

the role of the pastor, the place of prayer, and the participation of all, including women and children. I particularly sought to convey the holiness of God, His great love towards us, and the personal relationship we enjoy with Him.

It was possible to meet most of the objectives in a two-page leaflet, presented in a pleasant 'landscape' style, and printed and folded into three columns. I suggest that members of other expatriate churches in environments that are hostile to overt proclamation of the Gospel could do something similar.

[A photocopy of the leaflet is available upon request from the Seedbed editor.]

BOOK REVIEWS

Kenneth Cragg. *TROUBLED BY TRUTH: Biographies in the Presence of Mystery*. Cleveland, The Pilgrim Press, 1994. Pp. 328, \$14.95 (Paper). Reviewer: Rev. Bassam Madany.

The back cover of this book informs us that "in this collection of thirteen faith-biographies of literary and religious individuals from Jewish, Muslim, Christian and Indian beliefs, Kenneth Cragg, widely acknowledged as the premier Western Islamicist in the world, tells these stories in ways that emphasize the importance of religious tolerance and respect for others."

We are introduced by the author to the inner lives of twelve men and one woman all striving to make sense out of human existence from within their particular faith-systems. To list them is to indicate the daunting task which Bishop Cragg undertook in guiding the reader in this intellectual and spiritual exploration. They are: Henry Martyn, Charles Freer Andrews, Constance E. Padwick, Elie Wiesel, James Parkes, Abraham J. Heschel, Isma'il al-Faruqi, Salman Rushdie, Salah al-Sabur, Asaf 'Ali Asghar Fyzee, Raimundo Panikkar, Arnold J. Toynbee and Wilfred Cantwell Smith.

According to the author, as a by-product of the pluralistic societies which now exist in the Western world an "inter-faith situation" has come into existence. This leads to dialogue between the followers of these different faiths. In these encounters, if they are to be authentic and sincere, the Scriptures of those engaged in dialogue assume a primary importance. Thus posited, Cragg begins his study by recounting the moving story of the pioneer missionary, Henry Martyn (178-1812).

Born into a Methodist family, Henry Martyn studied at Cambridge and was later ordained in the Church of England. He was greatly influenced by the writings of William Carey and the biography of David Brainerd. Having felt the call to be a missionary, Henry Martyn went to India. His main concern was the translation of the Bible into Urdu, Persian and Arabic. Even though he died at a young age in the mission field, he left us a great legacy which is described by Cragg in these memorable words:

His quality of spirit made him the first of modern missionaries to know the painful perplexity of registering the sheer otherness of faiths. For he did not academicise the experience and seek refuge in study for

its own sake. Gifted scholar as he was, he did not escape his burden by foregoing the convictions that shaped it. Nor did he allow the philology he loved to suffice him as in itself an end. He therefore exemplified the truth that the full measure of dialogue — as we now intend the term — is known only where something more than dialogue is consciously at stake. (P.31)

Quite often while sympathetically sharing with us the lives of these pioneers and interpreting their struggles “in the Presence of Mystery,” Kenneth Cragg reveals his own thinking, as for example, when dealing with the mission work of Charles F. Andrews in India, he comments:

We have seen Henry Martyn inwardly struggling with the puzzle of how to be truly in the steps of the New Testament in a world so different — a world for which that supreme New Testament had no precise directives except the duty to ‘make disciples’, which was exactly where its cultural limits least satisfied its ‘loyalists’ in the India they found. (P.10)

That there are difficulties in spreading the Gospel in lands whose cultures had not been influenced by the Christian Scriptures, New Testament history itself bears witness. The Gospel must have sounded very odd to the ears of the Corinthians as they heard Saint Paul proclaiming the crucified and risen Messiah as Savior and Lord. Yet he resolved to preach what was intellectually an unacceptable message. He was convinced that it was precisely this specific message of the “Word of the cross” that he was commissioned to herald everywhere. At the same time, he was fully aware that the fruits of such preaching did not depend on human factors alone, but on the presence and secret work of the Holy Spirit. This Pauline theology of missions does not receive the attention it deserves in the comments of our author.

The accounts of the biographies of Elie Wiesel and Abraham Heschel introduce us to the thinking of two modern Jewish intellectuals. Cragg is very helpful in guiding us through the various aspects of this journey. Some quotes are shocking such as when Wiesel writes about Jesus Christ: “Unable to save Israel, Jesus ended up saving mankind” (P.84) Granted that everything that he wrote was influenced by the horrific event of the Holocaust, yet it does not follow that decades later, Wiesel had the right “to identify Christianity with Nazism and drown the Christian meaning of the Cross in the Judaic meaning of the Holocaust.” (P. 83) In depicting one of the super tragedies of world history, one should not be so selective as to ignore other similar tragedies, if not as horrible as the Holocaust from the standpoint of numbers, yet equally so as to their relative dimensions. I am referring to the genocide of the Armenians which was perpetrated against them by the Ottoman Turks and which took the lives of 1,500,000 innocent men, women and children during World War I.

When dealing with the Christian-Muslim encounter, Kenneth Cragg seems to read more into the Islamic sources than what they actually say or mean to an Arab reader. Perhaps this is inevitable, since notwithstanding his great erudition and knowledge of world religions as well as his excellent command of Arabic, he is still at heart an Anglican from the United Kingdom. His largesse of heart and his eagerness to be sympathetic to the others lead him to find in his readings of the Qur’an what Muslim interpreters have never discovered. In seeking very hard to find a bridge between Christianity and Islam, he tends at times to give the impression that there are two valid roads which lead to God. And yet, when the reader seems to have almost arrived at such a conclusion, Cragg draws back from any thought which denies the uniqueness of Christ or the finality of Christianity.

