

**CHARLES KINGSLEY
AND THE CHRISTIAN
SOCIAL MOVEMENT**

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Charles Kingsley and the Christian social movement by Charles William Stubbs

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Preface

The genesis of the Christian Social Movement of the present century, and the filiation of its ideas, of which the present memoir is intended to be a brief record, were both democratic and Christian. What I have written in the following pages, therefore, will be found to be complementary, on the one hand, to the introductory volume of this series by Mr. J. Holland Rose on *The Rise of Democracy*, and, on the other, to the volume on *The Anglican Revival* by Canon Overton. In the first volume Mr. Rose gave a fairly full account of the rise of the democratic movement in England, and a sketch of those "Parliament men" and others who, sixty years ago, succeeded in stirring up the English artisans to that action which finally resulted in the cession of most of their reasonable demands by the State, and in the event has led to the beneficial labour legislation of our own day. It has been my endeavour in the present volume to supplement Mr. Rose's sketch by a somewhat fuller account of the Christian Socialists of 1848, and of their influence in turning the political and economic aspirations of the Chartist workmen into the more

peaceful paths of trade-unionism and industrial co-operation.¹

Canon Overton in his book has given a succinct account of the Anglican Revival, of that renewed activity in the English Church which is associated chiefly with the names of such typical men as Keble, Pusey, and Newman. It has seemed to me, however, that no history, however short, of the religious movement of the Victorian era can be complete which omits the name of Frederick Denison Maurice, and gives no estimate of the remarkable influence which that perhaps greatest, certainly most typical, theologian of the nineteenth century has exerted upon the later developments of Church life and thought.

I have endeavoured, therefore, in my introductory chapter to give an estimate of the position and place of that great thinker, and to trace briefly the filiation of those ideas, which are called socialistic, and which, as a motive force to social service, whether by the State or the individual, are now so dominant among us, to their true source, in that restatement of the great Christian doctrine of the Incarnation as the exaltation of human nature, and the consecration of all human relations, by which Maurice has laid the English State, no less than the English Church, under so deep a debt.

I have told the story of the movement in especial connection with the life of Charles Kingsley for

¹ A recent volume of this series, *Provident Societies and Industrial Welfare*, by Mr. E. W. Brabrook, C.B., Registrar of Friendly Societies, has dealt more in detail with the development of these societies.

two reasons. In the first place, because, although Maurice was its real founder, no name is more closely associated in the public mind with the movement than that of "Parson Lot", the pseudonym under which Kingsley wrote "Cheap Clothes and Nasty" and the earliest of the Christian Socialist tracts. And, in the second place, because I am desirous that these pages should not wholly fail to pass on to a younger generation some of that impulse to works of social service and civic reform which I and my contemporaries thirty years ago at Cambridge received from the chivalrous teaching and fine character of Charles Kingsley. Facts are always more stimulating when told in relation to a personality.

But, of course, this Monograph makes no pretence, even on a small scale, to describe the details of Kingsley's life. The *Letters and Memories of Charles Kingsley*, edited by his wife, must always remain the sufficient record of his life, as it is undoubtedly one of the most inspiring of modern biographies.

It only remains for me to acknowledge my indebtedness, in the compilation of these pages, to that book, and my gratitude to Miss Kingsley for her courtesy in allowing me to make quotations from it. My sincere thanks are due to Messrs. Macmillan & Co., Limited, for readily granting to me similar permission in regard to the other works of Charles Kingsley—the Poems, the Sermons, the *Prose Idylls*, &c.—of which they hold the copyright, and also in regard to the *Life of Frederick*