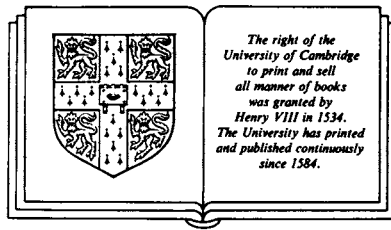


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THE VICTORIAN
CHRISTIAN
SOCIALISTS

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Edward Norman



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I

INTRODUCTION



There are usually a few men and women in each generation who succeed in transcending the common assumptions or intellectual orthodoxies of their contemporaries, or who stand outside the social prejudice of their times, and achieve insights of lasting value. Sometimes, it is true, their appearance of originality is enhanced by the sacralizing tendencies of later beliefs: they are represented as more accurately anticipating the preoccupations of succeeding generations than they probably did; and sometimes, also, their novelties of view or opinion express only a single level of their understanding, while other dimensions of their outlook remain faithfully suffused with contemporaneous pieties. Both conditions have affected the Christian Socialists of Victorian England. Yet what must most impress the student of their beliefs – and largely constitutes the substance of this work – is the importance and authenticity of their social vision. Much will be pointed out to suggest that their ‘Socialism’ was not, by most available tests, either ‘political’ or ‘Socialist’, and that the surviving references to traditional social attitudes were thickly distributed within their thought. But for all that, the Victorian Christian Socialists produced a radical departure from the received attitudes of the Church, both in their religious and in their social contentions, and their contribution to what Frederick Denison Maurice, their greatest thinker, called the ‘humanizing’ of society¹ disclosed qualities of nobility and unusual discernment. Many others in their day sought the alleviation of social suffering, and most, beneath the prevailing orthodoxy of Political Economy and the strength of surviving social paternalism, looked to the application of Christian works of charity, and to the (it was hoped) elevating consequences of popular education. There was a growing sense that political society would be more effectively stabilized if its basis was reinforced from below. ‘At no time within the history of our country have the working class been more talked of than at present’,² observed two of

¹ *Politics for the People*, No. 15 (29 July 1848), ‘Is there any hope for Education in England?’, 246.

² J. M. Ludlow and Lloyd Jones, *Progress of the Working Class, 1832–1867* (London, 1867), 1.

the leading Christian Socialists in 1867, when one of the accessions of fresh blood to the body politic was being accomplished. The Christian Socialists, however, in their different ways and with varying degrees of consistency, went far beyond these palliatives and dared to contemplate, if not a transformed political structure, at any rate the vision of a humanity emancipated from the thrall of custom and the existing ties of social deference. The craving of the working men, Charles Kingsley noticed in 1849, was 'for some idea which shall give equal hopes, claims, and deliverances, to all mankind alike'.³

What follows is not a collection of essays about individual Christian Socialists; nor is it a series of abridged biographical studies. It is an attempt to describe the history of the Christian Socialists' ideas, and to show their development through the century. The emphasis on personalities, rather than a chronological account of events, is deliberate: although contemporaries came to speak of a Christian Socialist 'movement' or 'tradition' – and those words, for convenience of expression, are sometimes used in the present study – there was in fact nothing so coherent or durable. Very little agreement was reached between individuals that went much further than a rejection of existing social evils. In 1852 Maurice concluded that the 'ideas of Christian Socialism were so divergent that only confusion was created when they spoke up'.⁴ Two years later John Malcolm Ludlow, the founder of the 'movement', registered a similar opinion. 'Now he understood that their many controversies had been caused by the fact that Maurice all the time had had something quite different in mind', he wrote about their understanding of Christian Socialism; 'they had meant different things by the words they used'.⁵ Organizations were short-lived. In 1848 Maurice, Ludlow, Kingsley and some others, excited by the Revolution in France, fearful of the wrong priorities (as it seemed to them) of Chartism, and anxious to promote co-operative enterprises as a means of releasing at least some working men from the baneful effects of the competitive system, promoted the first 'movement'. It was marked by experiment in associationism, attempts at a popular literature, and adult education. It collapsed, in 1854, because Maurice was anxious to avoid political or economic action, and because some of the others, notably Edward Neale, distrusted the diversion of energies and resources into educational work. Co-operative enterprise had preceded the Christian Socialists – there were the experiments of Owen in the 1830s, and the Rochdale Pioneers in 1844 – and distinct Christian involvement survived the collapse of coherent Christian Socialism in 1854. Neale, Ludlow and Thomas Hughes persisted, often very effectively, in this work, and in 1869 took a leading part in the organization of the first Co-

