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BOOK REVIEWS:

Living Religions of the World.

Living Religions of the World: A Socio-Political Study by Ahmed Abdullah al-Masdoosi Tr. by Zafar Ishaq Ansari, Published by Begum Aisha Bawany Wakf, Karachi, pp. 363+xi price: Rs. 15/-.

The contemporary international conflict has one again brought to the limelight the need for religion and the constructive role that it can play in setting the house of humanity in order. Dozens of books, dealing with the great religions of the world, are appearing in the western world. It is unfortunate that none of them honestly presents the viewpoint of the Muslims. Moreover emphasis is more on the theological side, and less on the socio-political aspects. Mr. Abdullah al-Masdoosi has tried to break some new ground by making comparative study of the socio-political aspects of the world religions. And what is more important, to the best of our knowledge this is the first book which surveys the panorama of world religions from the viewpoint of a Muslim.

The book begins with a chapter on "what is religion!" which is followed by the chapter dealing with the data about Muslim Population. The reviewer has found these chapters most instructive and enlightening. In his opinion they constitute the heart of the book. The following nine chapters deal with other important religions of the world viz: Paganism, Budhism, Taoism, Sikhism, Shintoism, Christianism, Confucianism, Hinduism and Judaism. The basic postulates and the economic-social strength of every religion has been stated in very clear terms. This discussion is followed by three concluding chapter’s viz. Islam and Christianity: points of concord and conflict, Rise and Fall of Colonialism and statistical survey.

The entire book is informative, thoughtful and thought- provoking. The standard of translation is superb.

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