The study of Isma'il al-Faruqi's life and work is perhaps the most helpful chapter dealing with a representative of orthodox Sunni Islam. We learn about the dreams of an uprooted Palestinian Muslim, educated at the American University of Beirut and at McGill University's Institute for Islamic Studies. His teaching career took him to the University of Syracuse and later on, to Temple University in Philadelphia. Al-Faruqi represents those Muslims who having left their homelands and mastered several aspects of Western culture, remained deeply committed to the faith of their birth. They sought in their new environment to affirm the superiority and adequacy of Islam for the entire globe. His life project was nothing less than the "Islamicisation of all knowledge."

Al-Faruqi, like other Muslim critics of the Christian faith, was very opposed to the doctrine of original sin. While Bishop Cragg does not deny this orthodox Christian teaching, his interpretation of the nature of original sin is very questionable. *"It is, therefore, 'original', not in the sense of being innocently inherited, but in the sense of characterising the personality as such. To express this in the myth of 'the fall' is to say that it is of the nature of humanity."*

At the risk of sounding very critical of our author, I must register my extreme unhappiness at the choice of the biography of Salman Rushdie, made famous through his authorship of *The Satanic Verses*. Besides being very offensive to Muslims, Rushdie's book does not serve any recognizable purpose other than acquainting Westerners with a bi-cultural émigré's critical thoughts and musings about the religion of his birth. Readers of Cragg's book would have been better served in becoming acquainted with some of the serious works of contemporary Muslims who are doing their utmost to "renew" Islam and enable its one billion adherents to properly cope with the innumerable problems which confront them. Cragg's familiarity with Arabic, for example, would have enabled him to share with us the remarkable literary products of such serious and scholarly men as the Egyptian intellectual, Dr. Zaki Naguib Mahmoud.

The closing chapters of *Troubled by Truth* deal with Raimundo Panikkar, Arnold Toynbee and Wilfred Cantwell Smith. In them we find the greatest challenge from within to historic Christianity. To be even partially acquainted with their work is to become aware of how different our times are from the closing years of the past century, that period in church history which witnessed the great expansion of the church into all the world. Divided as the missionaries of the past were on secondary matters, they were all committed to the finality, uniqueness and superiority of Jesus Christ. Not so with the thought world of Panikkar, Toynbee and Smith. They may be regarded as the proponents of theological pluralism with a goal to bring about a "world theology." While this dream may sound very attractive to Western intellectuals/theologians, the representatives of the other world religions will never "buy" such a project. In any attempt to bring about a world religion through the adoption of a world theology, the followers of Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism, for example, will soon discover that such schemes are thoroughly Western and thus require the total abandonment of the particularism of each major world religion. As Prof. S. Mark Heim of Andover Newton Theological School, writing about the pluralist theologies as advocated by Smith and others put it in his article, *Pluralism and the Otherness of World Religions*, (FIRST THINGS, August/September 1992):

Ironically, these antidotes to Christian particularism may prove to be much more culture and time bound than

the theologies they condemn, and the very religious traditions they wish to affirm may find on the whole they have no less to fear from the pluralists' embrace than the exclusivists' confrontation.

The rather frequent critical remarks of the work under review are not meant to detract from the value of this informative book. Its coverage of the lives and literary products of fellow-humans in search of the meaning of life "in the Presence of Mystery" cannot but enrich us as we seek to fulfill our mission in life. It should be a great challenge to every Christian living at the end of the Second Millennium to dig deeply into the Scriptures in the light of the accumulated heritage of the church in order to formulate our responsibilities to our contemporaries. Our allegiance to the "historic Christian faith" will be strengthened as we meet and briefly "live" with the personages who were introduced to us in this serious study crafted in the unique style and irenical spirit of Bishop Kenneth Cragg.

Abul Ala Mawdudi, translated and annotated by Syed Silas Husain and Ernest Hahn. *THE PUNISHMENT OF THE APOSTATE ACCORDING TO ISLAMIC LAW*, published anonymously in 1994, pp. 117, available from The Voice of the Martyrs, PO Box 117, Port Credit, Mississauga ON L5G 4L5 CANADA, \$Can.5.00/copy + \$3.50 for airmail, 40% reduction to organizations and bookstores in quantities of 5 and more.

BEHIND THE VEIL, Unmasking Islam is anonymous, both as to author and publisher. The publicity blurb states simply, "Many Muslim converts to Christianity have shared in the research contained in this book." It was published in 1995, pp. 315, is available from The People of the Book, 1731 W. Berwyn Ave., Chicago IL 60640-2007, \$7.00/copy plus handling and shipping charges. Reviewer: Wendell Evans.

Muslim countries and communities throughout the world are increasingly adopting more radical views as to how true Muslims should believe and behave. Muslim minorities in western lands, on the one hand, portray Islam as a tolerant religion which can best guarantee the human rights of mankind. Militant Islamic governments and groups, on the other hand, are both decreeing and demonstrating positions which are diametrically opposed to human (and especially religious) rights as defined in the UN Declaration of Human Rights and other 20th century documents. Which is the real Islam?

Both of the above books give invaluable insight into Muslim sources documenting the position Islam has adopted from the days of Muhammad down to the present. From the Qur'an, the Hadith, positions of the four Islamic schools of jurisprudence, and contemporary interpretation and application of those positions both books demonstrate that the position of Islam has been consistent throughout all its history.

The Punishment of the Apostate gives access to the thinking of an influential Muslim writer. The original was published in Urdu in 1942. The present translation was done from the fourth edition, published in Pakistan in 1963. Abul Ala Mawdudi has written multiple books and articles explaining and analyzing Islam from a Muslim perspective. The translator describes him as "... one of the most influential religious thinkers of the Muslim World in the 20th century."