

IRRELIGIOUS RELIGION.

The "Living like Christ" experiment of certain Protestant zealots, whose pious intentions were exploited recently in the daily press, undoubtedly was a movement of good-will, which, however, is by no means synonymous with good taste or judgment.

Sensational journals reported the progress of the undertaking under headlines that verged on blasphemy, and the most sacred and solemn subjects were held up to public ridicule, or dismissed as weighed in the balance of the enlightened twentieth century, and found wanting in modern practicality.

Yet this dissolving error has a redeeming side. It is one of the many good signs of spiritual consciousness and revitalization that are evident at the present day. Agate, the churches, and the goddesses of the children in and starve the souls of the children in schools of luxury secular lore, in spite of the pagan luxury and Mammon worship demoralizing the social classes, in spite of the anarchical and socialistic creeds of violence and license undermining the welfare of the human masses—in spite of the ruthless reign of Monopoly and the mortal strife of rebellious Labor, in spite of the dishonor, graft and immorality of public and private modern life—yet agnosticism no longer contents, and religious indifference yields place to interest, inquiry, and aspiration in the spiritual order.

Similar proof is in our literature, even though morbid, gloomy and pessimistic deductions too often take the place of solutions to the problems presented, and leave the goddess, criminal, suicidal literature of despair. But perhaps more visibly than elsewhere, the signs of vital religious awakening challenge us from the modern stage, where "holding the mirror up to nature," dramatic art reflects the spirit and trend of the day and generation to which it simultaneously appeals and responds.

Take for instance, as representative productions of the present season, the opera of "Salome," the dramas of "The Servant in the House," "The Devil," "Salvation Nell," "The Little Town of Bethlehem," each and all of religious suggestion and moral lesson. The great spectacular successes of Dreamland, Coney Island, even during the recent season, were "Creation," "The Feast of Belshazzar," and "The End of the World," all three scenic and dramatic representations of Scriptural narrative and date likewise run to realistic presentations of Hades and Satan, which in spite of the fact that the sight of sinners "shooting the chutes" into eternal fire gives a farcical touch to the tragedy, yet serve to remind the forgetful and careless and to suggest to the ignorant, that the "wages of sin is death!"

Yes, the soul life is quickening, and the immortal instinct of worship reviving in the American people. Then let us be religious in our religion, giving it true and not false devotional expression—let reverence go hand in hand with spiritual aspiration and effort, and prudence, restraint, dignity, and give wisdom to impulse born of sincere but misguided religious good-will.—N. Y. Freeman's Journal.

NEWS FROM SCOTLAND.

Mr. James Mathew Paver, S. J., of Edinburgh, is one of the most diligent champions of the Catholic faith in Scotland. He has recently been crossing swords with Rev. John Wallace of the Iron Presbyterian Church, Edinburgh, and has driven that gentleman into a very tight corner.

Much excitement is being caused in the North of Scotland at present by a squabble which is taking place between the Rev. Mr. McPherson of St. Columba's Presbyterian Church, and the Established Presbytery of Elgin. In St. Columba's Church Mr. McPherson has introduced such an Presbyterian innovation as an altar and a surpliced choir, while the congregation say "Amen!" Accordingly charges of "ritualism" and "popish practices" have been brought against Mr. McPherson, and a meeting took place the other day at which some hot language was used. Mr. McPherson's congregation is standing by him in his "Popish practices," and the Presbytery of Elgin is to lay the matter before the General assembly of the Church of Scotland.

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Church of the Greyfriars in Elgin was restored to its original state by the late Marquis of Bute and is now attached to the convent of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd.

A few miles from Elgin is situated the stately ruins of Pluscardyn Priory, one of the houses of the Scottish Cistercians. It lies in one of the most secluded and most beautiful valleys in Scotland, and must have been an ideal retreat for these holy men of former days.

One of the resolutions that every mother of a Catholic family should make in the dawn of this new year, writes Marie Louise Poincaré in the New Orleans Morning Star, is never to allow the children to sit down to table without first invoking the blessing of God upon the repast.

For it is a sad commentary on the busy, rushing life to-day that most people do not find time to thank the Giver of All Good for the food by which their lives are sustained.

Once in a while now in some old families where the father or grandfather sits at the head of the table, the family and guests bow their heads and the blessing is asked.

In this day of whirl and clatter, Americans are economizing for time in every way, and many of the old time courtesies that distinguished life in the past—and so not only courtesy and digestion have gone by the board, but that great duty of giving thanks to God for the daily bread which we asked of Him.

