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DIALOGUE

UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN. {309}

By DANIEL DE LEON

BROTHER JONATHAN—It does seem to me that there is something decidedly perverse in Socialism.

UNCLE SAM—That's something new; as a rule Socialism is sniffed at because it is taken to be too angelic.

B.J.—I don't think it ought to be sniffed at; what ought to be done to it is to burn it out.

U.S.—That's severe. And why that severity?

B.J.—I'll tell you. There are thousands upon thousands of people, nay hundreds of thousands who are content with their lots, and submissive to the existing order of things. I don't say they are as happy as I'd like to see them. But they are happy now with their lot. Down comes Socialism upon them, stirs their discontent, and turns their happiness into unhappiness. I say that such a thing is perverse.

U.S.—Let's see. You can't fly. You are perfectly happy with your legs for locomotion; down comes somebody upon you and descants upon the greater pleasures that you could enjoy if you only had wings, besides legs, and could fly; and he prevails upon you so much and he impresses you to such an extent with his arguments about the pleasures you are foregoing for want of wings, that you cease to enjoy your legs and actually grow miserable.

B.J.—Bravo, well put!

U.S.—And your understanding of the effect of Socialist agitation is of the nature of such an agitation for wings?

B.J.—Exactly! Now is not that perverse?



UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN

U.S.—Yes; THAT would indeed be perverse; but such is not Socialist agitation.

B.J.—What else is it?

U.S.—Now let's suppose this state of things: You imagine you are in good health, and are happy in that; nonetheless it is only appearance; there is death gnawing at your vitals; you have a tape-worm inside of you sucking up the substance of your nourishment and thus undermining your health; at times you feel a sense of lassitude, but you get over that, your recuperative power not yet having lost its elasticity, and you preserve your happiness. Some knowing one comes along and discovers the evidence of the mischievous parasite inside of you; he tells you of it; informs you of your danger, and thoroughly arouses you out of your ignorance on your condition into a thorough appreciation of the danger you are in. Has he not destroyed your happiness?

B.J.—He has for the moment; but for my own good. What he tells me makes me take measures to rid myself of the parasite upon me, and to become positively happy.

U.S.—And that is good?

B.J.—Certainly!

U.S.—And such is the case with Socialism; and that is what it does for those who{,} enjoying the happiness of stupor, are disturbed therein, and aroused to rid themselves of a danger not understood by them, but sure to undo them if not overthrown.

B.J.—What danger?

U.S.—The danger of the existing or capitalist system. More insidiously yet than the tape-worm undermines the constitution of an individual does this capitalist system undermine the health and, with it, the happiness of a nation. It renders the living of the working people, the masses, harder and harder; it gathers their substance into the hands of a small parasitic class; and the day will surely arrive when it will knock them down for good and all, unless that day is prevented by the alarm signal given by Socialism.

B.J. *looks contemplative.*

U.S.—The only perverseness in the case is the conduct of the paid brood of politicians, pulpiteers and professors who seek to lull into security a nation that is now being sucked day by day by the tape-worm of capitalism which it ignorantly is carrying in its inside.

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