



HX 536

HX
C 407

Religion without Slavery!

or

RELIGION FOR THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

AN ADDRESS BY

DR. WALTER WALSH

to local Labour Men and Women
in Steinway Hall, London,
on Labour Sunday, May 6th, 1923.

PRICE ONE PENNY.



Published by

THE FREE RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT
TOWARDS
WORLD-RELIGION & WORLD-BROTHERHOOD.

THIS Address forms No. 219 of the Series of Free Religious Addresses delivered by Dr. Walsh, and is printed in order to reach a wider audience than can gather within Steinway Hall on Sunday mornings.

To deny a speaker freedom to speak the truth is to deny a hearer freedom to hear the truth. Therefore the Leader of the Free Religious Movement exercises his right of absolute freedom of thought and expression while the Members exercise their right of absolute freedom of thought and judgment. He accepts entire responsibility for choice of subject and manner of treatment, and commits nobody but himself.

Additional copies of this pamphlet may be had on application to Dr. Walsh, "Northam," Athenaeum Road, Whetstone, London, N.20.

THE FREE RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT

TOWARDS

WORLD-RELIGION & WORLD-BROTHERHOOD

meets in Steinway Hall, Wigmore Street,
off Portman Square, W. (behind Selfridge's)
every Sunday Morning at 11 o'clock.

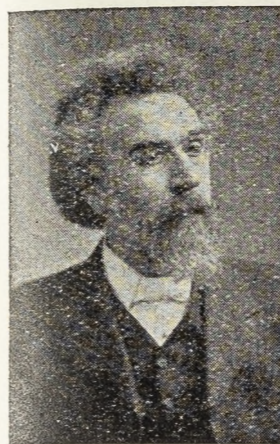
All are welcome.

No Reserved Seats.

RELIGION WITHOUT SLAVERY.

A suggestion of

RELIGION *for* the LABOUR MOVEMENT.



Dr. Walter Walsh.

I SHALL be acquitted of the charge of presumption if it be remembered that the correspondence column of *The Daily Herald*, and the existence of Labour Churches in various parts of the country, testify to a felt want. At a recent public meeting, a Labour Member of Parliament referred to what he described as the struggle now going on for the soul of the Labour Movement. In such a struggle I am entitled to take a hand.

Religion for the Labour Movement must be religion without slavery, since it is a movement towards emancipation—not only spiritual, but material and economic—to the last of which all the historic forms of religion have been indifferent or hostile, Christianity being no exception.

Nietzsche characterised Christianity as a slave-religion, Liebknecht described it as the religion of private property and the respectable classes, while Russian Communism regards the church as merely the hired spiritual servant of the bourgeoisie. Probably these opinions represent the major portion of Labour feeling, though the Bishop of Chelmsford says that he regards nearly all the Labour leaders as devout Christian men—a remarkable testimonial in more senses than one. That organised Christianity stands for the sanctification of the thing which *is*, as compared with the thing which *might be*, is a proposition few would deny and none could confute. The Labour Movement, on the other hand, moves towards the precise reverse—aspiration towards the things which might be, as contrasted with things that are. The church stands almost solid for what-

HX536
Socialism
and religion

ever social order manages to get itself established by the strongest ruling powers. She is on her knees to Kipling's God-of-things-as-they-are, instead of the Ideal God-of-things-as-they-ought-to-be. It is a notorious fact that rulers who were themselves entirely godless have firmly maintained the church as being necessary to keep the masses quiet and in order ; which it did by proclaiming the divine duty of passive obedience, submission to one's lot, contentment with one's station, respect for one's betters, honour to the king, deference to authority, compliance with law, and heaven hereafter for all who were meek, patient, and law-abiding, with, for all rebels, a corresponding "hell, the hangman's whip To haud the wretch in order" as Burns put it. In other words, encouraged by the patronage of the great, the church patented an elaborate dope mixture to keep the people stupid, a herd of "dumb, driven cattle."

