Church, whereas Blake was deeply faithful to the Church and was a creative artist.

"...Blake was enthusiastically in favour of the French Revolution; yet he enthusiastically hated that school of sceptics which, in the opinion of many, made the Revolution possible. He did not mind Marat; but he detested Voltaire. The reason is obvious in the light of his views on Nature and Imagination. The Republican Idealists he liked because they were idealists, because their abstract doctrines about justice and human equality were abstract doctrines. But the school of Voltaire was materialistic; it loved to remind man of his earthly origin and even of his earthly degradation. The war, which Blake loved, was a war of the invisible against the visible."

Blake was a great humanist. Even though he was violent in temper at heart he was kind, humane and

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L. Chesterton, G.K., William Blake, p.166.
charitable. Like Tolstoy, he was of the view that war was an evil. Because those who know the futility of war, are well aware of its moral repercussions.

"... He did not lead humanity, but attacked or even obstructed it. Many instances might be given of the kind of thing I mean; there was something of it in Blake's persistent and even pedantic insistence that war as war is evil. There was something of Tolstoy in Blake; and that means something that is inhuman as well as something that is heroic...." 27

There is a great place for imagination in the works of Blake. For him imagination is all pervading. It is imagination which combines the earth and heaven. Some think that he too like Wordsworth was a great poet of nature. But such a view is oversimplification. He had a great love for nature. Wordsworth considered nature the 'guardian' of his soul; for Blake, nature has no existence other than imagination. He found imagination more fundamental. Things of imagination are immortal, Chesterton has given a vivid description of Blake's philosophy of imagination: Lambs may die, but the idea of Lamb is everlasting.

"To sum up Blake's philosophy in any phrase sufficiently simple and popular for our purpose is not at all easy. For Blake's philosophy was

Those who imagined that because he was always talking about lambs and daisies, about Jesus and little Children, that therefore he held a simple gospel of goodwill, entirely misunderstand the whole nature of his mind. No man had harder dogmas; no one insisted more that religion must have theology. It is common to connect Blake and Wordsworth because of their ballads about babies and sheep. They were utterly opposite. If Wordsworth was the Poet of Nature, Blake was specially the Poet of Anti-Nature. Against Nature he set a certain entity which he called Imagination; but the word as commonly used conveys very little of what he meant by it. He did not mean something shadowy or fantastic, but rather something clear-cut, definite, and unalterable. By imagination, that is, he meant images; the eternal images of things. You might shoot all the lions on the earth; but you could not destroy the Lion of Judah, the Lion of the Imagination. You might kill all the lambs of the world and eat them; but you could not kill the Lamb of the Imagination, which was the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world. Blake's philosophy, in brief, was primarily the assertion that the ideal is more actual than the real, just as in Euclid the good triangle in the mind is a more actual (and more practical) than the bad triangle on the blackboard." 23

Blake found that it is imagination which gives 'form', shape and colour to Nature. Nature has no independent existence. It is the human being, the image of God, who demarcates the land and the sea, and thus man is superior to Nature in every respect.

"The most important conception can be found in one sentence which he let fall as if by accident, 'Nature has no outline, but imagination
has." In short, Blake really insisted that men as the image of God had a right to impose form upon nature." 29.

According to Blake, God is everywhere. There is continuous exchange between the earth and the heaven. God is not impersonal but He is a friend to one who can see and understand Him. Jesus is 'friend' of all humanity and enemy of none. Gandhi said "Truth is God", so too said Blake 'Goodness is God.' And the greatest vision of the seers and the visionaries is that God is a person, and friend of an enlightened man.

"God is not a symbol of goodness. Goodness is a symbol of God....

God was more and more solid as one came near. When one was far off one might fancy Him to be impersonal. When once came into personal relation one knew that He was a person. The personal God was the fact. The impersonal God of the Pantheists was a kind of condescending symbol. According to Blake (and there is more in the mental attitude than most modern people will willingly admit) this vague cosmic view is a more merciful preparation for the old practical and personal view. God is merely light to the merely unenlightened. God is a man to the enlightened. We are permitted to remain for a time evolutionary or pantheist until the time comes when we are worthy to be anthropomorphic." 30

Blake always believed that the 'ideal' was greater than the real. The virtues of God pervade the universe.

29. Ibid., pp. 161-162.
That is why this world which is seen as material or physical is, eternal and spiritual for Blake. God and Godliness are more real than the real itself. God takes the shape of individual person. The body of an individual may perish but the idea is immortal and eternal. This is also the preaching of the Upanishads and the Gita.

"Understand this Blake conception that the Divine is most bodily and definite when we really know it, and the severe lines and sensational literalism of his other and more pictorial work will be easily understood. Naturally his divinities are definite, because he thought that the more they were definite, the more they were divine. Naturally God was not to him a hazy light breaking through the tangled of the evolutionary undergrowth, nor a blinding brilliancy in the highest place of the heavens. God was to him the magnificent old man depicted in his dark and extraordinary illustrations of "Job", the old man with the monstrous muscles, the mild stern eyebrows, the long smooth silver hair and beard. In the dialogues between Jehovah and Job there is little difference between the two ponderous and palpable old men, except that the vision of Deity is a little more solid than the human being. But then Blake held that Deity is more solid than humanity. He held that what we call the ideal is not only more beautiful but more actual than the real. The ordinary educated modern person staring at these "Job" designs can only say that God is a mere elderly twin brother of Job. Blake would have at once retorted that Job was an image of God." 31

Blake belonged to the tradition of Chaucer and Milton. His art is a revolt against commonplaces and trite things. He was also impressed by Bacon, Newton

31. Ibid., pp.148-49.
Locke and Berkeley. Blake found that art gives 'vision' to the artist and the seer to realize the 'eternal' world. This spiritual and eternal world is not a new discovery of Blake; it is the message of all religions. Blake was the follower of Jesus and he propounded Jesus's thought. 32

Blake wrote at the time of the Industrial Revolution when England was swept away by the ethos of materialism. He stood against the stream. His main aim was to create 'unique' and 'individual' personalities through whom this spiritual world could be explained. 33

Blake hated politics and crafty politicians. He hated the French Revolution because it was an enemy of law and order. It was contrary to reason and 'vision,' which is his panacea for all the evils. He condemned princes as well as legislators. He thought that the world problem could be solved by mutual love and cooperation. For him man's life was divine. This vision of the spiritual world was very close to the oriental philosophy of the Upanishads that man may change his body but the soul or the spirit is unchangeable, that is eternal and indestructible. 34

33. Cf. Ibid., p.xiii.
34. Cf. Ibid., pp.xiii, xv.
Mysticism has been defined by the *Advance Learner's Dictionary* as 'teaching and belief that knowledge of God and real truth may be obtained through meditation or spiritual insight. Naturally, the mystic, unlike a common man, builds up contact with the supernatural, eternal and indestructible. Blake's vision or his love for God was somewhat similar. Schorer has given his observation about Blake's mysticism.35

And the mystic tries his best to form a communion with the supernatural. And this 'love' of a mystic is an antithesis of rationalism.36

Both, Blake and Yeats had seen the vision of eternity or spiritual world. And that vision did not disappear but developed into their cosmic thinking.37

Middleton Murry has described this supernatural imagination of Blake as 'spiritual sensation'. Because the eternity is beyond the sensation and perception of individual, it requires a different faculty which may be called 'spiritual', 'visionary' or celestial experience.38

36. Ibid., p.51.
37. Cf. Ibid., p.52.
It is through this medium that man perceives the essential truth or eternal good. The real seer sees 'infinite' in everything. In other words, he finds God in everything. "He who sees the infinite in all things, sees God. He who sees the ratio only, sees himself only."39

Blake, as a true Christian, believed that God partakes our virtues, and hence man is a part of divinity. This was the message of the great poet. To preach divinity, to awaken the best in man, to achieve perfection so that God becomes man and men becomes God, just as God took the form of Jesus and Jesus became God. And to achieve this perfection should be the all out effort of human life.40

Swinburne, while talking about Eternal life of Blake's theory said that great men should not be despised, because they are the real ingredients of God. God himself has been expressed in the form of great men.41

Chesterton felt that a true Christian is never desperate in miseries and sufferings. On the contrary, those who fell from Christianity went into the orbit of

40. Cf. Ibid., p.16.
pessimism. However, according to him, Hinduism and Buddhism both are different from Christianity because they belong to the pessimistic group.

"This being so, it has been broadly true that any mystic who broke with the Christian tradition tended to drift towards the eastern and pessimist tradition. In the Albigensian and other heresies the East crawled in with its serpentine combination of glitter and abasement of pessimism and pleasure. Every dreamer who strayed outside the Christian order strayed towards the Hindu order, and every such dreamer found his dream turning to a nightmare. If a man wandered far from Christ he was drawn into the orbit of Buddha, the other great magnet of manking - the negative magnet." 42

Blake was trying to bring out this personal glory of man, his divine personality which is the core of Christianity. As man develops his 'vision' or 'internal Imagination', God comes within himself.

".....He was on the side of historic Christianity on the fundamental question on which it confronts the East; the idea that personality is the glory of the universe and not its shame; that creation is higher than evolution, because it is more personal; that pardon is higher than Nemesis, because it is more personal, that the forgiveness of sins is essential to the communion of saints; and the resurrection of the body to the life everlasting. It was a mark of the old eastern initiations, it is still a mark of the grades and planes of our theosophical thinkers, that as a man climbs higher and higher, God becomes to him more and more formless, ethereal, and even thing. And in many of these temples,

42. Chesterton C.K., **Illywhacker**, p. 204 & 207.
both ancient and modern, the final reward of serving the god through vigils and purifications, is that one is at last worthy to be told that the god does not exist.

Meanwhile, the modern superior transcendentalist will find the facts of eternity incredible because they are so solid; he will not recognize heaven because it is so like the earth. 43

Even though Blake lived in poverty, he never complained of it. On the contrary, he was a self-contented man. He never felt miserable because he felt that God was with him and nothing was wrong with the world. This can be exemplified by the fact that Hayley gave a cottage to Blake to live in and the latter was overwhelmed with its beauty and simplicity.

"Hayley, who was in his way as munificent as Maecenas (and I suspect that Maecenas was quite as stupid as Hayley), gave Blake a cottage in Felpham, a few miles from his own house, a cottage with which Blake almost literally fell in love. He writes as if he had never seen an English country cottage before; and perhaps he never had. "Nothing" he cries in a kind of ecstasy "can ever be more grand than its simplicity and usefulness. Simple and without intricacy it seems to be the spontaneous expression of humanity, congenial to the wants of man. No other formed house can ever please us so well." It is probably true that none ever did. All that was purest and most chivalrous in his poetry and philosophy flowered in the great winds that pass and repass between the noble Sussex hills and the sea. He was always a happy man since he had a God. But here he was almost a contented man." 44

44. Ibid., pp. 58-59.
He was never after cheap popularity. He was never bothered by Mammon. But God was always with him. That is why he enjoyed perfect mental peace and died singing the song in praise of the Almighty who was everything to him.45

Gilchrist quotes an anecdote about Blake. He blessed a lady with her child that she should be as happy as he himself was. It caused a great bewilderment to her to see a man who was so ill clad; but later on she could understand that his happiness was spiritual rather than material.46

Blake wrote all his songs in 'praise' of the glory and grandeur of God. His life was full of joy. He died in ecstasy and had no worries. God was always with him. As a great seer he could hear imaginary voices of death approaching him.

"all his songs were in praise of God, and apparently new; all his songs were songs of innocence. Every now and then he would stop and cry out to his wife, "Not mine!" in a sort of ecstatic explanation. He truly seemed to wait for the opening of the door of death as a child waits for the opening of the cupboard on his birthday. He genuinely and solemnly seemed to hear the hoofs of the horses of death as a baby hears on Christmas eve the reindeer hooves of Santa Claus. He was in his last

46. Cf. Ibid., p.310.
moments in that wonderful world of whiteness in which white is still a colour. He would have clapped his hands at a white snowflake and sung as at the white wings of an angel at the moment when he himself turned suddenly white with death." 47

Chesterton has emphatically mentioned the image of Blake's 'eternity'. He saw God everywhere and in everything.

".....Blake knew as little about the Middle Ages as Stothard did; but Blake knew about eternity and about man; he saw the image of God under all garments." 48

Blake, the mystic and serious thinker had a sense of humour too.

"For instance, Blake had a strong sense of humour, but it was not under control; it could be eclipsed and could completely disappear. There was certainly a spouting fountain of fierce laughter in the man who could write in an epigram -

"A dirty sneaking knave I knew........

Oh, Mr. Cromek, how do you do?49

There is a confusion about the sanity of Blake. Particularly, whenever he referred to his visions. Sometimes he merely talked in parties about his talks to angels, or the poets like Milton and others, or he said to his wife -

".....It is said that he proposed to his wife that they should live naked in their back garden like Adam and Eve. If the husband ever really proposed this, the wife succeeded in averting it." 50

47. Chesterton, G.K., William Blake, p.70.
48. Ibid., p.61.
49. Ibid., p.91.
50. Ibid., p.77.
Actually there was no inconsistency in any act of Blake which could be attributed to madness. He never called a 'cat' a 'dog' or vice versa. On the contrary, he was a most rational man.

