

## Charles Kingsley's Christian Darwinism

*Amy Laura Hall*

In the conversation between theology and science, I am not myself concerned about finding or clearing a religious slip of terrain within the evolutionary sciences, or in finding a way that moral theology may sing in harmony with any particular evolutionary model. These are worthy conversations, but I am interested in another conversation, about what Stephen Jay Gould called 'canonical icons' within popularized, evolutionary science. In his essay 'Ladders and Cones: Constraining Evolution by Canonical Icons', he suggests that evolutionary science requires attention to 'canonical icons' as 'the standard imagery attached to key concepts of our social and intellectual lives.' This standard imagery enjoys a complicated relationship with popular science. The imagery is shaped by scientific projects, according to Gould, and imagery shapes the way science proceeds. Gould's particular concern, as an evolutionary biologist, is that this interaction can hinder inquiry. In the case of evolution, 'the image we see reflects social preferences and psychological hopes, rather than paleontological data or Darwinian theory.' He sums up the matter thus: 'The most serious and pervasive of all misconceptions about evolution equates the concept with some notion of progress, usually inherent and predictable, and leading to a human pinnacle' (Gould, 1995: 43).

My concern, as a moral theologian, is slightly different from Gould's. How does the intertwined imagery of progress, predictability, and pinnacle shape British and North American notions of the social applicability

of evolutionary thought? This effort involves historical digging for the sake of interpreting the background stories that are in play even today. In Jenny Reardon's book about the failed Human Genome Diversity Project, *Race to the Finish: Identity and Governance in an Age of Genomics*, she suggests that a crucial but largely hidden feature of genomics is the particular story of progress that continues to shape conversations: 'This modern age witnessed the entanglement of rules that govern what can count as knowledge with rules that determine which human lives can be lived' (Reardon, 2004: 5). I am continually concerned about the interplay of moral theology, variously working Darwinisms, and the rules that determine which human lives can be lived. This volume is dedicated to Darwinian thought in particular, and what people usually name as social Darwinism may have little to do with Darwin's own ideals. The term is usually used for a popularized combination of Herbert Spencer's understanding of hierarchical, social evolution and Thomas Malthus's analysis of population growth, poverty, and the danger or responsibility of 'charity' (see Hofstadter, 1992). Yet, even given this historical caveat, I believe a look back at earlier efforts to process Darwin's writings for, to, and about the masses is worthwhile. Such studies may help both scientists and moral theologians to perceive the echoes of English and North American cultural assumptions at work, even in projects thought to be patently universal or keenly cross-cultural.

Specifically, I here offer an English churchman, Charles Kingsley, as a helpful interlocutor for interpreting the intersection of moral and evolutionary thought in the US and UK. By Darwin's own account, Kingsley is precisely the 'celebrated author and divine' of whom he wrote gratefully in the second and subsequent editions of *On the Origin of Species* (Darwin, 1903: 174). Although still beloved in the UK, Canon Charles Kingsley (1819–1875) is not well known in North America. His treatises on Christian socialism and his novels encouraging what came to be known as 'muscular Christianity' are, in their specifics, lost to most. Nevertheless, he represents a connection of themes at play at kitchen tables, in school board meetings, and in public debates today. Kingsley was able to combine politically serviceable elements of evolutionary thought with other aspects of literary-popular culture to offer a helpful theology for Victorian England.

Kingsley was Darwin's churchman, able to process evolution theologically, making a clarifying struggle toward fitness seem downright providential, and, at the same time, crystallizing English conceptions of race, masculinity and progress for a popular (literate) audience. *The Water-Babies*, his enduring children's whimsy, was at the time part of a serious textual output for a whole generation of young men. This, joined with his homiletic call for a reasonably virile English faith, helped create religious Darwinism for his time. Attention to his voice may help one to note the ways that congregants in the United States and England draw

on his version of Christian Darwinism. Such a consideration of the past may encourage careful humility among Kingsley's inheritors. I will close the essay by suggesting that we may read even Kingsley as anticipating collaboration with the very people he narrated as in need of tutelage during an earlier era. If there was hope for even him, even then, perhaps there are creative possibilities for readers today.

