

BOOK REVIEWS

Answering Islam: The Crescent in the Light of the Cross, by Norman L. Geisler & Abdul Saleeb. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House [P.O. Box 6287, Grand Rapids, MI 49516-6287, USA], 1993. \$17.95 USD. Reviewer: A.J.Wiebe

Personally, I'm always on the lookout for a good book that deals with the fundamental issues that separate Christianity and Islam. From the brief notice I read, this book could just do that. So many other manuscripts are half-hearted attempts which simply skirt the hard questions altogether.

Well *Answering Islam* over-all is a very commendable effort. Sections of the book are superb, especially the first part which deals with the basic doctrines of Islam. The author obviously knows his subject and the Qur'an from the inside. I was please to see him present the philosophical under-pinnings, not merely the facts. He quotes a wide array of Muslim authorities in support of his analysis. The second part, an evaluation of Islamic Monotheism, Muhammad and the Qur'an, tends to be tedious and spotty. The third part, a Positive Defense of the Christian Perspective, is standard material. Here he brings forth answers to the four major Muslim objections to Christianity. One gets the impression of repetition the further one reads. Only occasionally do the authors break out into conceptual clarification; most of it is fact upon fact. I had the impression that the Christian position was written by someone who didn't really understand the thrust of Islam. Nevertheless, throughout there is a clear summary of the key Muslim beliefs that pose such a challenge to the messengers of the Gospel to Islam. The answers are well put.

Unfortunately there is very little illustrative material in the book. Added to the rather dense type-setting, you get the sense of working your way through a thicket of reeds where you only rarely see the sun. I was quite surprised that in their presentation there is no reference to the absence of the "second kingdom" in Islam. The Muslim mind and culture is in bondage to another gospel primarily because the source is entirely other. I think the arguments would be much clearer had that aspect been introduced. On the other hand, the Neo-platonic influence and its position on the absolute unity of God as the source of Islam's doctrine on Allah's inassailable oneness is well presented.

I should have liked the authors to add a final brief chapter on "Therefore".... No doubt they intend to invite the reader to draw his own conclusions, but at least a series of ten key questions would assist us in doing so.

Answering Islam brings to mind Pfander's book *The Balance of Truth*. Both are far-reaching overviews on the gulf that divides the Christian from the Muslim at the revelational and doctrinal level. This is where the battle lies. As a result of this reading my heart was warmed with deep appreciation for the Glorious Gospel that regenerates and liberates all who call on the Name of the Lord