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A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php

It seems strange to note in this connexion his failure to obtain the prize poem at Oxford. We would give a good deal to be able to compare his unsuccessful poem on "Mahomet," sent in for the "Newdigate," with the verses of his successful rival, who gained the prize two years running, and was never heard of afterwards.

Keble's is not the first attempt to treat poetically the holy-days of the Church's year. The earliest, perhaps, of these is a curious collection of "Epigrams," by one Nathanael Eaton, to which attention has been called by Mr. Lock, dedicated to Charles the Second. The abject style of the dedication is on a par with that of the verse. Eaton's "Epigrams" are a curious contrast to Keble's "Odes."

Worthier attempts, however, followed. Bishop Ken, a kindred spirit, wrote "Hymns for all the Festivals in the Year." Wither, the Puritan poet, in his "Hymns and Songs of the Church," made a similar attempt. Bishop Heber published "Hymns adapted to the Weekly Church Service of the Year," mostly of his own composition. And there have been modern imitators. For us, however, there can be but one "Christian Year," as there is but one Keble. In Newman's words, with which we may fitly conclude,¹ "When the general tone of religious literature was so nerveless and impotent as it was at that time, Keble struck an original note and woke up in the hearts of thousands a new music."



The Church and the Labour Movement.²

BY THE REV. J. E. WATTS-DITCHFIELD.

THE Christ is the theme of all our preaching, the Christ as the Good Shepherd, the Light of the World; but when did we preach on Christ the Carpenter? Do we clergy, do employers of labour, realize that He in whose Name we present every

¹ "Apologia," p. 77.

² A paper read at the Church Congress, October, 1907.

prayer, who is present with us every time we meet in Christian worship, who has opened a heaven before us, was a carpenter? Surely He has dignified labour, and invested the labouring class with a special interest for all Christians. What do we know about them? Many would say, "some industrious, some thrifty, some drunken." But what of their homes, their conditions of labour, their wages, their prospects? Are they such as Christianity can approve? Alas for the answer!

1. *Their Homes.*—Four hundred thousand persons—a town the size of Sheffield—live in London in families each of which occupies but one room for all purposes. And at what a rent! If a Fair Rent Court was needed in Ireland, is it not a thousand times more needed in the East End of our large towns?

2. *Their Conditions of Labour.*—We frankly admit that many employers of labour are kind and considerate, and that the working classes, no less than other classes, have their percentage of loafers and scamps; but are the conditions under which they labour Christian? The hours men and women work, the scanty wages paid, the paltry reasons often given for turning men adrift after twenty and thirty years' service, have surely caused many a heart to be broken and many a family to be ruined.

3. *Their Wages.*—Charles Booth tells us that 30 per cent. of Londoners earn less than 20s. per week per *family*. How can such, however thrifty they are, prepare for their old age? The total income of the nation is estimated at £1,710,000,000; £830,000,000, or half of this, goes to five millions of the population, and the other half to the remaining thirty-eight millions. Is this distribution equal? What of women's labour? of the sweated industries? If the Christ accompanied the Archbishop of Canterbury to-night through the East End of London, what would be His message to the great English Church?

4. *Their Prospects.*—What are the prospects of the agricultural labourer? No doubt some of the working class are drunken and thriftless, but Charles Booth clearly shows that a large proportion of pauperism is due to undeserved poverty.

Let us think of the prospect. Do we realize that in this Christian country one in four of persons over sixty dies a pauper, that three in five over seventy die paupers, and that out of every ten persons over eighty years of age no fewer than nine die as paupers? If even a large proportion of these cases is a result of their own conduct, what a commentary this is on the influence and work of our National Church.

If these are their circumstances, is it any wonder that working men who love their fellows are combining to alter them? Shame on them if they did not! Here let me say how thankful we ought to be for the high character of the English Labour leaders, many of whom are earnest, devout Christian men whose hearts have been touched by the Divine compassion. Will anyone say that it is the duty of the Christian Church to stand aloof? Should it not, rather, by sympathy and co-operation, guide and help such a movement? It is certain that the present conditions of labour hinder every Christian minister in his work. No wonder that the great mass of men are outside our Churches. Does not the Church approve of the aims, if not of all the methods, of the Labour Movement? We are told that it is merely a materialistic movement. So, in many ways, was the bringing of the Israelites out of Egypt, but it gave them freedom and a chance to worship God. Surely the kingdom of God must begin on earth! As Bishop Barry says, "The working classes are now demanding that Christianity should be tried by the test of its social effectiveness, its power to serve the welfare, physical, intellectual, and moral, of the great mass of the people." Are we prepared to yield to this demand? Lord Shaftesbury in 1844 bewailed the apathy which then prevailed in regard to the question, and said: "I find, as usual, the clergy are in many cases frigid, in some few hostile. . . . So it has been with me. I can scarcely remember an instance in which a clergyman has been found to maintain the cause of labourers in the face of pew-holders." The Archdeacon of Ely in his address denied that the Church had been apathetic. But if the Church has not been apathetic, but keen and in earnest, then alas for the

power of the National Church if, in spite of her keenness, the condition of the people is what it is to-day! Mr. Hill (Secretary of the English Church Union), who followed the Archdeacon, told us that the Reformation was largely responsible for the present condition of the labouring classes, and implied that if there had been no Reformation then things would have been very different. Well, in France there was no Reformation, *but there was a French Revolution*. Spain and Italy had no Reformation, but are the conditions there such as the English working classes would care to follow? Moreover, two of the greatest Social Reformers of the nineteenth century, Wilberforce and Shaftesbury, were products of the English Reformation. But the apathy is going, even if slowly, as witness the Report of the Joint Committee on Economic Subjects, appointed by Convocation, which says: "The Christian doctrines of the Fatherhood of God and the Incarnation imply the teaching of brotherhood with all its social consequences. The Christian cannot fail to recognize that Christ our Master and our most severe Judge holds us responsible for every one of His members whose lives have been wasted by our neglect."

