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# THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

## Notes of Recent Exposition.

THERE is some complaint that the Christian pulpit is too reticent on the conditions of the life to come. The spiritualist ranges the country and reports the doings of the 'discarnate' in detail. And the people love to have it so.

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The people do not all love to have it so. We quote from a daily newspaper: 'As for myself I must say that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's address left me precisely where I was before. The elaborate picture of "the other side" would be more convincing if it were less detailed. Can a "message" in such words (I quote from memory) as "My word, Matilda, but this is grand!" really form a foundation for a theory of the universe?'

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The criticism is both sound and central. The details which are so freely furnished are puerile enough, but their puerility is not the worst of it. The question to ask is this, Does the fact of death, so tremendous for science, mean so little for philosophy? Can you really explain it by explaining it away? If the conditions 'on the other side' are so little altered that commonplace people continue their commonplace talk and their commonplace conduct, what a gasping fraud has been the government of the world from the beginning. We have been induced to believe, not by Scripture only, that 'after death cometh judgement,' and it has been the moral steadying of mankind. What judgement is that which leaves us drinking beer and smoking cigarettes and engaging in such conversation as a schoolboy here would declare to be 'drivel'?

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Where wert thou, brother, these four days?
There lives no record of reply,
Which, telling what it is to die,
Had surely added praise to praise.

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Surely, if it can be told. But can it be told? Dr. Marcus Dods thought Lazarus had nothing to tell. Dr. J. D. JONES thinks he had things too great for telling. They were unutterable, he says, because of their very glory. But they left their mark on Lazarus.

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'He was the same Lazarus, and yet he was different. His experience had totally changed his outlook. From this time forth he measured all earthly things by eternal standards.'

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For Browning is a better guide than Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. 'Browning, in that Epistle of an Arab physician, tries to imagine the change wrought in Lazarus by his brief sojourn in the spiritual realm. He pictures him as if living henceforth a sort of dazed life, as if his soul was elsewhere; as if his eye, dazzled with the glories beyond, could not adjust itself to the things of earth.

"Heaven opened to a soul while yet on earth,
Earth forced on a soul's use while seeing heaven;
The man is witless of the size, the sum,
The value in proportion of all things,
Or whether it be little or be much."'

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Dr. JONES has published a volume on Lazarus. That is to say, he has published a volume in which is expounded, verse by verse, the story of the Raising of Lazarus from the dead. It is such a volume of pure exposition as we have been told we should never again see. Its title is *The Lord of Life and Death* (Hodder & Stoughton; 6s. net).

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How does Dr. JONES understand those words in the narrative of the Raising of Lazarus which have been found so puzzling to expositors—that Jesus 'groaned in the spirit, and was troubled' (Jn $11^{33}$)? He does not pass them by. He passes nothing by that is perplexing. The miracle itself receives his most respectful modern attention. He takes nothing out of it which he has already put in. These words present a real difficulty to him.

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Elsewhere, he shows, the word translated 'groaned' occurs three times. Twice it is rendered 'strictly (*i.e.* sternly) charged,' once 'murmured.' Jesus 'strictly charged' first a blind man and then a leprous man not to make known abroad their healing. They 'murmured' against Mary for the waste of the alabaster box of ointment. How can 'He groaned in the spirit' be turned into 'He sternly or indignantly charged the spirit'? or how can it be rendered 'He murmured against the spirit'?

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First of all, there is no word for our English 'in': the Greek is the simple dative of the word for 'spirit.' The literal translation is, 'Jesus then, when he saw her wailing, and the Jews who came with her wailing, sternly charged the spirit and troubled himself.' Dr. Moffatt's translation is, 'He chafed in spirit and was disquieted.'

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Next, notice that the word occurs again in a subsequent verse ($11^{38}$) and a slightly altered construction: 'Jesus then, again groaning in himself, comes to the tomb.' How can the word be rendered 'sternly charged' or 'murmured' there? Dr. Moffatt again uses 'chafe': 'This made Jesus chafe afresh, so he went to the tomb.' And it may be difficult to find a better word for both the occurrences. But why did Jesus chafe?

