

Atonement

IF Haeckel's definition be accepted that God is the spirit of the Good, the Beautiful, and the True, then unity with such a spirit is highly desirable. Atonement, that is, at-one-ment, is the word that describes this state and at least one religion—the forerunner of Christianity—solemnly celebrates for that purpose a whole Day of Atonement. But as Socialists do not specialize in any phases of other-worldliness, the foregoing may serve as introduction to the sort of this worldly atonement or unity that best serves our earthly interests; and also lead us to considerations relative to the causes that prevent it.

Presuming that what we want is "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," these cannot be obtained if, as workers (the typical capitalist class have no need to worry!) we are either unemployed, unpaid, underpaid, or over-employed. Without unity—a house divided against itself—the struggle to gain our objects will end in failure. Hence, our stock demand is for international unity of workers, irrespective of sex, race, color or creed.

Sex agreement is not a difficult problem, but that of race and color is a different matter, especially as the question of creeds with their dietary and hygienic subdivisions adds to the complications. The human race has in its evolution, given off various branches and the struggle for existence has left an ugly phase of obstinate striving for racial survival among many people who by some by-chance or accident came into being. Once these get the idea that they are "a little lower than the angels" and are the victims of persecution and oppression, their signal has been given for the centuries-long waste of thought and energy that goes with all purely national struggles. It was against such ego-mania that Omar directed quatrain:

And fear not lest Existence closing your
Account, and mine, should know the like no more;
The Eternal Saki (cup-bearer) from that Bowl has
poured
Millions of Bubbles like us, and will pour.

And yet, provided the artificial stimuli of outside pressure and miseducation could be removed the most ingrained racial antagonisms would decline and die. How unnatural the whole business is may be seen from the case of an intimate friend of the writer's—a Jew, the son of a Polish father and an English mother and himself a native of Scotland. His speaking accent from dominant maternal influences, is somewhat English but also modified by the Scottish environment. As his appearance is not markedly Semitic, the consequence was that in Scotland he was frequently accused of being English and when in England was just as often charged with being a Scotsman and variously hailed as "Mac" or "Scotty" and, having acquired some Americanisms, had sometimes to submit to Yankee implications; whilst in Dublin on a visit, they did not hesitate to place him as a Galway Irishman! He himself, as a lad, was fain to rejoice in Scottish victories over the hated (and "brother" Anglo-Saxon!) "Southron," not to mention British victories over the French; until in later life some kind and candid friends revealed the fact to him that his ancestors had as much to do with glorious Bannockburn and such like, as any tribe of Africa Hottentots. To crown all, he, to his inward amusement, was not seldom the recipient of vituperative tales from unsuspecting Gentile confidants with grievances fan-

ciated or real against his own compatriots.

So much for one whom, many of his neighbors insisted on robbing of his nationality. Here, on the contrary, are two men also intimates of the writer's, who unjustly and unasked for, received what the other was often denied. Both were Scotsmen, one of Highland and the other of Border descent; and each was swarthy and very Jewish looking; possibly (pace the British Israel Association) members of those lost ten tribes! Both men, on one occasion, had to run the gauntlet of a Scottish "newsy" who pestered each, but without success to purchase his wares. Great minds think alike; so each disappointed lad waited till his victim had walked a safe distance away: then came the taunting, insulting roar, "Sheeny!" It might be mentioned that the Celt earned this epithet solely on the merits of his facial and physical appearance. The Border Scot, however, had the additional advantage, he being a dabbler in art, of extraneous aid in the shape of some framed pictures he was then carrying under his arms; for the picture-framing business is in the same class as what Com. Leckie told us in the case of a priestly economist who (probably in characteristically meek retaliation for Marx's Bible and brandy etc., data) accused the latter of overfondness in using in his "Capital" junk-iron-fraternity illustrations. Yet, as above remarked neither Caledonian had, to his knowledge, the least drop of Semitic blood in his veins.