But what is to be done? The Church as a whole can admit more freely the working classes into her councils, and into her ministry. But, more than this, the Church should teach and emphasize more than she has ever done, the fact that Christian principles must govern the *whole* life. The fourth Commandment deals with the *whole* life. "Six days shalt thou labour" equals the "Remember" of the seventh. We preach on the latter, but do we teach how men ought to labour, and under what conditions on the six other days? In our Catechism we teach the child to say, "I must learn and labour truly to get mine own living, and to do my duty in that state of life unto which it shall please God to call me." But does the Church help the child to get its own living? Does she help it to respond to the call of God? How many are ever enabled by the Church to have a chance of reaching the state to which God calls them? You baptize the child, and in doing so receive it

into the family of Christ. You spend money in teaching it arithmetic. It leaves school. Has the Church now done all her duty to her child? How is it that the army of unskilled labour exceeds the skilled? Has the Church nothing to do with apprenticing her child? If you teach it arithmetic before fourteen years of age, why not give it technical training afterwards? If the one is the duty of the Church, why not the other? Has the Church no duty in the way of guidance and help, and of giving her baptized child a chance to do what she teaches it in her Catechism? Again, later on you marry the boy and girl grown up to manhood and womanhood. The man is out of work, and his wife and child starving. Alms are perhaps given, perhaps not. What the man wants is employment, not charity. Have we ever really thought of the condition of such a man? The following extract from a recent pamphlet by a Socialist very graphically describes a condition which I have over and over again witnessed. He says, speaking of such a man, that it means "gradually to sell or pawn the few sticks of furniture which convert the single room into a home; to blister the feet in walking in search of work, while hope deferred makes the heart sick, and want of nourishment enfeebles the frame; to see your wife sinking for lack of food, and send your children to school without breakfast; to know that as you grow each day more gaunt in face, more shabby in appearance, more emaciated in physique, there is less and less chance of obtaining employment; to return, faint and footsore, after a long day's tramp, and hear those you love best on earth crying for food; to ponder, in cold and hunger, whether the theft, which would save your family from starvation, is a crime or a duty; to be restrained from suicide only by the certainty that your death must drive your helpless daughter to swell the ghastly army of degraded womanhood; to feel drawing ever nearer the day when you will be driven alone into the living tomb of the workhouse; to feel through all this that you have done nothing to deserve it." Has the Christian community no duty to that man and woman whom by baptism she received into her family at

infancy? It is not the work of the Church to set class against class. There are phases of the Labour Movement which may be as unwise as they are unworkable. The previous speakers have treated the subject of Socialism; it is not in my province. But things are wrong; millions are leading unhappy lives amid surroundings which are a disgrace to us Englishmen and Churchmen. Is it not time that the whole Christian community rose to its duty of dealing with these great problems? A working man has his duty to his employer, but if he does not do it that does not drive the employer into the workhouse; but this is frequently the result when the employer fails in his duty to his workmen. What is the message of the Church to working men? to employers? We know full well that even good houses, good wages, good conditions of life will not make earth like heaven. The West End of London has all these things, but it is not heaven. Character is not made by material surroundings merely, but by the Gospel of the Christ working through the Holy Ghost. We do not urge the adoption of any substitute whatever for the Word of God as the all-sufficient remedy for the temporal and spiritual woes of a fallen world, but we say, "Preach the whole Word of God, and as surely as God spoke to Moses, He is saying to-day, 'The cry of the children of England has come unto Me, and I have also seen the oppression wherewith they are oppressed. Come now, therefore, and I will send thee that thou mayest bring forth My people out of bondage.'" "My people" indeed! Poor, despised, down-trodden, yet "My people." The teeming millions of our large cities are God's people.

The work of the Church is spiritual, like that of her Master. But the spiritual includes the physical and temporal, as His did. The clergy have their sphere. It is not in Parliament. The laity have their sphere. We do not appeal to them as Conservatives, Radicals, Socialists, but as Christians. Is the Christian element in this country so weak that a Christian party cannot be formed which, throwing party interests to the winds, will seek a solution of these problems, just, thorough, and effective?

Where are Christian employers of labour? There are such. Why cannot the Church summon these to rise and show themselves superior to their Masters' Associations, and seek for the *causes* of the unrest in the labour world, rather than merely deal with its *effects*? The Church is stirred to her depths by a struggle as to the vestments she must wear in her services. I do not say she should not be, but contrast her alertness on this question with the coldness and apathy with which she treats these great social problems. "Woe unto you, for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone." The sooner the Church gets back to the early Christian idea of the Christian family, the better. We must pray and watch our opportunities, and work day by day with a dogged perseverance which knows no weariness, and which never recognizes such a thing as failure. The Master is sending us, the Master is giving us this task, and it must be done. We have the grandest opportunity ever given to the Church of Christ; we have the greatest resources. Is the opportunity to be seized? Are the resources to be used? If not, then Ichabod will indeed be written of our Church, and we shall be as the Church of Laodicea. And if in that great day, when we face the Carpenter of Nazareth as our Judge, and He asks the reason, what will it be? Will it satisfy Him? Will it satisfy us then? Even now the Spirit is calling "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" What is the response? He awaits the answer.