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Notice the occasions. The first occasion was the wailing of Mary and the Jews. The other occasion was the saying of 'some of them': 'Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have caused that this man should not die?' Now, when we take the two occasions together, we see that the usual interpretation is quite impossible. The usual interpretation is, in the words of Dr. Dods in the *Expositor's Greek Testament*, that 'His sympathy with the weeping [not weeping but wailing] sister and the wailing crowd caused this deep emotion.' Dr. JONES sees that that will not do. It may fit the first occurrence of the word, but certainly not the second, and it leaves the word itself with no distinctive meaning.

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Dr. JONES thinks that 'our Lord was moved to indignation at the sight of the triumph of evil and death; that He saw in the tragic sorrow before Him the result of the Devil's handiwork, which had brought sin into the world and death through sin, and He was indignant at the havoc wrought by him; He was indignant that the destiny of man should be so blighted, and that God's purposes for him should be so perverted. Our Lord was angry that death should be here at all, He was angry that death should be able to claim His friend, He was angry that death should be able to fill the world with lamentation and woe. He was angry with the sin, and the personal spirit of evil, which had brought about this tragedy.'

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It is an interesting idea. But is it true? And is it an interpretation? Did our Lord, when He was on earth, really look upon physical death in

this way? Does this interpretation really make the difficult words intelligible?

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Jesus heard the wailing of Mary and the Jews. But if death, the death of the body, was so offensive to Him, He did not need that to remind Him of the offence of it. He heard some of them express surprise that He had allowed Lazarus to die. He deliberately allowed Lazarus to die: 'When therefore he heard that he was sick, he abode at that time [even then] in the place where he was two days.' Is it likely that He would have lost those two days if death had been to Him so dreadful? Is it likely that the taunt of the bystanders would have so strangely affected Him?

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Where does Dr. JONES find evidence that Jesus looked on death as so great an evil? The evidence is all the other way. There is a form of death which He thought evil and never wearied warning men to escape it. But it was not the death of the body. The death of the body He made comparatively light of. 'Fear not them,' He said, 'that kill the body and have no more that they can do.' And if ever He found people weeping and wailing because some one had died, or if ever He heard people suggesting that His purpose on earth was to keep the body alive—that was to Him occasion enough for chafing in spirit and showing His indignation.

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Does such an interpretation deprive us of Christ's sympathy with the sisters? It makes His sympathy more manifest and more moving. For do we not read a little later that 'Jesus wept'? By the ordinary translation we mix up the wailing of the Jews with the weeping of Jesus. The words are different. And by the ordinary interpretation we mix up the expression of our Lord's indignation with the expression of His sorrow. He was indignant at the blindness of the people in making everything of the death of the body; He was indignant even with Mary; but He silently shed tears of sympathy with the sisters as He followed them to the grave.

One thing more. The Jews and Mary were wailing. It was not insincere sorrow, but it was loud and bitter. Jesus wept. It was the expression, says Godet, of a calm and gentle sorrow. But once Jesus also wailed. 'When he beheld the city, he wailed over it.' Says Dr. JONES, and this time truly, 'It was a vehement emotion He displayed on that occasion. He sobbed aloud over Jerusalem. But He only "shed tears" at the grave of Lazarus. Now, I think there is a point to be noticed here. What made Him sob and wail over Jerusalem was its obduracy and its sin. What brought the tears to His eyes at Bethany was His sympathy with Mary. From which I gather this, that sorrow and loss are not half so terrible in the eyes of Christ as sin. His eyes fill with tears in sympathy with the sufferer, but He "wails" over the sinner.'

