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EDITORIAL

## FATHER GASSONIANA.

By DANIEL DE LEON

XIV.

**H**AVING considered and disproved all of the expressly expressed and expressly implied general propositions that Father Thomas I. Gasson advanced against Socialism in his Boston, February 6, address, the field is now clear for the consideration of the Father's specific assertions. This we shall now do in six successive articles.

When reading Father Gasson's statement that "the great aim of Socialism is to lessen poverty" one wonders what syndicated, ephemeral, superficial magazine article the Father derives his information on Socialism from.

Socialism and the idea of "lessening poverty" are contradictions in terms. If the best that could be done with poverty was to lessen it, Socialism would lack foundation, at least sociologic foundation. Socialism's aim is, indeed, great; the aim, however, is not to "lessen," it is to "abolish" poverty, that is, involuntary poverty.

Social science establishes that, one time, the poverty of some was necessary to social progress. That was the era when the productivity of labor was so slight that a sufficiency, let alone an abundance, for all was impossible. A sufficiency for all being impossible, there was no alternative other than either for society to remain in general poverty, with the evil train thereof—a brute's existence, spent in grubbing for the necessaries of life, constant want, the greater evil of constant fear of worse want, and no time for mental and spiritual expansion;—or for some to be steeped in poverty while others, a minority, being freed from the curse, could expand mentally and spiritually, and thus uplift society as a whole. So long as society was at that stage of production the abolition of poverty was an idle dream—a regrettable state of things, yet not an immoral seeing that a better state of things was materially impossible. The only thing then possible was the "lessening" of poverty, or, to speak more precisely, the mitigation of the ills entailed by poverty—a reform, not a revolution, as the abolition of poverty implies.

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the past no more than it denounces the incapacity of Franklin to reach England on one of his trips as fast as was desired—the material, physical means were not then in existence to prevent either undesirable thing. A child of the materialist conception of history modern Socialism first ascertained the material possibilities of our age. These, being found to establish the material foundation for the aspiration to abolish poverty, modern Socialism steps forth boldly, crystallizing the one-time idle aspiration into a political, a revolutionary demand.

To-day, the excuse, the apology for the involuntary poverty of a single member of society exists no more. Material conditions have changed so radically that, so far from insufficiency, there is to-day the material possibility of abundance for all. The mechanisms and the methods of production are such to-day that the leisure, the freedom from arduous toil for the necessities of life, the emancipation from the clutches of the Fear of Want, all of these prerequisites to mental and spiritual expansion, one-time enjoyable but by some, are to-day possible to all. To-day—all statistical researches combine to demonstrate—man can have an abundance at his disposal with no more exercise of physical energies than is requisite for health.

Under such material social conditions, Socialism spurns the goal of “lessening poverty” as a miserable Reform, as a betrayal of Man’s opportunity and duty. Under the present material social conditions Socialism boldly seizes the Archangel’s trumpet, boldly places it to its lips, and boldly sounds the call for human redemption—the call for Revolution—the call for the ABOLITION OF POVERTY.

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