

the Jews how he might kill "Jesus" The valley of "Hinnom," which never contains water as does the Valley of Kedron, separates the Mount from the Hill of Zion. This sloping depression, called Ben Hinnom (Josh. xv, 18), brings before us a mental picture that pales to insignificance the atrocious crimes of Nero's Coliseum—this is, the horrible blood-soaked HELL of sacrificed innocents destroyed by a race of sin-polluted, foul, soul-depraved brigands, from whom the Anglo-Saxon race choose to accept "good tidings of great joy." Here thousands of helpless little children were cruelly tortured and slaughtered as a sacrifice to the idol Moloch (ii Kings xxiii, 10; Jer. vii, 31 and xix, 6, 11, 12, 13), and here their bodies, so insanely and horribly destroyed, would lie festering and decaying beneath the scorching rays of a Palestine sun, until some measure of relief was demanded from the stench of such putrefaction. FIRE was the only remedy at hand, and for days at a time the stifling fumes arising from such an accumulation of lifeless bodies was not an incense of sweet savor to the nostrils of the savage beasts of Jerusalem. We are told in holy(?) writ that even at a very late period this valley was an object of great detestation to the Jews, whence the word "Gehenna," used in the New Testament, a contraction of "Gehinnom," signifying Hell, among both Jews and Moslems.

The lower part of the Valley of Kidron is at the present time called "Wadi en-Nar" (valley of fire) in connection with those ancient idolatrous and atrocious crimes; and this most damnable spot upon the earth's surface is the real origin of the orthodox Hell—a place, a home, which to speak of has been such a sweet morsel under the tongues of the pulpit orators for the last 2,000 years. It is a spot of recorded human cruelty. To walk over it makes the face pale, the heart quake and the soul cry for vengeance if we are possessed of humane feeling. But if the vast populace of this 20th century, calling themselves the advanced races of evolution, desire such superstition, why shouldn't they have it? A demand will find a supply, and why not a Hell to those who require it?

Ingersoll was always assailed with the theory that the ancient superstitions should not be destroyed unless something equally "acceptable" to the masses could be given as a substitute. But what describable monster or monstrosity could take the place of the orthodox Hell? Nothing. Isis vainly lifts the veil for our enlightenment.

When Hell is gone all goes, for theology and nature have no substitute.

Passing by this Gehinnom Inferno we find ourselves on the highway to Bethlehem, and of that next time.

The Myth of Hell, or the Human Heart Explored.

BY HENRY FRANK.

Ancient Hebrew thought is silent as to after-death experience. Post-Captivity Jewish thought, complexed by Persian mythology—which in turn was itself complexed by gloomy Scandinavian legend—speaks more clearly of the life of the dead, but only in faint tones as compared with mediæval Christianity.

But here it might be pertinently asked, Why should we search the Bible for proof of hell after death? Because it has more authority? Because of its inspiration? Truth forbids this.

No, we search the Bible as other books of antiquity, merely to learn in what manner this Hell-dogma developed out of the primitive fancy and idealism into the horrible realism of ecclesiastic formulæ. But it seems to me that even the Bible does not clearly and indisputably sustain this repulsive doctrine, and it is not a difficult task to show that the vague passages on which theologians base the dogma cannot be as positively interpreted in their behalf as they would wish.

The word "Hell" itself clearly reveals its pagan or natural origin. Originally it was in no sense a theological term. It did not primarily mean even the place of the dead. It meant merely a concealed or covered place. The word is derived from the Saxon word "Helan"—to cover—signifying merely to conceal or cover. (McClintock and Strong's Cyclopedia of Biblical Literature.) The word afterwards became personified in Hel—the ogress of the ogress of the abode of Loki. She was the proserpine of the Scandinavian mythology. It was from that mythology, as I have said, that the personification of the Devil and literal interpretation of hell is developed.

Now, the Bible employs three principal words which cover this subject, and which have constituted the storm-centers of theological discussion for ages. These words are: Sheol, Hades, Gehenna. Sheol occurs 65 times in the Old Testament. In the A. V. it is represented 31 times by "grave"; 31 times by "hell"; 3 times by "pit". Now, "Hell," representing "Sheol" in the Old Testament 31 times, is in the New Testament the translation of Hades and Gehenna. "Hades" in the New Testament is translated by "Hell" 11 times. "Gehenna" is translated by "Hell" 12 times.

Now, let us see if we can get at the exact meaning of these words. Unless Hades and Gehenna can be shown to sustain the mediæval interpretation, of course the Old-Testament term Sheol will not count at all. If we can show that Hades and Gehenna are purely figurative

terms and arose out of sympathetic communication with pagan nations, among whom no positive theology existed, it will then be evident that the Bible will present no valid apology for the existence and permanence of so revolting a dogma as the one we are now considering.

The original meaning of the term Hades is similar to that of the Saxon term Helan. It is derived from two Greek words meaning "not seen"—invisible. (Liddell and Scott, Lexicon.) Thus the original meaning of Hades was, like Hell, the concealed or covered place of the dead—the grave. Afterward it came to mean the abode of the living dead—but of the good as well as the bad. "There is in the Hades of the New Testament an equally ample signification with the Sheol of the Old Testament as the abode of both the happy and miserable spirits. (McClintock and Strong's Cyclopedia of Biblical Literature.)

I am quoting very orthodox authority. Hades is, therefore, not all Hell—in the exclusive, reprehensible, damnable sense of the creed.

[To be Continued.]

The New World Better.

BY ROBERT G. INGERSOLL.

Concluded from page 1.

as the greatest of all themes in poetry and song?

ANSWER.—Love and Death. The same is true of the greatest music. In Tristan and Isolde is the greatest music of love and death. In Shakespeare the greatest themes are love and death. In all real poetry, in all real music, the dominant, the triumphant tone is love, and the minor, the sad refrain, the shadow, the background, the mystery is death.

QUESTION.—What would be your advice to an intelligent young man just starting out in life?

ANSWER.—I would say to him: "Be true to your ideal. Cultivate your heart and brain. Follow the light of your reason. Get all the happiness out of life that you possibly can. Do not care for power, but strive to be useful. First of all, support yourself so that you may not be a burden to others. If you are successful, if you gain a surplus, use it for the good of others. Own yourself and live and die a free man. Make your home a heaven, love your wife and govern your children by kindness. Be good natured, cheerful, forgiving and generous. Find out the conditions of happiness, and then be wise enough to live in accordance with them. Cultivate intellectual hospitality, express your honest thoughts, love your friends and be just to your enemies."—[From the Dresden Edition, Vol. 8.]

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