Clarion Review

Religion

The Holiest Lie Ever: Glorified by Myths, Mysticism, Symbolism, Rituals and Traditions
Alexander Smith
Trafford Publishing
978-1-4669-4582-1
Three Stars (out of Five)

Since the publication of Joseph Campbell's *The Power of Myth*, countless books have capitalized on the popularity of psychological interpretation of religious doctrine. Targeting the freethinking intellectual and the cynic recoiling from dogmatic practice, Alexander Smith's *The Holiest Lie Ever* makes a soul-enlightening presentation of what he believes is the distortion evident in so-called holy documents, especially the Bible.

Thought provoking and genuinely fascinating in places, this carefully constructed work explores what the author views as the many deceptive facets of organized religion. Smith evaluates everything from the structure of the church to the concept of God. In twenty-four chapters, strong arguments are presented against sacred tradition and mindless ritual. Factual evidence is laid side by side with accepted doctrine, presenting a grounded, commonsense view of what Smith interprets as veiled lies.

Although the book is a worthwhile endeavor and an educated take on what the author believes are archaic beliefs, a choppy delivery combined with a tendency to overuse hypothetical questions reduces the book's impact. Immersion in series after series of ask-yourself questions is tiresome. This hard-hitting, repetitive style covers issues that could have been stated rather than asked; it does not enhance the quality of his argument.

Smith demands that readers examine their beliefs: "Have you become so blinded and your mind clouded by your religion that you cannot understand the true reality? Have myths, traditions, rituals, habits, and symbolism become so integrated in your actual existence that all other truths do not make sense to you?"

Powerful and articulate, *The Holiest Lie Ever* is not the diatribe of an atheist. Smith reiterates his faith in a higher power, only without the accoutrements associated with specific organizational embellishment. "Our endeavor is to strive against the evil powers of the light,

those that are perceived as angels that display great wonders. Those individuals and institutions who continue to feed you with maliciously concocted dreams of golden streets, empty promises of kingship and priesthood after the grave; they must be toppled and eradicated."

A native of South Africa, Smith is a former minister from a strict Christian background. *The Holiest Lie Ever* is his debut as a writer.

Filled with detailed comparisons, charts, and lists, this informative text provides the essentials required to develop an academic basis for well-rounded, fact-based spiritual advancement, although it does not provide a bibliography. *The Holiest Lie Ever* will attract an audience of nonbelievers who have never stopped believing in a loving God.

Julia Ann Charpentier