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B O O K R E V I E W S

William Campbell. Le Coran et la Bible à la lumière de l'histoire et de la science (The Qur'an and the Bible in the Light of History and Science). Editions Farel (B.P. 20, 77421 Marne-la-Vallee CEDEX 2, FRANCE), 1989. 328 pages. (In the US, may be obtained through this office. Review by the Editor)

Here is the book many have been waiting for, the answer to La Bible, le Coran et la science (The Bible, the Qur'an and Science) by Maurice Bucaille. Since its appearance in 1976, Bucaille's book has been translated into 8 languages, including English, and all over the world Muslims refer to it to support their claim that the Qur'an is scientifically and historically reliable--and the Bible is not. They like to point out that Bucaille is not even a Muslim! Like Bucaille, Dr. Campbell is a medical doctor. He writes out of a broad knowledge of Islam and many years of practical experience sharing Christ with Muslims. A review of it should have been published here earlier, but no one sent one to us. So here goes.

Personally, I do not hesitate to call this one of the best apologetic works addressed to Muslims you can find. Note that I say apologetic, not polemic. Some have called it a polemic, but strictly speaking that is not correct because it is not an attack on Islam per se. Rather, it is a defense of the Bible over against the baseless charges Muslims are continually raising against it, and those of Bucaille in particular. It is true that the author has occasion to deal with the authenticity of the Qur'an and similar matters, and to raise serious questions about them. He does so, however, not in an attacking way to "bring Islam crashing to the ground" as did the polemicists earlier in the century, but rather as a means of defusing fallacious Muslim charges against the Bible and Christian faith.

Campbell's apologetic approach is presuppositional; he examines his opponents' presuppositions to show the fallacies behind them. Two things that stand out are his disarming way of dialoguing with his readers and appealing to their sense of equanimity and truth, and his broad knowledge of how Muslims think and reason. His irenic, dispassionate spirit contrasts sharply with that of the polemicists. Interestingly, the book drew a favorable review in a Catholic journal specializing in Muslim/Christian dialogue.

The book is divided into six major sections of two or more chapters apiece--eighteen chapters in all. In Part I, to lay the groundwork for his defense of Scripture and his critique of Bucaille's approach, the author sets forth several linguistic presuppositions about the way we understand any kind of communication. He then calls attention to the presuppositions expressed by Dr. Bucaille in his attacks on

the Bible, which will come under his surgical knife in a later chapter. Part II studies the testimony of the Qur'an and the Hadith to the authenticity of our Bible, including the passages on tahrif or corruption. The ideas presented are not new, but this is undoubtedly the most complete and meticulous study of the subject to date.

In Part III, Campbell begins by an overview of the "Documentary Hypothesis" of the Pentateuch and of the "Form-Criticism" of the Gospels, theories on which Bucaille had based his rejection of the authenticity of the Bible. He goes to some length to show that if the "scientific results" of these higher critical theories of the Bible are valid, then they apply to the Qur'an as well--with the same results. There follows the most novel and interesting chapter of the whole book. In it Dr. Campbell summarizes approximately the first 170 years of the textual history of the Qur'an in parallel with that of the Bible; the idea is to show that the present text of the Bible is just as, if not more, trustworthy than that of the Qur'an.

Part IV focuses on the "scientific" side of Bucaille's attacks on the Bible. Here is where the groundwork laid in Part I begins to bear fruit. Campbell exposes the fallacies of Bucaille's so-called "scientific" interpretation of the Qur'an, and his dishonesty in his approach to the Bible. This is an excellent section for those interested in the problem of the interpretation of "scripture" in relation to modern science, whether for the Bible or for the Qur'an. Campbell examines a number of passages in both books and cuts through much of the specious arguments that Bucaille has put forward.

In Part V, Campbell examines the Biblical and Qur'anic understandings of how one can recognize an authentic revelation. Then, in Part VI, he applies his findings to the prophetic ministry of Muhammad, and finally to that of Jesus--an excellent presentation of the gospel message. It is here that he exposes the fallacies and dishonesty of Bucaille's argument that the Paraclete passages in John can only apply to Muhammad. There are so many things, which I cannot begin to summarize, which cannot help but cause Muslims to stop and reflect.

Dean S. Gilliland, Editor. The Word Among Us: Contextualizing Theology for Mission Today. Dallas: Word, Inc., 1989. 336 pages.

This is the second major study on contextualization to appear last year. The first, by Hesselgrave and Rommen, was reviewed in the issue before last (V/2) but we did not have enough space to include this one. The two have different emphases and complement each other. This one is a collection of articles written by faculty at the School of World Mission of Fuller Theological Seminary. As an anthology, it lacks the unity of the first, but its strengths tend to make up for the weaknesses of the first, and vice versa.

The book is divided into two parts. Part One contains six chapters dealing with the theological foundations of contextualization. In general, I found it to be the most substantive and interesting of the two (although that evaluation may reflect my personal interests