## 1. Manifest Domesticity

Evolution, as a concept, need not require that humans take it upon themselves to plan and produce a fitter future. It is logically possible to read *The Origin of Species* as resituating the human species sufficiently below our prior aspirations as to render grand, social planning silly, at least, and even as potentially detrimental to God's creation. But, as Michael Northcott notes in his essay for this volume, some of Darwin's readers used *The Origin of Species* further to make the case for the superiority of humans, as the pinnacle of evolution, and thus for the priority of human progress. This priority was for a particular version of human progress. Part of Gould's point in his 1995 article is that the Darwinian revolution does not necessitate a story of progress along an upward trajectory, with particularly fit heroes as agents of change. One possible reason that the pinnacle story took hold so firmly is that a group of Protestant men in England and the United States deemed themselves as holy husbandmen – as men particularly suited to usher in the next stage of human development through domestic and international efforts. For some of Darwin's readers, his findings gave warrant for directing the progress of peoples who seemed less evolved. Many of Darwin's interpreters took up the call implicit in the book's subtitle: *The Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*. Men within the 'favoured races' were able, with some theological effort, to understand their work on peoples at home and abroad to be now proven scientifically as ordained by God.

The most overt forms of this justification by way of evolutionary superiority came from Christian colonialists and, a few decades later, eugenicists. I first came across Kingsley while sorting through sundry American eugenicist texts and researching the formal eugenics movement that flourished in the United States during the first half of the twentieth century, decades after Kingsley's death. Yet Kingsley was a mentor to young churchmen grappling with how best to apply Darwin socially; he had set a pattern for evaluating, sifting, and culling individuals, regions, and populations. For those American clergy who were eager to be of use during what has been called a progressive era, Kingsley's fiction and his *Natural Theology of the Future* (the title of his 1871 essay) offered guidance for remaining relevant.

In my book *Conceiving Parenthood*, I concentrated on the obviously *domestic* side of 'Manifest Domesticity'. I believe it helpful now also to consider a view from the more 'public' eye. In her 1998 essay 'Manifest Domesticity', written for a special issue of *American Literature*, Amy Kaplan suggests a different way of thinking about gender and the too-often presumed split between home and public life.

Reconceptualizing domesticity in this way might shift the cognitive geography of nineteenth-century separate spheres. When we contrast the domestic sphere with the market or political realm, men and women inhabit a divided social terrain, but when we oppose the domestic to the foreign, men and women become national allies against the alien, and the determining division is not gender but racial demarcations of otherness. Thus another part of the cultural work of domesticity might be to unite men and women in a national domain and to generate notions of the foreign against which the nation can be imagined as home. The border between the domestic and foreign, however, also deconstructs when we think of domesticity not as a static condition but as the process of domestication, which entails conquering and taming the wild, the natural and the alien. Domestic in this sense is related to the imperial project of civilizing, and the conditions of domesticity often become markers that distinguish civilization from savagery (Kaplan, 1998: 582).

Put simply, those historians who have separated domesticity in the home from the process of husbandry across the empire keep alive a serviceable lie about masculinity and femininity, about politics and the nursery. Kaplan suggests that the work of home and the work of empire overlap. The title of her essay plays on the term 'Manifest Destiny', a term used for the presumably providential work Western expansion in the United States, an understanding of providence and fitness that justified theologically the extermination of real people and the obliteration of cultures. Kaplan links this public and violent story to the supposedly private and safe sphere of home-life in the Eastern states. For example, the nineteenth-century home in Sudbury, Massachusetts, was patterned in such a way as to support and justify Western expansion toward what would become Sioux City, Iowa; child-rearing in the Sudbury home involved a form of civilizing that patterned the supposedly civilizing efforts on the frontier. What children read in the New England drawing room had much to do with taming the land and peoples to the West. To consider this dynamic in Victorian England allows one to note that social class often then trumped (and now trumps) gender when forging relational alliances. Kingsley's work spans the spheres, as he was an author as well known to children as to their parents, beloved by royalty as well as to those who had only newly acquired a separate nursery. Canon Kingsley worked on multiple fronts, keeping within his purview for civilizing not only working class Englishmen, but the Irish, the Scots, and the inhabitants of the West Indies. His perspective on providence,

nationhood, and the proper work of proper men may be helpful for discerning the more obviously 'Manifest' side of this overlapping sphere in conversations today.

## 2. To Turn Men into Beasts

In 1859 Charles Kingsley was appointed the official chaplain to Queen Victoria. He later served as the private tutor to the Prince of Wales, who would become Edward VII. While there are many theologians whose work has aged better, Kingsley's writing represents his age very well. Over his writing life, Kingsley's commitments moved fluidly from the alleviation of suffering due to poverty, to Christian socialism, to worries about the enervation of English manhood, to the promulgation of Christian Darwinism. The fairy tale realism of *The Water-Babies* narrated the proper import of Darwinism in the English home for English mothers responsible for raising properly dutiful and courageous English sons. Larry Uffelman puts the matter simply by explaining the explicit purpose of the book:

Kingsley placed the nineteenth-century conflict between science and religion in the context of a fantasy designed to reconcile them by showing continuous development to be the creative principle at work in the world. Through the death, moral growth, and eventual rebirth of the central character, Kingsley links the principles of evolution in the physical world to the growth and maturity of the spiritual being . . . (Uffelman, 1979: 70-71).

