
The Amateur Toys With His Watch.

Is traditional Protestantism "sunk without a trace?" The Laymen's Foreign Mission Inquiry, representing seven of the leading Protestant denominations, seems to assume that it is. In a release last week its Appraisal Commission states:

"Of all the changes in the world, a theological change will of course bear most directly upon the missionary motive. If the conception of hell changes, if attention is drawn away from the fear of God's punitive justice in the everlasting torment of the unsaved, to happier conceptions of destiny, if there is a shift of concern from other worldly issues to the problems of sin and suffering in the present life, these changes will immediately alter that view of the perils of the soul which gave to the original motive of the Protestant missions much of its poignant urgency.

"Generally speaking, these changes have occurred: Western Christianity has in the main shifted its stress from the negative to the affirmative side of its message; it is less a religion of fear and more a religion of beneficence. It has passed through and beyond the stage of bitter conflict with the scientific consciousness of the race over details of the mode of creation, the age of the earth, the descent of man, miracle and law, to the stage of maturity in which a free religion and a free science become inseparable and complementary elements in a complete world-view.

"Whatever its present conception of the future life, there is little disposition to believe that sincere and aspiring seekers after God in other religions are to be damned: it has become less concerned in any land to save men from eternal punishment than from the danger of losing the supreme good."

When an amateur takes his watch apart he has a fine time - until he tries to put it together again. Protestantism took religion apart four hundred years ago and has spent the intervening centuries looking for the mainspring. If religion were a man-made institution, man might be able to put it together again; but since supernatural religion came from God, only God can make it work. Protestantism has tried this, that, and the other thing to make religion go, but it left out too many parts when it put the watch together; and in the intervening four hundred years the Catholic Church has run along smoothly, teaching the full, unchanged doctrine of Christ, and saving men's souls.

"When the conception of hell changes," means "when you cease to regard Christ as God and His teaching on hell as infallible." "A shift of concern... to the problems of sin and suffering in the present life," means, in view of what follows, Humanitarianism - that is, substituting the worship of man for the worship of God. "It has passed through the stage of bitter conflict... over... miracle and law..." means that it no longer concerns itself with the miracle as the proof that God has spoken or with the Ten Commandments that He has given. And "losing the supreme good," in view of the loose thought of the context, can mean only what the humanitarian means by it, "the joy of helping your fellow-man." That is the "happier concept of destiny" of those who spell "the supreme good" with small letters.

When are the God-fearing Protestants of this country going to waken to the fact that their intellectual leaders have sold them out to Modernism - the current polite form of atheism? And when are Catholics going to waken to the fact that the whole burden of Christianity in this country is upon their shoulders? You are young yet, and have much to learn. But take this much on faith: unless you study your religion more earnestly than you pursue secular science, unless you go into it deeply, you are going to be weighed and found wanting. And unless you cultivate your spiritual life strongly enough to be sure that you are giving good example to your non-Catholic neighbors, you will have to answer at the Last Judgment for the souls you kept from the truth.