

wherever he may turn he meets Christ and Christ's members. For we are living in a post-Christian world and in as much as the neo-pagan is worse than the old heathen, so the position of the revealed religion of the Triune God is more powerful than it was in the beginning of Christianity.

Thus though Christendom be filled with unspeakable grief for the millions of lost and reprobate who have yielded to the modern temptation, yet so much brighter shines forth the glory of the grace of the Lamb of God who alone is 'worthy to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honour and praise and glory.'

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THE LITURGICAL MOVEMENT IN GERMANY

TOWARDS the close of the nineteenth century Ernest Renan wrote: 'I have studied Germany and believed I entered a temple. All I have found there is pure, elevated, moral, beautiful and moving. O my soul, it is a treasure indeed, it is the continuation of Jesus Christ. Their morality fills me with admiration, how sweet and how strong they are! I believe that Christ will come to us from there.' What he meant by 'Christ' was: 'A pure cult, a religion without priests and without exterior practices, resting entirely on the heart's feelings, on the imitation of God, on the immediate relation of our conscience with the Heavenly Father . . . Jesus founded religion in humanity as Socrates philosophy . . . Jesus founded absolute religion, excluding nothing, determining nothing except the sentiment.' That is one of the strong currents which Germany sent into the maelstrom of modern European civilisation. Kant, Hegel, Strauss, Baur, Goethe were the sources.

In 1936 Abbot Ildefons Herwegen spent four weeks in Italy. In an audience the late Pope said that he had himself been able to establish that liturgical life in Germany was on the increase, and that this was a strong support for Holy Church in these days of strife and suffering. And this is another current of which Maria-Laach is the source.

Europe is one. Its unity is not an opposition of races and nations overcome by commercial, diplomatic or cultural contacts. It is one

family of cultural groups with different tendencies, grown out of the Greco-Roman culture of antiquity and the Christian culture of the patristic times and the Middle Ages. Any sweeping movement that swings to the top in one country, sets the social balance swaying in all the other countries of the European Commonwealth. Wycliff in England, the Brethren of the Common Life in the Low Countries, and Hus in Bohemia show the same fundamental tendencies and are, roughly speaking, all contemporary. Hobbes, Lock and Hume in England, Rousseau and the Encyclopaedists in France, Herder and Kant in Germany led to the same disastrous triumph of rationalism.

The first symptoms of what one may roughly call the Liturgical Movement were, in Germany as in France and elsewhere, the return to old texts, postulated by the defence of the faith against the 'Centuries' of Magdeburg; the love of critical editions, which came with the birth of humanism; and the chaos of religious practice which the Council of Trent remedied by its liturgical reform. This movement bore its fruits in the works of Melchior Hittorp (1568) and Gerbertus, Abbot of St. Blasien (who published two important works in 1774 and 1776), amongst others.

Nevertheless, for two and a half centuries we cannot yet speak of a true Liturgical Movement. Another element was needed: a religious revival which would turn man's mind to these *alte Quellen neuer Kraft*, these old sources of new life. This religious revival came about, in Germany as in France and elsewhere, with the so-called romantic movement. This movement was a reaction against the soulless rationalism of the *Aufklärung*, Enlightenment. Germany was spared the horrors of the French Revolution. This so-called romantic movement brought with it a powerful religious revival. Görres, Schlegel, and many others brought a new appreciation of the Christian culture of the past. In the midst of this movement towers the figure of a theologian who, far from being romantic in the usual sense of that word, gave a strong and sound frame to the rather shapeless religious revival. This theologian was Johann Adam Möhler.

Möhler was born in 1796 at Igersheim in Würtemberg. Before he turned to the priesthood he had done most of his philosophical and theological studies, so that he spent only one year at the seminary of Rottenburg before his ordination in 1819. After three years' pastoral labour he became a tutor at the Catholic Wilhelmstift at Tübingen; from there he went to the Catholic theological faculty of the university of that city. But before embarking on his lectures on Church history he went round several universities, visited the leading thinkers, Catholic and Protestant, and with his sensitive