In a matching, whimsical tone, the London *Times* reviewed the first bound copy of the book as displaying the truth that 'the pleasantest things of life are as a rule unintelligible to us until we have lost them.' Some of Kingsley's contemporaries suspected that the new science would reshape the pleasantries of English life. To use Kingsley's own words, 'the great Fairy' known as science was 'likely to be the queen of all the fairies for many a year to come' (Kingsley, 1864: 80). It would behoove pastors and parents to note her allure and adapt accordingly. For those wondering whether evolutionary science would technically explain away *awe*, a main ingredient for English naturalism, Kingsley came to the rescue. The 'quiet sober people' who, as *The Times* describes them, 'favoured *Macmillan* [magazine],' might have been 'a little scandalized' by the 'pure nonsense' of *The Water-Babies* when it was first published serially in 1862, but, *The Times* editorial declared, it was 'by no means necessary to understand a book to know whether or not it is agreeable.' The spritely work had a serious function. Kingsley saved Darwinism with fancy. The English home could have its evolution and keep its idealized sense of both Mother Nature and the children who were her gift.

One enchanting exchange in 1892, between Thomas Henry Huxley and his grandson Julian, shows how much the book eventually hit its mark. Huxley had come under particular attention in *The Water-Babies*. Kingsley depicted his friend as just the sort of researcher potentially incapable of wonder, as someone to whom a skeptic would send a water baby for dissection to verify its non-existence. After receiving a letter from Julian, asking whether his 'Grandpater' had seen a water baby, Huxley wrote back

*My Dear Julian,*

*I never could make sure about that Water Baby. I have seen Babies in water and Babies in bottles; but the Baby in the water was not in a bottle and the Baby in the bottle was not in water. My friend who wrote the story of the Water Baby, was a very kind man and very clever. Perhaps he thought I could see as much in the water as he did – There are some people who see a great deal and some who see very little in the same things. When you grow up, I dare say you will be one of the great-deal seers and see things more wonderful than Water Babies where other folks can see nothing . . . (Huxley, 1900: 436–439).*

The combination of nursery play and the dedicated perception of the hidden is key to the book's role in securing a place for wondering inquiry. It was able to catch up the well-churched and those determined-to-be-not-churched. Although Julian would grow up to defend theologian Teilhard de Chardin (as well as popular eugenics), he and his grandfather were both known as hearty agnostics (at least). With *The Water-Babies*, Kingsley made imaginative room for wonder and astute, scientific vision, intertwined with the English family.

Kingsley's magically poetic prose splinters with academic summary. But a few features are obvious. First, Darwin's science most comes alive when one has the eyes to see the intricate wonders of the natural world. To quote the epigraph at the beginning of the 1864 edition, all 'unbelieving Sadducees' and the 'less-believing Pharisees' with their 'dull conventionalities,' should leave to her work 'a country muse at ease; to play at leap-frog, if she please, with children and realities' (Kingsley, 1864: 6). Second, the interplay of children and realities is best kept safe from brittle minds with the help of a rather stretchy version of God. As Kingsley puts it using William Wordsworth, 'not in entire forgetfulness and not in utter nakedness' do we come into this world, but 'trailing clouds of Glory,' sent from the divine. For the child who knows this truth, 'the great fairy Science' will do him only good and not harm (80). Third, scientists who are asleep to the marvel that is reality are silly: 'The truth is, that folks' fancy that such and such things cannot be, simply because they have not seen them, is worth no more than the savage's fancy that there cannot be such a thing as a locomotive, because he has not seen one running wild in the forest' (70). To dress up a flying dragon in the name *Pterodactyl* does not erase the fact that it is flying dragon, the same beloved beast that supposedly 'learned men' had been denying for years (69). Finally, the natural world is best seen by someone washed

clean, literally and figuratively, of all that soils their bodies and souls. At the opening of the story, Tom sees his reflection in a mirror and turns, angrily, to expunge this 'little black ape' from the room of 'the little white lady' who slept there (28). Tom's realization that *he* is the 'ape' sends him, by a circuitous route, on the under-watery journey to become a man, even a 'great man of science' (308). If he had remained soiled, and thus ape-like, Tom would have ended up like the efts, creatures who 'will not learn their lessons and keep themselves clean' and thus devolve, growing not only 'nasty, dirty, lazy', and 'stupid', but also growing tails (309–310).