"Originally his intellect was not only strong but strongly rational - one might almost say strongly sceptical. There never was a man of whom it was less true to say (as has been said) that he was a light sensitive lyrist, a mere piper of pretty songs for children. His mind was like a ruined Roman arch; it has been broken by barbarians; but what there is of it is Roman. So it was with William Blake's reason; it had been broken (or cracked) by something; but what there was of it was reasonable. In his art criticism he never said anything that was not strictly consistent with his first principles. In his controversies, in the many matters in which he argued angrily or venomously, he never lost the thread of the argument. Like every great mystic he was also a great rationalist." 51

Gilchrist, his biographer, has refuted the charge of madness against Blake. 52

Blake is equally famous for his art. He made pictures of all kinds. His mysticism is to be seen in his paintings too. He himself explains that his work of art is not meant for an average man.

"But you ought to know that what is Grand is necessarily obscure to weakmen. That which can be made explicit to the Idiot is not worth my care." 53

51. Ibid., p.33.
As Blake was a great moralist in his writings, so was the case with his paintings. He did not draw a picture which was not without a purpose. He was on the line of Michaelangelo. He discovered that art should keep life. He found Chaucer very inspiring because he had greater vision and found that the 'true Christian' had inexhaustible fund of pictures.

"His whole business was somehow or other to make pictures; and therefore, when he looked at Chaucer, he could see nothing but the picturesque.

Against this sort of sound technical artist, another type of artist has been eternally offered; this was the type of Blake. It was also the type of Michaelangelo; it was the type of Leonardo da Vinci; it was the type of several French mystics, and in our own country and recent period of Rossetti.

The whole incident cannot be without its moral and effect for all discussions about the morality or immorality of art. If art could be immoral, it might be all very well. But the truth is that unless art is moral, art is not only immoral, but immoral in the most common place, slangy, and prosaic way. In the future, the fastidious artists who refuse to be any thing but artists will go down to history as the embodiment of all the vulgarities and blemishes of their time..."

During his time his paintings were not appreciated because the people thought that he was insane and there was inconsistency in his pictures. But modern critics have found out that Blake was one of the greatest

54. Chesterton, G.K., William Blake, pp.60, 63.
painters as he was one of the greatest poets of his
time. He was a 'fantastic' artist but most 'conven-
tional'.

His greatness has been confirmed by critic after
critic. T.S. Eliot put him with the great minds of
the world such as Homer, Aeschylus, Spinoza, Shakes-
peare, Bacon, Milton, Michael Angelo and so on.55

Herbert Read has paid one of the most glorious
tributes to Blake. He has placed him beside the colo-
ossal figures of English literature such as Shakespeare,
Milton, Hopkins and so on.56

W.B. Yeats admired him greatly. Blake's 'vision',
his purposeful art for which he sweated throughout his
life, great human treasure. For him, 'Imagination is
the body of God'. And God is expressed through subtle
manifestations. Perhaps 'word' is God which is very
similar to the philosophy of the Upanishads. God is
expressed through art, which is the 'truth' the 'good'
and the 'beautiful'.57

This cosmic poet wrote divine songs and drew
divine pictures throughout his life. He had 'cosmic

55. Cf. O'Neill, J., (ed.) Critics on Blake, London:
56. Cf. Ibid., p.97.
57. Cf. Ibid., p.22.
vision'. The greatest achievement of Blake is the healthy tradition which he established at the time of morbid thinkers. One cannot find the woeful cries of Keats, pessimism of Shelley and escapist imagination of Wordsworth in the works of Blake. Pessimism was alien to him. He always sang the glory of God and he saw the Almighty in everything. That is why he was enormously rich in his destitution. He never complained of it; on the contrary, he took himself to be the happiest man. This poet of immortality was the poet for all ages. No definite formula can be given for his appreciation. The world is deeply indebted to the son of God who gave joy and happiness in a world of miseries and pettiness. This is the healthiest tradition handed down to posterity by Blake who will remain immortal in the minds of the lovers of English literature.

ROBERT BROWNING

Robert Browning was born in a middle class family in London. His father was a very cultured man. He had a great love for learning. And also he had a great love for art, literature, painting and moral life. He had built up a very huge library, wherein Browning studied very widely and intensively. Chesterton writes
about Browning's father's typical habits, and attitudes of a middle-class man of the 18th century England.

"He was, in short, a very typical example of the serious middle-class men of the Wilberforce period, a man to whom duty was all in all, and who would revolutionize an empire or a continent for the satisfaction of a single moral scruple. Thus, while he was Puritan at the core, not the ruthless Puritan of the seventeenth, but the humanitarian Puritan of the eighteenth century; he had upon the surface all the tastes and graces of a man of culture. Numerous accomplishments of the lighter kind such as drawing and painting in water colours, he possessed; and his feeling for many kinds of literature was fastidious and exact. But the whole was absolutely redolent of the polite severity of the eighteenth century. He lamented his son's early admiration for Byron, and never ceased adjuring him to model himself upon Pope." 53

Browning's mother was of German extraction. She was a very systematic and well-mannered lady. She trained up Browning [religious habits] and good manners. She knew a bit of music which Browning picked up from her.

"Robert Browning's mother was the daughter of William Wisdommann, a German merchant settled in Dundee, and married to a Scotch wife. One of the poet's principal biographers has suggested that from this union of the German and Scotch, Browning got his metaphysical tendency; it is possible; but here again we must beware of the

great biographical danger of making mountains out of mole hills. What Browning's mother unquestionably did give to him, was in the way of training a very strong religious habit, and a great belief in manners." 59

Browning's school education was very unsystematic. He never stuck to any school for a long time because of his precocious and clever brain. But he was taught by a private tutor at home and his father taught him "Greek epics" and "medieval chronicles." Apart from this, his self-study in his father's library was a great achievement. That is why Chesterton felt that if his school and college education is taken into account, it will amount to nothing. But if his mental calibre and his self study are taken into account perhaps he would be called as the most well-read Victorian.

"...But the boy's education did not in truth take place at any systematic seat of education; it took place in his own home, where one of the quaintest and most learned and most absurdly indulgent of fathers poured out in an endless stream fantastic recitals from the Greek epics and medieval chronicles. If we test the matter by the test of actual schools and universities, Browning will appear to be almost the least educated man in English literary history. But if we test it by the amount actually learned, we shall think that he was perhaps the most educated man that ever lived; that he was in fact, if anything, over educated." 60

59. Ibid., pp.11-12.
60. Ibid., pp.12-13.
Browning grew in the hectic and rebellious atmosphere of 'liberty', 'equality', and 'fraternity'. The rapturous songs of Shelley, and the sensual poetry of Keats filled his mind, ears and thoughts. He was lucky enough to have the 'acquaintance' of the great literary coterie of Carlyle, Landor, Wordsworth and Charles Dickens.

But Browning was entirely an original poet. He was not only 'sensual' but 'intellectual'. He was not only aesthetic but metaphysical. He enjoyed God-made beauty, as well as artificial beauty. He was a man of deep sensibilities and higher passions of human life.

"Browning was first and foremost a poet, a man made to enjoy all things visible and invisible, a priest of the higher passions....."

In a way Browning was one of the luckiest persons of his times who did not have to sweat for a living. His father was quite well off and Browning could live on his income. He made a tour of Russia. He settled in Italy to which he eloped with Elizabeth Barrett.

It was in Italy where Browning drank deep natural beauty. He was fascinated by the green scenery and the landscape of Italy. Here Browning learned art, politics

61. Ibid., p.16.
and literature. Browning and his beloved rode on the
countryside of which Browning has made mention. It
was in Italy where he moved with the people, made
friends with intellectuals, and learnt its manners and
politics. Before one reads the poems of Browning, one
must have a thorough knowledge of the medieval period.
He is full of allusions to the old classics of Italy.
Chesterton has described beautifully the deep love of
Browning had for Italy in the following lines:

"It is well known that Browning loved Italy;
that it was his adopted country; that he said
in one of the finest of his lyrics that the
name of it would be found written on his heart
......He was interested in the life in Italian
art and in the life in Italian politics." 62

In fact for a layman, Browning's poems seem to be
difficult and obscure. Critic after critic has charged
him with obscurity, and there is reason for that.
Browning lived in Italy, and he imbibed its very life,
its heritage, its culture, music, paintings, its
countryside, landscape and its manners. Above all, the
medieval chronicles of Italy were at his finger-tips.
That is why before reading Sordello one must read the
medieval history of Italy intensively and extensively.
It appears to the reader that Browning is more concerned
with 'logic' rather than the finer elements of poetry.

62. Ibid., p.82.
A very great part of the difficulty of "Bordello" for instance, is in the fact that before the reader even approaches to tackling the difficulties of Browning's actual narrative, he is apparently expected to start with an exhaustive knowledge of that most shadowy and bewildering of all human epochs - the period of the Guelph and Ghibelline struggles in mediaeval Italy." 63

About the varieties of knowledge, and complexity of the medieval period, of which Chesterton too was very fond as much as Browning who was totally sunk in its depth.

"The Eden of the Middle Ages was really a garden, where each of God's flowers - truth and beauty and reason - flourished for its own sake, and with its own name. The Eden of modern progress is a kitchen garden." 64

Browning wrote "Paracelsus" in answer to those who charged him of 'logic' in poetry, or those who accuse him of having much intellectual element in his works. Some found in him little tenderness in his poetry. But Thomas Carlyle who had great hatred for poetry, loved Browning extraordinarily.

"The usual accusation against Browning is that he was consumed with logic; that he thought all subjects to be the proper pabulum of intellectual disquisition; that he gloried chiefly in his own power of plucking knots to pieces.

63. Ibid., p.41.
64. Ibid., p.25.
and rending fallacies in two; and that to this method, he sacrificed deliberately, and with complete self-complacency, the element of poetry and sentiment. To people who imagine Browning to have been this frigid believer in the intellect there is only one answer necessary or sufficient. It is the fact that he wrote a play designed to destroy the whole of this intellectualist fallacy at the age of twenty-three.

Paracelsus was in all likelihood Browning’s introduction to the literary world. It was many years, and even many decades, before he had anything like a public appreciation, but a very great part of the minority of those who were destined to appreciate him came over to his standard upon the publication of Paracelsus. The celebrated John Forster had taken up Paracelsus “as a thing to sate”, and had ended its perusal with the wildest curiosity about the author and his works. John Stuart Mill, never backward in generosity, had already interested himself in Browning, and was finally converted by the same poem. Among other early admirers were Landor, Leigh Hunt, Borne, Serjeant Talfourd, and Monkton-Milnes. One man of even greater literary stature seems to have come into Browning’s life about this time, a man for whom he never cease to have the warmest affection and trust. Browning was, indeed, one of the very few men of that period who got on perfectly with Thomas Carlyle.  65

Browning’s work is prodigious. He went on producing one work after another. Men and Women, The Ring and the Book, Pinne.Passes, Pauline, Sordello, Jalla and Pomegranates, Dramatis Personae, Pifings at the Fair, Pacchiarette, Dramatic Idylls, and Asilando.

Browning's poetry is tinged with human love. For him every human face was the expression of divinity.

His love poetry is the finest example of this.

"And therefore Browning's love poetry is the finest love poetry in the world, because it does not talk about raptures and ideals and gates of heaven, but about window-panes and gloves and garden walls. It does not deal much with abstractions; it is the truest of all love poetry, because it does not speak much about love. It awakens in every man the memories of that immortal instant when common and dead things had a meaning beyond the power of any dictionary to utter, and a value beyond the power of any millionaire to compute. He expresses the celestial time when a man does not think about heaven, but about a parasol. And, therefore, he is, first, the greatest of love poets, and, secondly, the only optimistic philosopher except Whitman." 66

Chesterton states that with the publication of his dramatic lyrics, Browning's work had reached its maturity and he found Browning the most original in 'literary form'.

"...Browning's poetry, in the most strictly poetical sense, reached its flower in Dramatic Lyrics, published in 1842. Here he showed himself a picturesque and reigning artist in a wholly original manner." 67

In The Return of the Druses, Chesterton finds Browning a true idealist, a highly religious-minded personality, and a pure thinker and philosopher.

66. Ibid., p.49.
67. Ibid., pp.45-46.
"We have in The Return of the Druses his love of the corners of history, his interest in the religious mind of the East, with its almost terrifying sense of being in the hand of heaven, his love of colour and verbal luxury, of gold and green and purple, which made some think he must be an Oriental himself." 68

Browning had the germs of a dramatist, but unfortunately he could not be successful.

He was a man of the world, for whom the entire earth and sky were one. But he was highly conventional. And this conventionality of Browning, according to Chesterton, was an adjustment between literature and the audience.

