

Rev. Dr. Owen B. McGuire

THE ONLY CHEERFUL VIEW OF HUMAN LIFE

The first of the four Quiz Questions proposed last week was "What is the central doctrine (and fact) of the Christian religion?" The answer is The Incarnation.

If this doctrine is rightly, adequately understood, if it is understood why it became a fact and what are its consequences for us (therefore for human life) in time and in eternity, then it will be seen why the doctrine of the Fall is the only cheerful view of human life. It is, namely, this relationship between the Fall and the Incarnation, which not only solves the appalling problem of the wickedness and miseries of this world, but also shows us that in the Incarnation we have gained more, much more, than was lost in the Fall; that we have gained in the second Adam more than we lost in the first.

That is what the Church means when in the Exultet on Holy Saturday when in a rapture of joy and triumph she exclaims: *O felix culpa quae talem ac tantum meruit habere Redemptorem!* O happy Fall which earned for us such and so great a Redeemer. This same spirit of joy and triumph finds expression in an antiphon which we priests recite eight times daily in the Divine office during the Octave of Easter: "This is the day the Lord has made let us rejoice and be glad therein." Namely, the Resurrection is the triumph of the Incarnation and the pledge of our own resurrection.

TRUTH AS REVEALED

In their speculations the Scholastics proposed the hypothetical question: If our first parents had not fallen, would God have become Man? Some theologians have answered in the affirmative. However that may be, the fact, the truth as revealed in the New Testament and constantly taught by the Church is that God became Man to redeem and save us from the consequences of the Fall.

Every Sunday you hear this truth repeated in the chanting of the Credo: *Qui propter nos homines et propter nostram salutem descendit de caelis—* who for our salvation descended from heaven, etc. Namely, to save us, to redeem us from the Fall and its consequences.

This, then, is the reason why the Incarnation became a fact. This is the relationship between the Fall and that fact. So we have already the answers to three of the four Quiz Questions. The answer to the fourth will appear in the sequel (next week).

This is truly a terrible world in which we live. Is it better or worse than it was, say fifty years ago? It is certainly no better. At that time, and for the preceding generation, the great centers of the "new enlightenment" were the Universities of Germany. Their praise was chanted by the "Intellectuals" on both sides of the Atlantic. At Tuebingen especially they had demolished the Bible and shown it to be a collection of "myths" and primitive superstitions. At all the other centers science was advancing. New discoveries were daily. We were just at the beginning of a new era. "The Dawn" had just broken. The full light of the new day would follow. Man was self-sufficient. If you want to know what these "Dawnists" were (and still are) you will find it in a book just published by Sheed and Ward, *Christian Crisis* by Michael de la Bedoyere, Editor of the Catholic Herald of London. And the men who are now loudest in their denunciation of everything German are the lineal and logical heirs of those who were the most enthusiastic heralds of the Dawn that was then irradiating from Germany and about to illumine the world. Well, anyway the "Liberal" Dawn has not fulfilled its promise. This world is still a terrible place.

NEWMAN'S APOLOGIA

And that brings us to those passages in Newman's Apologia to which I referred last week. They will be found in the chapter "Position of my Mind since 1842."

In that chapter the Cardinal is not attempting to prove the chief dogmas of the Catholic religion. His purpose there is to show that admitting the existence of God the Creator, a Supreme Being, intelligent and free, Who has placed man in this world and endowed him with intelligence and free will—starting from this truth, he goes on to show that the Fall, the Incarnation and an inflexible Church to carry on the purpose of the Incarnation, give the only conceivable explanation of the world as we find it; the only means ever conceived to make it a better

world, to make us happier here and hereafter. They give, he intimates, the only explanation that fits into the facts of human history, into human experience.

Believing as I do and must, he says, in the existence of God, "I look out of myself into this world of men and there I see a sight which fills me with unspeakable distress. . . . If I looked into a mirror and did not see my own face, I should have the sort of feeling which actually comes upon me when I look into this living busy world and see no reflection of its Creator. (He is speaking not of the material universe but of this "world of men") . . . The sight of this world is nothing else than the prophet's scroll full of lamentations, and mourning, and woe."

Then follows that majestic sentence of 200 words in which—crestfallen—he depicts this "world of men" as it is and ever has been, and concludes: "All this is a vision to dizzy and appall; and inflicts upon the mind the sense of a profound mystery, which is absolutely beyond human solution."

ONLY ANSWER

Then he proceeds to show that the Fall is the only conceivable answer—the only satisfactory answer that has ever been given, the only answer that fits into the facts. He asks: "What shall be said to this heart-piercing reason-bewildering fact? I can only answer, that either there is no Creator, or that either there is no Creator, or that this living society of men is in a true sense disconnected from His presence. And so I argue about the world. If there be a God, since there is a God, the human race is implicated in some terrible original calamity. It is out of joint with the purposes of its Creator. This is a fact, a fact as true as the fact of its existence, and thus the doctrine of what is called original sin becomes to me almost as certain as that the world exists, and as the existence of God."

But God had mercy on His rebellious creatures, on the work of His own hands, and applied a remedy which has made joy and cheerfulness and triumph possible in this appalling "world of men."

But of this next week.

COURIER'S CURRENT CINEMA COMMENTS

By JOHN SPRINGER

"The Invaders"—A-1

Six Nazi U-boat men escape when their craft is blown up in the Hudson Bay Straits. The six wander through Canada, committing almost every crime including murder in their efforts to get out of Canada and to reach the neutral territory of the United States. During the course of their travels, the U-Boat men kill a lone French-Canadian trapper in an Eskimo pillage, attempt to disrupt a peaceful religious settlement in the Canadian wheatfields, and repay the hospitality of a novelist in the North Woods with vandalism. Each adventure means the end of another Nazi until at the end only one is left—and he is doomed.

That's the story of "The Invaders"—manufactured propaganda, perhaps, when considered in retrospect, but highly compelling in its filmed form. Through it all moves Lieutenant Hirth, leader of the six Nazis, and a personification of the cold, cruel, fanatical Nazi spirit. Eric Portman's brilliant playing of this role dominates the entire picture, no small feat when stars like Laurence Olivier, Leslie Howard and Raymond Massey appear as principals in the various episodes. The three stars are at their best and there is an exceptional characterization by Anton Walbrook, as the gentle, but strong-willed, leader of the Hutterite sect. Glynis Johns, who replaced Elizabeth Bergner, is rather too doll-like as the Hutterite maid. A sore spot is the speech of the five actors who appear as the Nazi followers of Lieutenant Hirth. While the speech of Portman, Olivier, Walbrook and Miss Johns is correctly accented, the other five Nazis destroy the illusion by speaking in accents with range from cockney to Oxford British. Yet that is only a minor sore spot in a picture which is almost constantly effective.

"The Remarkable Andrew"—A-1

Although the idea is better than the execution, "The Remarkable

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