

Love : The Issue

by Charles Burnell Olds

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When as a youth in his late twenties this reviewer moved to Okayama City in the fall of 1963, ten years was to elapse before the experiment in interfaith fellowship described in Chapter I, "Beginning the Quest," of this volume was to be undertaken, so nothing was known of this emerging interest. When, however, the Laymen's Foreign Missionary Inquiry published its report, *Rethinking Missions*, Dr. Olds' work was noted and commended. In a footnote on page 31 of that volume he is quoted as saying; "For after all, we are brothers in a common quest, and the first step is to re-

cognized it, and disarm ourselves from prejudices."

Love: The Issue is mainly an exposition of the Christian faith of a man with a heart big enough to include the whole world, not by a process of envelopment and conquest, but by his faith that "the religion which Jesus taught was, above all other religions, the religion of love, the sum of the duties which it imposes is that we love as he himself loved." (p. 197) He also calls it the "religion of infinite concern." (p. 70)

His approach was a very disarm-

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ing one. "One thing I learned from my venture with Buddhist and Shinto priests was that, if ever we have hope of developing in them a right attitude of mind toward the larger truth of religion, we must have the same attitude of mind ourselves and meet them as equals. Then we can give our best and they can give theirs, and the result will be as salutary for us as for them. But if we assume the attitude . . . that we have after all nothing to learn from other cultures and faiths, then we may expect to find the way not only closed to a far-reaching influence among them, but may experience a gradual dwarfing of our own spiritual natures that will end in spiritual atrophy and death.

"And of one other thing also I became convinced, that to keep my mind and heart open to the winds of heaven for such inspiration as may come from men belonging to faiths different from my own may make me less of a propagandist within the limits of my own sect, but more of a follower of him who made it his aim to establish the

reign of love within the hearts of all men." (pp. 46—47)

Chapter One tells of how the author organized in Okayama a group of religious leaders representing several different faiths. In Chapter Two, "The Blazed Trail," he deals with the thoughts of great world religious leaders of the past. Then, in the remaining chapters of Part I he discusses: "The Cosmic Purpose and Process," "Life, the Channel of the Process," "Spiritual Law and the Natural World," "God Striving within Man," "When Man Fights God," "War," and "The Way Out." Finally, in Part II, "The Religion of Jesus," the author gives an exposition of his own deep Christian faith.

Readers may not always agree either with Dr. Old's interpretation of ancient writings or with his attitude toward the non-Christian faiths, but no one can read the book thoughtfully without catching in some degree the outgoing spirit of the author, and his sincere desire for better understanding. W.P.W.