To many of the most earnest spirits, the only alternative to all this appeared to be unbelief and blank atheism, which probably represents the general mind of Social Democracy in continental countries. Beholding the church given over to the worship of Mammon and Mars, Social Democrats, rather than prostitute their souls to those vile divinities, rightly preferred to have no God at all. A wealthy Quakeress declined to circulate my peace books on the ground that they were not exclusively Christian, yet the same dear soul went every year to continental Peace Congresses and voted for Peace Resolutions framed and spoken to by atheists from Russia, Belgium, Germany, and so on. She acted right by instinct. For when there was no theological label to mislead her, she felt the truly religious fervour of that continental atheism, which was doing the very work from which organised Christianity had withdrawn. In those non-Christian peace advocates and social reformers one has recognised the ideal mind, the mystic faith in the future, the strength of purpose which seeks a new world, the plenitude of conscience and conviction which is divine without confessing God, the martyr devotion to hold on to the end and suffer even to death,—all, in short, which we

commonly associate with religion, and which *is* religion, the only true religion, the religion that counts, the religion for the Labour Movement.

Can such a religion exist without a church? That is a question for the future to settle. It certainly must exist without a church such as now cumber the earth. When I initiated the Free Religious Movement some years ago, I took counsel with one who was, and remains, its friend—Israel Zangwill—who advised me to call it a church. I demurred. "You collar the associations," he argued. "That's exactly what I want to get away from," I answered. So I named it a "Movement" instead of a church, and Mr. Zangwill afterwards wrote that I was right. A church is a fixed, static, ungrowing thing, while a Movement is a thing that moves and lives and energises and expands and stretches itself towards the goal—the goal of World-Brotherhood, which I take also to be the goal of the Labour Movement. In the Better Order to which we haste let there be no ecclesiastical institution to become in time an obstacle to a Still Better Order. Let there be no priesthoods with vested interests, no sacraments to dull thought and lull conscience, unless it be the work-a-day sacraments of doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with the Great Powers of the Universe.

Much of the finest religion in the world is unassociated with any creed or dogma whatever ; for creed and dogma have ever been identified with bondage of mind and servitude of spirit, which are alien from the Labour Movement. Fixed formula is to be avoided as the root of all division. However liberal it might at the time seem to be, a common creed would harden into a new orthodoxy, a new form of institutional religion, and would erect new barriers to the further development of free thought and liberty of action.

It is obvious that Labour religion must be *democratic*. All the old religious institutions were aristocratic—Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism, Islam, Christianity—for they were the products of the ages of aristocracy. Each of them has been erected on the tradition of some special

Saviour, Messiah, Avatar, Prophet, or what not ; and they have all crystallised into powerful hierarchies governed by Popes, Priests, Presbyters, Plutocrats, and other high and mighty personages. The only form of religion that will fit the Labour Movement is one which includes the Common Man ; which indeed is shaped by him, and adapted to his needs and aspirations. It can afford no shelter to elect persons or chosen peoples. It will have no use for spiritual assumptions and privileges, or for dogmas of election and predestination. An inhuman theology makes inhuman devotees ; and the theology of the Scottish Confession of Faith and the Anglican Thirty-Nine Articles takes such a low view of man and his destiny as to foster social indifference and cruelty in those who agree with it. The dogmas of substitutionary sacrifice, atonement by blood and murder, original sin and imputed righteousness, unmerited heaven and eternal hell have undoubtedly assisted in keeping the morality of Christendom down to its present low and brutal stage of development. Those grotesque fictions cannot live inside a truly democratic faith. They belong to the slave-age from which Democracy is now painfully escaping.

The Labour Movement will inevitably democratise man's thought of God and his purposes with the human race. "God said, 'I am tired of kings,' " sings Emerson ; and the world-democracy is tired of the heavenly king who is alleged to have appointed the earthly kings that have valued them only as pawns in the royal game of war. The lamented decline of church-going is really a great mercy ; for it is compelling this generation to recast its thought of God in the mould of modern democracy. The ancient symbols were cast in the moulds of aristocracy, feudalism, and the right divine of kings to govern wrong. Democratic symbols must arise which express religion in terms of human equality, the rights of the common man, the reign of the common people. The old symbols, dogmas, theologies—in common with the old politics, diplomacies, and monarchies—have been battered to pieces by the guns that roared across the Somme and the Dnieper. The coming religion must of necessity be animated by the new spirit, envisage the New Order,

and function within the body of the new Democracy. Its Deity must be a Democrat whom we can respect and trust. Then hope, goodness, and happiness will seem to be really in the nature of things. The irrational dogma of the Three-in-one will pass away before the humanist truth of the One-in-all, expressing a passionate altruism that cannot desist till it has compassed the safety, virtue, and happiness of every human being.

