

Interesting Items

THE GOSPEL IN IRELAND

Despite a recent campaign, whose object was "To make Ireland one hundred per cent Catholic," Ernest Gordon informs us in *The Sunday School Times* that "the one outstanding fact in the religious situation in Ireland during the past ten years is the waning power of the Roman Catholic priesthood." The Irish Church Missions and the Irish Colportage Association both report that although their work is publicly denounced by Roman Catholic bishops, tens of thousands of Testaments and portions of Scripture are distributed in Irish homes annually; that the old bigotry against Protestants is largely gone; and it is easier to get into many houses than to leave again, because when one has something to say about spiritual things, the inmates would listen all day.—*Alliance Weekly*.

THE ATHEISTIC MOVEMENT

In a conversation with representatives of eight different foreign countries, Jaroslawski, the leader of the Russian Society of the Godless, according to a publication of the conversation which is reported in *Evangelisch Deutschland*, declares that there are at present over 5,000,000 members of the Society of the Godless, which is organized in more than 60,000 units or local circles. It is stated that in 1926 the society was comprised of only 87,000 members; in 1925 it had increased its membership to 465,000; in 1930 the growth was up to 3,000,000. In concluding the conversation in which the foreign representatives asked a number of questions concerning the cultural polity of the godless movement, Jaroslawski expressed his belief that the time is not far distant in which this year will be regarded as the fifteenth year of a new era and the reckoning of time will be computed from the beginning of the October revolution, "the day of the great dawning of a new humanity," in 1917.—*Missionary Review of the World*.

RELIGIOUS WHO'S WHO

Luther Fry of the Institute of Social and Religious Research has been studying the religious attitudes of the "Who's Who in America" family. Dr. Fry finds that 56 per cent of the persons listed in the 1930-1931 edition reported a church connection. This, he says, is almost the same as that for the entire population. Only 17 of those listed "took occasion to classify themselves in black and white as infidels, atheists, free-thinkers or agnostics." Twenty-three per cent of actors, painters and sculptors, 35 per cent of army and navy officers, 37 per cent of natural scientists, 40 per cent of editors and authors, 50 per cent of doctors and 51 per cent of architects and engineers claim a church connection. Politicians, diplomats, judges and lawyers, agriculturists, bankers and business men report from 54 to 61 per cent of affiliations, while the educators and social workers range from 63 to 64 per cent.—*Presbyterian Advance*.

RELIGIOUS STATISTICS

According to the *Lutheran World Almanac*, there are 558,027,965 Christians in the world at the present time. They constitute only about 28 per cent of the world's population, but a greater percentage than is allied with any other religion. North America has only about 83,624,772 Christians as compared with Europe's 381,217,663; but the figures for North America are said to be

minimum figures, is religious affiliations are not an item in the official census here as they are in European countries. The remainder of the world's religious population is divided as follows: Jews, 0.79 per cent; Mohammedans, 11.09 per cent; Animists, 6.87 per cent; Buddhists, 6.87 per cent; Confucianists and Taoists, 17.77 per cent; Hindus, 11.65 per cent; Shintoists, 1.27 per cent, and others, 14.68 per cent. The definition of membership in the various religious groups, however, varies widely. Many bodies report large numbers of children as communicant members while others do not.—*Methodist-Protestant Recorder*.

HELPS TO HOLINESS

Great wisdom is needed in the promoting of the truth and experience of Christian holiness. There is no truth more opposed nor less understood by the people than this truth. The devil hates it, wicked men hate it, weak believers oppose it and formalists seek to defeat it. It therefore behooves us to live it and seek to promote it not only as a doctrine to be believed, but as an experience to be obtained, and a life to live, and that we should seek to set forth the truth as to help men and women to find the way. It greatly aids masses of people in their thinking to discover the standard of true holiness.