"Robert Browning was unquestionably a thoroughly conventional man......Convention means only a coming together, an agreement, and as every poet must base his work upon an emotional agreement among men, so every poet must base his work upon a convention. Every art is, of course, based upon a convention, an agreement between the speaker and the listener that certain objections shall not be raised." 69

What was the theme of Browning’s poetry? Chesterton’s answer could be - Tradition. Conventional things were the subject of inspiration for Browning. For example, "the love of a woman", "the love of children", "the yearning for immortal life", and "original sin".

68. Ibid., p.51.
69. Ibid., pp.97-98.
"Poetry deals with primal and conventional things - the hunger for bread, the love of woman, the love of children, the desire for immortal life. If men really had new sentiments, poetry could not deal with them. ... it is original in the sense that it deals with origins." 70

Chesterton observed that Browning found a great necessity for 'adjustment' between the artist and the readers. Just as in a play, the audience rises to the imagination of the playwright. The audience really lands in the forest of Arden. The spectator also starts thinking like the dramatist. There cannot be communication between the artist and the audience if the audience feels that it is neither the forest, nor the Trojan city. What is the use of an only an actor who cannot be a real Hector, Achilles, Macbeth, Hamlet or Saint Joan? Similarly, the paintings of a painter should make the onlookers realize its truth in imagination. In the same way, the poet and the reader must have similar level of thinking. Otherwise, the poetic rapport will be impossible.

"All artists, who have any experience of the arts, will agree so far, that a poet is bound to be conventional with regard to matters of art. Unfortunately, however, they are the very people who cannot, as a general rule, see that

70. Ibid., p.99.
poet is also bound to be conventional in matters of conduct. It is only the smaller poet who sees the poetry of revolt, of isolation, of disagreement; the larger poet sees the poetry of those great agreements which constitute the romantic achievement of civilisation. Just as an agreement between the dramatist and the audience is necessary to every play; just as an agreement between the painter and the spectators is necessary to every picture, so an agreement is necessary to produce the worship of any of the great figures of morality - the hero, the saint, the average man, the gentleman. Browning had, it must thoroughly be realised, a real pleasure in these great agreements, these great conventions. He delighted, with a true poetic delight in being conventional. 71

Why did Browning love this world which others found a 'vale of tears', a place of 'fever and fret'.

According to Chesterton, Browning found the world good because of 'religion', 'nation', 'family', 'justice' and 'society'.

"He thought the world good because he had found so many things that were good in it - religion, the nation, the family, the social class. He did not, like the new humanitarian, think the world good because he had found so many things in it that were bad." 72

Browning was very kind and humane. He was one of the most respectable and lovable persons of his period. His youth was enviable for which Carlyle had a great admiration. He became a hot favourite of Tennyson, Gladstone and Palgrave.

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71. Ibid., pp.99-100.
72. Ibid., p.115.
The world acknowledged him as a great celebrity. Universities, one after another, honoured him for his poetical works.

"...Tennyson, for whom he then and always felt the best and most personal kind of admiration, came into his life, and along with him Gladstone and Francis Palgrave. There began to crowd in upon him those honours whereby a man is to some extent made a classic in his life-time, so that he is honoured even if he is unread. He was made a Fellow of Balliol in 1867, and the homage of the great universities continued thenceforth unceasingly until his death, despite many refusals on his part. He was unanimously elected Lord Rector of Glasgow University in 1875. He declined, owing to his deep and somewhat characteristic aversion to formal public speaking, and in 1877 he had to decline on similar grounds the similar offer from the University of St. Andrews. He was much at the English Universities, was a friend of Dr. Jowett, and enjoyed the University life at the age of sixty-three in a way that he probably would not have enjoyed it if he had ever been to a university. The great universities would not let him alone, to their great credit, and he became a D.C.Sc. of Cambridge in 1879, and a D.C.L. of Oxford in 1882." 73

Browning had studied the Greek language with great pleasure. The works of Aeschylus and Aristophanes were at the tip of his tongue. This impact of the great Greek dramatists made him obscure to ordinary readers.

"...his passionate love of the Greek language" continued in him thenceforward till his death. He published more than one poem on the drama of Hellas. Aristophanes' Apology

73. Ibid., pp.117-118.
came out in 1876, and *The Agamemnon of Aeschylus*, another paraphrase, in 1877. All three poems are marked by the same primary characteristic, the fact that the writer has the literature of Athens literally at his fingers' ends. He is intimate not only with their poetry and politics, but with their frivolity and their slang; he knows not only Athenian wisdom, but Athenian folly; not only the beauty of Greece, but even its vulgarity. In fact, a page of *Aristophanes' Apology* is like a page of Aristophanes, dark with levity and as obscure as a school man's treatise with its load of jokes.

Perhaps, this is one of the reasons for his obscurity. Those who are not familiar with the Greek language intimately, nor are one with Italy's moods, the mystery - the country of 'somnambulists' - find his poems difficult. His poetry was not written in an easy chair. And it is not a 'spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings'. It is well thought out and brooded over. Call it a philosophy, psychology, history or theology. To understand his works one must understand Browning as a man, a thinker, a philosopher, a Greek scholar, an Italianate. He had universal ideals and universal visions, and his poetry the by-product of his sincere and conscientious effort:

"There is an old anecdote, probably apocryphal, which describes how a feminine admirer wrote to Browning asking him for the meaning of one of his darker poems, and received the following reply: "When that poem was written, two people knew what it meant - God and Robert Browning. And now God only knows what it means."
People, find it difficult to understand Browning's poetry because of its 'grotesque' form. He went on inventing forms for his poetry throughout his life because he believed in his originality. There were other poets who had new and surprising ideas, for example, Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, Tennyson; but they wrote in traditional and most conventional manner, Browning had an insatiable desire for a new way of composing poetry. This can be exemplified by the Ring and the Book and Pinaa Passes.

"He was always weaving and modelling and inventing new forms. Among all his two hundred to three hundred poems it would scarcely be an exaggeration to say that there are half as many different metres as there are different poems.

The great English poets, who are supposed to have cared more for form than Browning did, cared less at least in this sense - that they were content to use old forms so long as they were certain that they had new ideas. Browning on the other hand, no sooner had a new idea than he tried to make a new form to express it. Wordsworth and Shelley were really original poets; their attitude of thought and feeling marked without doubt certain great changes in literature and philosophy. Nevertheless, the Ode on the Intimations of Immortality is a perfectly normal and traditional ode, and Prometheus Unbound is a perfectly genuine and traditional Greek lyrical drama. But if we study Browning honestly, nothing will strike us more than that he really created a large number of quite novel and quite admirable artistic forms." 75
People make a mistake in comparing Browning with any other poet. Generally people try to find out elements in the poetry of Browning which are similar to those in the poetry of others. Browning has not written after models of such and such poets. And this sort of general and sweeping criticism can never fit in with Browning, because he was extraordinarily original in finding new metres, rhythms, images and above all, his way of expression. In his poems 'how' is as important as 'what'.

"There is in this matter an extraordinary tendency to vague and unmeaning criticism. The usual way of criticising an author, particularly an author who has added something to the literature forms of the world, is to complain that his work does not contain something which is obviously the speciality of somebody else. If we can show that Browning had a definite ideal of beauty and loyally pursued it, it is not necessary to prove that he could have written In Memoriam if he had tried." 77

It is not a fact that Browning did not like Nature. For Wordsworth, Nature was an inspirer, a 'guardian' or 'nurse' and his 'soul'. It had an astounding magic power for mind. Shelley had an 'intellectual' sense of nature. Keats had 'sensual' sense of nature. For Browning, nature was a source

77. Ibid., pp. 133-39.
of mental energy. He has described the colour, landscape, flowers and innumerable sounds of big animals as well as of smallest insects. For him the sea was a tremendous source of mental energy and joy.

"Nature may present itself to the poet too often as consisting of stars and lilies; but these are not poets who live in the country; they are men who go to the country for inspiration and could no more live in the country than they could go to bed in Westminster Abbey. Men who live in the heart of nature, farmers and peasants, know that nature means cows and pigs, and creatures more humorous than can be found in a whole sketch-book of Callot. And the element of the grotesque in art, like the element of the grotesque in nature, means, in the main, energy, the energy which takes its own forms and goes its own way. Browning's verse, in so far as it is grotesque, is not complex or artificial; it is natural and in the legitimate tradition of nature. The verse sprawls like the trees, dances like the dust; it is ragged like the thunder-cloud, it is top-heavy like the toadstool..... Nature might mean flowers to Wordsworth and grass to Walt Whitman, but to Browning, it really meant such things as these, the monstrosities and living mysteries of the sea. And just as these strange things meant to Browning energy in the physical world, so strange thoughts and strange images meant to him energy in the mental world." 78

Nature does not have an independent role in the poetry of Browning. In fact, he was a 'town' poet. He was more for human beings rather than for nature.

78. Ibid., pp.149-50.
"Do you care for nature much?" a friend of his asked him. "Yes, a great deal", he said, "but for human beings a great deal more". 79

Chesterton has paid compliments to Browning for the perfection of his artifice, which is the art of the 'grotesque'.

"This queer trait in Browning, his inability to keep a kind of demoted ingenuity even out of poems in which it was quite inappropriate, is a thing which must be recognised, and recognised all the more because as a whole, he was a very perfect artist, and a particularly perfect artist in the use of the grotesque." 80

There is a charge of obscurity against Browning. For a layman, his poems are difficult. It is quite possible, because Browning was a well read man. And his encyclopaedic knowledge has been conveyed in his poetry. His knowledge of the middle ages, his experiments with forms, his expressions of the cosmos in his poetry, must be taken into consideration while studying his poetry:

"Browning is not obscure because he has such deep things to say, any more than he is grotesque because he has such new things to say. He is both of these things primarily, because he likes to express himself in a particular manner." 81

79. Ibid., p.186.
80. Ibid., p.153.
81. Ibid., p.156.
His deliberate craftsmanship, his extraordinary skill in creating new forms is illustrated in The Ring and the Book. It was widely acclaimed as a 'splendid monument of learning'. G.K. Chesterton called it the great epic of the century.

"The essence of The Ring and the Book is that it is the great epic of the nineteenth century, because it is the great epic of the enormous importance of small things." 82

Sullivan pays a glorious tribute to his The Ring and the Book. "Browning's The Ring and the Book is, in its length and scope, the most monumental poem of the Victorian period..." 83

Critic after critic still are praising Browning for his prodigious powers. A recent review in the Athenaeum, is a concrete example of this. 84

G.K. Chesterton has paid glorious tributes to Browning for his ceaseless hunt for artistic novelty. Perhaps he was out to exhaust the whole of the cosmos.

82. Ibid., p.163.
"He was always trying experiments; sometimes he failed, producing clumsy and irritating metres, top-heavy and over-concentrated thought. For more often he triumphed, producing a crowd of boldly designed poems, every one of which taken separately might have founded an artistic school. But whether successful or unsuccessful, he never ceased from his fierce hunt after poetic novelty. He never became a conservative. The last book he published in his lifetime, \textit{Parleyings with Certain People of Importance in their Day}, was a new poem, and more revolutionary than \textit{Paracelsus}. This is the true light in which to regard Browning as an artist. He had determined to leave no spot of cosmos undecorated by his poetry which he could find it possible to adorn."

Browning thought of this world as a place where man was imperfect. And his continuous struggle for perfection would lead to the 'immortality' of life. This is the basis of 'optimism'. As Chesterton thought of a weak man, with his beer, hunting, gambling and other weaknesses - as the symbol of greatness, similarly Browning thought that in the imperfection of man lives his hope.

"\ldots His two great theories of the universe may be expressed in two comparatively parallel phrases. The first was what may be called the hope which lies in the imperfection of man. The characteristic poem of Old Pictures in Florence expresses very quaintly and beautifully the idea that some hope may always be based on deficiency"

itself; in other words, that in so far as man is a one-legged or a one-eyed creature, there is something about his appearance which indicates that he should have another leg and another eye. The poem suggests admirably that such a sense of incompleteness may easily be a great advance upon a sense of completeness, that the part may easily and obviously be greater than the whole. And from this Browning draws, as he is fully justified in drawing, a definite hope for immortality and the larger scale of life. For nothing is more certain than that though this world is the only world that we have known, or of which we could even dream, the fact does remain that we have named it "a strange world". In other words, we have certainly felt that this world did not explain itself, that something in its complete and patent picture has been omitted. And Browning was right in saying that in a cosmos where incompleteness implies completeness, life implies immortality. This was the first of the doctrines or opinions of Browning: the hope that lies in the imperfection of man. The second of the great Browning doctrines requires some audacity to express. It can only be properly stated as the hope that lies in the imperfection of God. That is to say that Browning held that sorrow and self-denial, if they were the burdens of man, were also his privileges. He held that these stubborn sorrows and obscure valours might, to use a yet more strange expression, have provoked the envy of the Almighty. If man has self-sacrifice and God has none, then man has in the Universe a secret and blasphemous superiority. And this tremendous story of a Divine jealousy Browning reads into the story of the Crucifixion. If the creator had not been crucified He would not have been as great as thousands of wretched fanatics among His own creatures." 86

The greatest point in Browning is his 'Optimism' at the time of Victorian pessimism. The optimism is

86. ibid., pp.177-179.
the outcome of Browning's strong intellect and power. His famous line is a common proverb:

"God's in his heaven —

All's right with world! " 87

According to Chesterton, the optimism of Browning was not based upon intellectual argument, but the feeling that man is imperfect, weak and humble, hence there lies the hope of his perfection. Moreover, his sense of optimism was based upon human life of which he was a great singer. And he had the faith, that human life is the work of the Maker.