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In the book entitled *Words in Pain* which is noticed among the literature of the month, some bitter things are said about the fear of God. 'Can it be satisfactory to a wise God to see His children do good for Heaven's sake, and refrain from a bad act because they are afraid of God's punishment? They fear God, but do they really love Him? If a child wants to steal sugar, I would rather see him take it than not do so out of cowardice (fear of the Lord). The God you find so necessary must be everywhere and always there like a watchful policeman, and the child (later on, man) cannot be trusted a second to be left without that guardian.'

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The writer of the letters which are contained in that amazing book is as keenly opposed to the love as to the fear of God. 'With so many people hungering for love,' she says, 'why give so great a part up to Deity? Acknowledge, Doctor, if you had not had your good share of human love, a mother's, a wife's, and your children's, you would not so well understand the other. A child, I think, is taught untruthfulness when you make him say that he loves God.' That, however, is indi-

vidual, even eccentric. Dislike to the idea of the fear of God is widespread.

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In his new volume of sermons, *The Theology of Jesus* (Allen & Unwin; 6s. net), Dr. W. E. ORCHARD has a sermon on the fear of God. He begins with the sentence: 'Nobody fears God nowadays.' It is a quoted sentence. From whom does he quote it? From anybody. From everybody. 'Nobody fears God nowadays'—it is the concomitant to Sir Oliver Lodge's lighthearted remark that nobody nowadays worries about his sins.

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The sentence, if it means anything, must mean one of two things. Either it means that there is no God to fear, or it means that there is nothing to fear in God. Dr. ORCHARD passes from the first meaning. It is no characteristic of our time to deny the existence of God. He gives himself to the second meaning. And he asks, Why did men ever fear God?

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His answer is, Because they did not understand Him. 'God was unknown; His character was concealed from mortal eyes, the working of His mind was not comprehended; the principles by which He governed the world or judged mankind were inscrutable. And because men did not know God, they were afraid of Him.'

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Was that all? No; more than that, men feared God because they did understand Him. They feared Him because they understood that He was holy and because they knew that they themselves were sinful. 'In God Himself there might be nothing to be feared, but in man's approach to Him there was, and nothing could overcome it.'

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Then came Christ. Did Christ show God less holy? 'Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.' Did He show men less sinful? 'If I had not done among them the works that none other man did, they had not had sin; but now have they no cloke for their sin.' Did He show that holiness was after all not of the essence of God, or sin a mere accident in man? Take the Pauline words: 'For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us.' And from that moment the fear of God, the ancient fear of approach to a holy sin-hating God, disappeared from the consciousness of every believer in Christ. So to say of Christians now, to say of them at any time since Christ died, that 'they fear God,' is to misrepresent Christianity.

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Yet Christians do fear God; they fear God still. Does that mean merely that they reverence God? It means more than that. 'Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell'—there is that fear still.

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'It looks like the old fear back again; the fear of hell, the criminal's fear of punishment, the coward's fear of the consequences. In the effort to escape from this, some have thought that Jesus was referring to the devil and not to God. But we need not take that desperate course to escape the difficulty; for surely there is a fear of consequences which is quite wholesome and natural. We know now that hell is not an arbitrary consequence of sin, but sin itself; and it does mean utter misery for the soul, the destruction, perhaps, of the highest thing in us. It may be cowardly to fear the *suffering* of hell; but what this looks like is a commendation to fear the hell where one has no capacity to suffer.'

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And Christians have another fear. 'The finally remaining fear is perhaps the tenderest and most sanctifying thing that we can ever feel. It is not to fear the justice and the truth of God, but to fear His forgiveness and His beauty. How shall I bear to learn how full and free His forgiveness is, and what it has cost? What joy to know His wounds have healed me, but what shall I suffer when I see those wounds? There will be gratitude which will

need song to express; but will it not also need penitential tears? And when we think of His beauty, the beauty of His love! We take love in this world so cheaply because we are selfish, and because we rarely meet a love that goes far beyond our own. But to see God and to know that He loves us! It is possible sometimes to feel the beauty of the world too much, to feel the springtime as a piercing pain, to faint at the fair beauty of earth, and to be overwhelmed by the glorious majesty of sea and mountain and sky. One may need to have very sensitive appreciation for that. But if one has become sensitive to God, sometimes one is bound to have a last lingering fear that the sight of God will be more than the soul can bear.'

