

Proposed Book Reviews 9/68 P(11)1/2/63

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INSTRUMENT OF THY PEACE. Alan Paton.
Seabury, 1968. 124pp. Cloth \$3.50. This
book is a series of meditations on the great
prayer of St. Francis of Assisi, "Lord, Make Me an
Instrument of Thy Peace..." The author says in his
prologue that his intention is not to hold up the life of St.
Francis "as an example of how life must be lived, but as
an example of the way in which we all may aspire to be,
in spite of our manifold weaknesses, instruments of God's
peace."

The author is very honest about himself as a searching
Christian and occasionally dares to interpret a passage of
Scripture in the non-traditional manner. The high-lights
of the book are the original prayers with which he concludes
almost every chapter, frequently using the sentence "And
may I this coming day be able to do some work of peace for
Thee."

The author includes many quotes from St. Francis and
other writers, including the Bible, thus enriching its value
as a book for meditation.

Paton devotes one or more chapters to each part of the
prayer of St. Francis. However, the greatest attention is
given to the phrase "Where there is despair let me bring
hope." Eight chapters develop the Christian response to
a world in need, in despair. He faces anxiety and fear
head on. He sees the Christian and the church as acting
out the message of Christ's love in the world. He says
God's cause has something to do with caring for others.
"If we do not care for or about others, then no amount of
church going, no number of observances, no amount of money
given, no amount of believing (italics his), will give us
any cause worth working for." This section of the book is
most stimulating.

The concluding chapter sounds a clear note of the inseparability of freedom and obedience: "Why did Jesus hold spellbound those who listened to him?... He showed them a new thing--that obedience and freedom are inseparable."

Readers will be stimulated, perhaps irritated by this book. They will also be challenged to think through their own response to a world in despair.

-Keith Esch