As Jessica Straley suggests, Kingsley drew on a notion within one form of Darwinism at the time that the child was 'a living vestige of the species' bestial, pre-human past' (Straley, 2007: 583). I would add that Kingsley was able to layer on top of the evolution of the species a commentary on the hierarchy of supposed types within the species. I first came across the illustration below, by J. Noel Paton, while digging through books in the St Deiniol's library in Wales. Two of the young interns were shelving, and I asked them what they thought of the image. 'Goodness,' one said to the other, 'doesn't he look just like the face on the marmalade advertisement?' She explained that the image had been taken off of the advertisement, but that it had looked like the same sort of caricature. The young women's immediate response was that Tom looks African, more specifically like a *caricature* of an African child, known generally in the United States as a picanniny and in the United Kingdom as a golliwogg (after the erstwhile marmalade advertisement and a series of children's books by Florence Kate Upton from the turn of the century).

## THE WATER-BABIES:

A FAIRY TALE FOR A LAND-BABY.

### CHAPTER I.

"I HEARD a thousand blended notes,  
While in a grove I sate reclined;  
In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts  
Bring sad thoughts to the mind.

"To her fair works did Nature link  
The human soul that through me ran;  
And much it grieved my heart to think,  
What man has made of man."

WORDSWORTH.



ONCE upon a time there was a little chimney-sweep, and his name was Tom. That is a short name, and you have heard it before, so you will not have much trouble in remembering it. He lived in a great town in the North country, where there were plenty of chimneys to sweep, and plenty of money for Tom

This illustration fits well Kingsley's original prose. Tom is not only dirty from soot, but he is soiled in a way that requires submersion and elevation. When the fairy queen who first attracts Tom to the water tells the other fairies about Tom, she explains, 'He is but a savage now, and like the beasts that perish . . .' (Kingsley, 1864: 55). The transformation of Tom the chimney-sweep is a transformation of evolution from sooty to clean, from savage to civilized, from working to middle class, and from more nearly black to obviously white.

It would be perhaps more proper here to put the word 'black' in such a way as to indicate the suppleness with which Kingsley used the imagery of race. To employ Kaplan's 'manifest destiny' heuristic here, Tom's role carries meaning for an individual child's recapitulation toward maturity and the evolution of humanity toward an industrious, perceptive, clean race of humans. The images of 'beast' and 'savage' indicate both the English child maturing in the nursery, toward good English manhood, and those peoples who in various ways function to mark the rungs on the ladder by which a child is to climb. Seen in this way, Kingsley writes in *The Water-Babies* a story of recapitulation that draws on the work of Ernst Haeckel. According to one of Haeckel's formulations, each individual in a species repeats the earlier stages of the evolution of that species. As in this understanding of evolution, Tom goes through a transition from a newt-like creature, a water baby, toward becoming a human being, a 'land baby.' By Kingsley's retelling, a savage human returns to the watery womb to go again through the process, this time the right way, toward individual maturation. But the story also rehearses Herbert Spencer's understanding of the evolution of human kinds. With a light tone, Kingsley employs the heavy narration of human evolution from those who remain more nearly savage toward those who have evolved to become more nearly English.

There is a pithy discussion on these matters between a fairy named Mrs. Bedonebyasyoudid, Tom, and Tom's friend, Ellie. The fairy sums up the shape of savagery toward civilization in a way that draws on both an inherited and an acquired version of evolutionary theory. Groups fail to evolve when they pass on to future generations their stubborn incapacity to adapt. As the fairy puts it: '. . . there are two sides to every question, and a downhill as well as an uphill road; and, if I can turn beasts into men, I can, by the same laws of circumstance, and selection, and competition, turn men into beasts' (222). The capricious prose of *The Water-Babies* belies the serious work of narrating social evolution in a way serviceable to the spiritual, moral, and physical superiority of English men. If Darwin could intimate that beasts became men, so could Kingsley use this insight to turn men into beasts. The conversation explicitly on evolution occurs when the fairy Bedonebyasyoudid shows them the story of a group of devolving people called the Doasyoulikes. She explains that the division between apes and men has little to do

with 'whether the creatures had hippopotamus majors in their brains or not' (a reference to the contemporary debate over the hippocampus). Rather, some groups of men could become 'more apish than the apes of all aperies' (221). The relevant passage warrants extended quotation

