What Christians Believe by C. S. Lewis

An Introduction To Christianity

A succinct statement of Christian doctrine from one of Christianity's most beloved thinkers.

Features:
* Click here to view our Condition Guide and Shipping Prices

My Personal Review:
C.S. Lewis was a rare individual. One of the few non-clerics to be recognised as a theologian by the Anglican church, he put forth the case for Christianity in general in ways that many Christians beyond the Anglican world can accept, and a clear description for non-Christians of what Christian faith and practice should be. Indeed, Lewis says in his introduction that this text (or indeed, hardly any other he produced) will help in deciding between Christian denominations. While he describes himself as a very ordinary layman in the Church of England, he looks to the broader picture of Christianity, particularly for those who have little or no background. The discussion of division points rarely wins a convert, Lewis observed, and so he leaves the issues of ecclesiology and high theology differences to experts. Lewis is of course selling himself short in this regard, but it helps to reinforce his point.

This book derives from his work, Mere Christianity, a book looks at beliefs, both from a natural standpoint as well as a scripture/tradition/reason standpoint. Lewis looks both at belief and unbelief - for example, he states that Christians do not have to see other religions of the world as thoroughly wrong; on the other hand, to be an atheist requires (in Lewis estimation) that one view religions, all religions, as founded on a mistake. Lewis probably surprised his listeners by starting a statement, When I was an atheist... Lewis is a late-comer to Christianity (most Anglicans in England were cradle-Anglicans). Thus Lewis can speak with the authority of one having deliberately chosen and found Christianity, rather than one who by
accident of birth never knew any other (although the case can be made that Lewis was certainly raised in a culture dominated by Christendom).

Lewis also looks at practice - here we are not talking about liturgical niceties or even general church-y practices, but rather the broad strokes of Christian practice - issues of morality, forgiveness, charity, hope and faith. Faith actually has a very brief section - part of it looking at the more common use of system of belief, but another part examining faith in a more subtle, spiritual way. Lewis states early that should readers get lost, they should just skip the chapter - while many parts of Christianity will be accessible and intelligible to non-Christians, some things cannot be understood from the outside. This is the leave it to God sense of faith, that is in many ways more of a gift or grace from God than a skill to be developed.

Finally, Lewis looks at personality, not just in the sense of our individual personality, but our status as persons and of Gods own personality. Lewis conclusion that there is no true personality apart from Gods is somewhat disquieting; Lewis contrasts Christianity with itself in saying that it is both easy and hard at the same time. Lewis looks for the new man to be a creature in complete submission and abandonment to God. This is a turn both easy and difficult.

The main book Mere Christianity was originally a series of radio talks, published as three separate books - The Case for Christianity, Christian Behaviour, and Beyond Personality. This book brings together primary excerpts from all three texts. Lewis style is witty and engaging, the kind of writing that indeed lives to be read aloud. Lewis debates whether or not it was a good idea to leave the oral-language aspects in the written text (given that the tools for emphasis in written language are different); I think the correct choice was made.

This book is part of a pocket-book series being produced by Harper SanFrancisco, several books that highlight the key points of C.S. Lewis religious/theological writing. Less than 100 pages, with plenty of white space and good-sized print, these books are easily read, but invite contemplation far beyond the scope of their diminutive size.

For More 5 Star Customer Reviews and Lowest Price:
What Christians Believe by C. S. Lewis - 5 Star Customer Reviews and Lowest Price!