

REVIEWS

THEOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY

THE EUCHARISTIC SACRIFICE. A Conspectus of Modern Catholic Thought on the Essence of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. By Rev. E. F. Dowd, A.M., S.T.L. (The Catholic University of America.)

This thesis for the doctorate in Theology is a pains-taking and deserving work. If we also call it modern we do so with no sense of finality whether in praise or suspended judgment.

The long list, not just of writers, but of theories forming the greater part of the book must have meant such patient research into the opinions men had held, that the writer of the book could hardly have spared time for thinking what theory ought to be held.

If our Catholic Universities are not careful to put first things first theology as actually taught will have to be defined as "the unvarnished and copiously documented account of doctrines that are—wrong!" It is surely not scholarship, though it may be patience, first of all to recognise that 2 and 2 are four, and then to spend much of our all too short life-time investigating opposite opinions; whose name is legion. Sanity which still claims a place in scholarship, would suggest that if 2 and 2 are four, all other opinions are wrong.

In the present matter we sometimes wonder whether counsel is not somewhat darkened by the usual form of the question "What is the Essence of the Eucharistic Sacrifice?"

It is inadequate and at least psychologically misleading to look on the Holy Eucharist as *a* Sacrifice. The Holy Eucharist is *the* Sacrifice of Calvary. The Council of Trent tells us that the Holy Eucharist as a Sacrifice, i.e., the Sacrifice of the Mass, differs from the Sacrifice of Calvary "solo modo offerendi" only by its mode of being offered. The Sacrifice was offered in a bloody manner on the Cross. The same sacrifice is offered in an unbloody manner on the Altar. The difference between the Cross-Sacrifice and the Altar-Sacrifice is only modal; like the difference between water cold and water hot.

Here again we sometimes wonder whether theologians have grasped the implications of a mere modal distinction.

It is evident that "coldness" and "heat" are at least specifically different. It follows that we may enquire into the essence of each of these two specifically different qualities.

On the other hand cold water and hot water are not specifically

(or substantially) different; but only accidentally different. Hence the question, "What is the essence of hot water?" does not arise. If inaccurately asked such a question could mean only one of two things:—1st, "What is the essence of water?" or "What is the difference between cold water and warm water?"

On the authority of the Council of Trent we are told that the difference between the Cross and the Mass is only a modal difference; inasmuch as on the Cross the offering was bloody and on the Altar the offering is unbloody.

Now as "heat" and "cold" differ specifically so do "bloody" and "unbloody" differ specifically. But as the substance hot differs only accidentally and not specifically from the substance cold, so too the Sacrifice in its bloody mode differs only accidentally and not specifically from the Sacrifice in its unbloody mode.

Hence the question: "What is the essence of the Eucharistic Sacrifice?" does not arise. If it is inaccurately asked it can mean only one of two questions: first, What is the essence of Our Saviour's redemptive Sacrifice; or secondly, What is the difference in mode, the accidental difference, between the offering on the Cross and the offering on the Altar?

Hence as there is only *one* Sacrifice there is only one essence. And of this one Sacrifice with its one essence, there are two modes.

But using the word essence in a wide unmetaphysical sense, we may say that the essence of the Cross-Sacrifice as such, is that it is bloody; whereas the essence of Altar-Sacrifice is that it is unbloody. Yet it will be at once seen that this is to give, not the essence of the Sacrifice as Sacrifice, but the essence of its mode, as bloody or unbloody.

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GESCHICHTSWISSENSCHAFT UND WAHRHEIT NACH DEN SCHRIFTEN
VON LORD ACTON. By Ulrich Noack. (Frankfurt a/M.:
Schulte-Bulmke; RM. 10.—.)

KATHOLIZITÄT UND GEISTESFREIHEIT. By Ulrich Noack.
(Schulte-Bulmke; RM. 8.50.)

These two studies of Lord Acton as a historian and as a Catholic are from the pen of a German scholar, who, although a Protestant, seems able to enter so understandingly and almost lovingly into the teaching of the Catholic Church, that at times he has to take her part against his own hero, Lord Acton—as for instance in the case of the dogma of Papal Infallibility. The author seems for all that quite content to remain a Protestant—an attitude which perhaps can psychologically be explained by that of the late Archbishop Söderblom of Upsala, for whom Catholicism was one—