Religion without slavery also means emancipation from State Control over conscience and the things of the soul. A true Democracy never will be slave to any king, State, or country. It will never go warring against itself at the bidding of any junta calling itself a government. Truer word was never spoken than that which I heard spoken from a Labour platform by a uniformed soldier—"The king's uniform is a slave's uniform." Therefore the religion of the Labour Movement will never sanction its possessors to follow kings or presidents to the field of mutual slaughter. For patriotism it will substitute internationalism, knowing that all men and nations are bound in the same bundle of life, so that none can prosper while others decay. Into the old cry, "Workers of all countries, unite !" it will infuse a grander significance. Democracy all the world over will join hands and hearts, and a common ideal sentiment will weld them in a common aspiration and aim. Never, I hope, will there be an international church, for that, in turn, would raise new obstructions to further ideas and movements. I am afraid of organisations. I fear institutions. No creed can ever be regarded as final, no programme as complete, and no party as perfection. What the Labour Movement has to evolve is a brotherhood without a church, religion without a creed, morals without a priesthood, goodness without sacraments, humanism without caste or class, and universalism without racial prejudice. Above all nations or churches is Humanity.

I recognise, of course, that there must be some kind of structure—a body through which mind can function. The

purser the spirit of religion is, the juster and more fraternal will be the political structure through which it will express itself. Democracy is not so much a political system as a humanist spirit—the humane spirit materialising into humane conditions of existence. Religion is of man's spirit, and democracy is its political equivalent or embodiment. God is one, says religion. Humanity is one, says democracy. The strength of democracy lies in a few great principles, such as fellowship of mind, community of powers, co-operation in effort, universal fraternity. Democracy is world-friendship, the commingling of the souls of men with one another, and with the Universal Soul. Clans and castes, kings and kingdoms—whether heavenly or earthly—are out of alignment with it. Therefore its ideal is not a kingdom, either of God or of man, of heaven or of earth, but a Commonwealth of man, and, if you like, a Republic of God.■

There is nothing alarming in the prospect of abolishing the symbols of feudalism and substituting those of democracy. We have had to do exactly that in the realm of science, which has shattered the Ptolemaic universe with its static heavens and hells, and given us Copernican astronomy and the conception of an evolutionary universe on its upward way to moral perfection. It makes me melancholy to find readers of Labour newspapers discussing whether man be a special creation, and eulogising a churchman because he publicly disowns the myth of Eden and the Fall of Man. He will have to go much further yet. Surely Lyell and Wallace and Darwin settled all that so far as science was concerned; while Wellhausen, Robertson-Smith, Cheyne, and Frazer settled it so far as historical criticism was concerned. Let us get on to the things that matter. Geology long ago settled *Genesis*. The thing that now matters is the more awful conflict between Capital and Labour, between Imperialism and Democracy, between Militarism and Industry, between the Economic system of Feudalism and the Co-operative union of Peoples, which is a life and death business. The establishment of righteous

international economics is the thing that presses. It is the first duty of the religion of the Labour Movement.

Now a word of caution. I must not be understood to argue that a system of economics can be substituted for the experiences of religion. Far from it. In the process of evolution character is at least as important as environment, and the formation and direction of character is the particular function of religion. Human nature demands more than the collective control or ownership of the means of production, distribution and supply. It cannot be nourished and sustained on arrangements that terminate abruptly on the other side of Circumstance and Comfort. These secured, the insatiable soul of man is at once assailed by fiercer hungers and thirsts. It cries out for more. It demands beauty and truth, art and philosophy, knowledge, culture and brave adventure, ideals, enthusiasms, and passions, the flaming lights of the beyond,—in a word, *religion*. Granted, with all the emphasis of a thousand tongues, that it cannot be a right religion that is unable or unwilling to secure the primary and necessary rights of human nature; it would not be a religion at all if it stopped short when the primaries had been secured. It must then advance towards the further and higher things, the ultimates, surrounded by all the Arts and Sciences and Virtues which make the rich fulfilment of human destiny.