There was no more beautiful home picture than this, and I know that those boys and girls, now scattered far and wide from the old family roof tree, keep up in their own homes this blessed custom, this sacred duty, and this memory, mingled with that other holy recollection of the evenings when all gathered in family prayer before "good night" was said, remains with them as a sweet incentive to truer lives and higher efforts.

It is astonishing that Catholics should allow such a duty to lapse in their homes. So touching is this custom of saying grace at meals that even Protestant writers have chosen it as one of the most beautiful thoughts in their pen pictures of home life.

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SPIRIT MANIFESTATIONS.

GOD DOES NOT SEND ANGELS TO EARTH TO GIVE REFINED VAUDEVILLE, SAYS FATHER PARDOU.

Father William O'Brien Pardou, S. J., spoke on Spiritualism in the series of talks given by him to the Daughters of the Faith at the Catholic Club, New York, shortly before his death.

"God does not," he said, "send legions of His angels down to earth to give a refined vaudeville show. Neither is there any reason to believe that the various rappings, whisperings, materializations and mysterious writings that have been shown to be not the result of deliberate fraud on the part of professional manifestations, should be attributed to the spirits of the dead."

The speaker enjoined all good Catholics to stop worrying and speculating about these things, which he seemed to think were inimical to the cause of religion. Since the Church had not set upon the doctrines or manifestations of spiritualism the seal of her official approval it was disloyal for Catholics to imagine that they could have any value except from the point of mere amusement or of scientific interest.

CATHOLIC MILLIONS SHOW GROWTH.

GRAND TOTAL OF CATHOLICS UNDER THE UNITED STATES FLAG AMOUNTS TO 22,474,440. GREAT BRITAIN 12,063,000.

According to advance sheets of the 1909 Official Catholic Directory published by M. H. Wiltzjus Co., of Milwaukee, there are 11,235,451 Catholics in the United States. These figures show an increase of 358,025 over last year.

A study of the Wiltzjus Directory shows that in the United States there are 16,093 Catholic priests, 11,885 of whom are secular clergy and 4,208 members of the Religious Order clergy.

How Cecil Rhodes Lost His Faith. A recent volume of reminiscences quotes the late Cecil Rhodes as saying sadly of a clever atheistic book which he read in his young manhood: "That book has made me what I am."

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The total number of Catholic Churches in the various archdioceses and dioceses is 12,923—8,640 having resident pastors and 4,188 being attended from neighboring parishes.

The Directory further shows that there are 80 Seminaries with 5,687 students attending same. In the United States there are 213 Universities and Colleges for boys and 708 academies for girls.

According to the Wiltzjus publication there are 4,703 parishes with parochial schools, and the total number of children in these parochial schools is 1,197,913. There are 200 orphan asylums, in which 44,906 orphans are cared for.

The Catholic population of the twenty leading dioceses, according to the latest statistics, is as follows: New York, 1,219,920; Chicago, 1,150,000; Boston, 850,000; Brooklyn, 700,000; New Orleans, 525,000; Philadelphia, 525,000; Pittsburgh, 425,000; St. Louis, 375,000; Hartford, 365,000; Newark, 365,000; Cleveland, 330,000; Springfield, 323,121; Detroit, 267,000; Scranton, 265,000; St. Paul, 200,000; Baltimore, 250,000; San Francisco, 250,000; Buffalo, 244,739; Milwaukee, 235,000; Providence, 222,000.

THE TWO CATHOLICITIES.

Ah, those Latin American republics where Liberalism writes like a serpent beneath the tropical verdure! They are Catholic countries, nominally, but their governments, now and then, are guilty of crimes worse than those perpetrated by Columbus and Cleopatra.

A report from Puerto Plata, San Domingo, states that there is a serious controversy between the Church and the State, the executive having forbidden Archbishop Nouel to erect a mausoleum in the Cathedral for the remains of the late Archbishop Merino, previous to a joint resolution of Congress.

World such condition as this be tolerated by the Catholics of the United States? Not twenty-four hours. There would be mass meetings and protests and words said that would shame Bigotry seated upon his surmounting throne.

Apparently there are two Catholicities on this continent. That of Latin America is only too prone to "turn the other cheek," bearing much, and constantly having more to bear.

The advertisement in this issue of the Lee Manufacturing Company, Pembroke, Ont., will be read with interest by those who are engaged in the poultry business.

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