"Browning was, as most of his upholders and all his opponents say, an optimist. His theory that man's sense of his own imperfection implies a design of perfection, is a very good argument for optimism. His theory that man's knowledge of and desire for self-sacrifice implies God's knowledge of and desire for self-sacrifice is another very good argument for optimism. But any one will make the deepest and blackest and most incurable mistakes about Browning who imagines that his optimism was founded on any arguments for optimism. Because he had a strong intellect, because he had a strong power of conviction, he conceived and developed and asserted these doctrines of the incompleteness of Man and the sacrifice of Omnipotence. But these doctrines were the symptoms of his optimism, they were not its origin. It is surely obvious, that no one can be argued into optimism since no one can be argued into happiness. Browning's optimism was not founded on opinions which were the work of Browning, but on life which was the work of God." 88

This optimism of Browning is based upon a belief in the unshakable order of the Creator who created the universe and the human being.

"And this quality of Browning's optimism, the quality of detail, is also a very typical quality. Browning's optimism is of that ultimate and unshakable order that is founded upon the absolute sight, and sound, and smell and handling of things." 89

Browning's optimism was based in human beings. He loved all existence but he loved human beings more. For him every face in the street was an expression of divinity. Each one of us was on this earth for a purpose. Each one had valuable things in his brain. Browning was a lover of happiness, and the happiness was based upon human life.

"To Browning, probably the beginning and the end of all optimism was to be found in the faces in the street. To him they were all the makers of deity, the heads of a hundred-headed Indian god of nature. Each one of them looked towards some quarter of the heavens, not looked upon by any other eyes. Each one of them were some expression, some blend of eternal joy and eternal sorrow, not to be found in any other, countenance. The sense of the absolute sanctity of human difference was the deepest of all his senses. He was hungrily interested in all human things, but it would have been quite impossible to have said of him that he loved humanity. He did not love humanity but men. His sense of the difference between one man and another would

89. Ibid., p.182.
have made the thought of melting them into a lump called humanity simply loathsome and prosaic. It would have been to him like playing four hundred beautiful airs at once. The mixture would not combine all, it would lose all. Browning believed that to every man that ever lived upon this earth had been given a definite and peculiar confidence of God. Each one of us was engaged on secret service; each one of us had a peculiar message; each one of us was the founder of a religion. Of that religion our thoughts, our faces our bodies, our hats, our boots, our tastes, our virtues, and even our vices were more or less fragmentary and inadequate expressions."

The climax of his optimism is the poem Bishop Blougram's Apology in which Browning upheld the man of vices instead of a saint. This is something unimaginable to those who are not familiar with the themes of Browning's poetry.

"Browning in such poems as Bishop Blougram's Apology breaks this first mask of goodness in order to break the second mask of evil, and gets to the real goodness at last; he dethrones a saint in order to humanise a scoundrel." 91

Critic after critic has found his theory of optimism within human being as the symbol of God. Braybrooke is one of them.

"It is the essence of Browning; it is the certainty that however far distant there is the face of God behind the human features." 92

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90. Ibid., pp.136-37
91. Ibid., p.189.
Dellas Kenmare has praised greatly the approach of Browning to human life, that God is not only in heaven but everywhere, in the face of a good man, a bad man, and even in a blade of grass?

"It is this 'wildness', this sense of continual excitement and delight in the joys of God's world that mark him as not only the great artist but the true mystic who sees God not only in his heaven, but in every bush and flower and human face." 93

Phelps has praised Browning for his optimism because he held this view against the trend of his contemporaries. His firm faith in God at a time when a sad, and gloomy atmosphere prevailed, needed the strong views of a poet like Browning and not Tennyson.

According to Professor Chakravarty, Browning was a poet of 'courage', 'faith' and 'hope'. There is a fusion of three elements in his poetry.

'God', 'Man', and the 'World'. 95

Now, the question why Chesterton chose Browning for the subject of his criticism should be tackled.

Perhaps, he found Browning a thorough gentleman. A

true Christian, at the time when pessimists had given more tears than cheerful smiles to this world. Chesterton has stated:

"He was everything that he was with a definite and conscious pleasure - a man, a Liberal, an Englishman, an author, a gentleman, a lover, a married man." 96

Such a true Christian was a favourite of Chesterton. Like him, Browning also felt that art has a purpose to convey. It is not for pleasure's sake only. Every action on earth was the expression of God. In the street of London or Italy, he saw the Almighty being expressed in every face of man and woman, whether beautiful or ugly, and every one's life on this earth was meant for some object. And each had his responsibility in the totality of things. Hence he chose Browning for study.

"Every one on the earth should believe that he has something to give to the world which cannot otherwise be given. Every one should, for the good of men and the saving of his soul, believe that it is possible, even if we are the enemies of the human race, to be the friends of God." 97

THE VICTORIAN AGE IN LITERATURE

Victorian era was a period of material prosperity. It was the age of industrial and imperial 'expansion'.

96. Chesterton, G.K., Robert Browning, p.100.
a period of social, political and philosophical upheaval. This was the period of political awakening. The ideals of 'equality,' 'liberty' and 'fraternity' touched its height. It was the era in which Englishman could think of 'liberty' social reforms and the status of women.

G.K. Chesterton was enamoured of the Herculean tasks of the great writers of the Victorian period. That is why, for him, Carlyle's French Revolution seemed more 'fiery' than the revolution itself. Carlyle rose as a great moral force who set the gospel of hard work, and hero worship. He worked as a teacher, and combined good many qualities in himself. First of all, he was a great individualist, visionary, romantic, idealist and above all, a great spiritual teacher. Carlyle was very much impressed by German culture particularly by Goethe and Kant. Secondly, his 'Scotch education' made him a fearless fighter.

"The two primary things in Thomas Carlyle were his early Scotch education and his later German culture. The first was in almost all respects his strength; the latter in some respects his weakness. As an ordinary lowland peasant, he inherited the really valuable historic property of the Scots, their independence, their fighting spirit, and their instinctive philosophic consideration of men merely as men."

Chesterton was so much impressed by his colossal work on the French Revolution, that it looked more fierce, and stupendous than the French Revolution itself.

"Verbally considered, Carlyle's French Revolution was more revolutionary than the real French Revolution:..........." 99

It was Carlyle's great moral power which made him a vehement critic of 'Utilitarians'.

"His great and real work was the attack on Utilitarianism:" 100

G.K. Chesterton finds the work of Carlyle profound and erudite. His Reflections on the French Revolution, Sartor Resartus and Past and Present are all great works.

Even though Tennyson, Ruskin and Kingsley were his close disciples, he always remained an optimist amidst the shroud of Victorian pessimism.

"But Carlyle's philosophy, more carefully considered, will be found to be dangerously optimistic rather than pessimist." 101

Chesterton has written comments on other great Victorians. Macaulay was fond of great things. A

99. Ibid., p.15.
100. Ibid., p.35.
101. Ibid., p.37.
staunch man of independence, and high seriousness, he always propagated the great culture of the German giants.

Arnold was a man of great culture. For him, the Church was not a place for the selected few, but for the masses.

"He knew a rational minimum of culture and common courtesy could exist and did exist throughout large democracies. He knew the Catholic Church had been in history 'the Church of the multitude': he knew it was not a sect. He knew that great landlords are no more a part of the economic law than nigger-drivers, he knew that small owners could and did prosper. He was not so much the philosopher as the man of the world; he reminded us that Europe was a society while Ruskin was treating it as a picture gallery. He was a sort of Heaven-sent courtier. His frontal attack on the vulgar and sullen optimism of Victorian utility may be summed up in the admirable sentence, in which he asked the English what was the use of a train taking them quickly from Islington to Camberwell, if it only took them from a dismal and illiberal life in Islington to a dismal and illiberal life in Camberwell? 102.

As a fervent religious man, Carlyle believed in tradition, he believed in the 'Historic Church' with its loud and untiring zeal of spiritualism.

"His attitude to that great religious enigma round which all these great men were grouped as in a ring was individual, and decidedly curious. 102. Ibid., pp.47-48.
He seems to have believed that a 'Historic Church', that is, some established organisation with ceremonies and sacred books etc., could be perpetually preserved as a sort of vessel to contain the spiritual ideas of the age, whatever those ideas might happen to be. He clearly seems to have contemplated a melting away of the doctrines of the Church and even of the meaning of the words; but he thought a certain need in man would always be best satisfied by public worship and especially by the great religious literatures of the past."

As a great social critic, Carlyle believed in balance. Carlyle had great love for tradition, that is why he admired classics with all intents and purposes. He was an innovator of his own lucid style. His sentences are unduly long, sometimes untidy, and style becomes verbose; but, he is always careful for 'lucidity'.

"As a critic he was chiefly concerned to preserve criticism itself; to set a measure to praise and blame and support the classics against the fashions. It is here that it is specially true of him, if of no writer else, that the style was the man. The most vital thing he invented was a new style: founded on the patient unravelling of the tangled Victorian ideas, as if they were matted hair under a comb. He did not mind how elaborately long he made a sentence, so long as he made it clear. He would constantly repeat whole phrases word for word in the same sentence, rather than risk ambiguity by abbreviation."104

103. Ibid., p.49.
104. Ibid., p.49.
G.K. Chesterton is astounded at a transcendental style of *Apologia*. It is a storehouse of wisdom. The vigour, eloquence, the conviction with which it is written evades all definitions.

"He was a man at once of abnormal energy and abnormal sensibility: nobody without that combination could have written the Apologia." 106

Newman's style is unequalled. There has been no successful imitator of his style. His exhortations on morals and religion died with him. He was an institution in himself.

"He is a naked man, who carried a naked sword. The quality of his literary style is so successful that it succeeds in escaping definition. The quality of his logic is that of a long but passionate patience, which waits until he has fixed all corners of an iron trap. But the quality of his moral comment on the age remains what I have said: a protest of the rationality of religion as against the increasing irrationality of mere Victorian comfort and compromise. So far as the present purpose is concerned, his protest died with him; he left few imitators and (it may easily be conceived) no successful imitators." 107

Novelist of the greatest fans of the Victorian period is of course, Dickens. He figures as a great revolt against the old hackneyed fiction. His novels

106. Ibid., p.31.
have plots no doubt; but more particularly they excel
in innumerable vivid characters. In this respect he
is unequalled. He carries thorough knowledge in
depicting the stream of humanity which appears in his
novels.

Another striking thing was that he prayed to God
like a genuine Christian for the bread of everybody.

"Dickens was a mob - and a mob in revolt;
he fought by the light of nature; he had not
a theory, but a thirst." 107

Dickens created all sorts of human characters -
tragic, comic, and psychological. He was not partial
to any class. He enjoyed depicting every human being
- low, high, educated, and uneducated.

"The art of Dickens was the most exquisite
of arts; it was the art of enjoying everybody,
Dickens, being a very human writer, had to be
a very human being; he had his faults and
sensibilities in a strong degree; and I do not
for a moment maintain that he enjoyed every­
body in his daily life. But he enjoyed every­
body in his books; and everybody has enjoyed
everybody in those books even till today." 108
Dickens was a friend of all. Good, bad, rich,
and poor, they were all his brethren.

"Dickens did not merely believe in the bro­
therhood of men in the weak modern way; he was
the brotherhood of men, and knew it was a bro­
therhood in sin as well as in aspiration." 109

107. Ibid., p.51.
108. Ibid., p.74.
109. Ibid., p.76.
Thackeray depicted the idiosyncrasies of the middle class. Dickens, however, did not believe in class polarization in fiction. For him every human being was a worthy subject of his novel.

Thackeray had the best opportunity for higher education whereas Dickens could not go to school. He had a hard time during his childhood. Perhaps, that is why he has treated the poor with sympathy rather than contempt.

Both of them have written about England. But Dickens is the mouthpiece of the poor, whereas Thackeray depicts the middle class with 'pity and irony' and exposes their ostentation.

G.K. Chesterton is enamoured of the superior skill of the women novelists. They have a better understanding of human sensibility and their work is second to none.

"But when we come to the novelists, the women have on the whole, equality; and certainly, in some points, superiority. Jane Austen is as strong in her own way as Scott is in his. But she is, for all practical purposes, never weak in her own way and Scott very often is. Charlotte Bronte dedicated Jane Eyre to the author of Vanity Fair."110.

