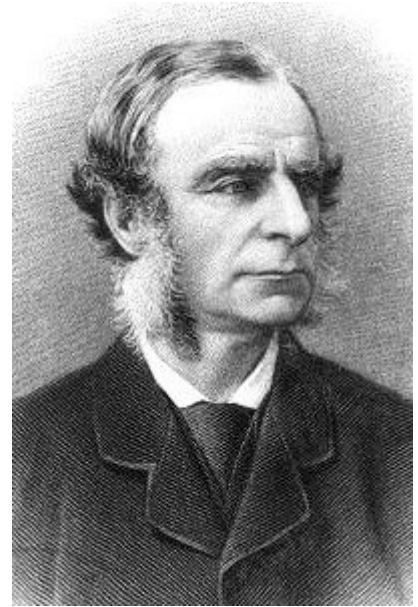


Prayer of the Month • April 2014

Stir us up to offer thee, O Lord, our bodies, our souls, our spirits, in all we love and all we learn, in all we plan and all we do, to offer our labours, our pleasures, our sorrows to thee; to work through them for thy kingdom, to live as those who are not their own, but bought with thy blood, fed with thy body; thine from our birth-hour, thine now, and thine for ever and ever.



Comprehensiveness and commitment are two ideas that are conveyed by this prayer. 'our bodies, our souls, our spirits' is one aspect of comprehensiveness. Other aspects are conveyed by 'all', such as 'all we plan and all we do' – whether action or inaction, whether joy or sorrow – all can be offered to God. 'To live as those who are not their own', disowns possessiveness, and the value of ownership, acknowledging most profoundly our indebtedness to Christ. We belong to him, from the moment of our birth and for ever, so let us always be oriented towards his kingdom in all things.

Charles Kingsley, author of historical novels like *Hereward the Wake* (1865) and *Westward Ho!* (1855), was born in Holne, Devon, in 1819. He studied at Magdalene College, Cambridge, 1838-42, and in 1844 became Rector of Eversley, Hampshire. In 1859 he was appointed chaplain to Queen Victoria. In 1860, he was appointed Regius Professor of Modern History at the University of Cambridge. In 1861 he became a private tutor to the Prince of Wales. As well as being a historian he was also interested in science, and became one of the first to praise Charles Darwin's book *On the Origin of Species*, having received an advance copy in 1859. Kingsley also had a concern for social reform – this is illustrated in his classic, *The Water-Babies, A Fairy Tale for a Land Baby* (1863), a tale about a chimney sweep. In 1873 he was made a canon of Westminster Abbey. He died in 1875 and was buried in St Mary's Churchyard in Eversley.

Colin Lunt