

so-called learning which opposes revelation is really fallen man's spirit of independence which is incompatible with true wisdom.

We Christian educators should go forward full of faith and courage, trusting in the Lord who is our light, his Son who is his life-giving Word, and the Spirit who unites all in harmony. Whether we say of the Father, 'The Lord is my Light', or of the Son from another Scripture, 'Come, Lord Jesus', or of the Holy Spirit, 'Send forth thy Spirit', we are praying that all three Persons of the Holy Trinity may fill us with the divine light to search for, and use fruitfully, all the truth by which man lives.

May the 'kindly light' lead us to the Truth!



POINT OF VIEW

I HAVE been following up a most fascinating trail recently with regard to the origin of the word 'Mass'. This has always been obscure, and the explanation usually brought forward is most unsatisfactory, i.e., that it derives from the *Ite, missa est* at the close, which is also obscure in its meaning.

I once heard it said by an archaeologist who was also something of a philologist that it simply means 'the Meeting', but on what grounds I did not then ask.

Now, if taken in the sense of 'the Gathering', and especially the eucharistic gathering, the ordinary word 'mass' (with a small 'm') will be found to fit perfectly, and moreover takes us into the very 'inwards' of the Christian Mystery. For in old English it was *maesse*, in French *masse*, in Latin *massa*, and the ultimate derivation, according to the dictionaries, is from the Greek *maza*, a barley cake, and *masso*, 'I knead together'. So the underlying sense all through is to 'bring-together-into-one', especially many of the same kind into a unity, e.g., particles, grains, articles, or people of the same mind. We call a 'mass meeting' of adherents to the same political party, and speak of 'massing'

troops; an officers' mess may belong, too, and even the 'mess of pottage', being a stew of many ingredients.

But, seemingly to clench all this, I came upon this old liturgical formula for Eucharistic thanksgiving in the Eastern rite from the second-century *Didache*:

For the Cup: 'We give thee thanks, our Father, for the life and knowledge thou hast made known to us thro' Jesus thy Servant. To thee be glory for evermore.'

For the Broken Bread: 'As this broken bread was scattered over the hills and then when gathered became one mass, so may thy Church be gathered from the ends of the earth into thy Kingdom.'

The early Church was nearer to the essence of things, and the emphasis was on our incorporation with Christ into God. St Augustine is full of the same idea when speaking on the Eucharist in his homilies. On Corpus Christi in the Breviary he is quoted thus:

' . . . and yet there is but one Meat and one Drink, which doth work in them that feed thereon that "this corruptible must put on incorruption and this mortal put on immortality", namely communion with that general assembly and Church of God's holy children who are . . . all one, fully and utterly. And therefore it is, as men of God before our time have taken it, that our Lord Jesus Christ hath set before us his Body and his Blood in the likeness of things which from being many, are reduced into one. In one loaf are many grains of corn, and in one cup the juice of many grapes.'

So that very ordinary little word would give its meaning both to the physical gathering of the faithful and to its purpose and mystical effect, i.e., our being one-in-Christ (which was the burden of his discourse both after the miracle of the loaves and at the Last Supper, according to St John). Was he not the Bread offered for us on Calvary by which our At-one-ment was made with the Father, and offered now under the very figure of bread; and are we not the grains that go together with it to make a continual extension of Calvary? And could not the *Ite, missa est* also mean, 'Go, our bond is made, our meeting is over, our business completed, our barley cake made and offered'? A little far-

fetched, perhaps, but less so than the usual explanation, 'Go, it is sent', the feminine ending to agree with an *oblatio* understood. For what is the *oblatio* but the means of our at-one-ment?

Moreover there is the military command, 'Dis-miss', which seems to have little to do with *mittere*, 'to send', but must mean to dis-mass, or dis-band; and in Hebrew *masoreth* has a meaning akin to 'bond', and the *Massorah* is 'the body of traditional information on the texts of the Hebrew Bible'.

But the study of this root meaning at its Greek source is the most fruitful for a deeper understanding of the Mass, and in fact opens the door to an endless vista regarding the Mystical Body of Christ and of how we go to the building of it up, or should do. This of itself is a convincing testimony that our quarry has been rightly found. For if the following up of any particular truth in any department is found to bear witness to the Truth (as it must, if correct), then the validity of the particular truth is thereby corroborated, and 'they knew him in the breaking of bread'.

It may also be remembered that 'the breaking-of-bread from house to house' was the earliest title for our 'Mass' of today.

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SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

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One of the tragedies of our time is that practically the whole world has the idea that it is not called to prayer. Yet the paths of prayer form the map of life. It seems odd that, at a time when men are not only off the road but have forgotten there is one, the need for direction is still questioned. For it is spiritual direction which helps men both to find and follow the ways of God. But there are still those who deny its necessity completely, even in the pursuit of the highest sanctity. More commonly it is simply stated that it is not so necessary these days. This applies, presumably, even to the youth of today. It is argued that the young show no liking for direction. They are more independent of mind and better educated than in the past, and so less in need of direction, and sooner able