I should hesitate to say that Charlotte Bronte's is a better book than Thackeray's, but I think it might well be maintained that it is a better story.

110. Ibid., p.58.
About the later Victorians, Chesterton has original views to express. Meredith and Hardy are opposed in their views in toto. Meredith was a 'pantheist'. For him God was the greatest of all. He was a saviour, protector, and preserver. He protects his women folk. Hardy had a tragic view of life. According to Hardy God does not protect women but destroys them. He felt as if human destiny was controlled by some superior power. However men may struggle to avoid the tragedy some immanent power whether destiny, luck or nature, was out to destroy them.

"Meredith really is a Pantheist. You can express it by saying that God is the great All; you can express it much more intelligently by saying that Pan is the great god. But there is some sense in it, and the sense is this: that some people believe that this world is sufficiently good at bottom for us to trust ourselves to it without very much knowing why.......

For the duel is deadly; and any agnostic who wishes to be anything more than a Nihilist must sympathise with one version of nature or the other. The God of Meredith is impersonal; but he is often more healthy and kindly than any of the persons. That of Thomas Hardy is almost made personal by the intense feeling that he is poisonous. Nature is always coming in to save Meredith's woman; Nature is always coming in to betray and ruin Hardy's. It has been said that if God had not existed it would have been necessary to invent Him. But it is not often, as in Hardy's case, that it is necessary to invent Him in order to prove how unnecessary (and undesirable) He is."
Tennyson understood the age. He vacillated between faith and doubt. He was a great admirer of science and he was a man of 'self-knowledge', 'self-control' and self-reverence.

He was a great singer of his age. His love of nature, his diction, narrative skill, all speak of his Virgilian craftsmanship.

"Tennyson, of course, owed a great deal to Virgil. There is no question of plagiarism here; a debt to Virgil is like a debt to Nature. But Tennyson was a provincial Virgil." 112

Tennyson was more a man of religion than of politics and other social fields of knowledge. He brought music to poetry. He was so superb in expression that no body could replace him.

"His religious range was very much wider and wiser than his political; but here also he suffered from treating as true universality a thing that was only a sort of lukewarm local patriotism. Here also he suffered by the very splendour and perfection of his poetical powers. He was quite the opposite of the man who cannot express himself; the inarticulate singer who dies with all his music in him. He had a great deal to say; but he had much more power of expression than was wanted for anything he had to express. He could not think up to the height of his own towering style." 113

112. Ibid., pp.98-99.
Tennyson was mainly a lyric poet. His strength lies in shorter poems rather than in the longer narratives.

"It is also true, I think, that he was first and last a lyric poet. He was always best when he expressed himself shortly. In long poems he had an unfortunate habit of eventually saying very nearly the opposite of what he meant to say." 114.

Browning is quite the opposite of Tennyson. Tennyson was a very popular poet of the Victorian period whereas Browning was an intellectual poet.

Browning was an eccentric in his craftsmanship. He shows too much self-awareness in his form and style.

For every poem, he invented a new metre. This prudition is reflected in his poetry. That is why a charge of obscurity and pride is levelled against him.

"Browning's eccentric style was more suitable to the poetry of a nation of eccentrics; of people for the time being removed far from the centre of intellectual interests." 115

Elizabeth Barret Browning was a poet of great power among the women poets. Her choice of words are unequalled.

114. Ibid., p.102.
115. Ibid., p.100.
And Elizabeth Barrett had a strength really rare among women poets; the strength of the phrase. She excelled in her sex, in epigram, almost as much as Voltaire in his. 116

Swinburne was a man of great learning. He had travelled far and wide. He saw the Christian traditions disappearing.

"It is natural, in the matter of Victorian moral change, to take Swinburne as the next name here. He is the only poet who was also, in the European sense, on the spot; even if, in the sense of the Gilbertian song, the spot was barred. He also knew that something rather crucial was happening to Christendom; he thought it was getting unchristened." 117

The aesthetic movement of John Ruskin and others was gathering momentum, and the purpose of it was to depict beauty rather than express the truth.

Chesterton feels that Old England was known for its spiritual characteristic; but Victorian England brought the 'Rationalist' movement which was a great jolt to religion.

"Certainly the great Victorian rationalism has succeeded in doing a damage to religion." 118

Darwin's Origin of Species succeeded in establishing itself among the people through the 'genius' of

116. Ibid., p.103.
117. Ibid., p.111.
118. Ibid., p.125.
Huxley. But it helped people indirectly. Even though, his theory rejected the supremacy of God, it built up the superiority of men which was a great service to man and society.

"On the one hand Darwin, especially through the strong journalistic genius of Huxley, had won a very widespread though an exceedingly vague victory. I do not mean that Darwin's own doctrine was vague; his was merely one particular hypothesis about how animal variety might have arisen; and that particular hypothesis, though it will always be interesting, is now very much the reverse of secure. But it is only in the strictly scientific world and among strictly scientific men that Darwin's detailed suggestion has largely broken down. The general public impression that he had entirely proved his case (whatever it was) was early arrived at, and still remains. It was and is hasty associated with the negation of religion. But (and this is the important point) it was also associated with the negation of democracy. The same Mid-Victorian muddle-headedness that made people think that 'evolution' meant that we need not admit the supremacy of God, also made them think that 'survival' meant that we must admit the supremacy of men." 119

The last but not the least, the new awakening brought victory for the socialists over Anarchists. And the chief propounders of socialism were Huxley, Shaw and others.

"Thus the Anarchists and Socialists fought a battle over the death-bed of Victorian Industrialism; in which the Socialists (that is, those who stood for increasing instead of

119. Ibid., pp.126-27.
diminishing the power of Government) won a complete victory and have almost exterminated their enemy. The Anarchist one meets here and there now-a-days is a sad sight; he is disappointed with the future, as well as with the past.

This victory of the Socialists was largely a literary victory; because it was effected and popularized not only by a wit, but by a sincere wit; and the one who had the same sort of militant lucidity that Huxley had shown in the last generation and Voltaire in the last century." 120

Chesterton counts the glaring mistakes of the Victorians in their miscalculations that expansion of trade outside, would bring them peace but it resulted in war. They thought the expansion of trade within the country would bring them wealth but instead it brought them destitution.

"The Victorian Age made one or two mistakes but they were mistakes that were really useful; that is, mistakes that were really mistaken. They thought that commerce outside a country must extend peace; it has certainly often extended war. They thought that commerce inside a country must certainly promote prosperity; it has largely promoted poverty. But for them these were experiments; for us they ought to be lessons. If we continue the capitalist use of the populace - if we continue the capitalist use of external arms, it will lie heavy on the living. The dishonour will not be on the dead." 121

120. Ibid., p.143.
121. Ibid., p.153.
SIMPPLICITY AND TOLSTOY

Tolstoy was a 'reformer', 'moral thinker', and one of the greatest novelists of the world.

He lost his parents when a young child, and was brought up by his relatives.

From the beginning, he was an individualist. And record shows that he had enjoyed pleasure and comfort in his early life. In later life he turned away from it. He never liked a coterie. He left his property to his family and started living as an ordinary peasant.

As an ambitious and learned man, he made a tour of France, Germany, and Switzerland. He was very much concerned with the life of the poor, and with the education of farmers. He was so much touched with feeling for distressed peasants that he started a school for them.

After his tour and deliberations he wrote his masterpieces War and Peace, and Anna Karenina. As a man given to self-introspection, he did not let himself be influenced by the works of philosophers, theologians and scientists. He rejected the theory
of immortality and the authority of Church. He condemned government because it worked through 'coercion', and he condemned private property because it was obtained by power.

Tolstoy himself led the life of an ascetic, and worked as a farmer. He believed that no one should live on the labour of others. He felt that on their own people are bound to opt for simplicity. Simplicity is not a compulsion but the continuous process of the world itself.

"The whole world is certainly heading for a great simplicity, not deliberately, but rather inevitably. It is not a mere fashion of false innocence, like that of the French aristocrats before the Revolution, who built an altar to Pomp, and who taxed the peasantry for the enormous expenditure which is needed in order to live the simple life of peasants. The simplicity towards which the world is driving is the necessary outcome of all our systems and speculations and of our deep and continuous contemplation of things. For the universe is like everything in it; we have to look at it repeatedly and habitually before we see it. It is only when we have seen it for the hundredth time that we see it for the first time. The more consistently things are contemplated, the more they tend to unify themselves and therefore, to simplify themselves." 122

Tolstoy did not believe in possession. He worked and lived with peasants. The difference between him

and others is this others wanted to establish communion with Nature whereas, Tolstoy believed is rejecting all the comforts of life even of Nature.

"Whitman returns to nature by seeing how much he can accept, Tolstoy by seeing how much he can reject." 123

G.K. Chesterton finds deliberate and forced simplicity as ornate and pompous. Simplicity should come automatically and it need not lead one to stoicism.

"We feel that a man cannot make himself simple merely by warring on complexity; we feel, indeed, in our saner moments that a man can not make himself simple at all. A self-conscious simplicity may well be far more intrinsically ornate than luxury itself." 124

Every piece of work that Tolstoy produced had some moral. And the great moral of his writings was simplicity. Chesterton makes a reference to his stories which were translated in English.

"The new collection of 'Tales from Tolstoy' translated and edited by Mr. H. Nisbet Bain, is calculated to draw particular attention to this ethical and ascetic side of Tolstoy's work. In one sense, and that the deepest sense, the work of Tolstoy is, of course, a genuine and noble appeal to simplicity." 125

123. Ibid., p.7.
124. Ibid., p.9.
125. Ibid., pp.10-11.
Tolstoy had firm faith in the moral perfection of the world. By the study of history, he could make out that enormous number of people were put to suffering by a few. He felt that if a whole people followed the law of love and affection to one another, a new world will emerge, which may be 'classless' and 'stateless'. And this theory was not based on Marx's theory of revolution or violence but the supreme law of love among human kind.

"When we put beside them the trumpeting and tearing nonsense of the didactic Tolstoy, screaming for an obscene purity, shouting for an inhuman peace, backing up human life into small sins with a chopper, sneering at men, women, and children out of respect to humanity, combining in one chaos of contradictions an unmanly Puritan and an uncivilised prig, then, indeed, we scarcely know whither Tolstoy has vanished. We know not what to do with this small and noisy moralist who is inhabiting one corner of a great and good man," 126

Tolstoy believed that non-violence is greater than violence. Passive resistance can bring enormous strength to the individual. And the core of Christianity lies in 'persuasion' and not in force.

"If human beings could only succeed in achieving a real passive resistance they would be strong with the appalling strength of inanimate things, they would be calm with the meandering

calm of oak or iron, which conquer without vengeance and are conquered without humiliation. The theory of Christian duty enunciated by them is that we should never conquer by force, but always, if we can, conquer by persuasion."

Chesterton makes a wise distinction between loving humanity and loving men. Humanity is an abstraction. Love for men is a concrete emotion. Tolstoy loved the abstraction. So, too, Tolstoyans, in their abstract love tend to ignore the ideal of service which is obeyed the service of an individual.

"The author has simply confused two entirely distinct things. Christ commanded us to have love for all men but even if we had equal love for all men to speak of having the same love for all men is merely bewildering nonsense. If we love a man at all, the impression he produces on us must be vitally different to the impression produced by another man whom we love. To speak of having the same kind of regard for both is about as sensible as asking a man whether he prefers chrysanthemums or billiards. Christ did not love humanity; He never said He loved humanity! He loved men. Neither He nor anyone else can love humanity; it is like loving a gigantic centipede. And the reason that the Tolstoians can even endure to think of an equally distributed affection is that their love of humanity is a logical love, a love into which they are coerced by their own theories, a love which would be an insult to a tom-cat."

127. Ibid., pp.16-17.

128. Ibid., pp.26-27.
SAINT FRANCIS

Saint Francis was born in a rich family. During his youth he was fond of pleasures and was totally an extravagant hedonist. He was virile and chivalrous and had done well in the army.

But a sudden turn took place in his life, and he became a great servant of the poor and sick.

Saint Francis was a keen lover of nature. He loved animals and the skies. He found immense pleasure in flowers. Later on, he believed that he had been commanded by God to initiate and represent the 'evangelical' life of Jesus Christ.

We suspect that one of the minor things that Christ did was to found Christianity. But the vast practical work of Francis is assuredly not to be ignored, for this amazingly unworldly and almost maddening simple-minded infant was one of the most consistently successful men that ever fought with this bitter world." 129

Later on, his cosmic love developed continuously. He became totally a mystic. For him, every creature on earth was a subject of passionate love, like Indian monks he reformed many thieves and robbers.

"He used to talk to any thieves and robbers he met about their misfortune in being unable to

129. Ibid., p.39.
give rein to their desire for holiness. It was an innocent habit, and doubtless the robbers often 'got round' him as the phrase goes. Quite as often, however, they discovered that he had 'got round' them, and discovered the other side, the side of secret nobility." 130

The greatest thing about St. Francis was that, he was the happiest man. He drew pleasure from every element of nature. He never repented for having renounced his property. He found his elixir in reconciliation. For him, misery and comfort were alike.

