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EDITORIAL

THIRD EPISTLE AT THE LAMBERTIANS.

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IN the two previous epistles we demolished two of the preliminary fallacies with which Father L.A. Lambert introduced his condemnation of Socialism in the April 16th issue of the *Freeman's Journal and Catholic Register*. We are not yet ready to move to the assault of Father Lambert's main positions. Following the maxim of sound strategy, we propose first to open another breach in his fortifications. Accordingly we shall now leap to his concluding remarks, which are intended to buttress up his reasoning. He says:

“Socialism, according to its authoritative exponents, rests on a basis of materialism and atheism; it is therefore materialistic and atheistic, and is therefore the foe of the Church and the family.”

The architectural intricacy of trusting “materialism,” “atheism,” the “Church” and the “family” into one will not save the redoubt from demolition. Its keystone is the charge of “materialism.” Now watch it crumble.

Two distinct schools of sociology divide society upon the subject. The one, the anti-materialist, maintains that the ideal, the spiritual, the intellectual, institutions, in short, mind rules the world; its motto is: “Man does not live on bread alone.” The other, the materialist, not only accepts the motto, but actually takes the motto for its own device, and shows that the motto not only sums up the philosophy of materialism, but overthrows its adversary, the anti-materialist school. The materialist says: “Aye, aye, not of bread ALONE does man live, hence he needs bread ALSO, without which bread (matter) his mind (spirit) cannot functionate.” And the materialist, accordingly, rears the principle that matter is the groundwork, essential, and consequently, determining, for the actions of mankind. It will not here be necessary to go into obstruse reasoning in order to prove the fact. It can be

proved concretely. The concrete proof can in all instances, be taken from the mouth of the anti-materialists themselves. So it can and shall be in this.

The Lambertians claim for their organization or institution, the Church, the very highest non-material, spiritual attributes. And yet, to take but one instance out of scores that might be adduced, one that may be said to sum up all the others, what is their own language? what is the language of their authoritative, their “infallible” exponents? It is this: “Without TEMPORAL power the Church cannot fulfill its SPIRITUAL functions”! Here we have from the camp of the Lambertians themselves—a camp, at that, which claims to act directly under the inspiration of the Deity, aye, to represent the Deity on earth,—the plump and plain, however unwitting, admission of the full materialist theory,—of all that is essential to that branch of Socialist philosophy. If the spiritual functions of a divine institution are unfulfillable without temporal (material) power, how could man accomplish the feat? Of course, he can not. Hence Socialism, planted squarely on materialist philosophy, maintains that material conditions determine man’s conduct, and, in order that his conduct shall be abreast of his mental and spiritual aspirations, he must furnish to these the requisite material basis.

Thus the fact is obvious that the essential difference which divides Socialism from Lambertianism on the subject of materialism is not a difference in practice, but a difference in preaching. The former, the Socialist, preaches what he practices; the latter, the Lambertian, preaches one thing but practices another. In short the former is truthful, the latter, whether intentionally or not, is untruthful, and, consequently, if not a morally unworthy, at any rate a morally and intellectually unreliable guide.

Socialism does not derive its strength from the circumstance that other institutions stand upon this, that or the other Socialist principle. A Socialist principle does not become right because some other ism also stands upon the principle. Socialism is self-sufficient; it rests upon its own basis. It must stand or fall according to its own soundness. Not, accordingly, in order to establish the propriety of materialism is the demonstration of the fundamental materialism of the Lambertians adduced. The shot is fired to demonstrate that the pronounced foe of Socialism, Lambertianism, kicks itself to pieces when it attacks Socialism from

the materialist side.

The “anti-materialist” buttress of Father Lambert’s fortification is shattered. Being pivotal to the others—the “atheism,” “Church” and “family” buttresses—on that side, the latter now wobble in the air. They may now be disregarded. The closing epistle of this series will wind them up. At present, wide enough breaches have been knocked through Father Lambert’s outworks, for Socialism to storm the Lambertian citadel, and plant upon its ruins the banner of human freedom—intellectual, political, economic.

These successive storms will be the subject of the next epistles.

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