

BOOK REVIEW

GILBERT KEITH CHESTERTON,
The Everlasting Man.

(London: Hodder and Stoughton Ltd.) 320 pp.

In his prefatory note to *The Everlasting Man*, Mr. Chesterton warns us that the view suggested in this book is historical rather than theological, and its thesis is that those who say that Christ stands side by side with similar myths, and His religion side by side with other religions, are only repeating a very stale formula contradicted by a very striking fact. Mr. Chesterton's book is really a philosophical proof of the existence of God.

The author at first dwells on the relations existing between man and the other animals that inhabit the earth, and then portrays the conditions that started men thinking about God and the results that this thinking produced. He conceives the religious history of the world to be centered around the many ways of treating the idea of an All-powerful Creator. The different conceptions of the Creator grew up in the mob or mass of men who got their knowledge from gossip, while the sages or thinkers undertook to draw up a plan of the world and to ascertain God's purpose in creating it. In doing this they attempted a possible plan of the world, almost as if the world were not yet made.

In the Catholic Church the author is puzzled by the fact that her priests and people behave as if they were messengers, and that the religion of the world is divided by the line between the men who are bringing the message and those men who have not yet heard of it, or cannot yet believe it.

Although there are many different denominations existing today, they do not prove that there is no one true God; and Mr. Chesterton ascribes them to another and vaguer notion of the invisible power accepted by some people. In considering the Catholic Church, he perceives the most convincing fact to be her continued existence through every age with its savage attacks, and that the zeal of her ministers and members is as great now as it was when the Church began.

In his own inimitable style, the author capably masters the task of proving the existence of a true God. Although his material is at times difficult, it is always convincing.

— FENNELLY HOWLETT, '48.

LYTTON STRACHEY,

Elizabeth and Essex.

(London: Chatto and Windus) 288 pp.

This book takes up back to the latter part of Elizabeth's reign. It deals with the political intrigue of the time and is particularly a story of Elizabeth's associations with the Earl of Essex, of her fascination for him, not only in personal but also in political matters.

In the opening chapters the author gives us a description of the personalities of both Elizabeth and Essex. As the chapters continue we see Essex, first as a court favorite, and then as a brilliant statesman capably filling the duties of his office as Minister of Foreign Policy. We see the gradual elimination of rivalries which had existed between him and other statesmen such as Raleigh and the Cecils; we see him gaining in success and favor until he is at the very apex of his career.

Then comes the turning point. Francis Bacon under takes to give him advice on how to maintain his high position, advice which the impulsive Essex fails to follow. His costly and ineffective expedition against the Spaniards, his failure as a military strategist in Ireland, causes him to lose favor and on his return to England he is placed in temporary custody by the temperamental and aging Queen. And finally the part he plays as leader of a conspiracy against the government causes him humiliation and subsequent execution.

The final chapters tell of Elizabeth's last days, days filled with remorse as she realized that she had lost her great favorite and that she could have saved him.

The author gives a vivid portrayal of characters and writes in a style which holds the reader's interest. This biography is a good example of Mr. Strachey's own idea of how a biography should be written: "... with a becoming brevity — a brevity which excludes everything that is redundant and nothing that is significant."

— MARY O'SHEA, '49.