

# OPINION

## Who, or what, is the 'everlasting man'?

Part of the rage on the contemporary scene is the promise of transhuman technology in creating “the everlasting man.” That is, the blending of humans, robotics and artificial intelligence may offer up the everlasting man or eternal life. Some of us may laugh at this idea, but there are those exercising faith in the promise of this technology. My faith, however, has a longer history and will be celebrated later this month. It is a faith defended by some of the most brilliant human beings ever to walk this planet. One of those brilliant thinkers wrote in the first half of the 20th century about his own understanding of an everlasting man. The Christmas season is therefore, an appropriate time to hear his voice.

One hundred years ago, *The Everlasting Man* was published by Gilbert Keith (G.K.) Chesterton. He was an essayist, poet, journalist, philosopher, and Christian apologist. In his lifetime, he would write 80 books, 200 short stories, several hundred poems, and about 4,000 essays. He would be nominated for the Nobel Prize

for Literature in 1935. In other words, Chesterton was an extraordinary and consequential writer. His book *The Everlasting Man* would be a major influence upon the conversion of the great Oxford and Cambridge scholar C.S. Lewis to the Christian faith. The book naturally warrants our attention at Christmas time, as most of us sense that Chesterton’s “everlasting man” is the incarnate Jesus Christ.

This is what Lewis wrote about Chesterton: “In reading Chesterton, as in reading MacDonald, I did not know what I was letting myself in for. A young man who wishes to remain a sound atheist cannot be too careful of his reading. There are traps everywhere ... God is, if I may say it, very unscrupulous.” Lewis wrote: “I read Chesterton’s *The 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



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sense.” Later, Lewis put it even more eloquently: “I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen; not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else.” And, so, the coherence of worldview was important to Lewis’s conversion to Christ. In fact, it would be Chesterton’s *Everlasting Man* that would prompt Lewis’s reexamination of the historicity and reliability of the New Testament gospel accounts. And Lewis’s professional expertise would convince him the accounts were historical, not legendary. Other influences would be important to Lewis as well, including his conversations with Oxford friend Owen Barfield and colleagues Hugo Dyson and J.R.R. Tolkien.

However, the influence of Chesterton’s *The Everlasting Man* cannot be overestimated. The work was a rebuttal to H.G. Wells’s atheistic account of human history in *The Outline of History* (1923). Wells’s argument emphasized an understanding of human evolution without God, providence, or purpose. Social progress depends upon humanity alone, especially scientific and tech-

nological advances. The work was consequential not only in England but throughout the world.

Chesterton disagreed. His survey led him to a different conclusion. If Jesus Christ truly is the “everlasting man,” then all of history and civilization has changed. Rather than beginning with the premise that the human species is progressively evolving, we begin with the premise that history has been radically interrupted. As Chesterton, in summarizing his book, puts it, “Rather have I deliberately dwelt on that incredible interruption as a blow that broke the very backbone of history.” The evidence of this radical interruption is all around us. And as Chesterton the apologist observes, “If it (Christianity) were an error, it seems as if the error could hardly have lasted a day. If it were a mere ecstasy, it would seem that such an ecstasy could not endure for an hour. It has endured for nearly 2,000 years, and the world within it has been more lucid, more levelheaded, more reasonable in its hopes, more healthy in its instincts, more

humorous and cheerful in the face of fate and death, than all the world outside.”

And, so, what do we make of this clash between the world-views of H.G. Wells and G.K. Chesterton? I submit two observations. First, the “clash” seems highly relevant to discourse in the West 100 years after the initial debate. Much of the “culture war” and polarization in the West resembles this debate. And second, the “clash” seems to call for a choice rather than a synthesis. Hopes for synthesis strike me as unreasonable and probably impossible. As I intimated at the outset, I personally agree with Chesterton, and for many other reasons. The ancient promise of a profoundly new, everlasting life, not a humanly manufactured one, has great appeal. The choice is not even close. Merry Christmas!

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## Love, which is of the heart, gives; lust, of the body, takes

Romans 5: 8 "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us". Advice we occasionally hear given to young people is, “Don’t confuse love with lust.” Lust is usually associated with sexual desires. Our physical bodies cause us to do many things we later regret, and the powerful sexual desire of humans at times affects our ability to reason rationally.

The word love is often confused. Eros love is a love between a husband and wife, and not to be confused with agape love. Agape love is actually the highest form of love. God’s love for His creation is demonstrated in this definition. Jesus demonstrated this selfless sacrificial love on the cross.

Lust, of course, can be for riches, power, or prestige. A strong, insatiable desire for anything that causes one to act irrationally to be satisfied can be classified as lust.

Exodus 20: 17a “Thou shalt not covet.” Coveting is very closely connected to lust. In many cases, they may be exactly the same. Our desires

can very easily overreach into sin.

Lust is of the body, and love is of the heart.

Lust is a physical desire, while love is a deeper, more emotional, and committed feeling.

Lust could never provide the commitment that does actual love. Lust is selfish and immediate, while love is selfless and patient.

Many non-believers in the world consider the story of Jesus giving Himself as a sacrifice for the sins of all mankind to be an irrational, illogical belief. Why would, how could the Creator of all things do such a thing?

This is where the differences between Christianity and some other world religions begin to emerge. Whereas Christianity is about God’s love for His creation (mankind), various other religions are about power, selfishness, hatred, human sacrifice, or man’s actions to gain eternity.

