

Brian Mountford  
**Christianity In Ten Minutes**

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Ten minutes is scarcely enough to read through this book but that should stimulate an enquiring reader to further study.

Mountford begins with the story of Jesus, and recommends us to read straight through St. Mark's gospel at one sitting. The strangeness of the story is then brought out. Jesus, Mountford tells us, "...claims to be empowered by God, and to understand God better than the experts." He hates hypocrisy and speaks of loving his enemies or going 'the extra mile'. He mixes freely with women and social outcasts, and says he is called for the sake of sinners. He identifies with God and rebukes the religious leaders who criticise him.

Mountford then goes on to St. Paul's doctrines as being the first writings about Jesus, and inevitably the question arises, "Who is this?" We return to the gospels and Mountford relates that Jesus forgives as well as heals, and that he quietens a storm on the lake, powers attributable only to God. Then he quotes from St. John: "God sent his Son into the world, that whoever believes in him will be saved."

We move rapidly through the Church's response to difficult questions: the idea of God as Trinity but One; Jesus as both God and Man; coping with current issues with moral thinking and behaviour. God's nature of Love is shown in Jesus, whom Christians try to imitate.

There follows a chapter on how life is changed by faith, which brings a challenge to our potential and meaning, assisted by prayer and a non-materialist outlook.

Mountford admits that it is possible to be a Christian without going to church; but maintains that Christianity is a "community religion" whose primary object is worship - the context for theology and teaching - and the Sacraments which offer God's forgiveness and strength for life. The book ends with comment on four "foundational Christian principles" and a summary.

What I most liked about this book was the author's clarity and simplicity, together with a comprehensiveness which could state that no one part of the Church has the whole truth. Yes, certainly I would offer this book to an enquirer.

***Elizabeth CSF***