³ Charles Kingsley, *Alton Locke, Tailor and Poet. An Autobiography* (Oxford (World's Classics edn.), 1983), 12.

⁴ Torben Christensen, *Origin and History of Christian Socialism, 1848–54* (Aarhus, 1962), 291.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 364.

operative Congress. But the co-operative movement was not, by then, in any sense an expression of 'Christian Socialism'. The next phase, indeed, like the first one, came from a group of Anglican clergymen whose primary purpose was educative and propagandist. The Guild of St Matthew, founded in 1877 and dominated by Stewart Headlam, was much more characteristically Socialist than the first phase had been, and it was, accordingly, as internally divided over issues of political doctrine, in just the same kinds of proportion, as was the secular Socialism to which it was drawn. The result was a series of defections and the eventual establishment, in 1889, of a moderate body, the Christian Social Union, which in some sense restored the social critique of the Maurician circle of the 1850s. While this development had the advantage of attracting liberals of good-will within the higher levels of the Church – men like Gore, Scott Holland and Westcott – it left those with greater attachment to more genuine Socialism with only the ailing Guild of St Matthew as the vehicle of their moral seriousness. By then, too, religious Socialism was spreading beyond the academic and Anglican places of its genesis. The *Christian Socialist* journal had begun in 1883, and in the same decade Nonconformist organizations for social radicalism first appeared. Christian Socialism developed along 'Sacramental' lines inside the Church of England, and separately in a sequence of Free Church bodies. The latter produced some of the most telling propagandist literature: the Congregationalist *Bitter Cry of Outcast London* in 1883, and William Booth's *In Darkest England* in 1890. The Christian Socialist League of 1894 was almost entirely a Nonconformist society, and it contained men who had clear commitment to collectivist Socialism. By then, also, the ideals had distributed beyond the main centres, and few large cities were without a Christian Socialist organization of some kind.⁶ The Church Socialist League of 1906 was distinctly Anglican and political in flavour, but in 1912, with its conversion to Guild Socialism, the Christian Socialist spearhead of the time returned to a version of associationism. It was a discontinuous and fragmented history, with few connecting links except those provided by particular individuals. That is why it is difficult to speak of a 'movement' and why an account centred around the various social and political analyses of the leading figures has much to commend it.

The particular men chosen for this study are not a sample collection. They were the effective leaders of Christian Socialist opinion. All but one were involved in attempts at organization. By temperament, thought and achievement they were very different, and the list comprises a University professor (Maurice), a country vicar (Kingsley), a lawyer (Ludlow), a Liberal politician (Hughes), an unemployed priest (Headlam), a professional art critic (Ruskin), a

⁶ Peter d'A. Jones, *The Christian Socialist Revival, 1877–1914. Religion, Class and Social Conscience in Late-Victorian England* (Princeton, 1968), 5.

Methodist minister (Price Hughes), and an Anglican bishop (Westcott). Some omissions require explanation. Edward Neale financed a lot of the early co-operatives and continued to work for them long after Maurice had pulled out: but he was not a Christian, and wavered between Positivist moralism and a kind of Pantheistic ethicism. Charles Gore and Henry Scott Holland were arguably better social analysts than Westcott, yet their coincidence of views, especially in the Christian Social Union, was sufficiently close to enable the least accomplished of them, nevertheless, to speak for their particular contribution: Westcott was unquestionably the one who adhered large numbers of moderate Anglicans to the cause. John Clifford was certainly a more convinced Socialist than Price Hughes, but as a representative of the Free Church involvement in Christian Socialism Hughes had, again, the great advantage of an especially articulate platform and a large following. Although the thoughts of all these men are dealt with individually, the themes are arranged to draw the reader on from one to another, and so to create a unified history, not of any 'movement' as such, but of Christian Socialist ideas. Where the conclusions of particular leaders underwent change this is indicated; in general, however, they did tend to show a remarkable consistency and it is often possible to describe their ideas without chronological qualification. One theme is so common to them all that it would be tedious to reiterate it in reference to each man. They were all critics of the application of what they took to be the main tenets of classical Political Economy. With earlier figures some attempt has been made to show how they treated this matter; in later ones, however, only variations are shown.

