

There was only one small point which bothered me. In the Acknowledgements there is a word of thanks to a lady for re-typing the many drafts - strange it was not done on a Word Processor!

Elizabeth H Mackenzie

Leith

REVIEWS

Jean Holl, Alone With God, Triangle, 147 pp, pbk, £2.25

A very comprehensive devotional 'grammar book', ALONE WITH GOD has something to teach Christians at all stages. It may have been written by a woman for women, but many men would also benefit from reading it (if they can cope with the pink cover!). Different chapters deal with a wide range of different topics, from the practical tools required through a theological understanding of the persons of the Trinity to be worshipped, to a collection of useful suggestions on ways of worship, involving all of us - body, mind and spirit - and how to cope with hindrances. Most of the ideas have turned up in other places, but it is good to have them presented together, even when some are mentioned only briefly.

Although the book is about how and where and when, to make the best use of the time we spend alone with God, Mrs Holl at no time emphasises an individualist Christianity, but rather seeks to build up Christians to be more useful and worshipful members of the Body of Christ. The authoress speaks of the Gifts of the Spirit freely and openly. Although much of the material is very personal, the style in which the book is written is so frank and friendly (it did develop from after-dinner conversation) that it could easily lead on to discussion and sharing with others.

For a very new beginner, it might be helpful to read it a chapter at a time along with a tutor or in a nurture group, making full use of the 'practical suggestions'. Above all I am sure this book is not meant simply to be read, but to be used.

Stuart and Mary Blanch (Ed), Learning of God: Readings of Amy Carmichael, Triangle, 135 pp, pbk, £1.95

In his introduction, Stuart Blanch, former Archbishop of York, gives the credit for this anthology to his wife who has known the influence of Amy Carmichael's writing since the Second World War Years, and who suggested he visit Dohnavur while he was in India with the RAF. While there for a month, he had only one brief meeting with Miss Carmichael but was very aware of the way in which her thoughts and teaching and personality permeated the total life of the community there. She may have worked in secret and never made newspaper headlines, but the value and effectiveness of her life's mission to children in danger of being abused in Hindu temple worship are evident in the continuing Fellowship and its life and mission today. She simply shared what she was 'learning of God', and her whole life and work was a showing forth of God's love in action.

She writes of her disappointment when, after her serious accident in 1931, she was longing for 'a good story' to take her out of herself and the parcel which arrive contained tracts for the sick - written, she detected, by the "well to the ill, to do them good". She realised then how the writings of "those who had passed through pain to peace" had a richness and depth of understanding which was so much more helpful. And that is what shines out from her own writings.

This book is particularly helpful because of the brief biographical details and autobiographical passages which set the background. We can understand how through her struggles against principalities and powers, her own character was forged. These little gems of thoughts and experiences in either beautiful poetry or prose have been published before, but here they are put in context. And although her roots originally grew in the soil of Presbyterianism in Northern Ireland, these writings freely cross all denominational boundaries.

Few will be able to sit down and read this book from cover to cover without stopping to ponder over some of the treasures, and most of us will be compelled to return to it again and again to savour particular passages and 'learn of God'.

Margaret E Stein
Carberry