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## BOOK REVIEW

**Sebastian Brock, Studies in Syriac Spirituality, revised, enlarged and updated edition, Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 2008, pages XII + 273, ISBN 81-89958-17-8.**

The first edition of this book, with a limited number of articles, was published in Pune, India, as volume 13 of 'The Syriac Church Series' in 1988. This revised and enlarged edition is published by Dharmaram Publications for the Centre for Eastern and Indian Christian Studies (CEICS) at Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram (DVK). The present edition has 16 articles with an index of Biblical references, index of Syriac translations and select general index. Prof. Dr. Sebastian Brock is a world famous Syriac scholar and a luminary in the field of Syriac studies. He spares no pains to unearth the treasures of the Syriac tradition for the scholars of the world. His whole life is a tapasya to make known the Syriac tradition to the world.

This book is an attempt to re-examine the foundational and radical elements of Christianity in the context of the modern world to suit to its requirements. The main thrust of the present work is to highlight the richness of the spirituality and theology of the Syriac Christian literature and make available to the public translations of some of the original texts. All through the articles the author stresses the importance of the relevance of the Syriac tradition in theologizing in the modern context. The book also aims at throwing before the readers the challenge of going to the roots of East Christian tradition in evolving a comprehensive Christian theology.

The theological contribution of the poet-theologian St. Ephrem the Syrian form the topics of discussion of some of the articles. The author says that the aim of theologizing is to cultivate an attitude of praise and wonder that allows the Holy Spirit to bring about in each one of us the Kingdom of God. 'The Prayer of the Heart in Syriac Tradition'

in two parts, 'Mary and the Eucharist', and 'The Priesthood of the Baptized,' are some of the other topics of the articles. The contributions of Jacob of Serugh and Isaac of Nineveh to the East Syriac spirituality and theology are also dealt with in a scholarly way. This book also provides a taste for Eastern theology as some articles deal with the special traits of Eastern theology. The article entitled 'Humanity and the Natural World in the Syriac Tradition' is an original contribution on the part of the author in the process of developing an eco-theology and spirituality.

As the author himself says in the preface, the Syriac Orient is of great significance for us for two reasons: i. 'Syriac Christianity is rooted in the Semitic world out of which the Bible and Christianity sprang. The imagery and thought patterns used by the early Syriac writers have their roots in the cultural milieu of the biblical scholars; ii. Syriac Christianity represents a Christian tradition which has been Asian from its very beginning, i.e., unwesternised Christianity. Thus Syriac Christianity is the most important witness to an indigenous Asian Christian tradition. It offers a vision which is at the same time profound, fresh and exciting.'

The present work is an essential source book to those who are engaged in developing an Indian Christian spirituality. The healthy blending of Indian and Eastern genius is essential to evolve a profound Indian Christian way of life. The efforts of Prof. Sebastian Brock will go a long way in this direction. I wish and pray that our Indian theologians go to the roots of Christian spirituality. The articles in the book will provide sufficient material in this field. I wish a wider readership to the book and offer my best wishes to the author.

**Francis Thonippara, CMI**