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EDITORIAL

SOCIALISM AND THE CHURCH.

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THE *Truthseeker* of April 17th reads the Socialist Movement of America its periodical lecture on the necessity of “tackling the Church.”

For one thing, what has come down in history as the Church Question is not a Socialist issue—it is a bourgeois issue. There being no Church but is more or less politics in ambush, politics, at that, of the theocratic period in the race’s history, the Church Question was one that pre-eminently concerned the Bourgeois Revolution—and resolutely did the Bourgeois Revolution tackle it. Like the Questions of Free Press, of the Right of Assemblage, of the Right of Organization, of the Right of Free Speech and such others, the Church Question involves a question of abstract right. As such these issues belonged to the Bourgeois Revolution, it being of the tribe of Revolutions that can only see Rights in their abstractness. It is otherwise with the Socialist Revolution. It knows no abstract Rights. Material facts are its basis—all else with it is superstructure, or reflexes that may, indeed, must be left to take care of themselves. Of course—as indicated a fortnight ago, when considering the Milwaukee elections—should the Socialist Movement in its march find its path blocked by any boulder of feudalism that the Bourgeois Revolution left unremoved, that boulder (the Question it raises) will have to be grappled with. But then it would not be as the Socialist Movement that the issue would be fought out. Socialism would then have to be relegated to the rear; it would be as a Bourgeois Radical Movement that the boulder would have to be blasted.

For another thing, people of the persuasion of the *Truthseeker* hold their noses so close to the Church detail that it confines their horizon within narrow bounds. A wider horizon strips the atheist of the glories some surround him with, and places him in the company where he belongs. The incisive dictum of Voltaire retains to this day all the poetic incisiveness of its soundness, and soundness of its poetic

incisiveness—the bigot would immolate Iphigenia upon the altar of Diana on the eve of her wedding; the atheist would deflower her.

Social evolution has cut out the tasks for Socialism. The Church Question, in no aspect, is one of these.

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