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DIALOGUE

UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN. {247}

By DANIEL DE LEON

BROTHER JONATHAN—What lovely songs these Salvation Army people do sing!

UNCLE SAM—I'll agree with you if you say: "some of these Salvation Army people." I've heard such horrid sounds from so many of them that I'm hardly ready to ascribe good music to the whole crew.

B.J.—Yes, that's so; and what good people they are!

U.S.—In that I'm still less ready to agree. I would hardly admit that "some" are good. If there are any real good among them, they must be mighty few. I at least know of none such.

B.J.—That surprises me!

U.S.—Why should it?

B.J.—Why, I know that they go about helping the miserable, redeeming the drunkards, raising the fallen women.

U.S. (smiling)—What is better, to help you from falling, or to help throw you down, and then go down on my knees to where you have been thrown, and, slobbering all over you, sing songs to you, and then help you up just a little bit? Which is better?

B.J.—Of course, to help me from falling.

U.S.—Now, these Salvation Army people don't do that, but help to throw you down.

B.J. (surprised)—You don't say!?

U.S.—I DO say. And I'll show you.



UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN

B.J.—Yes, please.

U.S.—Is knowledge light or darkness?

B.J.—Light.

U.S.—In the dark a man stumbles, but in the light he can see his way.

B.J.—Certainly.

U.S.—Knowledge being light, he who has knowledge can see his way?

B.J.—Yes, certainly.

U.S.—If you want to help a man to see his way and not stumble would you surround him in darkness or light?

B.J.—In light, of course.

U.S.—And if you don't, you help him to stumble and fall?

B.J.—Just so.

U.S.—Now, if I show you that these Salvation Army people try to surround the people with darkness instead of light, with ignorance instead of knowledge, my case is proven?

B.J.—Yes.

U.S.—Well, they not only abstain from informing the people upon the inevitableness of poverty under capitalism, but they oppose all attempts of Socialists to teach the poor this fact and to teach them the way out; but they teach them, on the contrary, to look for better conditions from their individual conduct only and from heaven. Now, you know that a man may be an angel of goodness, and sweetness, and sobriety and purity, but if he has no capital he must go work for a capitalist—

B.J.—And get skinned—

U.S.—Yes. And that that capitalist will try to make more and more; and will get in machinery that will displace hands and that will displace that good, sober, sweet man—

B.J.—Just so.

U.S.—To tell a man that all that is needed for him to get along well is to be good and sober, is a bit of hypocrisy and pharisaism, because it is to make him help to keep up the existing system that is bound to disgrace him more and more.

B.J.—Well, I never looked at it in that light.

U.S.—But these Salvation Army people do worse yet.

B.J.—Worse yet?

U.S.—Yes. They make the poor look to heaven, and in that way leave the earth to the capitalists; and then they levy blackmail on the capitalists and make them believe they also will go to paradise after having made a hell of this world. With the money they thus get they plaster up the wounds they thus inflict upon the poor; and in that way they prolong and perpetuate misery.

B.J.—Well, I declare!

U.S.—But that's not yet all—

B.J.—What, worse yet?

U.S.—Yes; worse yet. The men whom they keep as corporals and such in food and clothes, they set to work at low wages. I know a member of the Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners—

B.J.—That labor fakir McGuire's organization?

U.S.—The same. I know a Salvation Army member of that organization who goes about saying that \$1.50 a day is enough for any workingman—

B.J.—The divvil you say!

U.S.—Now, in whose employ do you imagine such a fellow to be; whose work do you imagine he is doing?

B.J.—No doubt, the devil's—

U.S.—Or the capitalist class's, which means the same thing.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.

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