"To most people, however, there is a fascinating inconsistency in the position of St. Francis. He expressed in loftier and holier language than any earthly thinker the conception that laughter is as divine as tears. He called his monks the mountebanks of God. He never forgot to take pleasure in a bird as it flashed past him, or a drop of water as it fell from his finger; he was, perhaps, the happiest of the sons of men. Yet this man undoubtedly founded his whole polity on the negation of what we think the most imperious necessities; in his three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, he denied to himself and those he loved most, property, love and liberty." 132

His sermons are poetic. And the diction which he chose shows the quality of a great poet.

"He was primarily a poet. The perfection of his literary instinct is shown in his naming the fire 'brother', and the water 'sister'; in the quaint demagogic dexterity of the appeal in the sermon to the fishes 'that they alone, were saved in the flood'. 132

130. Ibid. p.40.
131. Ibid., pp.41-42.
132. Ibid., pp.43-44.
Chesterton also has praised Saint Francis for his amazing aptitude for commonsense. He wanted to be a friend of all and enemy of none. Such a saint who wanted to be friendly with all - innocent and obnoxious alike - was bound to be revered all the world over.

"The general attitude of St. Francis, like that of his Master, embodied a kind of terrible common sense. The famous remarks of the Caterpillar in Alice in Wonderland - 'Why not?' impresses us as his general motto. He could not see why he should not be on good terms with all things. The pomp of war and ambition, the great empire of the Middle Ages and all its fellows begin to look tawdry and top-heavy, under the rationality of that innocent stare. His questions were blasting and devastating, like the questions of a child. He would not have been afraid even of the nightmares of cosmogony, for he had no fear in him. To him the world was small, not because he had any views as to its size, but for the reason that gossiping ladies find it small, because so many relatives were to be found in it. If you had taken him to the loneliest star that the madness of an astronomer can conceive, he would have only beheld in it, the features of a new friend." 138

WILLIAM MORRIS

William Morris was a poet, artist, and socialist. His works were marked by high seriousness.

He had a great apathy towards the industrialism of the 19th century, because, it had made life mechanical. He felt that all the higher values of life were being forgotten.

He had a great love for the countryside. The old buildings were his great inspirers. He wanted them to be protected. As an ardent lover of nature, he was deeply impressed by John Ruskin. That is why, in his works, one finds a deep hunger for beauty.

"He represents not only that rapacious hunger for beauty which has now for the first time become a serious problem in the healthy life of humanity, but he represents also that honourable instinct for finding beauty in common necessities of workmanship which gives it a stronger and more bony structure." 134

Actually, Morris swam against the current. He did not like, nor did he understand modern life. That is why he could not depict contemporary life as a keen observer.

The greatest thing about Morris was that he had a cheerful and optimistic attitude to life. In his colours, in his aesthetic sense, in the lyrical beauty of his poetry, this attitude is always prevalent.

134. Ibid., p.50.
"Poet of the childhood of nations, craftsman of the new honesties of art, prophet of a merrier and wiser life, his full-blooded enthusiasm will be remembered when human life has once more assumed flamboyant colours and proved that this painful greenish grey of the aesthetic twilight in which we now live is, in spite of all the pessimists, not of the greyness of death, but the greenness of dawn. 135

William Morris has left a great impact on people with his stupendous work, vitalising energy, seriousness of purpose and his aesthetic sense. He will be remembered for his great work as much as other 'Great Victorians.' 136

**CARLYLE**

Carlyle was a Scottish essayist and historian who belonged to the group of saintly writers. People of the Victorian era loved him greatly. They used to read his works and discuss about him with great interest.

He was a man of great eccentricity, and was to a great extent an individualist. As a result of this, people thought him to be a great egoist. But it was not so:

"But to attempt to denounce Carlyle as a mere savage egoist can not arise from anything but a pure inability to grasp Carlyle's gospel. 'Uskin' says a critic, 'did, all the same, verily believe

in God; Carlyle believed only in himself. This is certainly a distinction between the author he has understood and the author he has not understood. Carlyle believed in himself, but he could not have believed in himself more than Ruskin did; they both believed in God, because they felt that if everything else fell into wrack and ruin, themselves were permanent witnesses to God." 137

The fault with Carlyle was that he did not take the people with him. To be amidst the masses shows simplicity and greatness of a man. Jesus, Buddha, - all great leaders were men of the masses, but Carlyle was not:

"Where they both failed was not in belief in God or in belief in themselves; they failed in belief in other people. It is not enough for a prophet to believe in his message; he must believe in its acceptability. Christ, St. Francis, Bunyan, Wesley, Gladstone, Walt Whitman, men of indescribable variety, were all alike in a certain faculty of treating the average man as their equal, of trusting to his reason and good feeling without fear and without condescension. It was this simplicity of confidence, not only in God, but in the image of God that was lacking in Carlyle." 138

Carlyle believed in a selected class of people - men of destiny, who changed time and tide. That is why for him history was 'divine scripture'. And he thought that history was nothing but the biographies,

138. Ibid., pp.69-70.
of great people. That is why he laid emphasis on hero worship. And these heroes according to him, would improve the personalities of common people if only they followed the examples of heroes.

"As a matter of fact, Carlyle is really inhumane about some questions, but he is never inhumane about hero worship. His view is not that human nature is so vulgar and silly a thing that it must be guided and driven; it is, on the contrary, that human nature is so chivalrous and fundamentally magnanimous a thing that even the meanest have it in them to love a leader more than themselves, and to prefer loyalty to rebellion. When he speaks of this trait in human nature Carlyle's tone invariably softens. We feel that for the moment he is kindled with admiration of mankind, and almost reaches the verge of Christianity. Whatever else was acid and capricious about Carlyle's utterances, his hero worship was not only humane, it was almost optimistic. He admired great men primarily, and perhaps correctly, because he thought that they were more human than other men." 139

Carlyle was so much obsessed with the idea of a few great people that he went to the extent of supporting slavery. He had a firm belief in aristocracy. He exhorted, time and again, that a few great people can lead a country much better. They can take decisions more firmly than illiterates who lack commonsense and judgement. Hence, he had no faith in democracy which becomes monocracy.

"Carlyle's defence of slavery is a thoroughly ridiculous thing, weak alike in argument and in moral instinct. The truth is, that he only took

139. Ibid., pp. 75-80.
it up from the passion for applying everywhere his paradoxical defence of aristocracy. He
blended, of course, because he did not see that slavery has nothing in the world to do with aristocracy, that it is, indeed, almost its opposite. The defence which Carlyle and all its thoughtful defenders have made for aristocracy was that a few persons could more rapidly and firmly decide public affairs in the interests of the people. But slavery is not even supposed to be a government for the good of the governed. It is a possession of the governed avowedly for the good of the governors. Aristocracy uses the strong for the service of the weak; slavery uses the weak for the service of the strong." 140

People had so much reverence for Carlyle for his gospel of work that they considered him a prophet.

"He has often been called a prophet. The real ground of the truth of this phrase is often neglected. Since the last era of purely religious literature, the era of English Puritanism, there has been no writer in whose eyes the soul stood so much alone." 141

Chesterton compares Carlyle with a great Hebrew prophet because of his sense of humour. Humour is the quality of great men. Carlyle, according to him, with light spiritedness cracks jokes about eternity and religion.

"The profound security of Carlyle's sense of the unity of the Cosmos is like that of a Hebrew prophet; and it has the same expression that it had in the Hebrew prophets, humour." 142
Though Nietzsche and Carlyle were different in certain respects, there were many similarities in the philosophies of the two. Both pleaded for supermen. Nietzsche revolted against the supremacy of the state. Carlyle also revolted against Christianity because it was the religion of the 'weak and humble'. A strong man like Nietzsche denounced the philosophy of his educator Schopenhauer and pleaded his own philosophy, The Will to Power. He also revolted against modern democracy for it was the government of a herd of 'weak' illiterate and irresponsible people.

Carlyle also believed in 'hero worship' which was almost like the idea of the Superman. Carlyle, time and again, railed against the weak and the poor and showed his yearning for aristocracy. His creed for herculean work seems to be responsible to create a few English great men. Both thinkers denounced pessimism and pleaded for buoyant optimism. Hence quite a few similarities between the two thinkers:

"Though Nietzsche and Carlyle were in reality profoundly different, Carlyle being a stiff necked peasant and Nietzsche a very fragile aristocrat, they were alike in this one quality of which we speak, the strange and pitiful audacity with which they applied their single ethical test to everything in heaven and earth. The discipline of Nietzsche, indeed, embraces immorality like an austere and difficult faith. He
urges himself to lust and cruelty with the same
tremendous enthusiasm with which a Christian
urges himself to purity and patience; he strug­
ggles as a monk struggles with bestial visions
and temptations with the ancient necessities of
honour and justice and compassion. To this
madhouse, it can hardly be denied, has Carlyle’s
intellectual courage brought many at least.” 143

G.F. WATTS

G.K. Chesterton gives an appraisal of Watts as an
artist, painter and sculptor.

In the study of G.F. Watts one finds a complete
background of Victorian period, its doubt and faith.
The age was known for its serenity and solemnity. Its
philosophy of hard work, ideal of democracy and indivi­
dualism could be seen in the works of Watts. His works
speak of the grandeur of its creator who was never
frivolous.

"G.F. Watts is so deeply committed to, and so
unalterably steeped in this early Victorian
seriousness and air of dealing with great matters,
that unless we sharply apprehend that spirit, and
its difference from our own, we shall misunder­
stand his work from the outset. Splendid as is
the art of Watts technically or obviously consi­
dered, we shall yet find much in it to perplex
and betray us, unless we understand his original
theory and intention, a theory and intention dyed
deeply with the colours of a great period which
is gone.” 144

143. Ibid., pp. 84-85.
144. Chesterton, G.K., G.F. Watts, London: Duck Worth
He was the most fantastic and magnificent artist. His 'Hope', 'Love and Death', 'The Court of Death' are all reminders of the great man who worked on them.

... "Hope... that is dim and delicate and yet immortal, the indestructible minimum of the spirit; love and Death that is awful and yet the reverse of horrible; The Court of Death that is like a page of Epictetus and might have been dreamt by a dead Stoic; these are the visions of that spirit and the incarnations of that time. Its faith was doubtful, but its doubt was faith-ful." 145

Watts was a 'simple', 'modest', 'innocent' and terribly honest man. He had tremendous confidence in himself.

"His speech and gesture are simple, his manner polite to the point of being depreciating, his soul to all appearance of an almost confounding clarity and innocence. But although these appearances accurately represent the truth about him, though he is in reality modest and even fantastically modest, there is another element in him, an element which was in almost all the great men of his time, and it is something which many in those days would call a kind of splendid and inspired impudence." 146

Watts was a man of great 'colouration'. Even in the colouring he remained as simple as possible. He never wanted to complicate things.

"But all these colours have, as I say, the first and most characteristic and most obvious of the mental qualities of Watts; they are simple and like things just made by God."

145. Ibid., p.11.
146. Ibid., p.22.
147. Ibid., p.129.
Watts never believed in 'Art for Art's sake' theory. He felt that art and ethics are inseparable. The idea was this. Every work of a human being must have a purpose. That is why his art conveys a universal message. It is never trivial but full of ideas, symbols, allegories and above all, seriousness. Perhaps every great Victorian, wanted art to be linked with life. It was not trifling and frolicsome. It was the subject for a nation to meditate upon. It was instructive model for the youngsters.

"Doubtless, they did not give art a relation of unimpeachable correctness in their scheme of things it may be true, or rather it is true that the aesthetic was confused with the utilitarian, that good gardens were turned so to speak into bad cornfields, and a valuable temple into a useless post-office. But in so far as they had this fundamental idea that art must be linked to life, and to the strength and honour of nations, they were a hundred times more broad-minded and more right than the new ultra-technical school. The idea of following art through everything for itself alone, through extravagance, through cruelty, through morbidity, is just exactly as superstitious as the idea of following theology for itself alone through extravagance and cruelty and morbidity." 1148

Watts was a very industrious and incessant worker. He believed in sincerity and conscientiousness. And like a great man, he always shouldered his responsibility like God.

"He affronted heaven and the angels, but there was one hard arrogant dogma that he never doubted even when he doubted Godhead; he never doubted that he himself was as central and as responsible as God." 149

Simplicity was the code of his conduct. It was everywhere. There was no show-off either in his way of living or in his work. He neither followed any school of painting, nor himself very strictly stick to any one style.