Previous assessments of nineteenth-century Christian Socialism have tended to depend upon the interpretation of one or two important texts in relation to the (better known) theological writings of particular men. While this has yielded much information of value, the present study is based also upon an examination of the lesser-known and occasional writings of the leaders, in the belief that their social and political ideas have a greater clarity than has sometimes been assumed, and that the relationship of their political to their theological ideas is much less straightforward than general surveys have suggested. Specialist writers on Christian Socialism have always noticed this, and even Charles Raven, who was particularly drawn in sympathy to the subject, concluded that the leaders were 'lacking in clear and constructive policy'.⁷ Some observers have sought to find sophisticated variants of scientific Socialism in the writings of the Christian Socialists, or novel adaptations of utopian or co-operative ideals. These are not, in general, to be found. There has always been a recognition of how difficult it is to define exactly what 'Christian Socialism' meant to its own practitioners,⁸ and this in some measure derived

⁷ Charles E. Raven, *Christian Socialism, 1848-1854* (London, 1920), 136.

⁸ Geoffrey Best, *Bishop Westcott and the Miners* (Cambridge, 1966), 2.

from the Christian Socialists' own lack of acquaintance with the Socialist thought current in their times. It would clearly be unhelpful to define Christian Socialism by exclusive reference to one only of the very incoherent collection of socialist doctrines, attitudes, and practices available in the middle and later years of the nineteenth century. But nor would there be any virtue in producing a careful analysis of Owenite, associationist, utopian, Fourierist, Fabian, collectivist or Marxist versions of socialism only to show that Christian Socialism was not particularly aware of any of them. This was true even of associationism – the co-operative ideal – to which all Christian Socialists attached themselves in some degree. Ludlow and Jules Lechevalier were well acquainted with the ideas of Buchez and Louis Blanc, and so was Charles Sully, the paid secretary of the Promoters of the Christian Socialists' Co-operatives in 1850; but the practice of co-operation, as envisaged and actually carried out by Maurice and his colleagues, was much more indebted to English pragmatic experiments in association than it was to French theory. Even the English experiences were not that familiar: it has been correctly noted by one historian of Christian Socialism that 'Maurice and his friends were only dimly aware of their existence'.⁹ Throughout the 1860s, furthermore, English Socialism 'counted its support merely in terms of a few scattered individuals',¹⁰ and even had the Christian Socialists themselves been more organized at that time, and more ideologically conscious, they would anyway have lacked a vibrant tradition of ideas to which to relate themselves.

The more their extensive writings on social issues are probed, the more it becomes clear that the social and political ideas of the Christian Socialists were derived from reformist currents of opinion within the educated classes rather than from their own theological learning. Their very starting point – the critique of competitive economic practice – was, by the 1840s, already becoming quite widespread within sections of opinion, sometimes stimulated by Carlyle's writings, and sometimes, probably more commonly, through reaction to the revelations about social misery being made by the accumulating data of the parliamentary Blue Books, and the growing seriousness with which social enquiry was treated by journalists. The one literary offering which really moved the first Christian Socialists to action, in 1849, for example, was the publication in the *Morning Chronicle* of Henry Mayhew's articles on 'London Labour and the London Poor'. In Thomas Hughes's recollection, it was these 'which startled the well-to-do classes', and made 'all fair-minded people wonder'.¹¹ The problem with the Christian Socialists is not really to determine

⁹ P. N. Backstrom, *Christian Socialism and Co-Operation in Victorian England*. Edward Vansittart Neale and the Co-operative Movement (London, 1974), 33.

