

fission. Father McNabb and Père Gardeil are experts in another sphere showing us that these profound mysteries of God's action in the soul are within our intellectual range and are more relevant to our spiritual needs than some of the interesting instructions we receive from the scientists. Here and there a touch of unfamiliar idiom and foreign accent remind us that the book is a translation from the French.

B.D.

THE FULNESS OF SACRIFICE. By A. M. CROFTS, O.P. (Sands; 12s. 6d.)

The present abundance of literature on the Mass is a sign of a real religious revival—in the strict sense of a reorientation of men's minds towards the one perfect act of worship in which all are called to participate as perfectly as they can. Recent theological and historical writings have contributed much to this revival, but have of necessity remained largely of a speculative nature; on the other hand, many of the 'devotional' books on the Mass lack doctrinal backbone. Fr Crofts's book is to be welcomed as an attempt to provide a doctrinal and devotional synthesis on the Holy Sacrifice. Based on a series of conferences in St Patrick's Cathedral, Auckland, it is intended primarily for the laity, hence theological subtleties and long historical disquisitions are avoided. At the same time there is a solid doctrinal and scriptural foundation underlying the whole work which makes it 'strong meat' indeed, and no merely 'devotional' dish. Some of the discourses retain a rhetorical style more effective perhaps in the pulpit than in cold print, but on the whole the language is simple and direct, calculated to hammer home the 'essential truth that the Mass is in the truest sense a real sacrifice—the daily sacrifice of the faithful in Christ, in which they individually enjoy a perfect participation?'

Fr Crofts seeks to present the Mass as it were in its cosmic context, 'not merely as a truth isolated within itself, but as the culmination of God's vast and eternal sign of Redemption, gradually unfolded down the ages of preparation, and, once fulfilled, for ever perpetuating the fullness of sacrifice in the redeeming mystery of the Messiah?'

The advantage of this method is to emphasize the fact that the Christian religion was not a break with the past, but its continuation and perfect fulfilment through the coming of the Messiah. The Jewish religion, its sacrifices, ritual, the Temple itself are seen as 'the patterns of heavenly things', foreshadowing the perfect sacrifice of the Cross and the establishment of the one true religion, its Temple the crucified body of Christ. The sacrifice of Christ is unique, all-sufficient. 'What is so utterly perfect in one act cannot be repeated—only shown forth.' The Mass is the 'showing forth' of Calvary throughout all time, enabling men here and now, at all times, to share in the one perfect act of worship. This doctrine,

which is that of the Epistle to the Hebrews, chapters 9 and 10, is effectively developed by Fr Crofts in the first part of his book (chapters 1-4). The remaining chapters deal with the Mass as the centre of life and holiness within the Church. Holy Communion, 'partaking of the Body of the Lord', is the means whereby the faithful share fully in the Sacrifice; it is not something complete in itself but the climax of a sacrificial meal. The Mass is the centre of the other sacraments and so of the whole spiritual life of the Christian. The special association of the sacrament of Matrimony with the Mass prepares the way for the sanctification of family life. Not only during life, but even after death, the Mass is the 'pledge of future glory'; its efficacy penetrates into purgatory, 'that abode of God's mercy', and continues to avail in bringing men to the enjoyment of their eternal inheritance.

EGBERT COLE, O.P.

ST ATHANASIUS ON THE INCARNATION. Translated and edited by a Religious of C.S.M.V. (Mowbray; 7s. 6d.)

In the middle ages, we are told, stained glass windows and wall paintings gave the instruction the penny catechism now gives. Some people regret that the fashion has changed and think we should teach our children about just men before teaching them the definition of justice. The same is said of the seminaries and schools of theology; they ask us to put away the manuals and case books and study the fathers and schoolmen. We are not to define modernism until we have studied the history of Arius. Much has been done in these two departments of the study of theology, but there is still another school that needs its books of sources. This is the school where it is much easier to serve 'potted' theology than strong meat and it embraces all those things like C.E.G. classes, study week-ends, summer schools, university extension lectures, study groups in the armed forces and in parishes. Here there is a real need for the works of the fathers, schoolmen and philosophers and usually they must be in English. This translation, therefore, should have a very wide appeal, for not only is it inexpensive and attractively set out but it gives us theology in a lively narrative form. It can take a place besides Chartres's stained glass windows and Beverley's carved arcading. This is how St Athanasius writes: 'You know how it is when some great king enters a large city and dwells in one of its houses; because of his dwelling in that house, the whole city is honoured, and enemies and robbers cease to molest it. Even so it is with the King of all.' That is language we can all understand and it clothes true wisdom. This is a book to be commended to all leaders of study groups, week-ends and summer schools.

GERARD MEATH, O.P.