

Angels.

For the TORCH OF REASON. What are angels? This question has never been satisfactorily answered. Angels I think exist only in the imaginations of men, I think each individual who believes in their existence, pictures their shape, color, and size in his own mind.

Angels are mentioned in the Scriptures in several places, but there is no complete and systematic accounts of them. The belief of the church respecting them except in a few points has never been exactly defined. It has always been held that angels and human souls are distinct. Only Dionysius, Areopagita and a few modern speculators have maintained the contrary. Dionysius says there are nine orders of angels. Whether there are not spirits superior to men and angels, has been a disputed point. As to the number of angels and their names, the church in the middle ages repeatedly checked the tendency to go beyond the usually received accounts; a Romish Council, in 745 A. D., mentions with reprobation the use of the unwonted names of Uriel, Raguel, Simiel, etc. The names that have all along been in most common use are Michael, Gabriel and Raphael.

The creation of angels was placed by the platonizing church fathers, before that of the material world. Others assign it to some of the six days.

The Second Synod of Nice (787 A. D.) assigned them subtle, ethereal, or fire-like bodies. The scholastics, on the other hand, and the Lateran Council of 1215 A. D. maintained their immateriality, while others, owing to the appearing of angels mentioned in scripture, attributed to them the power of assuming momentarily the corporal form.

The poet Nonnus (lived in Egypt in the 5th century) is the first to speak of angels' wings. (see Chambers Encyclopedia, Art. Angels) Man has succeeded to some extent in illustrating angels. Up to this time but two species have met my gaze.

First is a young lady angel about 22 years of age, with a lovely face and long waving hair while a thousand yards of muslin entwines her lovely form, the ends of which are suspended gracefully in the air, as her swan like wings carry her on her atmospheric way. This species of Angel I have named the swan-winged angel.

The second and last species that I have seen illustrated is a little boy about four years old, with just the head visible. Small wings resembling those of the small butterfly or the codlin moth protrude abruptly from behind the ears. This species I have named the butterfly angel.

The angels spoken of in scrip-

tures must have been of a material nature. In Numbers xxxii-28 we read "And the ass saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand, and the ass turned aside out of his way."

Whether the angel of the Lord differs from any other kinds, I don't know. But it is evident the one that troubled Balaam was a rather dangerous one, capable of drawing his sword, and making the ass turn aside. In the 32nd verse of the same chapter, is an account of the Angel talking, proving that it had facilities for making sounds.

In 2nd Kings, Chap. xix, verse 35, we read, "and it came to pass that night that the Angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred fourscore and five thousand; and when they arose early in the morning, behold they were all dead corpses."

Sometimes it's consoling to some people, whose friends, or relatives have died to tell them not to worry about it, as God has made him or her, his "dear little angel."

Where is the mother who would like to have their little ones formed into a Gatling gun angel with a killing capacity of a hundred and fifty soldiers a minute.

What a surprise it must have been to the Assyrians to find on waking up, that they, themselves were dead, having all been slain by an angel of the Lord.

When Jesus was put in the tomb Joseph rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, then there came a "big earthquake, for the Angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it." This probably is the greatest fete ever performed by an angel. When the keepers saw him they shook with fear "and became as dead men." For the angel's "countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white like snow."

It is no wonder they trembled with fear, most anybody would. It has been several years since these terrible things have obstructed our highways and killed our people, and its to be hoped they have left the earth never more to return.

We often hear people use such expressions as "dear little angel" "pretty as an angel" "lovely as an angel," "harmless as an angel" etc., but after all, people don't want to be an angel until they have failed at everything else.

E. L. DAVIDSON.

If A Man Die Shall He Live Again?

Mankind, from the infancy of the race, perceiving beyond doubt their existence on earth, and that by death they soon disappear, have never ceased to wonder whether they will live hereafter. The problem involved has been the subject of

more discussion, more speculation, and the basis of more elaborate essays than all others that interest human thought.

