

with manuscripts of the Fathers and other writers. This is quite contrary to the spirit of *The Imitation*, for we all know how lightly Thomas à Kempis esteemed human wisdom and learning.

But, as I said before, here is a problem for the scholar-specialist. It may be he already knows this book with its claim for Gerard Groote, and in that case he must pardon this writer's presumption.

If, on the other hand, the book has been overlooked, you might, Sir, consider bringing it before your readers; and no doubt within your Oxford or Paris circle you could find someone competent to make a comparison between the two men and, at the same time, deal with this latest claimant to the authorship of *The Imitation*.

Yours sincerely,

JOHN SEARLE.

REVIEWS

PARDON AND PEACE. By Alfred Wilson, C.P. (Sheed & Ward; 10s. 6d.)

A practical study of the sacrament of Penance, breezily written. Some points emphasised are the distinction of necessary and unnecessary matter; the primary importance of contrition; the danger of 'piety' falsifying one's judgment on self; the unhealthiness of a 'safety first' attitude in the matter of doubtful sins. The belief—inculcated in Catholic schools?—that conscience is a still, small voice, is attacked roundly as leading ultimately to moral judgment which is subjective in a bad sense. 'Disastrous misconceptions of conscience have arisen because it is often confused with fuss, feeling, fuddle and fif. . . . Fuddle about conscience leaves the door wide open to obstinacy, intuition, scruples and fif (by fif is meant a tendency to substitute emotional intuition for reason) (p. 105). . . . Beware of the voice, special faculty theory of conscience' (p. 117); quotations which give a sample of the style. In fact all the bad misconceptions of untutored devotion are opposed by a moral sanity based on theological conceptions of God, sin and the sacrament. But Fr Wilson is limited by the need he feels to attack an unhealthy mentality. When he speaks of the 'centre of gravity', of God in whom thought and desire should converge, he admits that the problem is not one of correcting isolated errors of moral judgment but of a total religious education in which, so far as moral judgment in particular is concerned, an adequate doctrine of the virtue of prudence and of natural and supernatural human action must play a leading part.

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