THE DECADENCE OF HELL.

Under the somewhat flippant title, What Has Become of Heil," the Rev. Dr. Shinn discusses, in the North American for June, the remarkable change which of late years has come to pass in the Protestant world with re ference to future punishment. Protestant press and Protestant pulpit have, with remarkable unanimity, ceased to discuss this unpleasant sub-In fact, hell is seldom mentioned ject. except in the profanity of the day.

"It was not always thus," says Dr. Shinn. "In days not very long past, men argued with each other concerning the place and concerning the people who were on their way thither." Appeals to flee from the wrath to come were the great feature of old fashioned revivals. Belief in hell was a practical incentive to missionary endeavor.
Without the Gospel the dwellers by Africa's sunny fountains and India's coral strand could not escape the pains

But such views are now quite out of date. When one of the speakers at the recent so-called Ecumenical Conference ventured to suggest that a little old-fashioned fire-and-brimstone preaching might be found beneficial to-day, he was greeted with peals of derisive laughter.

Dr. Shinn asserts as a fact, which cannot be contradicted, that belief in hell as a place or state of punishment has been the persuasion of Christian people from the beginning of Christianity down to a few years ago. Hell is recognized in the Scriptures, and the writings of the early Fathers are full of references to it. But what has become of it lately? Why is it that the preachers have ceased to urge what is for the majority the only effective motive for virtuous living? though one may be accused of taking a low view of human nature by endors ing such sentiments, the fact is that few men are attracted to duty by the moral beauty of duty, and few keep God's law out of pure love for God.

According to Dr. Shinn the move

ment for the discrediting of hell began with the introduction of Universalism into this country away back in 1770, and Universalist notions have gradu ally infected all denominations ' Eternal Hope, on Farrar's book on in which he branded the doctrine of eternal suffering as an affront to God and a violation of the instincts of humanity, found a large and sympathetic audience. The world, for reasons best known to itself, wanted to get rid of the Canon's amiable arguments ministered to the want. Some "thinkers" who could not quite accept Farrar invented a theory of pro bation ; which is a caricature of our dectrine of Purgatory. The sum and substance of it is that God will in the world to come give a second chance of working out their salvation to those who failed to work it out in this mortal life., But suppose a man fails to avail himself of the second chance? what will be done with him after he has rejected his last chance? Evidently the theory of a second probation

will not do. The usual plan for doing away with hell is to explain away the language of Scripture which is supposed to refer to it. Another plan is the revival of it. Another plan is the revival of the constant of the c the alleged views of Origen, who is are confirmed with the sign of the Cross-said to have believed in hell, but not We get absolution with the sign of the an eternal hell. Still another plan is based on the assumption of a "condi-tional immortality," which means that only those who have been filled with the spirit of God during this life will the spirit of God unting survive eternally. Sinners will simply cease to be. But this view, though, according to Dr. Shinn, there are many things connected with it which would make almost any one wish he could ac cept it, is open to the serious objection that it contravenes the fundamental Christian persuasion of the immortality of the soul.

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Against all this theorizing-against the growing popular reluctance to hear anything about "the place which cannot be named in the presence of cultured persons," Dr. Shinn insists that hell "cannot be obliterated. He says that there is no fact which so obtrudes itself as the fact of retribution. The law of retribution works in our present life and why may it not work hereafter? The time has come to emphasize this point. The failure to appeal to healthy fear accounts in part, according to Dr. Shinn, for the noticeable general decline in personal religion. "The consciences of men must be aroused and the most effectual quickening of conscience is through the dread of the judgment to come. He who dies in sin passes on to be judged for the deeds done in the body. Having rejected the offer of mercy here, he must meet penalty there. The man who dies impenitent and unfor-

given finds his retribution."
Dr. Shinn is to be commended for speaking thus frankly on a subject so utterly distasteful to his co religionists. We hope his deacons or elders or vestry-men will appreciate his zeal in the cause of truth—that they will not be scandalized by his assertion that ceasing to believe in hell does not abolish hell. For the rest we submit that had he more knowledge he would have made a more telling article. The argument from the visible law of retribution is good as far as it goes, but ing its rulers from the lowest classes of there are others far more cogent which can readily be found in any treatise on man.

Catholic doctrine. Why men of his It was in itself a people's university,

stamp can content themselves with groping in the dusk of half-knowledge when the light is at hand, is one of the things which we have never been able to understand.—Providence Visitor.

SIGN OF THE CROSS.

The various forms of the cross in early and mediaeval times were very numerous. Justin Martyr says: "The sign of the cross is impressed upon the whole of nature. . . . It forms part of man himself when he raises his hands in prayers."

