

PC11/10/2/84

Diocese of Kentucky

MARCH 68
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Book Shelf

Instrument Of Thy Peace

By Alan Paton
The Seabury Press \$3.50

Editor's Note: Following is a review of the choice of the Seabury Press of its Lenten book for 1968.

Instrument of Thy Peace has been shaped principally by two outstanding Christian minds, one of our own time and one of the Middle ages. The two have come together in a productive encounter.

The mind of our own time is, of course, that of the author, Alan Paton, known for many years on account of his devotion to the cause of justice and reconciliation, and especially for his work and witness in the troubled land of South Africa. In this book he lets us share in the faith by which he has lived, making plain both its inward springs and its outgoing direction.

Asked To Join In Prayer

The medieval mind which has so strongly imprinted itself on these meditations is that of St. Francis of Assisi. We are not indeed asked to take the utter devotion of St. Francis as our model, in his embracing of poverty or his seeking or suffering.

But we are asked to try seriously and honestly to join in a great prayer of St. Francis, and to think how this prayer can be set to work in our lives.

The prayer is a simple one, yet so profound and comprehensive: "Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace."

Unfolds Rich Content

The book is a commentary on this prayer, an unfolding of its rich content and an application of it to the conditions of our life in today's world. Souls are made whole, we are told, to the extent that they become instruments of God and themselves receive a share in the divine love and creativity.

There is a sentence that recurs throughout the book, and that expresses its whole meaning and pur-

pose: "And may we this coming day be able to do some work of peace for Thee."

This Lenten book is entirely free of that unreal and sentimental religiosity that has so often marred such books of devotion.

But it is equally free from the brashness and shallowness that have come to be associated with many of the advocates of a "secular" Christianity. Alan Paton achieves the truly Christian dialectic of teaching us to care for the world in the light of God.