

## **BOOK REVIEWS**

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### **Olimp N. Căciulă. *Euharistia ca jertfă* [Eucharist as a Sacrifice]. Translated by Ioan Ică sr. Sibiu: Deisis, 2016, 410 pp.**

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Under the auspices of the prestigious Deisis Publishing House in Sibiu, it appeared the doctoral thesis of Ph. Fr. Olimp N. Căciula, who was promoted to the Faculty of Theology of the National and Capodistrian University of Athens in 1931, translated for the first time in Romanian, by Fr. Prof. Ioan Ică Sr. who also signs the foreword entitled: "*Olimp Căciulă*" and *the remarkable theological generation of Great Romania*.

The book has nine chapters grouped in two parts, each with several subdivisions: Part I: *About the sacrifice in general* (I. Religion and sacrifice, II. The origin of the sacrifice, III. The Being of the sacrifice, IV. A brief look at the Jewish sacrifices and Part II: *About the Eucharistic sacrifice in particular*, V. The teaching of the Orthodox Church on the Eucharistic sacrifice – the acceptance of the Eucharist as a sacrifice, VI. The teachings of the Protestant Church on the Eucharistic sacrifice – the denial of the Eucharist as a sacrifice, VII. The Eucharistic Sacrifice in the Tradition of the First Centuries of the Church, VIII. The Eucharistic Sacrifice according to Holy Scripture, IX. The Being of the Eucharist as a Sacrifice).

In the first pages of the work we find the definition of sacrifice: "essential act of cult to God, the sacrifice is also the fullest manifestation of the religious sen-

timents of humanity ... it is, perhaps, the only act through which it has manifested in history, this inexpressible desire for cleansing, forgiveness and reconciliation with God that every man has felt unceasingly, that burning urge for salvation" (43).

Further, it is stated that: "God, man and sacrifice are the three indispensable essential elements of any religion" (43).

As for the origin of the sacrifice, the author sets forth four theories – the theory of offering gifts of interest (attributed to Renan), the theory of sacrifice as a feeding of divinity, the theory of the origin of sacrifice from the notion of totem, Loisy's theory: the origin of sacrifice in the inclination of primitive man to magic – and concludes that the origin of the sacrifice is to be sought after the ancestral sin, in the conscience of the human race's head of guilt, and the manifestation of God's worship.

Concerning the being of the sacrifice, are developed hypotheses that: the being of the sacrifice is to offer a thing that expresses our inner gift, or the change of the offered thing by destruction, slaughter, burning.

Father Căciula highlights three very important terms: sin, atonement, reconciliation that constitutes the basis and being of any Jewish sacrifice (115), and states that the act of destruction is the only one that constitutes the being of every sacrifice (108).

The Orthodox Church has no doctrines formulated and ratified by the Ecumenical Councils on the Eucharistic Sacrifice, because it has never been disputed in the first eight centuries of the Christian era, but finds the author, no other point of Orthodox faith has been more vehemently challenged by Protestants.

The Savior is found not as a shadow or imagination, but in a real sense, in a sensible way (130) in the Holy Eucharist. This presence constitutes the unspent source from which the whole vitality of the Church springs out (129).

The Eucharist is the sacrifice of the Church, although the Church does not offer anything; it only prepares the proper conditions under which the Lord presents Himself in the form of a sacrifice offered unremitting to the God ... offering the physical elements, the figurative representations of the true body and blood of the Lord, not itself His body and blood (132).

The bringing of the sacrifice does not provide salvation mechanically, Father Olimp points out, the sacrifice of Christ present on the altar of the Church has the purpose of filling man's existence with the fire of God and persuading him to resemble his Savior, on the one hand bringing one's sacrifice pure and well-pleasing to God, and on the other hand, pursuing spiritual communion with His Creator (134).

None of the Holy Fathers or church writers specifically dealt with the Eucharist as a sacrifice ... it continued to remain an object of faith, and St. Ciprian of Carthage is the first who pronounce in its writings expressing the character of the Eucharist as a sacrifice, but "it is not a personal invention of its own ... because it was the unadulterated faith of the first Christian Church (144).

The Protestant rationalist critique has delivered several interpretations of the Last Supper, of which the present paper

retains two: *The Eucharist as a simple parable* (C. Weizsäcker, A. Jülicher), *The Eucharist as an eschatological teaching* (F. Spitta).