It may be interesting to notice the occurrence of the symbol of Christian faith among the prehistoric remains of the Western Hemisphere, says a writer in the Saturday Review.

On the Island of Cozumel, in the Caribbean, a stone cross attracted the attention of early navigators and ex-

Among the massive ruins of Yucatan its occurrence is noted at many places. The temple of the Cross, at Palmyra, affords a remarkable illustration. The tablet of the cross which adorned the sanctuary was a beautiful work of art Part of it is now in the National Museum, Washington. At Copan a statue in the shape of a cup has been discovered; another at Cuzbo and still another in Paraguay.

The question has been asked whether the cross has been found among the works of the Mound Bullders. I mention the discovery of a crucifix in a Western mound. In a crucifix county, West Virginia, an earthen mound was disturbed some years ago, and among its contents was a crucifix -the cross of iron greatly oxidized, the figure of bright metal, supposed to be Corinthian gold. Dimensions of the cross, The pin which at-7 by 4 inches. tracted the incription and emblem was present, but the legend and emgone. The mound in which this interesting relic was found belonged to the early mound period, dating back centuries. I purchased the relies, but do not attach value to the crucifix as a relic of the mound period. The stone ornaments found with it possess archaic interest as genuine pre-historic memorials. My explanation of the crucifix is that it belonged to a Spaniard or a French. man, who became lest and perished in the wilderness of the West, and his precious talisman passed to a nomadic

A silver cross was found in an an cient mound near Marietta, Onio. In a large mound on the Kentucky side of the Onio, opposite Portsmouth, two silver crosses and thirty buckles have been found. The crosses were decorated with leaves, but furnished no clue to the age; but one of the buckles, heart-shaped, bore the French crown

We regret to say that some Catholics do not think it fashionable to make the sign of the cross before and after Those weaklings are to be pitied. The Cross will preach to man-kind the infinite sufferings of Our Blessed Saviour for the sins of the world. It will preach to us the horror The Cross is the emblem of of sin. The Cross is the emblem of Christianity and the sign of salvation. In the words of St. Paul, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; by Whom the world is crucified to me and I to the For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision but a new creature. And whosoever shall follow this rule, peace on them, and mercy and upon the We receive Holy Communion Cross. We receive Holy Community with the sign of the Cross. When dying all our senses are anointed with Holy Oils in the name of the signs of the Cross. At Mount Calvary the Cross the emblem of disgrace and infamy. At the day of General Judg-ment Our Lord will appear in His glory and majesty, surrounded by countless millions of angels, and the Cross will be borne aloft in glory and triumph. Please God, on that day we shall rejoice and glory in the Cross of Redemption.

BISHOP SPALDING.

The Church and the Human Mind

It is one of the glories of the Church that it has scorned no human gift, con-demned no forms of genius. What-ever individuals may have done to narrow the scope of its action and inhas come to fluence, its general spirit has been The failure really Catholic. It has ever looked upon the Christian revelation as the full manifestation of the divine reason, which by word and deed seeks to make itself prevail in the hi-tory of the race; not to thwart or cripple human activ ity, but to consecrate it and to give it

higher aims. Ii has always felt that, in spite of apparent contradictions, there is har-mony between Christian faith and science. Its appeal is to reason and con-science, not to force. It preserved the ancient literature ; it founded schools ; it protected and encouraged men of learning and genius. During the per-iod known as the Renaissance, in which the modern mind first awakened, Italy led the other nations, and in Italy the Popes were the chief promoters of the new culture. It refused to permit learning to become the appanage of a caste or an aristocracy, but fostered talent, whether it was found in the prince or the peasant. It made ability and not birth the test of worth, choossociety, if it discovered there the ablest

the capacity and equality of all, was a world wide preparatory training for the modern assertion of popular rights and liberties But it did more than set up in its cathedrals and churches the teacher's chair around which the whole people gathered to listen to the utterance of the sublimest and most elevating truths; it sought to make the temple of religion a temple of art. It most interesting monuments of the Old World. The very light which streams into them through those wonderful windows, not unworthy to be the por-

erected those vast and mysterious Gothic structures, which are still the tals of paradise, reminds us of other worlds, while the music which floods the far-withdrawing aisles, deep and solemn as the voice of the ccean, sounds like an echo from the infinite home of God, to which all souls belong. From the deep-glowing windows, and from the numberless niches, apostles, martyrs and virgins look out upon the worshipping multitude, who turn to the altar of the Real Presence, where

WONDERFUL LITTLE BELGIUM

burns the quenchiess light.

Thriving Kingdom Which Gives the Lie to One of Bigotry's Oft Used Arguments.