"He is not connected with any of the groups of the nineteenth century; he has neither followed a school nor founded one. He is not mediæval; but no one could exactly call him classical; we have only to compare him to Leighton to feel the difference at once. His artistic style is rather a thing more primitive than paganism; a thing to which paganism and mediævalism are alike upstart sects. A style of painting there might have been upon the tower of Babel." He is mystical; but he is not mediæval; we have only to compare him to Rossetti to feel the difference. When he emerged into the artistic world, that world was occupied by the pompous and historical school, that school which was so exquisitely caricatured by Thackeray in "Sandsfield and his "Roadishia"; but Watts was not pompous or historical." 150

Watts' art is yet to be understood by the people at large. It is like a Gothic structure. It is like the religion known as Christianity which is good for all, but only a few people understand fully. This characteristic of his art has left a healthy tradition.

149. Ibid., pp. 56-59.
150. Ibid., p. 39.
Even the common things like railway-stations, and chimneys of factories he wanted to paint with religious imagination. Like any great leader of his time, he wanted to lead a public life. He lived that in his art. There is no secret about it, nothing to hide about it.

"For Watts' nature is essentially public, that is to say, it is modest and noble, and has nothing to hide. His art is an out-door art, like that of the healthy ages of the world, like the statuesque art of Greece, like the ecclesiastical and external Gothic art of Christianity: an art that can look the sun in the face. He ought to be employed to paint factory chimneys and railway stations. I know that this will sound like an insolence: my only answer is that he, in accordance with this great conception of his actually offered to paint a railway-station, with a splendid and truly religious imagination he asked permission to decorate Euston. The railway managers (not perceiving, in their dull classical routine, the wild poetry of their own station) declined. But until we have understood this immense notion of publicity in the soul of Watts, we have understood nothing. 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 Watts, men like all the great heroes, only breathe in public." 151

Watts painted the pictures of great men with his own imagination. He never bothered about the bitterest criticism of his art. The portraits have not been

151. Ibid., pp. 51-52.
painted to resemble the subjects. Behind these pictures lie the ideas, emotions, passions and the imagination of Watts. These great men have been painted with exaggerations and distortions rather than bare, naked reality.

"In his gallery of great men, indeed, we find Watts almost more himself than anywhere else. Most men are allegorical when they are painting allegories, but Watts is allegorical when he is painting an old alderman. A change passes over that excellent being, a change of a kind to which aldermen are insufficiently inured. He begins to resolve into the primal elements, to become dust and the shadow, to become the red clay of Adam and the wind of God. His eyes become, inspite of his earnest wish, the fixed stars in the sky of the spirit; his complexion begins to show, not the unmeaning red of portraits and miniatures but that secret and living red which is within us, and which is the river of man. The astounding manner in which Watts has, in some cases, treated his sitters, is one of the most remarkable things about his character. He is not (it is almost absurd to have to mention such a thing about the almost austere old democrat) a man likely to flatter a sitter in any worldly or conventional sense. Nor is he, for the matter of that, a man likely to push compliments far from any motive; he is a strict, and I should infer, a candid man. The type of virtues he chiefly admires and practises, are the reverse of those which would encourage a courtier or even a universalist. But he scarcely ever paints a man without making him about five times as magnificent as he really looks. The real men appear, if they present themselves afterwards, like mean and unsympathetic sketches from the Watts original." 152

Among Watts' portraits of great men that of Tennyson, is supreme. Tennyson has been painted as a

152. Ibid., pp.143-45.
great traditional poet with his deep seriousness and serenity. The sitter looks like a prophet involved in universal problem.

Tennyson by Watts is like Dante, like any great man produced in Christian tradition. He avoids Tennyson’s faults. Watts is concerned only with his poetic qualities. Tennyson was like Watts, who always believed that ‘art is not for art’s sake’ but it is a creative act.

"The greatest and most intimate of all his friends, probably, was Tennyson, and in this there is something singularly characteristic of Watts. About the actuality of the intellectual tie that bound him to ‘Tennyson, there can be little doubt. He has painted three if not four portraits of him; his name is often on his lips; he invokes him always as the typical great poet, excusing his faults and expounding his virtues." 153

On close analysis, one can gather that there were many points of similarity between Watts and Tennyson. Watts had the same attitude to art as Tennyson. Like Watts, Tennyson also thought that art and morality are inseparable. Both Watts and Tennyson observed solemnity and seriousness in art. Watts had a great admiration for Tennyson, the poet laureate, who really deserved many laurels.

153. Ibid., p.73.
"But while the practical nature of the friendship between Watts and Tennyson is clear enough, there is something really significant, something really relevant to Watts' attitude, in its ultimate and psychological character. It is surely most likely that Watts and Tennyson were drawn together because they both represented a certain relation towards their art which is not common in our time and was scarcely properly an attribute of any artists except these two. Watts could not have found the thing he most believed in Browning or S. Swinburne or Morris or any of the other poets. Tennyson could not have found the thing he most believed in Leighton or Millais or any of the other painters." 154

This great love of Watts for Tennyson becomes self-evident after one look at the portrait of Browning. Browning looks like a cheerful and grand personality who had a broad face, 'strong head' and it appeared to the onlookers that he could write fine poetry. But the difference is obvious. Tennyson had all seriousness and depth in him. He looks like a national poet awarded the greatest public award enjoying a high position in society. Tennyson looks like a great public figure, a courtier, a 'bard', and a 'jester' of the medieval period.

"The head of Browning is the head of a strong splendid, joyful and anxious man who could write magnificent poetry. The head of Tennyson is the head of a poet. Watts has painted Tennyson with his dark dome-like head relieved against a symbolic green and blue of the eternal sad and the
eternal laurels. He has behind him the bays of
Sante and he is wrapped in the cloak of the
prophets. Browning is dressed like an ordinary
modern man, and we at once feel that it should
and must be so. To dress Browning in the pro-
phets robe and the poet’s wreath would strike
us all as suddenly ridiculous; it would be like
sending him to a fancy dress ball.”

No doubt, Browning is made to appear like a
modernist who could introduce new forms in poetry.
He was a modern poet, but does not look one. But
the portrait of Tennyson looks more a minstrel. Watts
was more Tennysonian. For him Tennyson was a man of
older tradition who openly looks like a poet. Perhaps
Tennyson deserved the greatest place in public life.

“It is much more due to the fact that Tennyson
really assumed and was granted this stately and
epic position. It is not true that Tennyson was
more of a poet than Browning, if we mean by that
statement that Browning could not compose forms
as artistic and well managed; lyrics as light
and poignant, and rhythms as swelling and stir-
ing as any in English letters. But it is true
that Tennyson was more of a poet than Browning,
if we mean by that statement that Tennyson was a
poet in person, in post and circumstance and
conception of life; and that Browning was not,
in that sense, a poet at all. Browning first
inaugurated in modern art and letters the notion
of tradition, in many ways perhaps a more whole-
some one, that the fact that a man pursued the
trade or practice of poetry was his own affair
and a thing apart, like the fact that he collect-
ed coins or earned his living as a hatter. But
Tennyson really belonged to an older tradition,
the tradition that believed that the poet, the
appointed “Vates”, was a recognised and public
figure like the bard or jester at the medieval courts, like the prophet in the old Commonwealth of Israel. In Tennyson's work appeared for the last time in English history this notion of the stately and public and acknowledged poet; it was the lay of the last minstrel." 156

Perhaps, Watts' preference for Tennyson was because of the fact that both of them believed in the seriousness of art and they thought it was the most pious and universal thing.

Browning was a good fellow and an ordinary gentleman; but Watts has more of Tennyson in him; he believes in a great priesthood of art. He believes in a certain pure and childish publicity." 157

The portrait of Carlyle is not an ordinary one. He looks like a "mad labourer", absorbed in some great work like the French Revolution which was to be written like Phoenix which arose from its own ashes. If he were to paint the portrait of a handsome well dressed, good Carlyle, it could have looked less effective.

"...In fact, Watts painted Carlyle 'like a mad labourer', because Carlyle was a mad labourer." 183

Watts' portrait of Matthew Arnold Furniss a typical mad expression in his eyes and in his look. His real temperament has been depicted with a clever and superb artistry of Watts.

156. Ibid., pp. 78-81.
157. Ibid., p. 82.
158. Ibid., p. 154.
"The bewilderment of Matthew Arnold was more noble and faithful than most men's certainty and Watts has not failed to give that nobility a place even greater perhaps than that which he would have given to it had he been working on that fixed theory of admiration in which he dealt with Tennyson or Morris. The said sea-blue eyes of Matthew Arnold seemed to get near to the fundamental sadness of blue." 159

Watts' other paintings such as 'Love and Death', 'Time', 'Death and Judgment', 'The Court of Death', 'Mammon and Cain', throw light on his inner personality. He can be called a priest, or a 'stoic' philosopher, who believes in sacrifice and renunciation which is the essence of Christianity. G.K. Chesterton has called him as a great and strong Englishman who can be easily compared to great Englishmen like Milton and Gladstone.

"From the point of view of the true Celt, Watts, the Watts who painted the great steleal pictures Love and Death, Time Death and Judgment, The Court of Death, Mammon and Cain, this pictorial Watts would probably be, must almost certainly be, simply a sad, sane, strong, stupid Englishman. He may or may not be Welsh by extraction or by part of his extraction, but in spirit he is an Englishman, with all the faults and all the disadvantages of an Englishman. He is a great Englishman like Milton or Gladstone, of the type, that is to say, that were too much alive for anything but gravity, and who enjoyed themselves far too much to trouble to enjoy a joke." 160

159. Ibid., pp.160-163.
160. Ibid., p.30.
Watts was a born artist. No doubt he acquired it by practice, hard work and perseverance. At an early age, he achieved tremendous success and public applause for one of his pictures.

"He achieved immediate professional success however, at an astonishingly early age, judged by modern standards. When he was barely twenty, he had three pictures in the Royal Academy, the first two were portraits and the third a picture called The Wounded Heron." 161

Generally, his pictures are praiseworthy. They are known for their seriousness and depth. There is allegory and symbolism in them. 'Hope' is an example of his supreme mental culture wherein good many passions and ideas have been put together.

"Watts has always a singular kind of semi-mystical tact in the matter of portrait painting. His portraits are commonly very faultless comments and have the same kind of superlative mental delicacy that we see in the picture of Hope." 162

'Hope' is intricate and subtle in its expression. When one looks at it one feels doubtful about the title. But one thing is certain. The great reality that is 'Truth' has been expressed by this picture. Call it hope or despair, mysticism, 'paganism',

161. Ibid., p.45.
162. Ibid., p.77.
"Stoicism" call it the conviction 'Vitality' 'self-love' or the religion of the coming generation. In a word it is so superb that language loses its power to describe it. Books can be written on it because it is so delicate, it is so superb, it has maximum of expressions in one picture. This superiority of Watts is not appreciated by flashy modern artists.

"He calls it Hope and that is perhaps the best title. It reminds us among other things of a fact which is too little remembered, that faith, hope and charity, the three mystical virtues of Christianity, are also the gayest of the virtues. Paganism, as I have suggested, is not gay, but rather nobly sad; the spirit of Watts, which is as a rule nobly sad also, here comes nearer perhaps than anywhere else to mysticism in the strict sense, the mysticism which is full of secret passion and belief, like that of Fra Angelico or Blake. But though Watts calls his tremendous reality Hope, we may call it many other things. Call it faith, call it vitality, call it the will to live, call it the religion of tomorrow morning, call it the immortality of man, call it self-love and vanity; it is the thing that explains why man survives all things and why there is no such thing as a pessimist." 163

Behind his paintings one can find Watts' subtle humanity. Modern artists have a fancy to paint portraits which seem either impossible or incredible. Their pictures reveal their atheistic, pessimistic nature. They do not give anything solid and valuable.

163. Ibid., pp.102-103.
to the world. They are not worried about welfare of humanity. They are only concerned about certain imaginary concepts out of place concepts which are inexplicable to common people. But Watts shows his epical quality in his pictures. His great men are symbols of optimism; and his strong faith in God and creation, is visible in his portraits of the Great men.

"He makes all his portraits too classical. It may seem like a paradox to say that he makes them too human; but humanity is a classic and therefore classical. He recurs too much to the correct type which includes all men. He has, for instance a worship of great men so complete that it makes him tend in the direction of painting them all alike. There may be too much of Browning, in his Tennyson, too much of Tennyson in his Browning. There is certainly a touch of Manning in his John Stuart Mill, and a touch of the Minotaur in many of his portraits of Imperial politicians." 164

Besides all these portraits, his most astounding, fantastic, and majestic sculpture is "Physical Energy". It is a forceful and magnetic work.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

Stevenson was a Scottish essayist, novelist, poet and story-teller. He was born in 1850 in Edinburgh, in the family of an engineer. His frail health did not permit him to carry on his father's profession.

164. Ibid., p.158.
He went for legal profession but his natural bent of mind was towards writing.

He had travelled far and wide. The experiences of his life have been expressed in a 'picturesque' manner. Chesterton writes about his manner of composing.

"How Stevenson's life was really what we call picturesque; partly because he saw everything in pictures; and partly because a chapter of accidents did really attach him to very picturesque places." 165

In the beginning critics were very bitter about him. They thought he did not have originality but later his fame grew. About his manner of expression every one agreed that Stevenson had a unique way of describing a thing.

