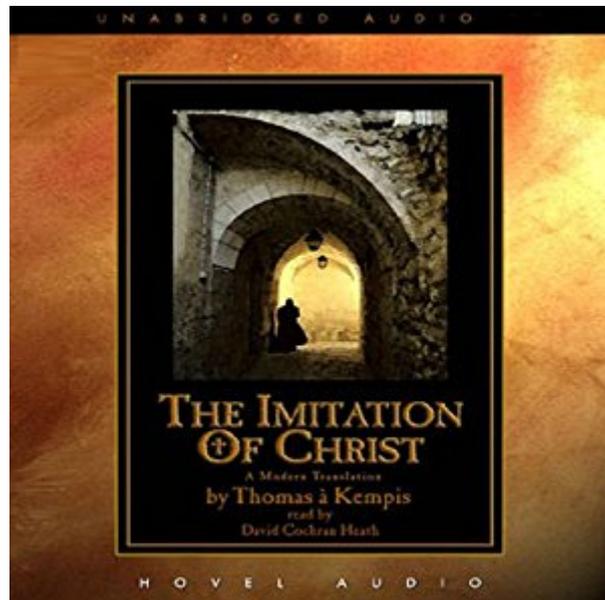


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The Imitation Of Christ



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Customer Reviews

"Want to know the best advice I ever heard?" asked Larry King, in an interview published today in Canada's National Post newspaper: "I never learned ANYTHING while I was talking." 50 years experience at the interviewer's microphone and Larry's best advice comes down to one word. "Listen!" Coincidentally (or maybe not!) I picked up this just-received book, sent to me by a dear friend who recalled my reviewing an earlier published edition of this same "Ronald Knox translation." And it literally fell open to these words, "By all means ask questions, but LISTEN to what holy writers have to tell you . . . often enough, (when we hear) Holy Scripture, we are distracted by mere curiosity; we want to seize upon some point and argue about it, when we ought to (listen) and move on." I flipped open "The Imitation" just now and my eyes (lately fixated on my newest pride and joy) were these: (p 32 under the heading, "ABOUT SELF-CONFIDENCE, AND HOW TO GET RID OF SELF-CONCEIT") "It is nonsense to depend for your happiness on created things (and) why all this

self-importance? Do not boast of riches, if you happen to possess them . . . nor about the important friends you have; boast rather of God's friendship."Do not give yourself airs, if you have physical strength or beauty; it only takes a spell of illness to waste the one, or mar the other. Do not be self-satisfied about your own skill or cleverness; God is hard to satisfy, and it is from him that they come, all these gifts of nature."He reads our thoughts, and will only think the worse of you, if you think yourself better than other people.

(My review is for the Catholic Book Publishing edition of "The Imitation of Christ" and not for other editions. For some reason has the review system rigged so that these reviews cover multiple editions of "Imitation", which does no one any favors since each addition has a different "editor" and translation, making each one a little different.)For hundreds of years in the Church many people would carry 2 books with them; The Holy Bible and The Imitation of Christ. It is one of the greatest Catholic classics and fortunately more and more people are "rediscovering" it.Naturally, with a spiritual classic, you want it as close to the original translation as possible. Unfortunately this translation by Clare Fitzpatrick falls very short. When you offer too many of your own edits to a work that fantastic as is, it starts to sound like a different book. It loses it's essence.The most common English translation comes from Rev. Richard Challoner, translated in 1893....there's a reason this edition of The Imitation has been around for so long. It is simply the best. To illustrate my point that the translation of the Catholic Book Publishing edition is weak, I will simply quote the first paragraph of both translations.The 1893 translation by Rev Challoner:"'He that followeth me, walketh not in darkness,' saith Our Lord. (John 8:12). These are the words of Christ, by which we are admonished, that we must imitate His life and manners, if we would be truly enlightened, and delivered from all blindness of heart."Now the edition being reviewed, edited by Clare L. Fitzpatrick:"No one who follows Me will ever walk in darkness (Jn 8:12).

I'm not a Christian but I have almost completed a minor in Christianity at the college I attend. I study Christianity because of my interest in European history. This book, written by a 15th century cloistered monk, is amazing for its strong use of language to convey how one should interact with God through Jesus. But even outside the sphere of religious thought, there are some good statements that could apply to everyday life, although Thomas would scoff at the idea that someone could do this independent of God. Consider the following short excerpts:"It is only by patience and true humility that we can grow stronger than all our foes." --pg. 40"For every bodily pleasure brings joy at first, but at length it bites and destroys." --pg. 52"Alas, a long life often adds to our sins rather

than to our virtue!" --pg. 58 These are just a few quotes from a book that has many memorable lines. Most of the book deals with how man should submit himself to Christ. The format Thomas uses is dialogue, between Christ and a disciple. Like Plato's use of dialogue, it is an effective means of getting his ideas across. Thomas even examines the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, and concludes that only through pure thought and hard work at patience and humility can one be able to effectively use these sacraments to become one with Christ, and through him, God. The only downfall I can see with this book is that it is aimed at the cloistered, or as Thomas calls them, the "Religious." Thomas sees the process of submitting to God as more than a full-time job. Because of this, most people would be shut out of union with Christ. But the book was written to help those in the monastery.

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