From the London Catholic Universe A wonderful little kingdom is Belgium, so populous and so wealthy, considering its superficial area. It is little more than one-third the size of Ireland, yet its inhabitants number over Though it is so densely populated, there is no poverty nor is there any danger of famine, because it produces its own necessaries of life with a good deal to spare for exportation. The balance between agriculture and manufactures is well maintained.

Belgium has an effective army, small but compact navy and considerable commerce. One of its colonial en-terprises is the Congo Free State, beween which and Antwerp there is a fleet of steamers second only to the Atlantic liners. Belgium's trade with the Congo is rapidly increasing. The official returns recently issued show an increase. increase last year of 31 per cent. on the figures of 1898, whilst those of 1898 marked an increase of per cent. on those of 1897. In exports alone the increase is over o per cent. The prosperity of Balgium exposes the falseness of the platitude so frequently on the lips of ignor. ant bigots-namely, that where Catholicity prevails there is nothing but

poverty and decay.

Belgium is more Catholic than Ireland, inasmuch as the Protestant minority in the latter country is propor-tionately greater than the Protestant minority in the former. In Ireland there is a considerable English element, and for centuries it has been the governing power. With what result? It is visible in the contrast between the wealth of Belgium and the poverty of Ireland, the latter having more fertile soil and an area almost three times greater than that of the former. Bigots say it is the rule of the priests that has beggared Ireland. But the Belgium priests exercise their political power to an extent not attempted by the Irish clergy. In the recent Bel-gium elections the Catholic party have retained their majority over the Liberals and the Socialists, though the latter have had some partial successes The wealth of Catholic Belgium and Catholic France refutes the falsehoods

AN EXHIBIT.

In the Missionary Exhibit which was gotten up in connection with the Missionary Conference in New York, a large wooden crucifix was shown, with this inscription :-

"This crucifix, for years, was worshipped by a native Brazilian, who gave it up when he heard the Gospel, and knew that the Bible forbids idolatry. Rev. H. C. Tucker, donor."

Another smaller crucifix was taken from a Mexican boy, whom they report to have said that it was "his God Whom he was carrying in his pocket. Other devotional articles were on ex hibition, and even Catholic vestments. What did the Episcopalian Bishops in attendance on the meetings of the Conference think of this show? Similar crucifixes, statues and vestments could be found in their own ritualistic churches; and "Chaplain Pierce" Manila fame deludes the natives there by means of a crucifix in his belt and pretence at saying Mass. - Sacred Heart Review.

THE LATEST VERSION,

According to the latest version of the alleged ailment of the "Rev. Mary Baker Eddy, the mother of Christian Science, she is afflicted with creeping paralysis. Since by her own illuminous teaching, sickness is a myth and there is no reality except the divine existence, consequently no such thing as paralysis or a body for it to creep over, it is somewhat puzzling to the uninitiated to understand how Mary can have creeping paralysis. The world has been pretty successfully humbugged a great many times, but rarely by anything so transparently idiotic as Christian Science. And yet there are some addle-brained people who build temples and pretend to worship God by trying to propagate it. There may be some joy among its members and some pleasure in their work, but to us it looks like the joy and pleasure of the simple minded and insane who live in delusion and thirty years, lost his wife last summer. chatter about folly. Because they do

more hopeless and pitiable. - Catholic Universe.

THE MODERN PRIEST.

Mgc. Mignot Addresses His Clergy As to What They Ought to Be. In a circular letter to his clergy Mgr. Mignet, Bishop of Albi, lays down what the priest of the hour should know. This prelate is an authority on the subject of which he treats, for he is considered to be the most learned one in France. He is looked upon, moreover, as the one the most in the van of modern thought. According to him the priest of the hour should be as deeply versed in classical knowledge as were his elders in previous generations of the priesthood. Be-sides Latin he should have at least a good knowledge of Greek. He should be learned in the academic sense. From this it will be seen that Mgr. Mignot concedes to modern exigencies no iota of the traditional character of a priest's education. According him the modern priest must be what the best before him have been in the matter of learning. But he must be something besides. After por-ing over Greek and Latin he must bring his mind on a level with all the discoveries of the age. He must be versed in natural as in sacred science. By a few splendid strokes of the pen the Archbishop of Albi traces the progress of modern science. He shows how the heavens and the earth have in re cent times revealed their secrets, upset-ting the old order of things. In the presence of this he places the priest of the hour and with the latest scientific discoveries as point of sight. "The priest nowadays," he says, "should be the most cultured man of his parish, because he is the defender of religion. He should know the ground of attack as well as that of defense. To objections unknown to our forefathers he should have ready answers. In reality the Church, instead of being the enemy of science, has been its Saviour. If the progress of physical science

