



G. K. Chesterton's
Orthodoxy

**September 14, 2008, Chapter 1:
Everything Else**

Discussion Questions:

What is the main proposition of the chapter, "I. Introduction in Defence of Everything Else"?

How is the main proposition supported?

Regarding the statements which are quoted on page 2 below:

Which ones do you challenge, and why?

With which ones do you agree, and why?

Which ones surprise you?

Which ones are like/unlike statements that are commonly made in contemporary discourse?

Chesterton reasoned from his experience and his observations of others. Was he right to do so? Why or why not?

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For substantive discussion of the merits, as time and interest permit:

- Page 2: This at least seems to me the main problem for philosophers, and is in a manner the main problem of this book. How can we contrive to be at once astonished at the world and yet at home in it?
- Page 2: I wish to set forth my faith as particularly answering this double spiritual need, the need for that mixture of the familiar and the unfamiliar which Christendom has rightly named romance.
- Page 2: The thing I do not propose to prove, the thing I propose to take as common ground between myself and any average reader, is this desirability of an active and imaginative life, picturesque and full of a poetical curiosity, a life such as western man at any rate always seems to have desired.
- Pages 2-3: (N)early all people I have ever met in this western society in which I live would agree to the general proposition that we need this life of practical romance; the combination of something that is strange with something that is secure. We need so to view the world as to combine an idea of wonder and an idea of welcome. We need to be happy in this wonderland without once being merely comfortable.
- Page 4: (T)his book explains how I fancied I was the first to set foot in Brighton and then found I was the last. It recounts my elephantine adventures in pursuit of the obvious.
- Page 4: The man from the yacht thought he was the first to find England; I thought I was the first to find Europe. I did try to found a heresy of my own; and when I had put the last touches to it, I discovered that it was orthodoxy.
- Page 4: If any one is entertained by learning how the flowers of the field or the phrases in an omnibus, the accidents of politics or the pains of youth came together in a certain order to produce a certain conviction of Christian orthodoxy, he may possibly read this book.
- Page 5: These essays are concerned only to discuss the actual fact that the central Christian theology (sufficiently summarized in the Apostles' Creed) is the best root of energy and sound ethics.

Wit for our amusement:

- Page 1: The only possible excuse for this book is that it is an answer to a challenge. Even a bad shot is dignified when he accepts a duel.
- Page 1: I have often had a fancy for writing a romance about an English yachtsman who slightly miscalculated his course and discovered England under the impression that it was a new island in the South Seas.
- Page 2: What could be better than to have all the fun of discovering South Africa without the disgusting necessity of landing there? What could be more glorious than to brace one's self up to discover New South Wales and then realize, with a gush of happy tears, that it was really old South Wales.
- Page 3: I know nothing so contemptible as a mere paradox; a mere ingenious defence of the indefensible.
- Page 3: The truth is, of course, that Mr. Shaw is cruelly hampered by the fact that he cannot tell any lie unless he thinks it is the truth. I find myself under the same intolerable bondage.
- Page 3: It is one thing to describe an interview with a gorgon or a griffin, a creature who does not exist. It is another thing to discover that the rhinoceros does exist and then take pleasure in the fact that he looks as if he didn't.
- Page 4: (T)here is in everything a reasonable division of labour. I have written the book, and nothing on earth would induce me to read it.
- Page 5: (I)f any one wants my opinions about the actual nature of the authority, Mr. G. S. Street has only to throw me another challenge, and I will write him another book.