

EDITORIAL

FAITH A LA MODE.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE average traveler through life is aware that saques, men's and ladies' hats, trousers and skirts, and so forth, adapt themselves to fashion. Such an average traveler may even see deeper, and discover that political and economic tenets somewhat partake of the quality of wearing apparel, in that they change, also adapting themselves to, if not fashion exactly, at least something that was not there before. Probably, however, the average traveler would resist acceptance of the theory that Faith also is ruled by fashion—at least with certain folks. Yet that is the fact, whatever may be thought to the contrary. Faith suffers, in some quarters, changes even more revolutionary than any change undergone even by the headgear of men and women through history. Of this interesting fact the recent outburst of clerical laudations of capitalists and capitalism furnishes proof positive. The point may be best unfolded by prefacing the proof with a passage from Dean Swift's celebrated sermon "Upon Sleeping in Church."

The Dean read from Acts XX, 9, "And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep; and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead." With this as his text the Dean proceeded:

"The accident which happened to this young man in the text, hath not been sufficient to discourage his successors. But, because the preachers now in the world, however they may exceed St. Paul in the art of setting men to sleep, do extremely fall short of him in the working of miracles; therefore men become so cautious, as to choose more safe and convenient stations and postures for taking their repose, without hazard of their persons; and upon the whole matter, CHOOSE RATHER TO TRUST THEIR DESTRUCTION TO A MIRACLE, THAN THEIR SAFETY."

To lie, to steal, to kill, to cheat, to over-reach one's neighbor—these and all such

kindred acts, not one of which capitalism could forego and survive, are condemned by the canons of all creeds. According to the creeds' different concepts of punishment, the commission and encouragement of such acts was visited with different penalties, all, however, destructive of the sinner; according to the creeds' different concepts of reward, abstinence from these acts was followed with different returns, all, however, conducive to salvation. Safety, accordingly, depended upon goodness; destruction upon wickedness. Faith, accordingly, rested originally upon the principle that safety, or destruction, were logical sequences from given premises; whereas destruction from the premises of a clean life, or safety from the premises of a life unclean would require the intervention of a miracle. It is evident that the recent outburst of unbounded laudation for capitalists and capitalism indulged in by the profession of the cloth denotes a revolutionary reversal of the original foundation upon which Faith was raised.

As suggested by Dean Swift's sermon, up to date Faith is predicated upon the identical principle on which modern sleepers in church predicate their salvation. Whereas in the days of St. Paul sleepers in church were so incautious that their safety was entrusted to a miracle, but whereas they have become so cautious that nothing short of a miracle could disturb their slumbers, now destruction is entrusted to a miracle, safety is sought to be rendered certain.

That the Faith in a safety, that is the logical sequence of the ways of capitalism, must be an article of different pattern from the Faith in the safety originally sought after, is evidence that the Faith of the clerical praise singers of capitalism is an article of wear that changes with circumstances like wearing apparel changes with the fashion.

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