

Book Notes

If Christian theology is to find a fresh start many more Christians (seminarians especially) must have at least some first-hand knowledge of the men who gave Christian theology its distinctive and lasting shape. But how? Potted histories of doctrine have done untold damage, yet how many of us are fit to plunge naked into the patristic ocean? *Documents in Early Christian Thought* (Cambridge, £7.50), edited by Maurice Wiles and Mark Santer, tries to meet the non-expert's need. Perhaps closest to it is Henry Bettenson's selection from the Fathers (OUP, 2-vol. set now £2.20 paper). However, Wiles and Santer have not aimed to produce a comprehensive compendium of classical snippets, but a 1-vol. anthology of topically-arranged texts sufficiently long and varied to enable us (if armed with one or two standard works) to begin to enter the thought-processes of the Fathers and hear them speaking. Their book does this limited yet difficult job well. As these writings are grouped rather arbitrarily under 'modern' categories fuller cross-referencing and an index would have been welcome, but the selection itself—in vigorous new translations—is extremely interesting. What is wrong is the silly price. If this is a student's book, why is it not in paperback?

See Rob van der Hart in NB Aug. 1970 on the methodology of John S. Mbiti, whose thoroughly-researched *Concepts of God in Africa* is now in paper (SPCK, £3.50). The latest TEF Study Guide, David A Brown's *A Guide to Religions* (SPCK, £2.95; £1.50 in 3rd world), is not (note!) a cool treatise in comparative religion, but it does meet the specifications of this well-planned series for trainees for a third-world Christian ministry. Quite different is Robin Minney's able portrayal of the multi-form phenomenon of religion, approached from both the socio-anthropological and the psychological angles. *Of Many Mouths and Eyes* (Hodder & Stoughton, £3.75). Full of concrete illustrations and raising quite a lot of interesting questions, it should be found

helpful background reading by those teaching on world religions at secondary school level.

Collins are publishing commentaries to accompany *Good News for Modern Man*. In addition to David Edwards's introductory book on the historical Jesus, *Jesus for Modern Man* (50p), there have now appeared Robert Crotty's *Good News in Mark* (45p) and companion volumes on Luke (40p), John (35p), Acts (35p), Romans (35p) and Galatians (40p) by Wilf Wilkinson, Douglas Webster, David Edwards, Joseph Rhymer and John Davies respectively, and David Read's *Good News in Letters of Paul* (55p), which introduces Thessalonians and the pastoral epistles. Lucidly written, they are very suitable for use with church discussion groups.

A commercially successful genre of religious book normally by-passed by NB basically consists of pop psychology laced with a dash of Christianity. Belonging to this genre but far more authentically Christ-centred than most is Rosemary Haughton's *The Liberated Heart* (Chapman, £3.75). What is it, she asks, makes the great saints different from 'those other God-people, the heavenly thumb suckers and holy inquisitors' whom most of us more nearly correspond to? She tries to give an answer, using certain principles of transactional analysis which point to the ways we too (by the destruction of early-acquired growth-denying psychological roles) can advance towards spiritual liberation. Maybe the formula is too facile, but reading this author is never a waste of time. Speaking of great saints, *St Thérèse of Lisieux: by those who knew her* (Veritas, Dublin, £2.50) should especially hearten religious (but not only religious) in these tumultuous times, for these fascinating testimonies from the beatification process, edited by Christopher O'Mahoney, reveal that Thérèse grew in holiness in a Carmel only too clearly 'in considerable chaos' (p. 231).

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