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“The At-Onement,” 1908 October 4.

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### The At-Onement

The character of Israel's day of judgment is a striking revelation of the spirit of Judaism. The central idea of Christianity is mankind's atonement from sin. Central to Jewish thought is the magnificent idea of the at-onement of mankind. It is not chance which appoints the jubilee, proclaiming liberty throughout the land, for the great Day of Atonement. The day of judgment demands at-onement with God and at-onement with man, but its theme and purpose is larger than the individual. On that day "God will be one and his name one".

Bold was the vision of the prophets of Israel. In the magnificent orations of those old Hebrew preachers, Israel, a small nation and in captivity, dreams of the at-onement of mankind. If it is never to become true, vain have been the Jewish loyalty and martyrdom of the centuries. It is the belief and the hope and the purpose of Israel. 'Tis marvelous that Jews, persecuted and oppressed through the many centuries, have continued to treasure this ideal of the at-onement of mankind.

Is it a possibility in the face of the seemingly arising tide of neo-nationalism, with its glorification of the nationalistic spirit, emphasizing the distinction of petty nationalities and determining the unification of great empires? Even our Jewish leaders have been misled by its spell to encourage the revival of the nationalistic Israel. The unification of all races and of all nations and of all religions seems impossible. The at-onement is to be not of blood or dominion or worship, but an at-onement of the spirit.

Manifest still is the conflict of races and the strife of nations and the rivalry of religions = the conflict of races for the mastery of the earth = the strife of nations in the conquest of the world and the rivalry of religions for triumph among the nations = a rivalry that over-steps the boundary lines of friendship and love, as when protestant passion invokes the law to maintain catholic disability, prohibiting a religious procession in free England in the 20th Century = a shock to every lover of liberty.

Is the vision of the old Hebrew seers only vanity? It would be if they



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expected a world conversion to ancient Judaism. This world conversion is unnecessary. It was the teaching of the Rabbis two thousand years ago — not in the great cosmopolitan world, but in little Palestine — that all the righteous have a share in the world to come. The Rabbis of old recognized a mighty truth, which the thousands of leaders and teachers, not to speak of the millions of the masses, in the twentieth century fail to comprehend. Few teachers of religion are today willing to grant salvation to the Jew unless he foreswear the essentials of his Judaism. It was and is the teaching of the Rabbis, ancient and modern, that the Jew, the Christian and the Mahomedan, the God worshiper and the heathen idolater may live the life acceptable to God. The old Bible taught and still teaches the essential brotherhood of the human family and proclaimed the wonderful hope of the at-onement of the race.

It is characteristically Jewish that the at-onement of mankind was not to be through a blood atonement. No supreme sacrifice of eighteen hundred years ago is to save the human race. Man is not to be redeemed vicariously. Man the individual must save himself, and men, the nation and the race must accomplish salvation through themselves. At last the good will be triumphant in mastery over evil. Not forever will the children of God be separated by man made creeds, by laws decreed by a human lawgiver, by customs peculiarly human and in no sense divine. No one man will be son of God, except as all men will be recognized as children of God.

Can we believe in the at-onement while the millions are still bleeding from their wounds and crying aloud for justice? The hoped for justice has been long deferred. Not yet do we behold the sunrise of freedom out of the dark night of Russia. Is there any hope in the face of the crimes of Russia in the twentieth century? Where is the at-onement? The old gray-haired and gray-bearded patriarch Tolstoi gives answer in the face of Russian despotism. Like the old Hebrew prophet he risks his life and welcomes death — lifts his voice for justice and demands freedom for his people.

The Millennial day is not yet. Not yet sounds the great trumpet for the jubilee — the regeneration of mankind — the salvation of the race. However dark the

night, sure will be the sunrise. Forward through the centuries has been the advance of human kind.

The Jew believes -the Jew is idealist - sufferer everywhere from human injustice, he has not lost faith in eternal justice. He knows himself chosen, appointed and anointed to be the real Messiah of the nations. Israel has proclaimed to the world the universal hope of the at-onement of the race. He still preaches the gospel of hope and not of despair - not of hate eternal but of love triumphant. The kingdom of God shall be established in justice and in righteousness. Mankind will not be one in religion, with one custom and one law - not one in race and in blood - not one in nationality. There will be an at-onement of mankind under the judgment of justice, with the law of love, the universal reign of righteousness. God is one and mankind will be one.