mind took stock of the situation of the Church. Then he started his lectures and published his first book, *Die Einheit in der Kirche*, Unity in the Church (1825). It went straight to the heart of the real question: no vague talk of an emasculated Christianity, no swinging between rationalism and romanticism, but a firm and deep statement on the inner reality of the Church. Christianity means nothing if it does not mean a body of real and living men, living the life of Christ; a Mystical Body of Christ continuing in history the Incarnation of the God-Man and his Death and Resurrection; an organic body of which the Incarnation was the seed and of which the golden City of the Apocalypse is to be the flower and the fruit. The success of Möhler's book was like Chateaubriand's *Le Génie du Christianisme* in France. It is curious to see that Görres and Möhler published a life of St. Athanasius in Germany while Newman, the central figure of the contemporary Oxford Movement, was writing his in England. Another great work of Möhler's, inspired by *Die Einheit*, was his *Symbolik*, which is a comparison of the Catholic and Protestant creeds according to their official documents. The study of the Church's unity inspired Möhler with a lifelong desire for a peaceful settlement and return of the various branches of Christianity to the one and only Mother Church of Rome. He was right in preferring, for this purpose, a deeper presentation of the Church's inner reality to superficial controversial methods and it saved him from compromising on any vital points. The book appeared in 1832 and is still constantly re-edited. Möhler's line saved German Catholicism from Modernism which was to work such havoc in France, and he saved it by putting it on a theological and patristic level far above the shallow productions of a recent and immature science. In his *Neue Untersuchungen* (New Investigations, 1834), the defence of his *Symbolik* against Bauer and Marheineke, he launched the motto of his life: 'The Church in all, nothing but the Church.' History becomes '... the plan of God with the human race unfolded in time. In virtue of this plan God prepares for himself, by means of Christ, the honour and glory due to him, honour and glory resulting from the free homage of man himself.'¹ Möhler died at Munich in 1838, forty-two years old. His work gave a depth to the religious revival in Germany which was never equalled in France or England. He had thrown open new horizons in theology, basing this science on a profound and realistic conception of Christ and his Church. Precisely because it was such a realistic conception it created a stir

¹ An English translation of the *Symbolik* by James Burton Robertson kept the title (perhaps unfortunate because misleading), *Symbolism* (London, 1843).

in the religious life of many. Hurter, the famous Jesuit, Hammerstein, Bickell, and many others were led to the Church by this road.

Among his admirers and followers was Franz Anton Staudenmaier (1800-1856). Perhaps it is not too irreverent to say that, like Möhler, his vision and inspiration had not suffered from what sometimes looks like the stifling influence of an immovable seminary routine. He, too, spent only one year at the seminary of Rottenburg. His most influential work was *Der Geist des Christenthums* (The Spirit of Christianity, Tübingen, 1835), which treated Möhler's conception in a deep and yet popular way by showing it in a detailed description of the Church Year. And this is how Möhler, through his disciples, became the father of the liturgical movement in Germany. It had to happen because, once the central position of Christ and the Church is realised, one cannot but want to live as Christ and the Church continue to live on this earth, and this life is manifested in the Church's liturgy as it unfolds itself in Mass, Sacraments and Divine Office throughout the year. The Liturgy is the normal means by which we can share St. John's privilege of 'handling the Word of life' (I St. John i, 1).

That was the beginning of the Liturgical Movement in Germany. Its conception was much wider than in any other country.. And so it must not astonish us to see its influence in things so far apart as theology and politics and social action. Guido Görres with his *Historisch-politische Blätter*, Joerg, de Meyer are but a few names. Two years before Marx launched his Communist *Manifesto* (1848), Father Adolf Kolping had already founded his first *Gesellenverein*, and the idea of a vocational society had already been outlined by Bishop von Ketteler (1811-1877) in Germany as explained in another article in this number.

Although this religious revival was full of promise, the attention was for more than fifty years riveted to problems of internal and external politics. When Napoleon dealt the death blow to the Holy Roman Empire in 1806, and the French Revolution had had the effect of stirring German patriotism, the question put to Germany was whether or not it would continue to exist as a group of independent states; with or without Austria; within or without a general federation; under the leadership, or not, of Prussia. In short, it was the question whether or no the Germans were to form a single nation. Under the powerful leadership of Bismarck the Reich was created; this new nation of sixty million people brought a new factor into the internal politics of Europe at large. This was brought home rather drastically by the Franco-Prussian war. It should not be forgotten that this Reich was prepared and asked for by the Lib-

erals: hence the constant conflicts, in the midst of these political developments, between Church and State, which came to a head in the *Kulturkampf*. When, at the beginning of this century, things seemed to settle down, a new impulse was necessary for the Liturgical Movement to turn people's minds once more to the deeper spiritual questions of Catholic life. This impulse came from abroad.

In 1841 Dom Prosper Guéranger, Abbot of the resuscitated Abbey of Solesmes (1805-1875), had launched his great liturgical work, *L'Année Liturgique*, a work which in spite of its fifteen volumes ran through more than fifteen editions (English translation by Dom L. Shephard, Worcester, 1895-1903). His restoration of the Benedictine Order in France was wholly inspired by a liturgical spirituality. Two Germans, the brothers Maurus and Placidus Wolter, received their schooling and inspiration from him, in order to renew Benedictine life in Germany. It should not be forgotten that the period of 'Enlightenment' led to the secularisation and confiscation of most Benedictine Abbeys throughout Europe. When the *Kulturkampf* broke out, these German Benedictines went to Belgium where they continued their work, so that for a long time (till after the war of 1914) the German and Belgian houses formed one Congregation. In Belgium the liturgical life which Benedictine life brought there bore great fruits. In 1909 Dom Lambert Beauduin and Mgr. Callewaert gave a new shape and inspiration to the liturgical movement at the Abbey of the Mont-César, Louvain. This monastery, together with those of Maredsous and Bruges, were and are still the pillars of the liturgical movement in Belgium. At Maredsous there were many German monks who, when they returned to Germany, were fully equipped to pick up the thread of the German Liturgical Movement once more. They could not do so without returning to the spirit of Möhler. And so, in 1913, the Liturgical Movement knew a fresh revival in Germany. It is unquestionably headed by the monks of Maria Laach under the guidance of Abbot Herwegen.