In human experience there are sufferings and sorrows which lie beyond the scope and power of economics and political reformations. I am reminded that there is a thing called death, which removes us one by one from these scenes of mortal striving, long, long before we have fulfilled our destiny, while we are still far, far from the land of heart's desire. We march bravely through the wilderness, and from the little hills dotted here and there we catch glimpses of a land of promise, which no human foot has ever yet traversed, nor perhaps ever can traverse. The religion of the Labour Movement, with all its brave strivings, can never be indifferent to the eternal questions, *Whence? Why? Whither?* Ah, that aching "Whither!" After death, *What?* I am not one of those who hold that belief in future

existence is essential to religion or to noble living and peaceful dying. But in order to secure the Commonwealth of Man here, it is surely not necessary to renounce man's faith and hope in a Hereafter? What of the uncounted and uncountable myriads who have died and will continue to die without setting foot across the earthly Commonwealth?

The old heavens and hells are gone out of our minds as completely as the fables of Jack-the-giant-killer and the Seven-league-boots. True. But the sense of something after death remains. Every manly and womanly spirit will despise the feudal superstition which doped the poor into submission with the dream of an impossible heaven, and terrified them into obedience with the threat of an unbelievable hell. But if the Creative Power has endowed his creatures with immortality,—and if no man can confidently affirm, neither can any confidently deny,—then it surely becomes us to form some rational idea of the conditions towards which we hasten each in his turn; not needlessly to fore-shorten man's perspective at the grave, nor extinguish the lamp of hope which flings a ray into the realm of the unknown. A docker had been out of work many weeks, after which he got a single day's job. While in the act of holding out his hand to take his pay, he fell dead. The inquest brought to light the fact that he had been deliberately refusing food in order that his bairns might have enough. He died that they might live. I am loth to believe that was the end of him.

The only religion that can fulfil the programme and purpose of the Labour Movement is a world-encircling Universalism beyond the limits of church, sect, creed, nation, or race; and which puts into operation the supreme law of love or friendship, to foster which is the supreme function of religion. The Internationals of London, Vienna and Moscow must expand into a Fraternity wide as the love of God and broad as the need of man.

It is important to recognise that the moral basis for Universal Brotherhood has been already laid by the old religions. The historic forms of Judaism, Brahmanism, Hinduism,

Confucianism, Taoism, Paganism, Christianity, Islam, and the rest, laid the spiritual foundation on which International Democracy can rear the parliament of man and the temple of Humanity. All the ancient faiths have their version of the Golden Rule, uttered centuries before the Christian faith developed from them. They all teach the virtues of justice, mercy, love and peace. Putting aside the rubbish of creeds, superstitions, dogmas, sacraments and priestcrafts which they gathered round them, like barnacles on an old ship,—and their scholars, thinkers, reformers, and democrats are all, like our own, busy doing that for them—in every continent and church and temple and pagoda busy spading away the rubbish,—they are publishing the grand fact—the fact already demonstrated by Max Muller and the science of Comparative Theology—that all the religions are only one religion. No one of them is altogether true; no one is wholly false; but all contain and teach the same ethical principles, and seek to point their devotees to the good life.

Truly, the spirit of man is a unity, as the science of Ethnology has demonstrated; and in every clime and beneath the colour of every skin, he seeks towards light and truth and virtue and fellowship. Therein lies the sublime hope and inspiration for a Labour Movement which aims at Universal Brotherhood; and therein consists its indispensable need of Universal Religion. As the Labour Movement proclaims the Brotherhood of Nations, and thus makes possible a great political Union or Federation of Peoples, let it also proclaim the Sisterhood of Religions, and thus make possible a vast spiritual Union or Federation which will be as a soul to the body, and give sanction, passion, and enthusiasm to the cause of universal progress and peace. As long as there are warring gods in heaven there will be warring worshippers on earth. Let the gods be reconciled, and the peoples will be at peace.