The moral, to a very large extent, of the foregoing, is that—to paraphrase Hamlet—"there's nothing racially true or false but thinking makes it so." And if a real thinker like the moody Dane, who was not a misanthropist, surveying the entire field of the sexes, could affirm "man delights not me: nor woman neither" is it strange that other thinkers, within the far narrower bounds of race, should refuse to give the stamp of approval to any individual just because they happen to be compatriots? In his "Confessions of a Young Man" Geo. Moore, who was both a Catholic and an Irishman, affirms his detestation for both his religion and his countrymen, his love for Anglo-Saxon and his affinity for France and Frenchmen which influenced him to the extent that after living in France, he nearly forgot how to speak his native English, and had, on his return to London, to relearn it.

Even the late Jas. Connolly, who died a leader in defence of Irish independence, has 2 striking passages in his pamphlet "Socialism Made Easy" in which he indignantly attacks the Catholic Church when she uses her powers to slander Socialism and Socialists on behalf of capitalist blackguards, all of which doesn't read as if, as a prominent American Socialist (*) accused him of he were ever a "Jesuit tool." Connolly also exposes the hollowness of mere Irish nationalism when all it leads to is "when you cannot find employment and giving up the struggle for life in despair, you enter the poorhouse, the band of the nearest regiment of the Irish army will escort you to the poorhouse door to the tune of St. Patrick's Day' Oh, it will be nice to live in those days! 'With the green flag floating o'er us' and an ever-increasing army of unemployed workers walking about under the green flag wishing they had something to eat. Same as now! Whoop it up for liberty!"

Thus we see, mere nationalism is of small value in itself and in excess is a hindrance to progress; especially as no race, not even those that are "pure" is of unmixed blood. But equally as much as nationalism "religious" factors are also to blame in creating dissension and disunity, according to H. E. M. Stutfield who, about a year ago, shortly

* "Prominent American Socialist": De Leon in a silly row he had with Connolly.

after a startling political murder in London, Eng., wrote as follows thereon in "The National Review," and which might throw some light too on the recent Swiss assassination: "I have shown in my book how the spirit of the shambles has always hung round dogmatic religion of the . . . type; and the savagery of modern men with 'cultured accents' and agreeable manners is more revolting than the cruder brutality of primitive barbarism. The gods are athirst, the zealot thinks—athirst for blood; and so it has come about that the army of martyrs to bigotry of all kinds must now be reckoned in millions. Say what we will, it is religion, or the fetish worship which men falsely call religion, that is branded with the deepest stain today . . . a colossal tribute, paid in human suffering, has been exacted by the fanaticism which is mistakenly called faith, and on behalf of rites which are an affront to ordinary intelligence. Ancient Egypt, Greece, India, the Far East, Mexico . . . all have the same tale to tell of religious or quasi-religious butchery and mutilation. Blood, blood, everywhere and always—expiation and redemption, political as well as transcendental, retribution, satisfaction . . . all are unobtainable unless somebody is massacred?"

Hence, it would "pay" humanity honorably and immeasurably if such "religion" were forever scrapped; and it is that conviction, and not perverse wickedness, that lies at the back of all Socialist free-thought activity. Indeed, sometime or other, this MUST be done, for, although tinged with pessimism, the words of J. S. Woodsworth, Winnipeg labor M.P., were profoundly true when he declared that the inherent conservatism of human nature is blocking progress and may eventually destroy civilization.

To achieve the Socialist "atonement," our capitalist government, in striving to make "New Canadians" of their immigrants, points out the way. With our present rulers the desire is to induce each newcomer to speak English, honor the flag, the government, Canada and the British Empire; not forgetting (preferably the Protestant) God and the King.

Our desire, on the other hand, is to gain a unified adherence to Science, Rationalism and Socialism; for, as DeLeon put it in dealing with the problems of race and religious antagonisms, "Socialism, with the light it casts around and within man, alone can cope with these problems. Like the sea that takes up in its bosom and dissolves the innumerable elements poured into it from innumerable rivers; to Socialism is the task reserved of solving one and all the problems that have come floating down the streams of time and that have kept man in interminable strife with man." PROGRESS.

WHAT AND WHENCE.

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rupting luxury and wanton idleness at one pole; of corroding poverty and rotting stagnation at the other. Capitalist private property in the common means of life—that is the key and secret of it all. We can leave the plant of production in the hands of capitalist possession,—and sink into deeper degradations and inanities. Or we can own and control it socially, for social use and need—and flourish with a prosperity whose developing greatness none can imagine. There is no other alternative. R.

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