

HELL.



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INTRODUCTION.

“DIEU condamne aux enfers la plupart des hommes.

“L'enfer est bon et aimable comme une partie très-considérable du palais de Dieu. Il venge tous les mépris et toutes les injures de Dieu, en quoi il lui rend un très-grand service qui fait que quiconque aime Dieu sincèrement doit aussi aimer l'enfer sous ce point de vue.”—*Théologie Affective*, BAIL.

The work from which the above extract is taken is long and interesting.

Founded upon the teaching of S. Thomas Aquinas, it imparts, in five closely-printed volumes, a considerable amount of information, conveyed in lucid and forcible language, of which the above quotation is a favourable specimen. Bail thinks Hell good and amiable. Those who love God sincerely ought, in his opinion, to love Hell too, because in that large portion of *God's palace* he is avenged of his adversaries.

Some people may envy Bail the inward and spiritual light which enabled him to discern the beauty of damnation. Others may drift away

from Hell to Calvary, and wonder of what use the Atonement was, if, as Bail assures us, God condemns the greater part of mankind to Hell, and places himself under an obligation to the Devil. But one and all may like to know where Hell is and what sort of an existence its inmates lead.

Availing ourselves, therefore, of the information afforded us by a contemporary writer, who views Hell from a very practical point of view, we will take a brief survey of the place which "Eternal justice had prepared for those rebellious."

H E L L.

AN inexpensive but unusually comprehensive little work has long been before the public, but has not hitherto received the attention it deserves, though a striking quotation from it has found its way into Lecky's interesting pages.

The book costs only a penny, and may be bought of Duffy in the Row, or of any other Roman Catholic bookseller. It is drawn up for the use of Roman Catholic children, but it cannot fail to interest and edify adults of all denominations. It is written by the Rev. Father Furniss—a name in curious harmony with its title, 'The Sight of Hell.' Published like all Roman Catholic works *permissu superiorum*, it has the sanction and probably the approval of Cardinal Manning. It is a work of considerable merit, the result not merely of minute research, but of deep conviction, and it needs but a few good illustrations by the hand of some God-fearing artist to take its rank as the best Guide to Hell before the public. Swedenborg has written at greater length upon the fertile theme, but his work is too mystic for the general reader; that of Father Furniss is adapted to every capacity—it is a simple and soul-stirring production. There is only one point about which the writer seems in any uncertainty, and that is the exact *locality* of Hell; however, he thinks it likely to be "in the middle of the earth just four thousand miles off." Bail, on the contrary, seems to consider

it a part of Heaven, and S. John, in the unintelligible work attributed to him, favours the supposition by telling us that the smoke of Hell penetrates into the region of bliss, an arrangement quite irreconcilable with mundane notions of comfort.

All Christians are supposed to know—and all Roman Catholic children are very distinctly taught, that Hell was created for Lucifer the Seraph, and about a third of the inhabitants of Heaven, who, for one sin of thought, and without one minute's time for repentance, were suddenly thrust into the new wing of what Bail is not afraid to call "God's palace," and which Father Furniss has described in such glowing language. He tells us that "millions on millions" are in Hell, and that so long ago as the time of S. Teresa, it was inconveniently crowded, for, during the visit of that great Saint to those great sinners, she found it "impossible to sit or lie down, for there was no room." From each inmate is emitted an odour of such a nature that if but one body were removed and placed among us, "in that same moment every living creature on the earth would die," and Father Furniss is of opinion that the bad smell is increasing. An incessant and appalling noise prevails there; the poor prisoners "hiss, howl, wail, shriek, groan, and yell;" but there is a worse still, for above all you hear "the roaring of the thunders of God's anger;" of course a good and an amiable anger by no means at variance with "His tender mercies which are over all His works," and of which the eternal torture of the damned is an eloquent proof.

How long the angelic host had undisturbed possession of Hell we are not informed. Countless ages may have elapsed ere the monotony was broken by the entrance of the first ill-fated human being whose

name and crime are nowhere recorded. In the celebrated 'Catéchisme de Persévérance,' the Church teaches that, with the exception of *beauty*, "les mauvais anges n'ont rien perdu de leurs dons naturels," we may therefore venture to assume that until the mundane multitude began to pour in daily, the social condition of Hell was endurable; for Lucifer was one of the highest order of angels, called Seraphim, when that horrible thought was put into his angelic mind and caused the instantaneous damnation of a third of Heaven. Who put the sinful thought into the seraphic mind has never transpired.

At that time Lucifer was handsome—now he is hideous. S. Francis saw him. He was sitting upon a great beam which passes right through Hell. He is so tall that his hands can be chained to the roof and his feet to the floor. Horns smoking like chimnies come out of his head. His breath is foetid and fiery. His eyes are full of pride, anger, rage, spite, blood, fire, and cruelty. Who made him so? This is the description given of the Devil by a great Saint.

