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Meditations From Africa

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INSTRUMENT OF THY PEACE. By Alan Paton. Seabury \$3.50.

By E. C. KIESSLING

THIS BOOK might have been written by the late C. S. Lewis. The mantle of that influential Christian layman seems to have fallen upon Alan Paton, best known for his novel of Negro life and travail in South Africa, "Cry, the Beloved Country."

In his short new work, published in time for the Lenten market, he appears in the role of evangelist. The life of St. Francis is his immediate inspiration, and the saint's famous prayer, beginning with the words "Lord, make me the instrument of Thy peace," furnishes the texts for most of the 21 meditations of the book.

His comments are addressed to "those who with all their hearts wish to be better . . . who know that being cold in love is perhaps the worst sin . . . who seek not so much to lean upon God as to be active (in His service) . . . who are inclined to withdraw rather than participate and to keep their love and pity for themselves.

Again and again he re-

turns to what he considers the "overwhelming question." It is expressed in the closing petition of each of the original prayers which he appends to his sermonettes: "Lord, may I this coming day be able to do some work of peace for Thee."

In a sense Paton's task is more difficult than that of St. Francis. Whereas the latter spoke in an age of faith, Paton must speak in a time of "indecisions" and "revisions." He performs this task with modesty and understanding.

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