¹⁰ Royden Harrison, *Before the Socialists. Studies in Labour and Politics, 1861–1881* (London, 1965), 2.

¹¹ Thomas Hughes, 'Prefatory Memoir' to the 1881 edition of Kingsley's *Alton Locke*, 7.

the source of their outrage at social evils, but in what kind of ways their response disclosed peculiarly theological or religious characteristics.

It is at least very clear that their response was religious rather than political; most historians of Christian Socialism are agreed about that. The whole point of Maurice's involvement at all was a self-conscious attempt to 'Christianize' Socialism. Of his attitude to the working classes Christensen has written: 'their economic and social conditions, often desperate, their slums with unhealthy and overcrowded dwellings, the problems at their place of work – all this does not seem to have entered his mind'. There is some exaggeration here, but Christensen's general point is true enough. Maurice, he continued, regarded the real problem as how 'to make the workers understand themselves as spiritual beings belonging to the Divine Order'.¹² The priorities of Christian Socialism, through most of its expressions, were moral and religious rather than economic or political; 'far from aspiring to independent thought', Harrison has noticed, 'they conceived their task to be the revival of Christian influence through a re-statement of Christian principles in terms relevant to contemporary social relations and problems'.¹³ The later Christian Socialists, of the era of the Guild of St Matthew and the Christian Social Union, Jones concluded, paid their respects not to the economic ideas of Ludlow 'but to the religious thinking of Maurice'.¹⁴ It was, indeed, this very emphasis upon the spiritual condition of men which made secular Socialists sceptical of the political seriousness of the Christian Socialists. Their failures, it could be supposed, were due to 'a misconception of the real economic conditions of the time, an exaggerated belief in the spirit of brotherhood, and the absence of a thorough knowledge of the market'.¹⁵ This was a harsh judgment, but it indicates the difference of priorities. Neale said that the 'Christian' part of Christian Socialism was 'rather a something floating over it than definitely embodied in it'.¹⁶ The implication was that the theological arguments adduced to support the Christian Socialists' schemes, and actual Socialist experiment, had no necessary connexion, and Neale himself discarded, for a time, a religious basis. Christian Socialism was essentially moral rather than political, and emphasized voluntary solutions to social ills rather than collectivist ones. The Christian Socialists, Jones concluded, were 'naive in matters of theory', they made 'no startling advance or breakthrough in the evolution of socialist thought'.¹⁷

If the Christian Socialists learned so little from authentic political Socialism, and gave so little to it, why then are they to be regarded – as they should be – as having made an important contribution to the evolution of social radicalism?

¹² Christensen, *Origin and History*, 345.

¹³ Harrison, *Before the Socialists*, 15.

¹⁴ Jones, *The Christian Socialist Revival*, 10.

¹⁵ Colwyn E. Vulliamy, *Charles Kingsley and Christian Socialism* (Fabian Tract No. 174, London, 1914), 12.

¹⁶ Backstrom, *Christian Socialism and Co-operation*, 31.

¹⁷ Jones, *The Christian Socialist Revival*, 6.

