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Editorial

Religious Quotations

IN the minds of many William Neil, who is Warden of Hugh Stewart Hall and Reader in Biblical Studies in Nottingham University, is associated with his fellow Scots A. M. Hunter and William Barclay as a great communicator in semi-popular style of the work of the 'Biblical Theology Movement'. Now he has provided something which will be of considerable interest and use in a somewhat wider field in compiling a *Concise Dictionary of Religious Quotations* (Mowbrays, 214 pp., £4.50). It consists of some 2,500 entries. To make such a choice is of course a risky business. No one can possibly be satisfied! He has used the NEB as the Biblical translation from which he selects all his biblical quotations. This must have been a difficult decision to make. The AV remains the most memorable of the translations into English, but it now falls short of modern versions in accuracy. Some of the more striking modern versions may have been too ephemeral, yet the NEB does not by any means entirely rise to the role of a version to be quoted. For example NEB's 'You think it will not take much to win me over and make a Christian of me' is a more accurate but much less memorable rendering than AV's 'Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian'. Perhaps the RSV might have been better, with its clearer links with the Tyndale-Coverdale, AV, RV, tradition, but again it is far from ideal. So NEB it is, and we shall have to see how it weathers as a source for quotations. The book is not of course intended to take the place of even an abbreviated Bible concordance.

Though Dr. Neil is a Presbyterian, he is still well-versed in the Book of Common Prayer, from which he produces nearly fifty quotations. The rest come from a remarkable variety of sources, Christian, other religious and irreligious. Amongst those most quoted are Augustine, Bonhoeffer, Cowper, Donne, Forsyth, Samuel Johnson, Studdert Kennedy, Kierkegaard, Luther (but none from Calvin!), Shakespeare,

Temple, Tennyson, Thomas à Kempis, Thomas Aquinas, Watts and Charles Wesley. The names of some of the authors will indicate that there are a good number of hymns which are chosen. On occasion he does not give the title of the work from which a quotation comes and in a second edition perhaps dates could be provided for the authors. It is one man's choice, but the choice of a wise and well-read man and many others will benefit from it. As William Barclay says in his commendation of it, 'its unique quality is that at one and the same time it suits the desk, armchair and the bedside'. It would make an admirable present.

The Church of England Year Book

The Church of England Year Book (CIO, 428 pp., £3.00) has now become an indispensable part of the ecclesiastical scene in England and it is good to welcome the 1975 edition. Those who believe that reference books should be particularly careful about the way in which they set out information will be irritated by the number of inconsistencies of presentation that there are, as well as the inevitable misprints. No doubt standard information is very hard to come by when one is dealing with clergy, but a little greater uniformity would be welcome in future. The *Year Book* now goes in for an anonymous preface which, while lacking the weight of the preface to *Crockford*, has some important points to make within its brief compass. The only one which has caught public attention is its sigh for a dash of vulgarity on the Bench of Bishops, though the particular purpose of this wish is not precisely explained.

News of Liturgy

THIS is the title of the monthly eight-page leaflet which has started publication this year and has already proved its value in keeping up to date with the rapidly changing scene in the liturgical field. It is edited by Colin Buchanan and published by Grove Books, Bramcote, Nottingham. Meanwhile the monthly flow of Grove Booklets continues with the latest titles being *Inaugural Services* by Colin Buchanan, *Knowing God through the Liturgy* by Peter Toon and *Modern Roman Catholic Worship: The Mass* by Nicholas Sagovsky. All are 24 pages long and cost 25 pence. In addition a new series of *Grove Liturgical Studies* has been started to deal with liturgical issues at a more technical level.

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printer or proofreader must have been dead or at least sleeping as eight of the pages are blank. In *The 'Secret' Gospel of Mark* (Athlone Press, 20 pp., £0.45), F. F. Bruce's Ethel M. Wood lecture is printed and in it he refutes the theory of Professor Morton Smith that Jesus gave esoteric teaching which involved literature and gnostic ideas. Mark Green, Bishop of Aston, in *Diary of Doubt and Faith* (CIO, 48 pp., £0.15) writes with compelling honesty of the way in which as a parish priest he reacted to the various situations of his ministry.

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Other Literature

Hodder and Stoughton have produced a paperback edition of *Built as a City* (480 pp., £1.00) by David Sheppard, Bishop of Woolwich and soon to become Bishop of Liverpool. It has already received a warm commendation in our pages (July-September, 1974) and we are glad that it will now have wider usefulness in helping all those who are wrestling with the daunting problems of urban church life all over the world. *Christianity on Trial* is the title of a trilogy by Colin Chapman of which the third volume has recently appeared (Lion Publishing, 128 pp., £1.10). This is a well produced and illustrated attempt to take honest enquirers through the evidence for Christianity, dealing with the different possible explanations for the facts. If intelligently used it could be a first-rate way of introducing people to a deeper knowledge of the Christian faith and might even be suitable for teaching theological students at a certain level.

100 Great Lives edited by John Canning (Souvenir Press, 768 pp., £3.95) includes the lives of More, Erasmus, Luther, Bunyan, Wilberforce, Jeanne d'Arc, Elizabeth Fry and Cromwell. It will be of considerable use to young people even if the author does not really understand Luther!

R.E.N.