

Cardinal Faulhaber

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CARDINAL FAULHABER

By WALDEMAR GRIMM

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WHY has Michael Faulhaber taken upon himself the mission of defending the Old Testament? Like the ancient prophets he feels obliged to speak the truth even against the desires of the ruling powers. His truth is the doctrine of Christ, his instrument the Church. Anyone who wants to win power over human souls away from the Church is his enemy and the personification of Satan. To fight the Devil one cannot be a coward, and Faulhaber is brave.

The young theologian received his schooling at the Vatican. Born of a Bavarian family of bakers and millers, he had become professor of Old Testament exegesis in the University of Strassburg at the age of thirty-four. After his first two or three lectures, everyone streamed to hear him. Even the non-theologists would not miss the æsthetic pleasure of his bearing and speech. He had a sharply chiseled fighting face and eyes that were always focused on some far-away point in the distance. As soon as he opened his mouth he held his audience in a spell. The gray-haired priests who sat at his feet listened as he read the psalms and the prophets and evoked familiar scenes and pictures in a speech that was infused with the breath of the day of creation. The cedars of Lebanon rustled again. It was not the living Faulhaber who spoke from the pulpit but a prophet revealing the laws of ancient times in spite of his remoteness from them. Faulhaber never resorted to the empty pathos of the

pulpit, and the Church perceived this great man among her many servants. At forty-two Michael Faulhaber, having written many books on religious history, became bishop of Speyer.

During the War the Pope made him chaplain general in the German army. But had not Faulhaber always proclaimed that the Prince of Peace wanted to bring peace to mankind? How then could he urge soldiers to take the lives of others? He believed that he had solved this conflict when he told the soldiers to defend their own country. This was a compromise and a capitulation, for during the War he spoke these words: 'The grisly reality of war should never be concealed. It is, and remains, an orgy of bloodshed in which costly human blood is spilled like water, a piling up of skulls, a pyramiding of dead men's bones, a hospital in which much of the strength of the nation lies crippled, a field of corpses in which the happiness and hope of many families lie buried, a mountain of shattered wealth, an infinite destruction of the values of science, art, and technology.'

The Church understands that in time of war men yearn for peace. Whoever brings peace captures their souls. One day the war mongers were brought to book. In 1917 the Pope appointed the forty-eight-year-old Faulhaber archbishop of Munich and Freising, the most important Catholic centre in Germany. Monsignore Pacelli was papal nuncio in Munich at the time, and he and Faulhaber tried to arrange papal intervention in behalf of peace. The attempt failed. The bitter end came bringing collapse and revolution. Faulhaber remained what he always had been—the arch-conservative prince of the Church. He opposed the revolution because it confiscated Church property. He attacked it as 'perjury and high treason.'

In the German Republic Rome won more influence than it had ever held under the Empire, yet Faulhaber would not be reconciled. He turned his back on the Weimar Republic. In 1921 the Vatican rewarded Faulhaber's aid in arranging the Bavarian Concordat by making him a cardinal. The fifty-three-year-old prince of the Church chose as his coat of arms a silver candlestick and the dove of the Holy Ghost with the motto, *vox temporis vox Dei*, the voice of the time is the voice of God. In the cathedral of Munich he then explained the significance of this device. It does not mean that the voice of the people is the voice of God. Never, in God's name! The voice of the people, the voice of the masses, the opinion of the masses is much more and much oftener the voice that urges the destruction of God. The will of God should and must be identical with the need of the hour. Each individual must listen to the voice of God in his own time.

Since the day when Hitler first began to run riot in Munich the gulf between him and the Cardinal has remained unbridgeable. Dietrich

Eckart, the modern popular Homer, raged in the *Völkische Beobachter*, ripped 'that foul gospel of Satan, the Old Testament,' to pieces. This summoned the fighting Cardinal to the field of battle. Faulhaber inveighed against political murder and damned the nationalist terror, for he is a man who believes that the people should live in peace, to which the National Socialists contemptuously replied, 'A Roman peace.' Rosenberg emerged as their prophet, and Faulhaber passionately inveighed from the pulpit against the new outbursts of heathenism. For a long time he regarded Hitler as worse than the Republic, and the National Socialists never understood that the Cardinal is a power in Bavaria with which Hitler must reckon, a power that he should have won over to his side in spite of their differences concerning the attempted coup d'état of November, 1923. But Faulhaber does not favor Hitler or the Republic either. The old conservative stands in the camp of the Wittelsbach dynasty.

