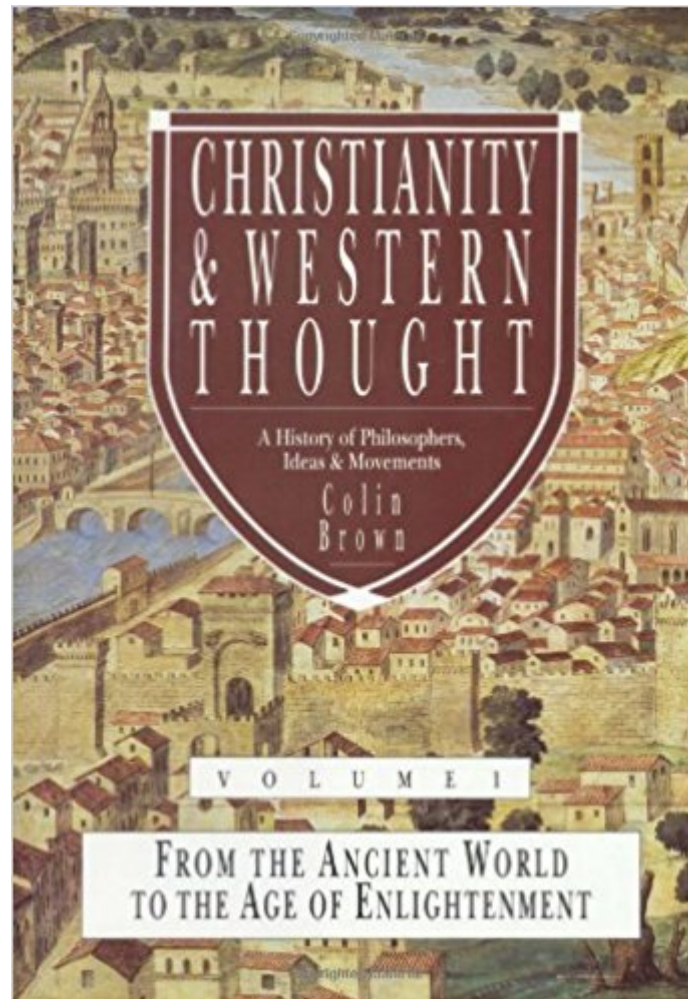


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Christianity & Western Thought: From The Ancient World To The Age Of Enlightenment: 001



Synopsis

From Socrates and the Sophists to Kant, from Augustine to Aquinas and the Reformers, Colin Brown traces the turbulent, often tension-filled, always fascinating story of the thinkers, ideas and movements that have shaped our intellectual landscape. Is philosophy the "handmaiden of faith" or "the doctrine of demons"? Does it clarify the faith or undermine the very heart of Christian belief? Brown writes, "This book is about the changes in preconceptions, world views and paradigms that have affected the ways in which people have thought about religion in general and Christianity in particular in the Western world. . . . It is a historical sketch, written to help students--and anyone else who might be interested--to get a better grasp of the love-hate relationship between philosophy and faith that has gone on for close to two thousand years." Students, pastors and thoughtful Christians will benefit from this rich resource. The first in a proposed three-volume work, Brown's easy-to-read, hard-to-put-down introduction to Christianity and Western thought focuses on developments from the ancient world to the Age of Enlightenment.

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Customer Reviews

The reviewer below gives a pretty good summary of the book's contents, so I'll just add my two bits about its quality. C&WT is well-done, balanced, and readable. The author relates the ideas of leading Christian and non-Christian thinkers in a clear style, interjecting his own thoughtful viewpoint with about the right frequency. He treats readers with respect, but has mercy on those of us who find a lot of philosophical discourse a bit esoteric by explaining terms and concepts. None of the book is boring, (to me) because Brown engages his subjects with respect and interest -- this is not an archeological dig in quaint DWM thought. Nor is the book a long editorial. When the author gives his opinion, he sets it clearly apart, and it is cogent and reasonable. Brown not only shows the awesome breadth of knowledge that such an undertaking requires -- charting the ideas of great and famous thinkers from 500 B. C. to 1800 in a single complex story -- he also demonstrates good taste and judgement in dealing with thinkers of such widely differing views and personalities. I appreciated, for example, his rehabilitation of Descartes, the brackets he puts around Hume, his discussion of Pascal, and so on. It seems to me he deals with them all pretty fairly, though of course this book is no substitute for the originals. I hope volume II is as good. It would be unfair to complain that the book is too narrow in scope. But it may encourage an attitude among Western Christians that I think is. Brown seems to envision "the West" almost hermetically sealed from the rest of the world. (As do so many Christians.) For instance, Brown seems to go along with the convention that the Greeks started philosophy too readily.

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