I said that they returned to the spirit of Möhler. In France and Belgium the Liturgical Movement was sound and worked wonders. But one has the impression that too much energy was spent on quick success and popularisation, at the expense of depth and theology. Abbot Herwegen and Dom Odo Casel, as the leaders of the band, returned to the Fathers as an authentic theological source. It must be admitted that after the Council of Trent, indeed already before it, sheer natural reason and the 'authority' of theologians were, for all practical purposes, the sole theological sources that were taken seriously. The argument from Holy Scripture had become more of a pious illustration or a meaningless routine, and the Fathers

were almost entirely neglected. For a great deal it must be said that the very language of Holy Scripture and of the Fathers was so little understood that quotations from them were chosen at random and thereby lost their value. Maria Laach followed in Möhler's footsteps and humbly asked of the Old and New Testament and the great men who built up the theology of the Church (and from whom St. Thomas draws his most theological passages), to share in their light. They inspired theology with a new impulse drawn from tradition ('*Alte Quellen neuer Kraft*,' 'Old sources of new life,' is the title of a beautiful small book by Abbot Herwegen). They concentrated on the meaning of the word *Mysterium*, of which the Christian Latin version is *Sacramentum*, as on the key position for the whole life of the Church. They arrived at a conclusion which may be roughly put as follows: 'Mystery' implies a presence of God as working out man's salvation; in the Mass, Christ becomes therefore present, if we follow the tradition of the Church, not merely as a dead statue, nor as symbolically offering merits, but as doing again, fulfilling again, the whole work of the Redemption, not in a historical way, nor in a metaphorical way, but in a realistic, yet sacramental way; that is, by means of a sign which efficaciously makes this redeeming Christ present. Whatsoever be the truth of their theses, it is a development in theology which harmonises perfectly with St. Thomas and which will open up new horizons in theology and consequently in spirituality.

Going thus to the very root of the Church's life and touching the very nature of the Church, the Liturgical Movement in Germany threw open undreamt-of possibilities. In the practical line it brought a new and eager understanding of the Mass. What is saved of Catholicism in Germany now is, in great measure, due to Maria Laach. Pius Parsch, an ardent follower of Maria Laach, formed a very active centre of liturgical action in Klosterneuburg. It was suppressed at the invasion of Austria. There are many periodicals, ranging from purely popular ones to the *Jahrbuch für Liturgiewissenschaft*, each of which is far above the superficial or merely pious publications of this country. The persecution has driven many of those master-minds and 'master-souls,' if I may coin this word, to America, where they are already lifting the liturgical movement from the level of vestments and plainchant and liturgical shows to the level of the formation of a new mentality, a new outlook on life, entirely moulded on the reality of the Church, on the Spirit of the redeeming Christ.

This return to the *Antike*, antiquity, and its consequent attachment to Greco-Roman ways of thought put the liturgical movement

into sharp contrast with the superficial and narrow nationalistic ideas of the Nazi régime. No wonder they suppressed Maria Laach.

Abbot Herwegen often put the blame for individualism in the Church on the naturally individualistic and sentimental character of the Teutonic nations. And so he writes in *Kirche und Seele* (Münster i. W., 1926): 'In the "germanisation" of the interior life of the Church we are faced with a fact which could only be overlooked so long because, after all, the *Mysterium* (Mass) remained present as a duty, and even held, at least theoretically, the first place. But the attitude of the souls of the faithful has, for a long time, hardly been influenced by it. The whole of their real piety is nourished by individual devotions and flows along outside the *Mysterium* (Mass). The *opus operantis* (man's part in the interior life) should hold itself towards the *opus operatum* (God's sacramental grace) as one who drinks holds his goblet to the source. If we wish to penetrate the interior life of the Church in our days with new vitality, drawn from Christ, we shall have to learn to draw again from the sacred sevenfold fountain (the Sacraments) of the *Mysterium* (the Mass as the fountainhead of the Sacraments) This way was shown us by Pope Pius X with his call to the Holy Eucharist in order to re-integrate all things again under Christ as our Head: *Omnia instaurare in Christo*: to integrate all things in Christ.'

The Cardinals of Milan and of Malines used to say: 'Catholic Action will be liturgical or not be at all.' There is no Catholic Action without a strong and vital 'Church-consciousness.' There is no 'Church-consciousness' without an intense liturgical life or participation in the *Mysterium* of Christ.

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