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We have heard how it stands with Religion in the Army. How is it with the workers at home?

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Few questions are causing us more anxiety. For, even if we do not look forward to a labour government in the immediate future, we know that those who have hitherto been the ruled are henceforth to be the rulers. And even our material prosperity will depend upon their attitude to Religion.

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We have an opportunity of answering the question. Last September an International Conference on Labour and Religion was held in Browning Hall at the invitation of the Warden, Mr. F. Herbert Stead. It was attended by delegates from many of the European countries and from India. With one exception, they were working men. They ranged in respect of Religion from the active agnosticism of a Belgian socialist to the local gospel of a Primitive Methodist. A full report of their speeches was taken, and has now been published at the Holborn Press, under the title of *The Religion in the Labour Movement* (3s. 6d. net).

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The first fact that comes clearly up from the multitude of words is the need of Religion. The need is admitted even by the active agnostic, though he means his own kind of religion. For the most part it is admitted ungrudgingly, even joyfully. 'We shall have to abandon the notion,' says the Secretary to the National Council of Brotherhoods, 'that religion is a special reserve or perquisite of ecclesiastical organisations, or that it is something which can either go up or down according as communities frown at it or favour it. It is something that never would have been in humanity if humanity could have managed without it.' The delegate from the Socialists in Finland says: 'The Finnish people is by nature a meditative and religious people. It cannot live without religion.'

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And it is as clearly shown that Religion is necessary to the Labour Movement. Alderman Sheppard only touches the fringe of the matter when he says, 'Whether in England or in any other country, the Labour Movement will only live in proportion to the men of insight, truth and justice associated with the Movement.' But Mr. F. Chandler, J.P., late General Secretary of the Joiners' Union, is quite explicit: 'Everything in Labour depends upon religion.' So is Mr. George A. Spencer, M.P.: 'Labour divorced from religion and morality is destined to destruction.' The same report comes from abroad. From Denmark comes Mr. C. Norlev, saying, 'When we hold this Conference and discuss the subject of the Labour Movement and Religion, it is because we are convinced that Religion is necessary for the success of the Labour Movement.' And the delegate from Finland, Mr. Sigfrid Sirenius: 'If any cause has to gain success among the Finns, it must be, so to speak, part of the Finns' religion. Such was the case, for instance, with the women's movement, and it succeeded. Such was the case with the temperance movement, too, and we have now prohibition laws in force. I am glad to say that our working people are heart and soul supporters of the prohibition law. Similarly, Socialism itself came to our country with the gleam of a new religion in it, and so it gained its immense influence over the minds of the people.'

With that directness which is characteristic of every speaker at the Conference, we are told what is the enemy of Religion. It is Materialism. One of the speakers, a parson (to use the word used here), misunderstood what is meant by materialism. He took it to mean philosophical materialism, and proceeded to argue against it, quoting Sir Oliver Lodge and Mr. Lecky. But the next speaker put him right: 'As to the naturalistic view of human nature held by Huxley and the Rationalists, there is very little mention of it among the working classes now. I know something of the miners and railwaymen and shipbuilders. There is very little of it amongst them.' No. The materialism with which Religion has to contend among the miners and railwaymen and shipbuilders is quite practical. It is described by one of the speakers as an undue regard for bread and butter.

'It has become the fashion,' says Mr. E. C. Fairchild, 'among the leaders in the Labour Movement, now rather to speak of the materialism of the people who want sufficient coal in winter to keep them warm, or who, because their wages are very low, resent the increase in the price of bread. The materialism of the workers is a request for the common things requisite to keep body and soul together, and it is not an illegitimate materialism; I would suggest that the leaders of the Labour Movement generally draw higher salaries than those whom they lead.' An illegitimate materialism is denied: 'The working classes,' says Mr. George Lansbury, 'are no more materialistic than any other class, and in very many ways are less materialistic than other classes.'