THE National Socialists grew more and more aware that the Catholic Church opposed them. They tried to defy Faulhaber. A Hamburg journalist openly accused the Cardinal of having supported the Hitler movement at the outset and then having withdrawn in order to launch a civil war that would separate Bavaria from the Reich. Faulhaber brought suit, and the trial ended with the acquittal of the accused. The court even conceded that the journalist had acted in accordance with the true interests of all Germans who did not belong to the Catholic Church. Never before had anyone attacked the authority of His Eminence. The Cardinal therefore turned his fight against Hitler into a religious war. Thanks to his influence the bishops' conference at Fulda anathematized the National Socialists.

Faulhaber also resorted to religious pacifism in his struggle against the barbarous National Socialists, whose military youth organizations were taking children away from him. He warned: 'We must all do our best to make the world plague of war occur as seldom as possible. We must never let any military celebrations cause us to forget the horrible scenes of the last war. We must retain a living memory of that frightful horror. We must educate the people to prefer to live in peace rather than win a war. We should prefer to dress as simple shepherds rather than wear the uniform of a wild soldier. Extreme nationalism is the enemy of world peace and the real heresy of the twentieth century. Every newspaper that consciously lies in order to destroy confidence between one nation and another should be stamped on its front page as a criminal is branded.' At this time the courts began sending pacifists to jail, but Faulhaber urged them to have the courage to stand for peace.

Meanwhile, nationalism ran higher and higher in Germany. Faul-

haber stood almost on an island. In February, 1932, he exhorted the people from his pulpit in Munich: 'Military disarmament must precede moral disarmament. The nimbus of the uniform and the military parade has faded, but equal justice among nations will not be attained if disarmed Germany rearms and causes new competition in armaments but only if the heavily and overarmed nations disarm.'

The Catholic Church feels that the people are dissatisfied with the existing economic system. If it is not to lose contact with the masses, it must accommodate itself to their desires. The conservative Faulhaber, who has no use for 'progress,' always hits the right note. 'The wealth of this world is not fairly divided. Such inequality cannot correspond with just intentions. At least in the future more of the new wealth that is created should come into the hands of the wage-earners. It is unjust for one man to starve, in spite of an honorable will to work, while another lives in luxury on his dividends. We again have reached a point at which we must learn new lessons and abandon one relic of the capitalist economic period.' The Cardinal has a sixth sense of the way things are driving. A little while ago he attacked the collapse of morality as the chief evil of our time. He brought forward a Franciscan monk who made radio addresses, and he sent another monk dressed in civilian clothes to the movies and theatres to supervise the moral purity of the performances, until he felt the need of turning to more important contemporary orgies. But too late. The National-Socialist demagogues had been working faster with their economic doctrines. In the summer of 1932, Faulhaber tried to persuade the Bavarian government to oppose the cowardly resignation of the Berlin government. Here, too, he was late.

Hitler arrived. The political representatives of German Catholicism, whom Brüning led to defeat, capitulated. The Catholic Church made peace with its excommunicated members. It capitulated as long as the masses worshiped their new idols, but, as soon as the people showed the first signs of discontent, the Church changed its tactics. Faulhaber keeps silent no more. His words ring out. People are beginning to take heart. His example has a stimulating effect. Catholic priests who had been forced to make their churches into cathedrals of National Socialism are becoming fighters again. Faulhaber dares to speak of the new heathenism. He stands straight and stiff in the pulpit of his big church in Munich, and his words are carried by loud speakers to other places of worship. Crowds gather at the doors, all eager to hear a fearless attack on National Socialism. He pours contempt on Germany as a nation without culture and dares in the next sentence to call Israel the chosen people. The hearts of the oppressed turn to him. He thunders against the new German defamers of the Old Testament, from which he quotes moral laws that apply to all the world. 'Either we believe in the inspiration of

