

**STUDIES IN
POLITICAL AND
SOCIAL ETHICS**

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Studies in political and social ethics by David G. Ritchie

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DAVID G. RITCHIE

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STUDIES IN POLITICAL
AND
SOCIAL ETHICS

BY

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P R E F A C E .

I HAVE to thank the editors of *The International Journal of Ethics* and *The Contemporary Review*, the Committee of the Co-operative Wholesale Society and the Committee of South Place Ethical Society, Finsbury, for their kindness in sanctioning the re-publication of articles and lectures which they first put in print. These are here reproduced with a few verbal alterations and some slight modifications of statement. But, on the whole, they have been left in their original form. As will be seen, the papers here collected together were written at considerable intervals of time and adapted to different hearers or readers; and the same subject is often approached from various starting-points. What is said in one paper must be taken as qualifying or supplementing what is said in another.

Any one trained in philosophical studies who

may look into this volume may, perhaps, have to be reminded that these essays and addresses, from the circumstances of their origin or first publication, are "exoteric discourses." It seems to me possible and profitable to discuss practical questions of political and social ethics on the basis of what may be called evolutionary utilitarianism, without raising, or at least without discussing, metaphysical questions, provided that one may take for granted that faith in the value and meaning of human society and human history which is implied in all serious political and social effort. I hold, indeed, that a thoroughly scientific treatment of ethics is impossible without a philosophical basis; and that this faith, of which I have spoken, in the ultimate rationality of the world can only find a theoretical justification in a metaphysic or, in the Aristotelian phrase, in a theology.

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