

**SPIRITUAL LETTERS OF  
EDWARD KING,  
D. D.; LATE LORD  
BISHOP OF LINCOLN**

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Spiritual letters of Edward King, D. D.; Late Lord Bishop of Lincoln by B. W. Randolph

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**B. W. RANDOLPH**

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LATE LORD BISHOP OF LINCOLN

EDITED BY

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## INTRODUCTION.

EDWARD KING, the writer of these letters, was the son of the Archdeacon of Rochester, the Ven. Walter King, and grandson of the Bishop of Rochester, Dr. King, who held that See during the first quarter of the nineteenth century. He was born at Stone, December 29, 1829, and after being privately educated by tutors, he went to Oriel College, Oxford, and took his degree in 1851. After a short period of travel he was ordained in 1854 by Bishop Wilberforce to the Curacy of Wheatley, the village at the foot of the hill leading up to Cuddesdon. That he never lost his love for Wheatley and for the charm of village life the letters in this little volume abundantly testify. It was the same year in which the Theological College at Cuddesdon was founded. Four years later, in 1858, King became Chaplain of that Institution, when the Rev. Alfred Pott (afterwards Archdeacon of Berkshire) was Principal, and Henry Parry Liddon was Vice-Principal.

In 1863, on the death of the Rev. W. H. Swinney (who had succeeded Mr. Pott in 1859), King was made Principal. During his tenure of office, first as Chaplain and then as Principal, the College was from time to time the object of considerable suspicion; and

though the attacks made on it by Mr. Golightly and others are now happily forgotten, it was no easy task to which King had been called.

Under all the strain of controversy, however, he kept quietly on, exercising an altogether unique influence over the students, and setting a standard in regard to the devotional life and ideals of Theological Colleges, which has profoundly influenced the English Church. His lectures and addresses were full of deep spiritual power, and made a lasting impression on successive generations of men.

In 1873 Mr. Gladstone nominated Canon King to the Regius Professorship of Pastoral Theology at Oxford, with a Canonry of Christ Church annexed. The ampler opportunities which this position afforded him were taken advantage of, and he became in a very few years the paramount religious influence in Oxford, exercising an extraordinary fascination over all kinds of undergraduates, and honoured and loved also by the senior members of the University.

On the resignation of Bishop Wordsworth of Lincoln early in the year 1885, Mr. Gladstone recommended King as his successor, and he was consecrated on S. Mark's Day in St. Paul's Cathedral—Dr. Bickersteth being consecrated to the See of Exeter at the same time—in the presence of a vast congregation. It was on this occasion that Dr. Liddon preached one of his most memorable sermons, and anticipated for his friend an Episcopate which would rank "hereafter with those which, in point of moral beauty, stand

highest on the roll of the later English Church—with Andrewes, with Ken, with Wilson, and with Hamilton.”

How completely this prediction has been fulfilled all the world knows. The Bishop enjoyed an Episcopate of twenty-five years (all but seven weeks), and died on March 8, 1910.

The letters in this volume have been selected by the present writer out of those which many kind friends of the Bishop have been good enough to send him, or from those which he has himself at various times received.

He desires to express his grateful thanks to those who have entrusted him with letters. His design has been to give to the world a small volume of *Spiritual Letters*; he has, therefore, somewhat rigorously excluded all such letters as would not naturally be found in such a category, or which might more properly be included in a Biography.

The first nineteen letters were all written to the same correspondent, who, as a boy at Wheatley, began his acquaintance with King in 1857, and who kept up a yearly correspondence with him from that date till 1909.

The other letters are of a more miscellaneous character, and it has been found difficult to arrange them very satisfactorily in order of subjects. The Fragments at the end, which are taken for the most part out of longer letters, will not be thought the least precious part of the volume. Simplicity, tenderness, sympathy and love—combined with deep spiritual in-



sight—these are the notes which seem to dominate every one of these letters, while ever and anon there are flashes of that quiet humour and playfulness which those who knew the Bishop will recognise as one of the most delightful and never-failing traits of his beautiful, inspiring, and uplifting character.

B. W. RANDOLPH.

THE ALMONRY, ELY.

*Feast of St. Hugh of Lincoln, 1910.*

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