People have become so familiar with the word Devil, that one would suppose it occurred very frequently in the Bible; however, it is not to be found at all in the Old Testament. As synonymous with idols we see it four times in the plural number, but of Satan we hear nothing until we come to the book of Chronicles. Brought forward by theologians of all persuasions; with what some might consider unnecessary and injudicious prominence, we are sometimes forced to consider him and his melancholy mission, especially when such a book as the one we are engaged upon falls into our hands.

Animated, doubtless by an excellent motive, Father

Furniss has produced a work of questionable utility, more calculated, some might think, to promote convulsions than conversion. We will give two extracts.

The children alluded to, have been previously cursed in the following words, taken from 'The Terrible Judgment,' by the same author :—

"The curse of God the Father Almighty is upon you; I am God the Son, my curse is upon you; the curse of the Holy Ghost who sanctified you is upon you; the curse of every creature is upon you."

"THE RED-HOT OVEN.

"'Thou shalt make him as an oven of fire in the time of thy anger'—Psalm xx. You are going to see again the child about which you read in the 'Terrible Judgment' that it was condemned to Hell! See! it is a pitiful sight. The little child is in this red-hot oven. Hear how it screams to come out. See how it turns and twists itself about in the fire. It beats its head against the roof of the oven. It stamps its little feet on the floor of the oven. You can see on the face of this little child what you see on the faces of all in Hell—*despair*, desperate and horrible! The same law which is for others is also for children. If children knowingly and willingly break God's commandments they must be punished like others. This child committed very bad mortal sins knowing that Hell would be the punishment. God was very good to this child. Very likely God saw that this child would get worse and worse and never repent, and so it would have to be punished much more in Hell. So God, *in his mercy*, called it out of the world in its early childhood."

Thus ends the story of the red-hot oven which a

merciful father prepared for his little child, and into which he thrust her because he was so fond of her!

We will give one more extract from Father Furniss:—

“What are they doing?”

“Perhaps at this moment—seven o'clock in the evening—a child is just going into Hell. To-morrow evening at seven o'clock go and knock at the gates of Hell and ask what the child is doing. The devils will go and look. Then they will come back again and say, *the child is burning*. Go in a week and ask what the child is doing; you will get the same answer, *it is burning!* Go in a year and ask, the same answer comes, *it is burning!* Go in a million of years and ask the same question, the answer is just the same, *it is burning!* So if you go for ever and ever you will always get the same answer, *it is burning in the fire.*”

Longer and equally horrible passages might be chosen, but enough has been quoted to show with what wholesome and inviting food the lambs of the Roman Catholic fold are fed, those lambs of whom the mild Son of Man is reported to have said:—“It is not the will of my father that one of these little ones should perish.”

Sincere anxiety for the salvation of souls has, we doubt not, urged Father Furniss to condense into a very small compass a collection of horrors from which adults turn away with dismay, wondering that the “superiors” by whose permission the infernal little book is printed and circulated, sanction anything so ill-calculated to impress the golden rule upon the infant mind and so utterly at variance

with the injunction attributed to Jesus, "If thine enemy hunger feed him, and if he thirst give him drink."

Fortunately for the interests of what is called religion, no little children and very few adults "meditate upon these things." Those who *do*, neither fear the Hell nor covet the Heaven of theology. It is the generally received opinion among the Fathers that Adam had been created but a few hours when Lucifer succeeded in procuring his ignominious dismissal from Paradise; but we have never heard how soon after his creation Lucifer himself was exposed to the malevolent and fatal influence of some occult agent who, like the Satan of the book of Job, was suffered to present himself "before the Lord" and to achieve the instantaneous transformation of angels into devils.

Accustomed from our childhood to hear much and often about the Fall of man, the depravity of our nature, our proneness to sin, innate tendency to evil thoughts, etc., but wholly unaccustomed to "meditate upon these things," we sometimes lose sight of the still more startling and indigestible doctrine of the Fall of the Seraphim, the imperfection of *their* nature, *their* proneness to evil thoughts, and their consequent liability to be precipitated into Hell. How are we to know that evil thoughts are now banished from that haven of rest where once they wrought such disastrous and abiding consequences? Those who are aspiring to that "better land," where "the ways are ways of pleasantness and all the paths peace," may rejoice that religion and theology are not synonymous—that it is possible to love God sincerely without loving Hell too, and that they can train up their children in the way they should go, with-

out having recourse to Father Furniss's method of salvation by fear—a method singularly at variance with the teaching of One who is reported to have said, "Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea." However, perhaps "the end justifies the means;" in which case 'The Sight of Hell' will contribute *ad majorem Dei gloriam*.



