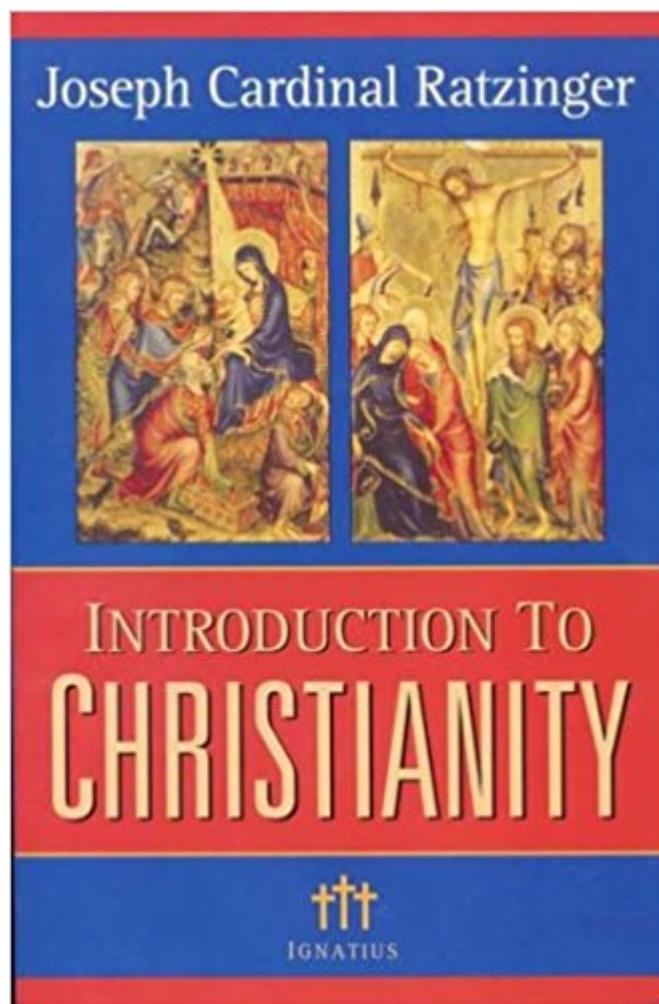


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Introduction To Christianity, 2nd Edition (Communio Books)



Synopsis

One of Cardinal Ratzinger's most important and widely read books, this volume is a revised second edition with an improved translation and an in-depth 20 page preface by the Cardinal. As he states in the preface, since this book was first published over 30 years ago, many changes and significant events have occurred in the world, and in the Church. But even so, he says he is firmly convinced that his fundamental approach in this book is still very timely and crucial for the spiritual needs of modern man. That approach puts the question of God and the question about Christ in the very center, which leads to a "narrative Christology" and demonstrates that the place for faith is in the Church. Thus, this remarkable elucidation of the Apostle's Creed gives an excellent, modern interpretation of the foundations of Christianity. Ratzinger's profound treatment of Christianity's basic truths combines a spiritual outlook with a deep knowledge of Scripture and the history of theology.

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Customer Reviews

Text: English (translation) Original Language: German --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Joseph Ratzinger (Benedict XVI) is recognized as one of the most brilliant theologians and spiritual leaders of our age. As pope he authored the best-selling Jesus of Nazareth. Prior to his pontificate, he wrote many influential books important for the contemporary Church, such as Introduction to

Christianity and The Spirit of the Liturgy.

