
Fact, Fear, Beauty, and Hell.

From a non-Catholic: "Nearly all of the teachings of the Catholic Church are beautiful except the one on Hell. It's ignoble. I prefer to live because of love, rather than because of fear."

Fact and Belief. A cancer has formed and shows up on an x-ray negative. The reality of the cancer is not changed simply because the patient refuses to look at the negative. Belief doesn't create Hell; non-belief doesn't destroy it. If Hell exists, it exists independently of the belief or non-belief of anyone. Belief is only a means of knowing that Hell exists.

Whether there actually is a Hell, this is the point to determine. If there is, one had better believe in it even if he doesn't like to. As to the existence of Hell, read the Gospels honestly. Then answer: if there is no Hell, is not Christ either a liar or a fool?

Fear and False Fear. At night an unarmed man approaches the gate of a strongly-fenced orchard. He is about to enter. "Danger! Lions Roam In The Orchard" a huge sign informs him. He looks closely. The lions come near and appraise him appetitiously. The man doesn't enter. Fear of the lions has kept him out. Is that fear ignoble? Fear of breaking mirrors, of walking under ladders, may be ignoble because there is no objective basis for the fear. If Hell exists and if George's conduct is influenced by the fact of Hell, is George really so stupid and ignoble?

Hell and Beauty. Is Hell beautiful? Hardly. But Hell helps men and women to be morally beautiful. Absolute certainty (if it be possible!) that there is no Hell--this would make many a good-living person live less beautifully. Ask any ordinary Christian. Ask yourself. Even the comparatively few who live habitually on the love of God, even they in their meaner moments are influenced by Hell to a much more beautiful life.

All laws are made effective by sanctions--by rewards and punishments. Think of some laws and see. Ask human lawmakers about the necessity of punishment. And the moral law, which reaches into the silent conscience of man with the most difficult demands, does it, also, not require sanctions? If, then, the observance of the moral law makes men and women morally beautiful, and if Hell is a negative sanction of the moral law, Hell really is an aid to moral beauty.

Love and Behavior. If, as you say, you live well because of the love of God and of your neighbor, keep on living that way. Christ came and did everything possible to make men love Him and His law. Charity, properly understood, sums up all His teachings. He wishes, above all, that men come to Him through love. But Christ is no insipid lover. Hell is really a manifestation of the fierceness of His love. If certain men, because of unholy earthly loves, refuse love to Christ, then He would bring them to Him by fear. If, neither by fear nor love they will come to Him, Whom they know, then they will deserve Hell for eternity; and they shall get it. Churchmen didn't invent this teaching. It comes straight from Christ.

Most Efficacious Novena.

From a student: "Are there any prayers especially efficacious for making a novena?" Yes, by all means, the prayers you say in offering Mass. If at midnight you got up and crossed yourself and with arms outstretched for two solid hours prayed devoutly before the Blessed Sacrament your devotions would not be nearly so efficacious as the offering of one Mass. That is why we urge you in every novena to offer Mass and Holy Communion at its natural place within the Mass. Why then take on a lot of "pet" devotions and pass up the daily Mass?

PRAYERS: deceased) aunt of Joe Langton, '28. Ill, sister of Nick Lamberto (How.); father of Arthur Woods (Lyons); father of Aurelius Rizzi (Badin); Ed Pratt (St. Ed's); Fred Cisk (Lyons); Berrie Wessel (Lillor) appendectomy. Two special intentions.