questions of today’s men and women.

A point that some readers might wish to see further developed concerns one of the criteria of authenticity for non-Christian revelation, i.e., the criterion of the content of the message, which content would enable one to discern whether something claiming to be a revelation from God is really such. Even admitting that reading the Qur’ān may reveal a deep experience of God to the Christian, how can the reader be sure that the experience originates from the Qur’ān itself and not from some passage it reproduces in altered form from the Bible or from other Jewish or Christian sources? It is true that no text can be explained by its sources but only by the use it makes of them (p. 66), but here the sources themselves are not considered as explaining or interpreting the Qur’ān but as perhaps explaining the religious experience of the reader. Moreover, after saying (p. 64) that “the Qur’ān bears such unmistakable hallmarks” [of authenticity] it would help to sum up a few examples before going on to say, “We could add many other indices, like the refusal to ‘prove’ anything... when it can only affirm and proclaim what it has ‘seen’.”

Since there is question here of criteria, is refusal to provide something more than a subjective experience (not of course to insincere critics but to seekers in good faith) a justifiable attitude?

The book is almost completely free of typographical errors, but a few have crept in. Ibn Ḥazm’s death date should be 456/1064 instead of that given at the top of p. 79. Trismegistus is misspelled on p. 51 and in the index (p. 103). On p. 98, Ibn Rushd (Averroes) is said to be the grandfather of Averroes.

I asamochristiana, 1 (1975), a review often cited in this book, in its Liminaire (p. vi) speaks of two kinds of interreligious dialogue, one polite and compliant, the other systematic, vigorous, and demanding. It then goes on to say that the elite among Christians and Muslims must choose the second, even if it is harder and requires a long and methodical preparation, because in the last analysis, dialogue looks for truth, seeks after God, and brings about growth in mutual respect. This book is a good example of the second and should be read by anyone concerned with serious interfaith encounter.

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The author presents his book, not as a narrative history, but as an introduction to the basic concepts and problems of Islam. After a brief note on the
unity of his subject he reveals in Chapter Two the amazing phenomenon that is Islam. For this he cites from the *Prodigalnata* of Johann Reiske (d. 1774), one of the founders of Islamic studies:

A poor despised person such as Muhammed. . . . tamed a wild people . . . and educated them by . . . moral standards. He founded a religion which swept Christianity out of the east like a broom; . . . he established an empire which in half a century subjugated more provinces than the Roman empire [did] in three centuries and defeated two flourishing empires, the Byzantine and the Persian . . . — all this . . . did not happen without higher decree.

Chapter Two itself in fact is a special feature of the book, reviewing as it does the history of Islamic studies from their rise in Spain in the 1100's against the background of religious conflict, through their development for diplomatic and commercial use in the 1500's to the rise of orientalism in the late 1700's. The critical analyses of the early Arab historians, made in Europe in the nineteenth century, opened the way to the establishment of Islamics as a field of scholarly research and its emergence as a recognized discipline in Europe and America from the end of the nineteenth century until the present.

The concise summary presented in the rest of the book views Islam both as a religion and civilization and also as a social and economic system. Two chapters give a rapid survey of fourteen centuries of Islamic history by region and period. An appendix deals with the languages of Muslim peoples, their names and titles, and their calendar. This is followed by a chronological table running from the fourth century of the Christian era until 1979 and a fifty-three page bibliography on the topics treated in each chapter.

The author has accomplished a masterly task in condensing so much material into so short a compass. To make the book more useful as an introduction, the bibliography might have been more fully annotated, at least by the use of symbols, to point out works considered most important. The index needs much amplification and should also include the names of all authors mentioned in the bibliography as well as all foreign words and technical terms used throughout.

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