I was reading through Pope Benedict's first book on Jesus, *Jesus of Nazareth: From the Baptism in the Jordan to the Transfiguration*, and I began to feel a little bit wobbly --- out of my depth, so to speak. So I "retreated" to this book, and found it even more compelling. For one thing, Benedict's first item for discussion is DOUBT, something which applies in roughly equal measures to believers and non-believers, although you will never find Richard Dawkins admitting to such a thing. "Yet, perhaps it is true..." is the thought echoing in the minds of some atheists. This is followed by a penetrating argument which actually startled me, because I had just written something similar in a review a few days before. What I said was that scientists who refused to discuss Intelligent Design because "it was not science" may have walled themselves off from the truth. What Benedict wrote was much more sweeping: because positivist science deals only with the visible and the material, it CANNOT discover the truth, because the most important things in human life are invisible. Now, think about that for a few moments: "the most important things in life are invisible." That would, of course, include your soul, and God as well. If God is the root of all the meaning in life, well, science cannot possibly discover this, because they have ruled him out of the game by manipulating the rules! There are other "invisible" things which rule our lives; the most important is love. There are many ways to make love manifest on the physical level (flowers, kisses, etc.) but love itself cannot be touched or seen. Of course, I can think of a lot more things which make philosophical materialists ill at ease: information, ideas, music, poetry...the list is really quite long, and philosophical materialists who try to reduce these things to the billiard-ball view of the universe really go through quite remarkable contortions trying to do this. On the other hand, if we admit the existence of non-material things, the problems disappear. "What is belief really? We can now reply like this: It is a human way of taking up a stand in the totality of reality, a way that cannot be reduced to knowledge and is incommensurable with knowledge; it is the bestowal of meaning without which the totality of man would remain homeless, on which man's calculations and actions are based, and without which in the last resort he could not calculate and act, because he can only do this in the context of a meaning that bears him up. For in fact man does not live on the bread of practicability alone; he lives as man and, precisely in the intrinsically human part of his being, on the word, on love, on meaning." In any case, if you are curious about Christianity, this is a superb book. And it puts some of the efforts of C.S. Lewis in the shade. Very high recommendation!

The popular press may have written him off - probably on the basis of a mere handful of things he

said - but the monolithic import of this work will endure. Especially valuable is Ratzinger's treatment of the Trinity, which uncovers the ambiguity of singularity and plurality, along with the irreducible role of logos and relationally, lying at the very foundation of Being. Far from being a traditionalist throwback, Ratzinger has his finger on the pulse of of contemporary secular society, which makes his presentation of Christianity highly relevant. If you are at all inclined to regard religion as a province of the ignorant, this book is for you.~DS Thorne, kindlefrenzy.weebly.com

This book by Pope Benedict is quite surprising. Overall, he has a very Hegelian approach. He emphasizes the role of history and transformation in understanding Christian theology. He also is quite expressly for evolution and is a big fan of Teilhard du Chardin . He is a bit of a universalist as well. This book was based on a series of lectures delivered to German students, and it shows and his extensive use of modern science and philosophy to make his points. Reading this makes me a little sad as to how so many treated this great thinker due to media influence.

Having chosen philosophy over religion, and reason over faith, I expected little from this book. But I was sufficiently impressed by BXVI's Regensburg Address (2006) to check it out. This book anchors itself on the Creed - something with which I am not familiar but, as it turns out, that is not a problem. It begins with a discussion of 'belief' and points out that 'belief' has no place among the hypotheses and experimental proofs of the modern mathematical sciences - so we begin by distinguishing scientific knowledge from Christian belief. For me, the most interesting discussions concern (i) the relation between scientific and historical knowledge; (ii) the historical replacement of the concept of an 'individual' with the concept of a 'person'; and (iii) the comparison of the God of Christianity with the God of philosophy. This is a work of substance and a nice proof of the teaching skills of BXVI. A very interesting read for any interested in the history of science and philosophy.

This should be required reading for anyone interested in Christianity, and especially for "cradle Christians" who may not grasp the rich and fully developed theology of the Christian and particularly the Catholic Church. Heavy philosophical arguments are rendered in clear, precise prose. This is easily one of the most important books of the 20th century. Making the theology of the church understandable without skimping on it is one reason that this is such an important work. Those new to Christianity have a treasure trove of examples laid out for them. Long time Christians would do themselves a favor in reading it, and anti-Christians could learn a thing or two about what this singular

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