



The Everlasting Man

By G. K. Chesterton

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"The best popular apologetic I know." — C.S. Lewis

In 1925, just three years after his reception into the Catholic Church, G.K. Chesterton published a work that proclaimed anew to the doubters of the age that the key to history had arrived nearly two thousand years before. Contra the evolutionists, he first points to the singular nature of man from his very beginnings; and, later, contra the comparative religionists, points to the uniqueness of Christianity in relation to all other paths. Two of those paths, the way of myth and the way of philosophy, were at war until Christ restored the world's sanity in the union of Story and Truth. In Chesterton's telling, the groaning and travail of the ancient world was answered, precisely and definitively, in the still night of Bethlehem and the Birth of our Lord. Chesterton insists the event be seen with fresh eyes: God as Child—a claim no other religion dares to make.

As Chesterton writes, "when we do make this imaginative effort to see the whole thing from the outside, we find that it really looks like what is traditionally said about it inside." Looking at Christianity with such new-found sight, one can only be astonished at "the strangest story in the world." The Everlasting Man is the tale of a unique creature, man, made in the image of God, and of the God-Made-Man who fully reveals this fact to him. There is a spiritual path, and mankind has wandered over it with myriad gaits through the centuries. Nevertheless, the path that leads to man's true home begins with the Nativity and ends with the Resurrection, and in between is contained all life and all holiness.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

What, if anything, is it that makes the human uniquely human? This, in part, is the question that G.K. Chesterton starts with in this classic exploration of human history. Responding to the evolutionary materialism of his contemporary (and antagonist) H.G. Wells, Chesterton in this work affirms human uniqueness and the unique message of the Christian faith. Writing in a time when social Darwinism was rampant, Chesterton instead argued that the idea that society has been steadily progressing from a state of primitivism and barbarity towards civilization is simply and flatly inaccurate. "Barbarism and civilization were not successive stages in the progress of the world," he affirms, with arguments drawn from the histories of both Egypt and Babylon.

As always with Chesterton, there is in this analysis something (as he said of Blake) "very plain and emphatic." He sees in Christianity a rare blending of philosophy and mythology, or reason and story, which satisfies both the mind and the heart. On both levels it rings true. As he puts it, "in answer to the historical query of why it was accepted, and is accepted, I answer for millions of others in my reply; because it fits the lock; because it is like life." Here, as so often in Chesterton, we sense a lived, awakened faith. All that he writes derives from a keen intellect guided by the heart's own knowledge. --*Doug Thorpe*

Review

I've reread this book after ten years and found it just as astonishing a work as I did the first time around. Chesterton is a consummate apologist, combining a sincere reverence for his subject matter with a devastating sense of humour and a true generalist's erudition. He has a wonderful ability of taking accepted secular dogmas, turning them completely on their heads, and in the process making Catholic dogmas, rejected for their lack of congruence with modernism, look sensible and enlightened. This polemical mastery is one of the enduring qualities of *The Everlasting Man*. --A Customer

This is a book that everyone ought to read two or three times at least. It is a crime that such nonsense as *Conversations With God*, or better but still relatively shallow introductions to comparative religion like *Religions of Man*, seem to be better known. Here you will find a description of Christianity and its relation to other faiths strong and fine as aged wine. I don't know of anyone who writes with this much class in the modern world. Having ordered the book for our college library, I tried not to mark it too much, but found myself putting ink dots on paragraph after paragraph of material I wanted to quote. He rambles a bit, but I think there is more wisdom, humor, and insight in a single page of this book than in whole volumes that are better known in our days. --David Marshall

Everlasting Man had a decisive role in one of the most important conversions of the this century. C.S. Lewis described reading it in 1925 when he was still an atheist: "Then I read Chesterton's *Everlasting Man* and for the first time saw the whole Christian outline of history set out in a form that seemed to me to make sense . . . I already thought Chesterton the most sensible man alive; apart from his Christianity; Now, I veritably believe, I thought that Christianity itself was very sensible; apart from its Christianity." (Surprised by Joy) When asked what Christian writers had helped him, Lewis remarked in 1963, six months before he died; "The contemporary book that has helped me the most is Chesterton's *The Everlasting Man*." (God in the Dock) --Fr. Phil Bloom

About the Author

Gilbert Keith Chesterton (1874 - 1936) published numerous works which include compilations of his

voluminous journalism, novels, biographies, histories, criticism, Christian apologetics, poetry, and plays. Many of his novels have the genuine marks of genius. His books on Dickens (for whom he had a considerable affinity) and Saint Thomas Aquinas are considered classics in their fields.

Users Review

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