The answer, of course, is partly that Socialism was only one of many forces making for social change in the nineteenth century – and it was a very minor force at that in England. But as far as Christian Socialism is concerned, the answer really lies in their view of humanity. Here theological learning was important, and the great prophet of the new attitudes was Maurice.¹⁸ ‘The truth is’, Maurice observed, in what was surely his most famous sentiment, ‘that every man is in Christ; the condemnation of every man is, that he will not own the truth’.¹⁹ He believed this with such consistency that by early in the 1850s he had even come to dislike the word ‘Christian’ itself, as ‘something limiting, sectarian’.²⁰ At times he was thought to border on the theological impropriety of universalism, and it was this, as much as his association with Socialism (and especially with Kingsley), which led to dismissal from his chair at King’s College London in 1853. Maurice’s ‘Platonism’, or rather his debt to some of the intellectual methods of the Idealists, also had some practical consequences. It induced him to suppose that the universal and spiritual Kingdom of Christ was already in existence, and that men needed only to realize the fact to be free. The implication seemed to some of his colleagues to be that political measures and social or economic transformation were not actually necessary, and Maurice’s own reluctance, which at times amounted to a phobia, to take part in organizations for any purpose on the grounds that they were sectarian or partial, added to the impression that his influence inhibited action. About Maurice’s doctrine of humanity, however, there were no reservations. It unified all the Christian Socialists of the century behind a liberating appraisal of the possibility for a betterment of mankind. It was the essential inspiration for social reform, and its results were felt within the Church rather than within political society. That, indeed, was the very nature of Christian Socialism: a new impetus for social reform (not Socialism) which had lasting and dynamic qualities. Maurice’s theological learning provided the basis, and although it is difficult to show precise connexions between his view of humanity and all later Christian Socialism, later Christian Socialists themselves all expressed their indebtedness to Maurice’s vision. In this sense the phenomenon of Christian Socialism was an example – of which both the Broad Church and the Oxford movements were others – of the liberating effects in the minds of some individuals of the rejection of Evangelicalism. It was the Evangelicals’ insistence on the dead-weight of human depravity which Maurice had removed: men were no longer to be divided between the elect and the damned, for the Kingdom of Christ

¹⁸ See Kenneth Leech, ‘Stewart Headlam’, in *For Christ and the People. Studies of Four Socialist Priests and Prophets of the Church of England between 1870 and 1930*, ed. Maurice Reckitt (London 1968), 138.

¹⁹ Frederick Maurice, *The Life of Frederick Denison Maurice. Chiefly told in his own Letters* (second edn., London, 1884), I, 155.

²⁰ John Ludlow, *The Autobiography of a Christian Socialist*, ed. A. D. Murray (London, 1981), 116.

encompassed the whole human race, and although the reality of sin divided men from the purposes of the creation the mercy of God yet raised them to a fellowship of dignity of which society itself – existing society – was evidence. For Maurice and his disciples the evil conditions of living and labour into which competitive economic practice had allowed the large majority of their brothers to fall was not only in itself disgraceful: it was a blasphemy, a denial of the intentions of God for his creatures. To this vision Maurice added the notion that ‘the spiritual is also the practical’.²¹ Christianity was about the physical state of society. ‘If the foundation of this kingdom were the end of all the purposes of God’, he wrote, ‘if it were the kingdom of God among men, the human condition of it could be no more passed over than the divine; it was as needful to prove that the ladder had its foot upon the earth, as that it had come down from heaven’.²² What they called ‘Christian Socialism’ was the application of this teaching to the society of their day.

That they called themselves ‘Socialists’ at all requires some comment; indeed they questioned the title themselves fairly often. It earned them unnecessary execration. ‘Our opponents called us Utopians and Socialists’, Thomas Hughes observed, ‘and we retorted that at any rate we were Christians’.²³ There was a rhetorical element in the use of the word – a deliberate association with extremism in order to demonstrate solidarity with those whom respectable opinion despised. For the same kind of reason Kingsley once called himself a Chartist. Maurice believed that the title ‘Socialist’ would ‘commit us at once to the conflict we must engage in sooner or later with the unsocial Christians and the unChristian socialists’.²⁴ The truth is that not until later in the century did Christian Socialists come to regard Socialism, at least in their understanding of it, as political. Before that the concept was moral and educative, having essentially to do with generous human impulses to further the physical lot of working men and to elevate their lives through acquaintance with higher culture. What most shocked them about the revelations of working class life – in Mayhew’s articles, for example – was not the low wages or the dreadful slums but the debased leisure activities of the poor. They were shocked, too, at further evidence of the extent to which rural as well as urban working-class people had ‘broken with the Church’.²⁵

It was their very innocence of Socialist thought which probably, in the longest perspective, made for the effectiveness of the Christian Socialists. They were not, it is true, a large body of opinion within the Church until the first two decades of the twentieth century, but their influence on behalf of religious

²¹ F. D. Maurice, *The Prayer Book, Considered Especially in Reference to the Romish Systems* (London, 1849), 13.