We do not have eternal sal-



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vation by what we may do but by what Jesus did. His sacrificial shedding of blood became the sacrifice for the sins of all.

John 15: 12-14 “This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.”

American military service men and women, firefighters, and police officers lay their lives on the line every day. Many jobs are more than a paycheck.

1 Corinthians 13:4-8 (Living Bible) “Love is very patient and kind, never jealous or envious, never boastful or proud, never haughty or selfish or rude. Love does not demand its own way. It is not irritable or touchy. It does not hold grudges and will hardly even notice when others do it wrong.”

This definition of “love” given by the Apostle Paul makes a statement all need to hear and heed. When we think of love and it does not conform to this description in 1 Corinthians, perhaps we should re-examine our personal definitions of love.

Perhaps Paul’s thoughts concerning love and many world religions not practicing these simple concepts explains why the world is in such chaos today. The presence of love would not include the wars and many illegal activities happening in our world today.

Many resent the Christian concept of the urgency of promoting the Gospel of Christ Jesus. The vast misunderstanding is because teaching the love of Christ is an act of love.

We tell others about the saving power of our Jesus because He has commanded us to do exactly that (Matthew 28: 18-20 and Acts 1: 8). Secondly, because we are Christians, we are commanded to love all mankind.

John 13:34 “A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.” This cannot be interpreted as loving only those we personally know, but all the world’s people. Because of this, we go to “the uttermost” (Acts 1: 8) to preach and teach.

John 13:34-35 "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one

another." Loving all people demonstrates to the world that we are not only believers but also followers of the Lord Jesus.

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him shall not perish but have ever lasting life." John clearly states in repeating the words of Jesus that “God so loved the world.”

With the approaching Christmas season, we are reminded of God’s love for us through the sights and sounds. The birth of the Christ child was the beginning of the redemption of man. Since the “fall of man” (Genesis 3), man has had the need to be redeemed, and Jesus provided that.

We must always teach that eternal salvation is attained by a faith-based belief (Ephesians 2: 8) in Christ Jesus crucified (Matthew 27: 35) for the remission of sin (1 John 1: 9), resurrected (Matthew 28: 6) and ascended alive into Heaven (Acts 1: 9).

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## Sharpen your skills of protecting your outdoor tools

By JOANNA KIRBY

Columnist

As we are ‘snowballing’ our way into Winter, let’s not forget to take care of the valuable tools in our toolbox. This is a great time to take an inventory of what you have on hand, what you need to replace (possibly from Old Saint Nick), and what may be on your Wish List. I have several different types of hand pruners, all from a wonderful company, Ironwood Tool Company, that offers a lifetime replacement guarantee on all their tools, which is a bonus. As a Cut Flower Farmer, I can personally recommend each of these for any gardener. Their Ratchet Pruner is indispensable, as it cuts through stems up to an inch in diameter by increasing your hand strength 5 to 7 times!

Now, let’s get started on the cleaning aspect for your tools. I have recently purchased several cleaning supplies that will make this job easier for anyone. First, make sure you have cleaned off all of the dirt from your tool. A soft brush will be useful to have on hand, or even an old toothbrush will work. Next, I use several products from Felco, a company that has been around for almost 80 years. Felco was launched in 1945 in a small town in Switzerland by a young visionary engineer. They have global recognition for their innovative products and design. I start with Felco 980 to clean the metallic parts of gardening and workshop tools. This is a biodegradable, 100% synthetic, non-stick formula that will never become resinous. It

is recommended by the company for the wintering of all garden tools. Now, if there is any resin buildup from evergreens, I use Felco 981. Once you have applied this to the blades of pruners or shears, rub it in with a soft cloth several times to remove any resin. Sometimes, steel wool is needed if you have a sticky situation. Dry them off and let them sit on paper towels overnight. The final step is to use Felco 990 to lubricate and grease any moving parts, reducing wear and tear on your valuable tools.

All of these cleaning products can be found in your local garden centers, hardware stores, or online. I always find cleaning my workhorse tools in winter a peaceful and relaxing job. If you have shovels, garden

forks, or any other tools with a wooden handle. Brush them off well and apply a good coat of Linseed Oil to the wooden handles, rubbing it in well with a rag. This will help to lengthen the life of a tool for many years to come. I also take a five-gallon bucket and fill it half full of sand. Then I take used motor oil and mix it into the sand, creating a coarse, wet medium that I put my shovels into. This helps remove any buildup and provides a good winter coating for the metal parts.

Once you have taken inventory, cleaned, and stored your tools, it’s time to think about your Christmas Wish list for yourself, your family, and your friends. If you are cutting any greenery (boxwood, pine, cedar, spruce, holly) for the holidays,

you will want to give it a good spraying of Wilt-Pruf, an anti-transpirant that helps seal in moisture with a clear, protective coating, reducing water loss. This will keep your greens fresher longer and can be found at most garden centers this time of year. One more tidbit- if you have newly planted evergreens in your yard, you can use burlap to wrap around them to help protect them from winter winds and freezing temperatures. Last year, I wrapped two pyramidal boxwood plants, and they flourished in the Spring. Just make sure to remove their ‘coats’ before the Spring thaw.

Wishing you a peaceful and joyous Advent season.