under the Church's sway was comparatively slow, Mgr. Mignot gives the rea-He shows that the Church's first object was to produce saints, and learned men in the supernatural order. "But if," he says, "she did not discover the secret of the earth's motion or raise a monument in honor of physical science, she raised one incomparably more important in honor of revela-He shows how modern scient tion. ists are indebted, as no words can tell, to the courageous efforts and silent labor of men working during long ages under the Church's shadow and often in the religious garb. Roger Bacon is cited as an instance, and Isaac Newton is made to say by the pen of the Archbishop of Albi that without the Abbe Picard's labors he would not have been in a position to verify the exactness of his discoveries. Admitting that modern science and the Church now work on separate lines, the Archbishop attributes this in a measure to the suppresion of priests under the Revolu-tion. He shows the Church to have been busy since then rising from her ruins and forming priests worthy of their sacred mission. But the time has come for something besides, he thinks. According to him the modern pries must be a man of science as well as of learning and of sanctity. "If our generation has more than ever need holy priests, she has also need of irned ones." This remarkable ad-

PLAY.

An English journal had recently the following communication, on a subject that just at present is full of interest to Catholics, namely, the sort of people who enact the parts in the Passion Play at Oberammergau The correspondent writes of the Oberammergau villagars:—

"They struck me as a people apart in some mysterious and indefinable way. The look in their eyes was dif-ferent from that of others. One sees t sometimes shining under the calm brows of devout yet unsaddened per-sons coming reverently out of church, after a service which has lifted up

their hearts. "I lived among the Oberammergauers for a while, studying them as best I could; and I last decided that this mysterious something was partly the effect of the tragedy which has mingled with the blood in their veins through almost countless generations, their outlook on the everlast-

gau occupy themselves all the winter (save only the winter before the Tragedy) with their wood carving, giving their thoughts shape in the forms of saints, madonnas and the Lord they worship dying on the cross. They reherse the minor plays they enact every year, by way of practice for the great event; and they draw much soft, half melancholy music from the violins on which it is one of their dearest pleasures, their best talents, to

play.
"They go to church much; not a man among them is known to look too long upon the wine when it is red, or beer when it is brown, even on a feastday, when a little relaxation is excusable. The people take their pleasures quietly, their sorrows quietly also, with a simple dignity of resigna-

tion. "Josef Mayer, for instance, who played the part of Christus thrice in

whose teaching, open to all, assuming it seriously, makes their condition compaint, which racked her with con-Her husband nursed her night and day; and at last she Mayer made no moan died. when he followed the coffin to the grave his hair, lately so black, was white as the snow still lingering on the mountains. 'I can never act the mountains. 'I can never act Christus again,' he said. For an Operammergauer would consider it almost sacrilegious to disguise himself by dyeing his hair or wearing a wig on the stage of the theatre to him as sacred as a church. Rosa Lang also, who twice played the Mother of our Lord, had her own private serrow which she bore with the quiet courage she showed as the grief - stricken Mary. If the Operammergauers were not sincerely religious they could not give the figures which they skilfully carve in wood such beautiful and holy faces. Practically every man carves in wood, most of them as a profession, the remaining few for pleasure when there is time for pleasure. Auton Lang (not related to Rosa), the young man with the serene eyes and perfect profile, who is playing Christus for the first time, is one of the latter few. He is a Hafner meister (master stove - builder) making the porcelain tiled stoves so much used in

CHRIST.

In His created capacity Christ was not only the greatest individual of the human race, but the greatest individall creation. No intellect amongst the highest rank of cherubim ever penetrated so deeply into the abyss of the Divine Essence; no will amongst the highest rank of seraphim ever came into such perfect union that of the Divine. Inundated by the light of the Divinity shining from the Eternal Word within, Christ comprehended not only all creation, but even the Divinity itself, so far as that was comprehensible by created faculty while His Will, attracted by this bea tific vision, adhered with invincible force to that of His Eternal Parent. From this rose a superb moral and intellectual excellence never possessed by any creature standing outside the Divine Essence. In Christ therefore creation culminated, and the Divine Being stepping outside the clouds of infinity in which He has been enfolded for eternity manifested Himself to His creation.

THE NEED OF PRAYER.

Which one of us has not felt the need of prayer? Which of us has failed to see its results? If not substantially in everyday life, at least can we fail to perceive the sweetness penetrate the recesses of our souls? To feel that we are not struggling alone but helped onward by the prayers of a friend, stimulates us to action in every instance, causing the vision of dis-couragement to fade away in the clear gleam of sunlight which brings out with distinctness the picture of loved one kneeling, his breast beating responsive to our request, "Pray for

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Liverpool Catholic Times.

DASSION

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Liverpool Catholic Times.

DASSION

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well-known to inconsist they are in giving tone to the system.

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