²² F. D. Maurice, *The Kingdom of Christ* [1838, 1842] (London, 1958 edn.), I, 252.

²³ Thomas Hughes, *Memoir of a Brother* (second edn., London, 1873), 112.

²⁴ Jones, *The Christian Socialist Revival*, 27.

²⁵ Frederick Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, ed. W. O. Henderson and W.M. Chaloner (Oxford, 1958), 303.

involvement with social reform was nevertheless considerable. Hostility attached to their Socialist identification rather than to the kind of changes they sought: there was, indeed, in their educational and moral emphases, much that echoed the traditionalist paternalism of the Tory Church of the first half of the nineteenth century. Their aim of social fellowship, also, was not dissimilar to (and in some cases was actually related to) the old Tory desire to restore the benevolent relationships of the past. Their loathing of Political Economy was not greater than that of the backwoods exponents of pre-industrial social values. The absence of a systematic political scheme within the Christian Socialists' thought placed them near to the pragmatism of English political experience; it gave their advocacy of social reform an acceptable basis. Yet it was not only hostility to their self-adopted label that got the Christian Socialists a bad name. There hung about them a certain oddity, which Hughes, who was above all things a social conformist, found particularly distressing. 'I am bound to admit', he wrote, 'that a strong vein of fanaticism and eccentricity ran through our ranks, which the marvellous patience, gentleness, and wisdom of our beloved president [Maurice] were not enough to counteract or control'.²⁶ Some, he pointed out, were 'vegetarians, bearded, wore wide-awake hats'; Kingsley and Ludlow went in for mesmerism; Charles Mansfield wore cloth shoes (because of a surely rather laudable reverence for animal life) and supposed himself haunted by the ghost of a seal. Hughes exaggerated the significance of all this. East, it must be remembered, in *Tom Brown's School Days*, Hughes's most celebrated literary achievement, had advised that 'a great deal depends on how a fellow cuts up at first'. If he has 'got nothing odd about him' then 'he gets on'.²⁷ Another condition which limited the influence of the Christian Socialists, at least until the establishment of the Church Socialist League in 1906 (with its northern orientation and leadership) was the London bias of the various organizations.²⁸ This seemed to reinforce the middle-class nature of the Christian Socialists, and gave their social protest, for all their efforts to the contrary, an indelible respectability.

Two events precipitated the first appearance of Christian Socialism in 1848. First, the Revolution in France seemed to show that there was no inherent hostility to religion within 'Socialism': there was no assault upon the Church by the French radicals. In the *associations ouvrières*, furthermore, the Paris working men showed that they were capable of self-help organization. Secondly, the great Chartist demonstration planned to take place at Kennington Common shocked the ruling classes: 'Chartism was gaining force every day, and rising into a huge threatening giant'.²⁹ It also made Kingsley, Maurice and Ludlow recognize the justice of the working men's case. They rejected the Chartists'

²⁶ Hughes, *Memoir of a Brother*, 114.

²⁷ Thomas Hughes, *Tom Brown's School Days*, (by An Old Boy) (London, [1857] 1889 edn.), 74.

²⁸ Raven, *Christian Socialism*, 333.

²⁹ Thomas Hughes, *Tom Brown at Oxford* (Cambridge, 1861), III, 113.