That the soul exists is always assumed as a fundamental proposition in all theologies. He is held a daring man who disputes or raises a doubt upon the subject. It is so pleasing to the average man to be told that beyond this world there is another of shadowy forms, in which he is to reappear as a unit, in possession of all the faculties, modes of thought, mental qualities, and even the passions of this life, that he stands not on the tame exaction of proof. If a believer, he is ever ready to vent his wrath on the doubter. In this fortress of credulity imagination has full play; it is the stronghold of all theologies, the place of retreat when hard pressed by reason.

Now, from a philosophical and scientific point of view, what evidence exists upon this subject? If a man has a soul, it must be something planted by nature in the human organization at the beginning of life, in the same or in a similar manner to mind, with its specialized organs of action. We cannot conceive it as originating in nothing. To be conceivable it must be something that has resided somewhere in the human body, and been subject to all laws and changes that are included under the name of "mentality." It cannot be mind, for physiology has been able to determine the conditions under which mind exists, the force by which it is developed, and without which it could have no existence.

Starting then with what is known as the primitive trace, or simple cell, clothed with a power of multiplying and growing upon itself, the soul, if it exists, must in its time and order have passed through every phase of the human body previous to birth. These are all animal types, a zoophyte, a polyp, a rudimental fish, a reptile, a bird, a marsupial, a mammal, not to mention other forms with different nervous organizations. All these are essential steps to the birth of a child. What indications of the presence of a soul can be mentioned while this process of gestation has been going forward?

Birth introduces the babe to new and essentially changed conditions. Maternity has discharged its office, the child now becomes an air-breather, dependent for life upon the oxidizing of the blood, the consumption of carbon, which henceforth is the vital force of life. For about one year, all actions are of a reflex kind. If mind exists, it is not active. The sensory nerves soon begin to receive and record impressions. These, throughout childhood and youth, are extremely vivid and lasting. The centenarian more easily recalls the events of youth than of the preceding

hour. His mind is failing. Present mental impressions have little strength. The store-house of memory is nearly full. Out of millions, and perhaps billions, of impressions, thus stored away involuntarily during a long life in the mind, it has a magazine upon which to exercise its forces—to assort the items, to weigh, compare, ponder, assimilate or reject, as an experienced reasoner shall decide. This may be styled the analysis of thought. But what is thought, save the product of force? Whence does this force originate, but in the consumption of carbon through the agency of the lungs, and the nourishment of the body at large? There can be no thought without the force that creates it. The brain is the seat and center of this force, and the union of all the forces constitute the mind. Phrenology proves that the brain is not a unit, but is distinctly apportioned into what may be called faculties, which are duplicated in such a manner that the organs in one lobe may correct illusions in the other; so one may dream, while the other is awake. Nor is there any line or place where physical force may be separated from mental force. No difference exists except in the form of manifestation, and the organs employed. All spring alike from one source, and that is food supply or combustion. With age and reduced powers, mind and body decay until the force that sustains them ceases to act, when nothing remains but death. If the mind is the soul, how are we to conclude that when force ceased, both did not perish at the same moment? But force is immortal. All organic things can die, but force cannot. It will always persist, as it always has persisted, without diminution of potency. Death, therefore, is the withdrawal of the forces which before animated and sustained life.

And now the mind or mental force being dead, what is left out of the former combination which can be called soul or spirit? By what reasoning process can we imagine that out of a cessation of all laws of life—out of nothing indeed—the death of the mind is the birth of a soul. What is it that leaves the body? Is it anything of tangible kind? Has anyone ever seen a soul? Has any mechanism been devised by the wit of man to gather an impression of this fabulous and immaterial thing? To say it is a shade is to suppose it at least a shadow of something. We know that mind is force which can project its thoughts upon paper, and thus leave a durable mark for others to read.

Nature, as far as any proof exists, deals only with the material and laws of the material. It is impassive, and moves resistlessly under laws of necessity that never

(Continued on 5th. Page.)