But the danger is sometimes admitted. Mr. Thomas Cape, M.P., admits it. 'I believe there is a peril from materialism as regards the workers. And my belief is borne out by the evidence I have received.' It is even stated once to be on the increase. It is Mr. Stead himself who says: 'It is because the working classes have been the idealistic classes of the world that we would with all our might protest against the invasion of materialism into the regions where ideals have hitherto prevailed. Alas! I have had many testimonies given me, not by employers of labour only, but by Labour leaders who have fought a long fight for the elevation of their class, who have borne the heat and the burden of the day. They have told me in tones of deep sorrow that they find amongst the younger workers of to-day a very different spirit from what prevailed when they set out to fight for better conditions. They say that they find amongst the younger workers of to-day a greed of gain utterly irrespective of the welfare even of their own class, still less of the welfare of the community; that there is a profiteering spirit abroad amongst the workers of to-day that they had never known in the earlier time. They have told me that the workers of to-day are too largely influenced by the desire to get as much as they can and to give as little as they can, and the tragedy of it is that they regard that as happiness!'

It is this very danger that Mr. Stead desires to meet. It was in order that means might be devised for meeting it that he called the Conference. And, with all their differences, not one person present had any other suggestion to make to that end than an outspoken profession of Religion. But what did they mean by Religion?

Senator Vinck from Belgium meant morality: 'I dare to say that in our country it will not succeed if it is not purely a morally educational movement, leaving it to the freedom of everyone to find the origin of those transcendental moral rules.' Bishop Gore meant the acceptance of the doctrine of the Trinity. Between those two were ranged all the rest in uncountable variety.

One part of Bishop Gore's programme was accepted by everybody. All agreed (except the agnostic) to acknowledge the Fatherhood of God. And to that all added—they were for the most part very eager to add—the Brotherhood of Man. Dr. Gore's second proposition, the Lordship of Christ, was not mentioned again till the very end of the

Conference. Then one daring delegate said: 'If I have understood the deliberations of the Conference aright, I may say the unanimous desire has been to rally together in different countries, in different creeds and different movements, all men and women who believe in the Fatherhood of God, the Brotherhood of Man, and, may I not add? the Mastership of Jesus.' The third proposal of the Bishop was not referred to by any one.

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That is highly significant. For it is surely the most important proposal of all. How can any movement call itself Christian—and if it does not call itself Christian, what is the use of calling itself religious?—how can any movement call itself Christian if it does not recognize the spirit of the living Christ? 'If you had asked any of those early Christians what it meant to be a Christian, I fancy you would have got one of two answers, either that it meant the belief that Jesus is Lord, or that it meant the belief in the arrival of His Spirit. Very well, then. There is a very widespread feeling, very much wider than the limits of our religious bodies and organisations, that the Spirit of God, the Spirit which is in Jesus Christ, has not deserted or left the world, and that the very purpose for which the Church was formed was that, inspired by His Spirit, it might carry out His Word, and work for the Kingdom of God. That is the third proposition that I seem to feel implicit in the Labour Movement, the belief in an organising, guiding, enriching Spirit which is the Spirit of Jesus. It is the Spirit of God moving and working in the hearts of men.' And Dr. Gore was never more right than when he made that proposition.

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But there was something else that many of the speakers insisted upon having included in the Religion of Labour. It was Service and Sacrifice. Alderman Sheppard declared that both service and sacrifice are to be found in the very rules and regulations of the Trade Unions. And he gave examples. 'Can anyone who has the slightest knowledge of Labour forget what happened at the birth of the Dockers' Union? A demand was put forward for improved conditions of service around your docks; an appeal was sent out to the established Trade Unions. The appeal was not made in vain. Assistance, financial and otherwise, came from all of the old Unions, and large sums of money were sent by the Unions of Australia.'