own solution – for being merely political – and sought, instead, to inspire them with the ideals of education and moral improvement. Chartism, in fact, contained a strong religious element; the Chartist Church movement was not an attack upon religion but an attempt to recover Christ, who was represented in popular Chartist literature as ‘the first Chartist’, from the existing Churches, which were seen, not incorrectly, as class institutions.³⁰ It was, perhaps, the last occasion in English social development when protest from below associated itself with Christianity: the Labour Church of Trevor and Wicksteed, begun in 1891, was intended as a replacement for religion. The first Christian Socialists actually failed to discern the Christian elements within Chartism; their purpose was to re-introduce the unchurched masses to the conventional Anglicanism of the times, through educational and social reforms. Chartism was a social and religious movement with a political programme. Christian Socialism was a religious and moral movement intended to make political activity unnecessary. The two never came near to a meeting point, despite the mutual exploration of opinions at the Cranbourne Tavern meetings in 1849, but at least the Christian Socialists learned something of the passion of the working-class protest. They also sensed, as did other men, the apocalyptic atmosphere of the times. Society seemed near to dissolution. Action to elevate the poor was urgently needed, or the poor would themselves destroy existing institutions. ‘Expect nothing but from your own actions’, Ernest Jones told the Chartists: ‘God aids those who aid themselves!’³¹ The Christian Socialists reached out for a solution, and found it in co-operative practice.

They had three immediate intellectual sources. Coleridge, whose influence on Maurice’s thought was enormous and acknowledged, provided an organic view of the state and of society, and an Idealist theory about the relationship of Church and State. Coleridge’s influence was not reserved for the Maurician circle; others in the 1830s and 1840s who contemplated the philosophical bases of English society were attracted to the Coleridgean formulations. They were at the core of Gladstone’s book of 1838, *The State in its Relations with the Church*. Carlyle was the first source of the Christian Socialists’ critique of competitive economic relationships and of the conditions of industrial society. The great assailant of the ‘Dismal Science’ of Political Economy was their first prophet. Although Carlyle did not himself contribute ‘new ideas to political and social reform’,³² he successfully undermined confidence in existing reliance on the moral character of *laissez-faire* practice. ‘There is a deep-lying struggle in the whole fabric of society’, Carlyle declared in 1829; ‘a boundless grinding collision of the New with the Old’.³³ The Christian Socialists took over the

³⁰ *Chartism and Society: An Anthology of Documents*, ed. F. C. Mather (London, 1980), 272–3.

³¹ *An Anthology of Chartist Literature* (Foreign Languages Publishing House: Moscow, 1956), 357.

³² B. E. Lippincott, *Victorian Critics of Democracy* (Minneapolis, 1938), 6.

³³ F. W. Roe, *The Social Philosophy of Carlyle and Ruskin* (Port Washington, 1921), 42.

diagnosis complete. A whole range of their interests, if not always directly derived from Carlyle, were moulded by his attitudes. Here they found scorn for the rich and sympathy for the working classes; hatred of materialism and the machinery of the industrial age; opposition to democracy and egalitarianism as destructive of the social fabric; encouragement of emigration as a social panacea; exultation of leadership by men of prophetic discernment; an enhanced rôle for the state in social and educational reform – this last was not to find uncritical acceptance among the Christian Socialists. It was Carlyle, too, who in his pamphlet *Chartism*, in 1839, had recognized that the cry of the poor for change was not the consequence of disordered priorities or false expectations but a genuine and important sign that something was radically wrong in the condition of England. The Christian Socialists inherited that vision as well. Their third major intellectual source was Thomas Arnold. He does not at first seem a likely candidate, being known, to modern readers, through the screen of interpretation provided by Arthur Penrhyn Stanley and Thomas Hughes, as merely a great headmaster and, perhaps also, as a liberal advocate of radical ecclesiastical reform. Arnold died when he was only forty-seven; Stanley produced his *Life* in 1844 and revealed (or created, according to interpretation), through Arnold's letters, a man of quite extraordinary social vision. The more the writings of the Christian Socialist leaders are examined, the more clear it becomes that Arnold's ideas had a major importance for them,³⁴ even though, as Westcott lamented years later, 'the true portrait of Arnold has yet to be drawn'.³⁵ Arnold was a liberal, impatient to see a progressive and rational arrangement of society. His objective of 'Christianizing men's notions and feelings on political matters'³⁶ declared in 1831, was an obvious anticipation of Maurice's desire to 'Christianize' Socialism. His endorsement of the co-operative principle, if in a rather vague fashion and intended primarily as an ecclesiastical device, must also have inspired the Christian Socialists. 'The direct object of Christian co-operation was to bring Christ into every part of common life', Arnold wrote; 'to make human society one living body'.³⁷ The Christian Socialists, too, sought co-operative methods to foster social harmony. Arnold also believed, as they did, that the real evils of society were 'neither physical nor political, in the common sense of the word, but moral'.³⁸ In 1839, furthermore, Arnold aspired (vainly, as it turned out) to organize a society 'for drawing public attention to the state of the labouring classes'.³⁹ Ten years later the Christian Socialists fulfilled his desire. Above all, however, Arnold projected a

