

One does not look for completeness in Masure—he dislikes system, and the illusory *idées claires* of the text-book—and there are several matters still requiring definition. Mgr H. F. Davis in the *Downside Review* (Winter 1948-49) acutely observed that Masure had not set out with all the clarity desirable the respective functions of the Church and the priest in offering the Mass, and though Masure in *Le Sacrifice* makes clearer exactly what the Church brings to the sacrifice, he does not throw any further light on the question. In fact, now after more than twenty years of constructive discussion, it is time someone undertook the vast task of setting out the whole theology of the Mass and the Mystical Body. There are innumerable references and assertions in modern books on the subject, many of us are constantly talking about it, and indeed think we know what we mean, but much remains vague. It was one of Père de la Taille's great merits to bring the whole matter of the Mass back to its classical context, and it remains for someone now to complete his task.

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## REVIEWS

**MARRIAGE. A GREAT SACRAMENT.** By Canon Jacques Leclercq. Translated by the Earl of Wicklow. (Clonmore and Reynolds; 8s. 6d.)

*Le mariage chrétien*, of which this volume is a translation, has already been introduced to LIFE OF THE SPIRIT readers in an earlier number. It would be superfluous to repeat a description of the book's merits. Taking all this for granted, let us venture the following observations in the hope that they may prove of some use in discussing this very delicate subject.

Canon Leclercq says that men in our climate only attain maturity at the age of twenty or even later (p. 22). This may prove to be untrue if the investigations made in Germany are confirmed, which suggest that there has been a biological change in recent years, and that young people are maturing two or even three years earlier. If the German investigations prove correct then this change is obviously going to demand the most drastic revision of our present curriculum of education. It would be simply fantastic, for instance, to impose the strain of important examinations upon a youngster who is already living through a most critical period of physical and mental development. There is plenty of evidence that this is happening.

A similar revision of education seems to be necessary 'in some educational establishments in which formation in purity holds (such) a prominent place in their system (that) the very word love is banned'. (p. 48.) Or perhaps it is rather our language which needs revision, for it can only be a horrid fear of ambiguity which leads Canon Leclercq to say: 'Man needs love. The Church is not so simple as to believe that men can be induced to deprive themselves of love, apart from the small numbers of those who deliberately renounce it in order to consecrate themselves to God'. (p. 41.) This sounds rather like carrying coals to Newcastle!

Another question of presentation: why does the author not favour us with a few stories and anecdotes (of which he must have a vast store, since no one could talk so much sense as he does on this subject without a wealth of experience to draw upon)? This is not a minor matter if the young people for whom the book is intended are going to read it, because they soon become bored with a philosophical treatise. Our spiritual guides need to acquire the habit of telling stories; we remember stories at moments when principles seem to belong to an unreal world of remote abstractions.

Finally, at the very end of his book Canon Leclercq makes a suggestion which we should like him to expand. He says that the opposition between Christians and the world has nowadays become so acute as to make it almost necessary for Christian households to form themselves into groups so as to make a social *milieu* inspired by the Christian ideal (p. 171). It is a sad comment on the human condition, and its division even from the natural law, if the vocation of marriage has become the vocation to solitude.

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A TREATISE ON INTERIOR PRAYER: FOLLOWED BY A FEW COUNSELS ON THE SAME MATTER. By Dom Innocent Le Masson. Translated from the French by the Prior of Parkminster. (The Paternoster Series, No. 8: London, Burns Oates; 1s.)

It is not easy to review this booklet in a satisfactory manner. The title, *A Treatise on Interior Prayer*, and the fact that the author was a Carthusian monk arouses a sympathy and expectation which are not altogether fulfilled. In itself, the treatise is full of excellent and useful matter; it sets forth the true nature of interior prayer (in the wide sense) and insists on its simplicity—in order, says the author, to remove the fears of those who 'believe that it [interior prayer] is only possible for those who have retired into solitude'. (p. 7.) But he declares that 'there is nothing so easy as prayer, nothing so possible for all kinds of