World-unity and peace will never come if my friend Dr. Orchard goes on writing in the pages of *The New*

Leader that Christianity's cross is the only way, and if the editor declines to print my letters pointing out the more excellent way of universal recognition and co-operation between all religious people throughout the world. After two thousand years of proselytising, Christianity nominally covers only one-third of the human race, and is less likely than ever to convert the other two-thirds. Nor is there any need to do so. The symbols of the circle and the crescent have moral power behind them as well as the symbol of the cross, and all can boast their glorious company of heroes, saints, and martyrs. That devout churchman, Father Adderley, does not advance the cause of World-wide Democracy and the vast International of Souls by writing in *The Daily Herald* that the immortal founders who preceded Jesus of Nazareth—Moses, Confucius, the Buddha, Muhammad, and "all the rest of them are not a patch on Christ." Is the holding of such discourse likely to have a reconciling effect on Hindu India, or Muslim Egypt, or Buddhist China? Can it impress reformers like Zaglul and Gandhi, scientists like Bose, or poets like Tagore with a sense of a reverent and understanding sympathy on the part of British religionists? If Jesus the Jewish reformer were the man we like to think him, there is none who would more hotly resent a supercilious Christianity which so slightly dismissed the great Fore-runners without whom he himself would have been impossible. Nor is union and co-operation between ourselves and the conscientious followers of the sublime Buddha, preacher of mercy and love—of Moses the immortal emancipator, giver of liberty and law—of Confucius the wise and good—of Muhammad the magnificent, with fire enough in his belly to burn up the sins of the whole world—if Christian democrats with such high disdain regard those burning and shining lights of the ancient world, those tall and stately bridges who supported man's tottering foot-steps across the gulfs of time.

Listen to this from one of "all the rest of them"—the old Persian religion of Zoroaster: "Have the religions of mankind no common ground? Is there not everywhere

the same enrapturing beauty beaming forth from many thousand hidden places? Whatever road we take joins the highway that leads to the Eternal One. Diversity of worship has divided the human race into seventy-two nations. From all their dogmas we may select one—Divine Love."

Or this from the Buddhist: "Treat others as thou wouldst thyself be treated; do nothing to others which hereafter thou wouldst not have them do to thee. . . . The Law of Love is: Never seek nor consent to receive personal or individual salvation, never seek nor consent to enter into bliss alone; in this world, and in all worlds, labour for the elevation and happiness of every living creature."

Or this from Confucius: "The good man loves all men. All within the four seas are his brothers. Love of man is chief of all the virtues. The love of the perfect man is universal."

Or this from the grand Paganism of Rome: "I am a man, and nothing that concerns human beings is indifferent to me. By nature we are inclined to love mankind. Give bread to a stranger in the name of the universal brotherhood, which binds all men together under the common Father of Nature. The universe is one great city full of beloved ones . . . we are made for co-operation, and to act against one another is contrary to Nature. The eternal, universal, unchangeable law of all beings is to seek the good of one another, like children of the same father."

Last, take this from the great founder of Islam: "Love your fellow-beings; love all creatures; do unto them what you wish to be done to you. Know that all are brothers to one another, and that we are one brotherhood . . . preaching the gospel of Righteousness, Peace, and Good-will."

I could go on quoting a thousand more of the same teaching from the sources of all the ancient religions, proving that the heart of man all the world over desires the same good things, that men everywhere long for justice, love, and peace. Upon those world-wide foundations the Labour Movement can build a Religion of Universal Brotherhood. That is its sublime mission.

Let the Labour Movement go forward in this spirit of universal understanding and friendship—which is the only true religion, and the real religion of all mankind—and we may joyfully sound forth to all the earth the English poet's lines, with the singing of which we bring this memorable meeting to a close :

These things shall be! a loftier race
Than e'er the world hath known shall rise,
With flame of freedom in their souls
And light of knowledge in their eyes.

They shall be gentle, brave, and strong
To spill no drop of blood, but dare
All that may plant man's lordship firm,
On earth, and fire, and sea, and air.

Nation with nation, land with land,
Unarmed shall live as comrades free ;
In every heart and brain shall throb
The pulse of one fraternity.

