
Thomas Merton

THOMAS MERTON ON PRAYER

Compiled and edited with an Introduction by Tony Castle
 Christian Spirituality Series
 London: Marshall Pickering, 1989
 9 pages — £1.50 paperback

Thomas Merton

THE SHINING WILDERNESS:

Daily Readings with Thomas Merton

Edited by Aileen Taylor with an Introduction by Monica Furlong
 London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1988
 xvi, 62 pages — £2.50 paperback

Reviewed by **A. M. Allchin**

Thomas Merton is not all that well known in England, at least to judge from the story with which Tony Castle introduces his little booklet. A Salvation Army officer giving an address in a Catholic girls school during the week of prayer for Christian unity, compliments the pupils with the words: "How fortunate you Catholics are to have the wonderful writings of Thomas Merton," only to discover that none of the girls had ever heard of Thomas Merton. It looks, however, as though there is at present a revival of interest in his work, particularly among Anglicans. Tony Castle's little book is one sign of it, and he manages to pack a good deal of Merton's teaching on prayer into its pages. *The Shining Wilderness* is also a little book, but it has a more substantial feel to it. The sixty passages from Merton's writings which it contains have been skillfully chosen by Aileen Taylor, former warden of the Retreat House at Pleshey in Essex, made famous sixty years ago by the retreats of Evelyn Underhill. Monica Furlong contributes a vigorous and characteristic introduction, making of the book an admirable introduction to Merton's writings.

More recently other and larger studies of Merton have begun to appear on this side of the Atlantic. Terry Tastard devotes a chapter to Merton's work in his recent book, *Spark in the Soul*, a study of the interrela-

tionship of spirituality and social justice (Darton, Longman & Todd, 1989). Brother Ramon, an Anglican Franciscan, has produced a very personal account of Merton's development in his book, *Soul Friends: A Journey with Thomas Merton* (Marshall Pickering, 1989). As the destructive efforts of ten years of Thatcher government become clearer and clearer in British society, so the social teaching of Merton becomes more and more relevant to our situation. We need his voice now more than ever.

Thomas Merton
THE MERTON TAPES
Second Release of Lectures

Kansas City, Missouri: Credence Cassettes, 1988 & 1989
Thirty cassette tapes [Sixty minutes each] — \$7.95 each

Reviewed by **Dewey Weiss Kramer**

The goal of all Christian formation is to become formed in the image of God. Of all human institutions, the monasteries, especially contemplative ones, see as their *raison d'être* the creation of an environment and program which makes this goal possible. The monk has but one "work," to seek God alone. Thus the practices of monastic formation can be expected to help all serious Christians in their attempt to image Christ, and methods used in the monastery can be expected to work for non-monastic Christians as well.

This is particularly the case when the director of such monastic formation is one of the era's most gifted spiritual teachers, Thomas Merton, a writer whose published works, while intended primarily for non-monastics, were the fruit of his monastic experience. Thus, it is no surprise that the two series (now made available to the general public by Credence Cassettes) of Merton's lectures to the novices at Gethsemani during the 1960s have enjoyed tremendous success. This second group of tapes brings the number of tapes released in unedited versions to forty-nine. Used judiciously, and most effectively in groups of lectures wherein relationships