"His graphic narrative skill raised him above the limitations of those writing in similar conventions, though he occasionally suffered from the literary forms he felt obliged to follow." 166

Above all, the greatest quality of Stevenson was his consummate skill of story-telling. Whether he writes an essay, novel, or romance, there is such a wonderful fluency that makes it appear as if he were

telling us a story. A piece from his *Treasure Island*, a romantic narrative, will exemplify it: "In one way, indeed, he bade fair to ruin us for he kept on staying week after week, and at last month after month, so that all the money had been long exhausted, and still my father never plucked up the heart to insist on having more. If ever he mentioned it, the captain blew through his nose so loudly, that you might say he roared, and stared my poor father out of the room. I have seen him wringing his hands after such a rebuff, and I am sure the annoyance and the terror he lived in must have greatly hastened his early and unhappy death." 167

G.K. Chesterton describes his long travel not as a normal one. His American wife called him a 'teller of tales'.

"...the beloved patriarch of a little white and brown community, to whom he was known as Tusitala or the Teller of Tales." 168

As by the study of his biography it becomes obvious that his life itself was romantic hence he easily turned to writing romances. Whatever form he adapted it easily had the gaiety of a romantic writer.

"But broadly speaking, it is true that the outline of his life was romantic; and was therefore perhaps too easily turned into a romance." 169

Eigner establishes that Robert Louis Stevenson belonged to Romantic tradition.

"...I shall attempt to maintain that Stevenson was a Romantic writer, indeed, that he was much more seriously a Romantic than was Scott or any of Scott's true followers." 170

But this romantic tradition of writing started long back. And also it was the favorite of the great minds of England. Before Stevenson is a galaxy of lovers of romance such as Richardson, Dickens, Godwin, Radcliffe, the Brontes, Shelley, Meredith and many others.

Right from the beginning he worked very hard to establish his reputation amongst writers. It was the result of this constant practice that he achieved grace, ease, and a smooth style of writing.

"Stevenson learned his art by writing essays, and his conscious and laborious efforts to achieve a style free from the obvious in rhythm and expression give his earlier work a mannered and artificial quality; but his later essays move easily, without losing the grace which comes from careful artistry. They are the product of an alert sensitive, and sympathetic mind." 171

169. Ibid., p.23.
Of the charge against early Stevenson that he lacked originality, and that he has a mannered and imitative style, G.K. Chesterton has answered this question very well. Perhaps everyone will agree with him that, at the initial stage, the young writer does have a model before him. He reads his predecessors, and if there is some influence on his work, nothing is wrong.

"Every young writer, however original, does begin by imitating other people, consciously or unconsciously, and nearly every old writer would be quite as willing to admit it." 172

But it has to be admitted that Stevenson worked ceaselessly to achieve a graceful style. And Chesterton believes firmly that love for craftsmanship is achieved by continuous endeavour.

"Stevenson was a man who believed in craftsmanship." 173

Stevenson worked day and night with untiring zeal for his craftsmanship. As a result his style became the most exact. Every line is to the point. And gradually, he developed an ability to choose such diction in which there is maximum of expression in minimum words.

173. Ibid., p.196.
"Stevenson had a passion for compression. With all his output, he had a strange ambition to be a man of few words. It seems to me that he was always seeking in words for a combination that should be also a compression; for two words that should instantly give birth to the third thing that he really wanted to say. It may be questioned, of him as of any other artist, whether he ever really succeeded in saying it. But we might amuse ourselves with the fancy that such a system of brilliant abbreviations might be more and more rapidly, like @ and #, uttered and understood; that some day a symbol of two words might stand for a thesis as a cryptic Chinese character stands for a word; and that all men could easily write and read such compact hieroglyphics." 174

About Stevenson's mastery of words Chesterton further says that, what he could say in one word other writers say in twenty.

"....that is, that the word is well chosen out of a hundred words and that one word does the work of twenty." 175

Chesterton is not happy with this admiration alone about his 'compressed' style,

"I do not quite see why he should be covered with cold appreciation merely because he could put into a line what other men put into a page" 176

But this continuous struggle for style did not lead Stevenson to obscurity. No one has to strain his

175. Ibid., p.147.
176. Ibid., pp.161-162.
nervous to understand his work because of his class
compact style. 'Clarity' and 'directness' are the
main characteristics of his style. Whether it is
his essay, novel, short story, adventure, poem, or
travologue, they are all marked with his narrative
artistry and simplicity. A passage from his *Dr. Jekyll
And Mr. Hyde* is given below:

"I stretched out my hands, exulting in the
freshness of these sensations, and in the act,
I was suddenly aware that I had lost in sta­
ture....
I stole through the corridors, a stranger
in my own house; and coming to my room, I saw
for the first time, the appearance of Edward
Hyde." 177

The following is an extract from the *Treasure
Island*, which indicates the clarity, simplicity,
directness, romance, the art of story-telling, and
craftsmanship of higher grade, the power of saying
the thing interestingly and the power of saying it
well. It indicates modernity as well as the old
tradition. Above all, the childlike simplicity of
Stevenson is worth noting. He has created a coherent
image of the subject. The description of the captain
is vivid and convincing:

177. Stevenson, R.L., *Dr. Jekyll And Mr. Hyde*, London:
Collins' Clear-Type Press, n.d., pp. 210-211.
"How that parsonage haunted my dreads, I need scarcely tell you. On stormy nights, when the wind shook the four corners of the house, and the surf roared along the cove and up the cliffs I would see him in a thousand forms, and with a thousand diabolical expressions. Now the leg would be cut off at the knee, now at the hip; now he was a monstrous kind of a creature who had never had but the one leg, and that in the middle of his body. To see him leap and run and pursue me over hedge and ditch was the worst of nightmares. And altogether I paid pretty dear for my monthly four penny piece, in the shape of these abominable fancies."

His sentence-structure is so smooth and coherent; the theme arouses curiosity: it sounds like a fairy-tale in which man is out for an adventure, always struggling with the enormous powers of the supernatural and natural.

"I find everywhere, even in his mere diction and syntax, that theme that is the whole philosophy of fairy-tales of the old romances and even of the absurd libretto of the little theatre -- the conception that man is born with hope and courage indeed, but born outside that which he was meant to attain; that there is a quest, a test, a trial by combat or pilgrimage of discovery; or in other words, that whatever else man is he is not sufficient to himself, either through peace or through despair. The very movement of the sentence is the movement of a man going somewhere and generally fighting something." 179

Frank Swinnerton writes about his style, for which Stevenson laboured so much. Whether it is a novel or

anything else, the reader finds a typical Stevensonian style full of his idiosyncrasies. For his style was not a means to an end but an 'end' in itself. His essays may not have depth of thought. They may not stand comparison with those of Bacon, Hazlitt, Lamb, de Quincey, but they have their own charm. Even now one can read his essays as a pastime, as a cheerful companion in an easy chair:

"He did not regard writing as a means of expressing truths; he seems to have regarded it as an end in itself." 180

Chesterton observes that every scrap of paper written by Stevenson was for the sake of some moral.

"For it seems to me that there is a moral to the art of Stevenson (if the shades of Wilde and Whistler will endure the challenge), and that it is one with a real bearing on the future of European culture and the hope that is to guide our children." 181

His family background was very religious, as a result of which there was a great impact of the Bible on his works.

"It is an obvious truth that Stevenson was born of a Puritan tradition, in a Presbyterian country, where still rolled the echoes, at least, of the theological thunders of Knox." 182

182. Ibid., p.68.
The themes of Stevenson's works are of perennial interest:

"His imagination and half his mind are involved in defending the beauty and dignity of the joy of gods and men." 183

That is why, the description of the death of Jekyll and Hyde is so moving.

"Hyde die upon the scaffold? Or will he find the courage to release himself at the last moment? God knows; I am careless, this is my true hour of death, and what is to follow concerns another than myself. Here, then, as I lay down the pen, and proceed to seal up my confession, I bring the life of that unhappy Henry Jekyll to an end." 194

His favourite subject was "bearing the Cross"; yet he was unaware of it as carpenters make 'Cross' unknowingly. The Architects build our houses, Churches, schools and all sorts of buildings, wherein they make crosses unconsciously.

"After all, there is in the world a great crowd of unconscious cross-builders or unintentional crosses. There is, running through the very frame work of our houses and our furniture, a sort of pattern of crosses. There are a great many honest carpenters and joiners who make wooden crosses and don't mean anything by it. But the figure means something for all that;" 185

183. Ibid., p.70.
184. Stevenson, R.L., Dr.Jekyll And Mr.Hyde, p.254.
Stevenson might not have been conscious of the fact that he was a good Christian, whose work, or a major portion of it, was devoted to theology. A concentrated study of his works will disclose that he dealt with the 'Original Sin', the 'Fall' even though he has done it unconsciously like a good Christian in whose thought, word and deed, there blows the essence of Christianity.

"Wordsworth, though he is sometimes called pan theistic, saw in the vivid pleasures of childhood what he called intimations of immortality. Stevenson admitted that he often found it difficult to get any intimations of immortality. And yet, if he could bear no witness to the Resurrection, he was continually bearing witness to the Fall. We say lightly enough of a good man that he is a Christian without knowing it. But Stevenson was a Christian theologian without knowing it." 186

One can ask "What was the literary aim of Stevenson?" The answer could be that, Stevenson had a theory, that literature should have a serious purpose. It is not just recreation or a pastime.

"Whatever else Stevenson stands for, he certainly stands for the idea that literature is not mere sensation or mere self-expression or mere record, but is sensation appealing to certain senses, self-expression in a certain material and record in a certain style. And in this he was certainly asserting the rights of

186. Ibid., pp. 243-244.
the soul of man, as against various formless forces which some regarded as the soul of nature; the anima mundi of the pantheists. In this way Stevenson represented the same deep, ancient, hieratic and traditional truth that was taught to that generation by William Morris; and neither of them had the least idea what it was." 187

And the greatest task of Stevenson was to crusade against Victorian Pessimism.

"I have already said, and it can hardly be said too often, that the story of Stevenson was a reaction against an age of pessimism." 188

There is an old philosophical question which is as old as man and philosophy. Can man be happy? The question is subtle. Books have been written on the topic, and no set formula can be had for it. But Stevenson has shown his gesture in a very old, orthodox, Christian manner, that only a child can be happy. As he grows, he learns in the complexities, subtleties and worries of worldly life.

"He had his answer to the question, "Can a man be happy?" and it was 'yes before he grows to be a man." 189

Stevenson had a great love of 'old things'. He was very simple. Perhaps this is the sign of greatness.

187. Ibid., p.203.
188. Ibid., p.129.
189. Ibid., p.234.
"When men pause in the pursuit of happiness, seriously to picture happiness, they have always made what may be called a 'primitive' picture. Men rush towards complexity; but they yearn towards simplicity. They try to be kings; but they dream of being shepherds." 190

This lover of the Toy Theatre with child-like simplicity, with the old themes as old as the universe, like love of God, Man, nature, old values, Cross, Resurrection, Jesus and Man's Soul, his internal passions and emotions, can be surely placed with the old masters of world literature. Chesterton ironically states:

"Let us suppose that the Stevensonian way of doing it is altogether dated and out of date; let us leave Stevenson behind in the dead past, along with such lumber as Cervantes and Balsac and Charles Dickens." 191

But he observes that such bitter criticism against Stevenson has ceased; On the contrary in 1950s, people have started thinking afresh about him. The man who was misunderstood for writing innocent things e.g. Child's Garden is considered as a man of great learning, a celebrity, whose literature has enriched English language greatly.

"His literary reputation has also fluctuated. The reaction against him set in soon after his death: he was considered a mannered and imitative essayist, or only a writer of children's

190. Ibid., p.234.
191. Ibid., p.256.
books. But eventually the pendulum began to swing the other way, and by the 1950s his reputation was established among the more discerning as a writer of originality and power; whose essays at their best are cogent and perceptive renderings of aspects of the human situation; whose novels are either brilliant adventure stories with overtones of moral subtlety or original and impressive presentations of human action in terms of history and topography as well as psychology; whose short stories produce some new and effective permutations in the relation between romance and irony or manage to combine horror and suspense with moral diagnosis; whose poems, though not showing the highest poetic genius, are often skillful, occasionally (in his use of Scots, for example) interesting and original, sometimes (in Child's Garden) valuable for their exhibition of a special kind of memory or sensibility.

Stevenson was a self-contented man who never complained, who never groaned and grumbled, and never blamed others. He was quite happy with his lot, with the judgment of the Lord. He can be called a true Christian. Perhaps, that's why Chesterton selected him for his study. His own requiem is a testimony of his mental peace.

"Under the wide and starry sky,
Dig the grave and let me lie.
Glad did I live and gladly die,
And I laid me down with a will.
This be the verse you grave for me;
Here he lies where he longed to be;
Home is the sailor, home from sea,
And the hunter home from the hill." 193