³⁴ See Eugene L. Williamson, *The Liberalism of Thomas Arnold. A Study of his Religious and Political Writings* (Alabama, 1964), 210–11.

³⁵ Arthur Westcott, *Life and Letters of Brooke Foss Westcott* (London, 1903), I, 288.

³⁶ Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, *The Life and Correspondence of Thomas Arnold, D.D.* (fifteenth edn., London, 1892), I, 258.

³⁷ Thomas Arnold, *Fragment on The Church* (second edn., London, 1845), 8.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 146.

³⁹ T. W. Bamford, *Thomas Arnold* (London, 1960), 152.

view of humanity not unlike Maurice's; his Broad Church theology accepted the value of progressive developments in society and in men. 'There is nothing so revolutionary, because there is nothing so unnatural and so convulsive to society', he wrote, 'as the strain to keep things fixed, when all the world is by the very law of its creation in eternal progress'.⁴⁰

It is often necessary to show how much of the old world remained lodged in Christian Socialist minds. Those who detach themselves from the prejudices of their age in some things do not usually manage, or even wish, to separate themselves from all of them. 'No man, I think, will ever be of much use to his generation', Maurice wrote, 'who does not apply himself mainly to the questions which are occupying those who belong to it'.⁴¹ Yet the areas in which the Christian Socialists pioneered new Christian perspectives were very considerable, and although it would be an exaggeration to see their influence behind all Church involvement with social questions in the later decades of the nineteenth century,⁴² they nevertheless furnished a social critique which achieved increasing acceptance. As primarily concerned with the education of opinion, and through actual work of lasting importance for the adult education of the working classes,⁴³ the Christian Socialists made a notable contribution to the advance of education in England. They furthered the social emancipation of women. In the novels of Kingsley and Hughes their opinions reached into some of the most popular of Victorian popular literature – although it cannot be said that their journals and tracts, intended to reach the working men themselves, really did so on any significant scale. *Politics for the People*, the most important as well as the first of the Christian Socialists' attempts at a popular press, never sold more than two thousand copies. There was, anyway, resistance to this kind of product. 'Of all things they hate tracts', Mayhew noticed of the London costermongers: 'They hate them because the people leaving them never give them anything'.⁴⁴ The Christian Socialists did much to encourage co-operative economic enterprise, and in the process forged an enduring link with at least one aspect of the emergent labour movement. Through the work of Kingsley, especially, they promoted sanitary and public health reforms. Although most of them were opposed to democracy – or at least to democratic political practices until the masses had been educated to the point at which they could exercise a responsible voice in public life – the Christian Socialists plainly stimulated the idea that popular political aspirations had to be treated with respect. Above all, they were insistent on the accountability of the economic order to moral law.

⁴⁰ Stanley, *Life of Arnold*, I, 249.

⁴¹ Maurice, *The Kingdom of Christ*, II, 359.

⁴² D. O. Wagner, *The Church of England and Social Reform since 1854* (New York, 1930), 60.

⁴³ See J. F. C. Harrison, *A History of the Working Men's College, 1854–1954* (London, 1954).

⁴⁴ *Mayhew's London. Being Selections from 'London Labour and the London Poor'* by Henry Mayhew, ed. Peter Quennell (London, 1969), 58.

Their respect for humanity, the great Maurician legacy, infused political consciousness with a broad and serious dimension, tempered, however, by a measured realism. 'We dare not forget', Ludlow observed in *Politics for the People*, 'that the laws of politics have to be applied by the spirit of man'.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ *Politics for the People*, No. 3 (28 May 1848), 'Politics', 33.