Any effort to find the origin of the Eucharist as the other Christian Mysteries in the mysteries of Antiquity can be characterized only as a ill will and a clear proof of unbelief and rationalism.

The last chapter presents different theories on the being of the Eucharist as a sacrifice, at Roman Catholic theologians:

- some centered around the idea of change: 1. the being of the Eucharist as a sacrifice in the real change: a) of the elements of bread and wine (Mathieu van der Galen) and b) of Jesus Christ (Roberto Bellarmino) 2. the being of the Eucharist as a sacrifice in the mystic change (Gabriel Vasquez). The change in the Eucharist by sanctification does not concern the real object of this sacrifice, Christ; it is only a transubstantiation, ie a change in the natural elements of the Eucharist (349).

- others around the idea of offering: 1. the being of the Eucharist as a sacrifice in offering Christ by Himself (Marius Lepin); 2. the being of the Eucharist as a sacrifice in the offering of Christ by the Church (Ch. Pesch, Maurice de la Taille).

All this reduces and explains only in abstracto the question of the being of the Eucharist as a sacrifice, but the element of atonement is overlooked by the followers of the sacrificial theory as offering (360).

In another section, there is the analysis of the views of Russian, Greek and Romanian Orthodox theologians (end of the 19th century – the first half of the 20th century):

Macarie Bulgakov sees the Eucharist as an act of a double offering: of Christ by Himself and of Christ by the Church. This double offering takes place at sanctification by the Holy Spirit ... to communicate to the believers for whom

the sacrifice on the Cross is made, and from this point of view it is actually an atoning sacrifice (365-366).

Nikolaos Damalas quite rightly observes that the Eucharistic sacrifice is not a repetition, but a remembrance ... putting into action of the sacrifice once brought by the Lord on the Cross (369).

Christos Andrusos formulated the most scientific theory in the Orthodox Church about the Eucharist as a sacrifice (369). The act of sacrifice is to be sought in sanctification, when sacrifice and sacrificer are one and the same person; through this sanctification the Eucharist becomes both the representation of the sacrifice on the Cross and real sacrifice ... The Eucharist as a sacrifice remains the very sacrifice of the Cross, on the altar we sacramentally have the sacramental re-presentation or presence of the sacrifice on the Cross and not the presentation or repetition (371-372).

According to Konstantin Diou-  
notis, the Eucharistic sacrifice cannot add anything to the value of the sacrifice on the Cross ... the mystical and unbloody repetition of this sacrifice on the Cross to share the fruits of the believers (374).

Alexiu Comorosan emphasizes that the Eucharistic sacrifice is a renewal of the sacrifice on the Cross of the Lord to share believers with its fruits (368).

Ioan Mihălcescu believes that the destruction is done sacrificially (376), the presence on the altar of Christ in sacrifice is meant not to be offered again, but to the contrary, to be assimilated by believers ... the sanctification – the act par excellence – that realizes the Eucharistic sacrifice, since this sanctification presents Christ on the altar of the Church as a sacrifice (377).

The book concludes with a section titled: *A sketch of a correct theory of the being of the Eucharist as a sacrifice*, in which the author concludes: The sacrifice

on the cross of the Lord consists in the slaughter of His righteous body and the shedding of His blessed blood (391). The sacrifice of the Savior in heaven is a true sacrifice, but a passive sacrifice. And that this sacrifice becomes active, our personal contribution is needed ... only when Christ's sacrifice becomes, by sharing our own sacrifice, it passes from passive to active, interceding with the heavenly God for our salvation...our personal, spiritual sacrifice unites with the help of Christ, with which it is truly offered to God at the altar of heaven, so that the redemption work, that is, our salvation is not necessarily acquired magically, as many imagine, but is, on the one hand, the result of the goodness of God and, on the other hand, the personal co-operation of man.

The Holy Eucharist – the mystery of the real presence of the Savior in the midst of the faithful, which occupy the central place in the mystical life of the Church – is at the same time Mystery and Sacrifice, mutually intertwined, for which reason it is a matter of utmost importance and permanent actuality.

Although written more than three quarters of a century ago, the work, the fruit of a sustained and earnest work, points very clearly the fundamental aspects of Orthodox teaching, remaining, despite the foreign influences, specific to the time in which it was drafted, of a certain value for Apologetics and Dogmatics, the author proving an excellent knowledge of the bibliography of the period, related to this theme, as well as a great capacity for analysis and synthesis.

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