There are many who identify the thought of being freed from sin with the idea of the dehumanizing of our selfhood. When men understand that the eradication of sin does not destroy our humanity, much opposition fades away. We can therefore help in the spreading of Scriptural holiness by not placing the standard higher than that which is written. It is sin that is destroyed when God sanctifies us wholly and not our true selves. I fear that sometimes figures have been pressed so far as to convey the opposite idea. It is the sin of self that dies, not our human personality.

If we teach that holiness conditions us so that we cannot feel an injustice or suffer under pressure either from the enemy or from the opposition of folk, we are placing the standard beyond that which is written. The beautiful fact is that while we may both feel and suffer, we can do so in patience and in purity without that carnal resentment that breaks our peace and precipitates trouble between man and man. No, it is possible to enjoy true holiness and yet have a natural preference for certain foods and for the comforts of life, and function in a normal way in all the varied legitimate relationships of life. There is, however, in this gracious grace a conditioning of us to bear patiently with situations where our preferences are not recognized or indulged. We do not teach that the blessing frees us from the fact of being tempted, nor from the natural infirmities of our selfhood. The destruction of sin does not mean such a change in our personality as to destroy our capacity to sin. Since this is true, we are susceptible to temptation through the channel of our natural selfhood, and are subject to infirmities which are upon us as the consequence of the fall in this probationary period.

We do not therefore teach a legal or absolute perfection, but an evangelical perfection, the standard of which is that love is the fulfilling of the law. On the other hand there is great danger in lowering the standard of both experience and life in Christian holiness.

In my own observation I fear there are many who in their seeking stop at the point where condemnation is lifted, and they feel the freedom of a right relation with God. There are many who stop at this station and who testify to being sanctified when there is nothing between

them and the Lord which condemns. We must insist upon a much higher standard of experience than this. Christian holiness frees from inward sin, from depravity, so that freedom from condemnation which belongs to the first step in salvation is not sufficient. We need to insist upon that inward purity which marks the absence of our "old man," the carnal nature, and the indwelling presence of the fullness of the Holy Spirit. One reason why so many make repeated trips to the altar for the blessing is because they stop at the station of freedom from condemnation rather than recognizing that as their preparation to press on for inward purity. To be free from inward sin is as gracious a reality and as knowable to human consciousness and capable of testing in human experience, as to be free from condemnation and in right relation with God.

It may help men and women to recognize that the sin which is removed when they are sanctified wholly is no essential part of their human selfhood, but an inoculation of the devil which may be removed utterly and leave them with their whole human personality, plus the abiding of the Comforter, empowering them for a holy life.—*Christian Witness*.

THE MAIN THING

E. E. Shelhamer

Some things are more important than others. Let us put first things first.

The main thing is heart purity.

The main thing is not water, but fire.

The main thing is not a big shout in church, but gentleness at home.

The main thing is not, are you able to give a needed reproof, but can you take one as well.

The main thing that proves your liberality is not how much you give, but how much you have left.

The main thing is not, are your actions pure and holy, but are your inner thoughts and feelings such?

The main thing is not how well a young lady can bake frosted cake, but how well she can make common bread.

The main thing for missionaries is not to teach heads to read or write, but hearts to feel saving grace.

The main thing is not, can you trust God fully, but can He trust you when nobody is looking at you?

The main thing is not how you enjoy a good meal, but how frequently you praise your wife's good cooking.

The main thing is not how well you can argue your point, but how you can cease in order to preserve peace.

The main thing is not how rich you appear in public, but do others have a hard time collecting what you owe?

The main thing is not, are you a "pre" or a "post," but do your actions prove you are ready for His coming now?

The main thing is not how nice you act when strangers are present, but how you treat your home folks when all alone.

The main thing is not how much zeal you have for your views, but how much courtesy you show toward those who oppose you.

The main thing is not how many flowers you had at your loved one's funeral, but how many you strew before death.—*Christian Witness*.

That fills me with awe. I can not find a hiding-place where I can sin in secrecy. It fills me also with joy and hope. He sees the faintest, weakest desire aspiring after goodness. He sees every movement which looks toward home.—J. H. Jowett.