New arts shall bloom of loftier mould,
And mightier music fill the skies,
And every life shall be a song,
When all the earth is paradise.
(*John Addington Symonds*).

WHAT IS THE FREE RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT?
Read the following books by Dr. Walter Walsh
and you will know.

“THE REPUBLIC OF GOD.”

*Crown 8vo., stiff boards, 130 pp., published by C. W. Daniel, Ltd.,
3, Tudor Street, E.C.4. Price 3/6 net.*

The author is tremendously in earnest, and in clear and forcible words he points to the goal of Human Brotherhood, and shows how it can be reached. The Republic of God will be realised in a true League of Nations and a true League of Religions. No one can afford to disregard this original and daring account of the way Religion must take if it is to substitute Catholicity for sectarianism, Humanism for patriotism, and Peace for War.

“THE ENDLESS QUEST.”

*Crown 8vo., stiff boards, 131 pp., published by C. W. Daniel, Ltd.,
3, Tudor Street, E.C.4. Price 3/6 net.*

A remarkable argument for breadth and inclusiveness in religion, and for a real catholicity. Sets forth the essential messages of such modern prophets and teachers as Edward Carpenter, Bernard Shaw, George Moore, Lord Morley, Walt Whitman, George Eliot, Browning, Tennyson, Ruskin. Shows the way these brave thinkers take in the Endless Quest for Truth. Incidentally, provides a valuable literary text-book.

“THE GOLDEN RULE.”

*Crown 8vo., stiff boards, 131 pp., published by C. W. Daniel, Ltd.,
3, Tudor Street, E.C.4. Price 3/6 net.*

Shows that the Golden Rule is common to all the historic forms of Religion ; proving that Man is a Spiritual Unity, that the Moral Sentiment is universal, and that we need no other basis on which to build the structure of Universal Religion and International Peace.

“THE WORLD REBUILT.”

*Crown 8vo., stiff boards, 96 pp., with frontispiece, Proposed
Temple of Religions. Price 2/6 net.*

“THE MORAL DAMAGE OF WAR”

Second International Edition. Five Shillings.

THE FREE RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT
TOWARDS WORLD-RELIGION AND
WORLD-BROTHERHOOD

LEADER DR. WALTER WALSH

SUNDAY MORNINGS AT 11, IN THE
STEINWAY HALL.

Wigmore Street, off Portman Square (behind Selfridge's).

THE FREE RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT has its source in that desire for unity which pervades the modern world. It is a reasoned effort to express and encourage that sweep towards universalism in religion and social ethics and politics which is the most powerful and hopeful impulse of our time. It seeks to relate man to his universe, and human beings to one another, by principles which are rational, scientific, ethical and international.

The Movement is religious—not in the narrow ecclesiastical sense of the word, but—in a broad, humanist and ethical sense. It is a constructive Movement, springing from the spiritual oneness of humanity, and consciously directed towards the realisation of the greatest of human ideals—the ideal of social and international unity.

To enable it to move with ease and rapidity, the Free Religious Movement does not encumber itself with creed or sacrament. Believing that for the accomplishment of the successive tasks of mankind ample wisdom and virtue dwell within the nature of man himself, it seeks to voice the truth of the ages as discovered by science, tested by reason, and approved by experience. It endeavours to support truth as disclosed to the growing intelligence of man by history and science. It asserts the undeniable right of everyone to think and speak his or her own thoughts; and therefore it assures to its leaders and speakers entire intellectual liberty; and to all its adherents and authors perfect freedom of judgment.

Believing that goodness and truth are inherent in human nature, it seeks for these in the immortal books of all ages and races; and regards with reverence all those who in every nation and time have laboured and suffered and lived and died for humanity.

In the conviction that the goal of human unity can be reached only as men and women learn to think independently, fearlessly and rationally, the Free Religious Movement in all its activities keeps steadily before it the liberation of mind and conscience from servile submission to authority and tradition; and seeks association with all those who also are looking for a world which shall be enlightened by knowledge, guided by reason, and animated by love.

For further information please address either—

GEORGE GUY, *Hon. Treasurer*, 94, Radstock Road, Reading or
Dr. WALTER WALSH, *Leader*, "Northam," Athenaeum Road
Whetstone, London, N.20.