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These, then, are the articles of the Labour Creed—the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man, the Mastership of Jesus Christ, Service and Sacrifice. Is that all? That is all that was agreed upon. One speaker would gladly have added Worship. He said, 'My friend, Mr. Sheppard of Bristol, was speaking on Tuesday morning with regard to the amount of anonymous unselfish activity of Trade Unions. I felt how true his statement was. At the same time I felt how much more powerful it might be if it were encouraged and nurtured by some deliberate form of worship.' But there was no response.

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For Worship suggested the Church. And unanimous as the speakers were that Labour must be religious, they were nearly as unanimous in saying that it should have nothing to do with the Church. When we consider who these men and women were, and what they were assembled to do, that is the most marvellous and the most melancholy fact of the Convention.

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What were their reasons? Their reasons were various. One found the Church—and with them the Church meant all the Churches—too sectarian. 'I was brought up in Oxford,' says Mr. Britten, 'a choir boy when I was nine years old, so I know something of the Church. It is with the Church I must deal. The Church is divided against itself: and in that I include all religious denominations. In this sense there is no brotherhood to-day. Look at the Church of England clergymen. They preach different doctrines in high and low churches: and there is no common agreement with the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Churches: neither is there any common agreement with the

Church of England or the Roman Catholic and the Nonconformist Churches. I saw a case in point the other day, of a clergyman in the Church of England refusing his pulpit to a Nonconformist minister. I, as a man, left the Church of England when I began to see the wide class distinction in the Church.'

Another found it too stand-offish. 'Might I venture to suggest, therefore, that if the clergy of all denominations in this country are really keen on getting hold of the men, they should continue to do what so many of them have so ably done during the War—go to where the men are and not wait for the men to go to them?'

But for the most the offence of the Church was that it is 'against Labour.' That belief is evidently as deep-rooted as it is widespread. One speaker may stand for all. Says Alderman Banton: 'I have been a member of the Labour Party since its formation, and I have realised from the beginning the jealousy and the fear in the Labour Movement as a whole, against the encroachment of the ancient forms of ecclesiasticism. They have looked upon the Churches as being organised against them rather than for them. I even think we might say they have believed that the Churches were entirely against them.'

Yet there is hope. If these representatives of the Labour Movement were nearly unanimous in their dislike of the Church, they were wholly unanimous in their appreciation of Jesus Christ. 'Back to Christ' is their phrase—back from the Church and back from everything.

Perhaps they appreciate Jesus because He does not belong to the Church: 'The Church itself, as it is now organised, is not the true representative of Christ on earth. So we have to re-interpret and put into modern language and phraseology our conception of the Divine truths which He expounded.'

Perhaps they appreciate Him because He was Himself a working man: 'Mr. Westrope spoke about the Christ coming from the carpenter's bench. Yes, and the Christ I pin my faith to sprang certainly from the same class as I have sprung from—from the working-class.'

But they appreciate Him. They never mention His name without reverence. They say that if ever in any gathering of Labour His name is mentioned it is received with approval and applause. 'We know that in England' [this is Bishop Gore] 'the name of Jesus Christ is a name hardly ever received without enthusiasm in the Labour Movement. (Applause.) Very well.' 'I have addressed' [this is Mr. Eastman of Hull] 'thousands of my fellow-workers up and down the country, and the mention of the name of Lansbury and Lloyd-George and Smillie and Thomas has caused dissension and discussion, but the Name of Jesus has united them together.' And this is Mr. F. A. Jarman, speaking about the farm-labourers of Somerset: 'You know the condition these poor men live under, on 10s., 11s., or 12s. a week. When I have told them they were going to get a rise they have cheered; but I have told them that is not the first and the last of Trade Unionism. If so, I should leave it to-morrow. When I have told them it stands for something bigger than that, and spoken to them of the things Jesus taught, I think I have got the biggest cheer—a bigger cheer than when I told them they were going to get 5s. a week more—and they wanted it, God knows!'