Some of them talked of sowing corn, as their ancestors used to do, before they came into the land of Readymade; but they had forgotten how to make ploughs (they had forgotten even how to make Jews' harps by this time), and had eaten all the seed-corn which they brought out of the land of Hardwork years since . . . So they lived miserably on roots and nuts, and all the weakly little children had great stomachs, and then died.' 'Why,' said Tom, 'they are growing no better than savages.' 'And look how ugly they are all getting,' said Ellie. 'Yes; when people live on poor vegetables instead of roast beef and plum-pudding, their jaws grow large, and their lips grow coarse, like the poor Paddies who eat potatoes.' And she turned over the next five hundred years. And there they were all living up in trees . . . 'But what great, hulking, broad-shouldered chaps they are,' said Tom ; 'they are a rough lot as ever I saw' . . . And she turned over the next five hundred years. And in that they were fewer still, and stronger, and fiercer; but their feet had changed shape very oddly, for they laid hold of the branches with their great toes, as if they had been thumbs, just as a Hindoo tailor uses his toes to thread his needle. The children were very much surprised, and asked the fairy whether that was her doing. 'Yes, and no,' she said, smiling. 'It was only those who could use their feet as well as their hands who could get a good living . . . 'But there is a hairy one among them,' said Ellie. 'Ah,' said the fairy, 'that will be a great man in his time, and chief of all the tribe.' And, when she turned over the next five hundred years, it was true. For this hairy chief had had hairy children, and they hairier children still . . . all the rest coughed and sneezed, and had sore throats, and went into consumptions, before they could grow up to be men and women. Then the fairy turned over the next five hundred years. And they were fewer still.' 'Why, there is one on the ground picking up roots,' said Ellie, 'and he cannot walk upright.' . . . 'Why,' cried Tom, 'I declare they are all apes.' 'Something fearfully like it, poor foolish creatures,' said the fairy. 'They are grown so stupid now, that they can hardly think . . .' And in the next five hundred years they were all dead and gone, by bad food and wild beasts and hunters; all except one tremendous old fellow with jaws like a jack, who stood full seven feet high; and M. Du Chaillu came up to him, and shot him, as he stood roaring and thumping his breast. And he remembered that his ancestors had once been men, and tried to say, 'Am I not a man and a brother?' but had forgotten how to use his tongue and then he had tried to call for a doctor, but he had forgotten the word for one. So all he said was 'Ubboboo!' and died (217-222).

Tom learns that his fate would have been similar to the devolved creatures, the 'efts,' if he 'had not made up [his] mind to go on this journey, and see the world, like an Englishman' (222). To see the world, like an Englishman, is, for Kingsley, to see the ways that poverty is materially substantive. Here we may read traces of the Christian socialism of

Kingsley's earlier years. But Kingsley has by this point replaced socialism with a version of social Darwinism. The sloth of one generation would come to bear on its extinction. It may be that Kingsley here has partly in mind the saving of Irish boys forced by poverty to crawl down deadly chimneys, but there is also a reverse lesson. Those who are suffering in poverty are animal-like, and, unlike the true animals, they are beastly *by choice*. Linking misery with 'coarse' lips, and potatoes with imminent descent, those who 'live on poor vegetables instead of roast beef and plum-pudding' become responsible for their demise. It is hardly Paul Du Chaillu's fault not to have recognized the resulting savage as his kin. Within a few generations, the savage had become more akin to a gorilla, one of those exotic creatures Du Chaillu shot and stuffed for museums. Those marked as savage have, in Kingsley's story, become something other than 'a man and a brother.'

This reading of humanity may be read as Kingsley's defense of God's providential plan to secure the beauty of creation. The review in the *The Times* of London notes that *The Water-Babies* carries with it Kingsley's account of faith and moral aesthetics, what the review calls 'the foundation of the theology of his school' (*The Times*, 1864: 6). The reviewer then goes on to surmise that this method, 'to ground the scheme of Christian faith upon its beauty', seems 'to some simple minds like balancing a pyramid upon its apex, and then sitting at rest upon its inverted base'. Noting that the 'criterion of moral beauty is painfully uncertain', *The Times* then poses the problem of the 'pious cannibal' who, prior to proper instruction on duty and beauty from an English missionary, believes cannibalism to represent a 'touching reverence for human life' and to be 'an exquisite fulfillment of filial obligations'. What then of truth and beauty, the reviewer asks. How may the reader fasten the connection between Kingsley's particular faith and the abiding truth of providential beauty? Kingsley's answer comes not in sophism but by way of his reliable aim at a receptive audience. He need not answer this gentle criticism from his reviewer, because his story is to be read in the English household. There, it may remain beautifully true (now as a Puffin Classic). His is not a clearly logical progression made up of what might be read as culturally transferable, universal fact. The line the review notes to be vital speaks with a particularly English voice for a particular purpose: 'It is so beautiful it must be true', they repeat, and in this they catch the genius of Kingsley's writing.

*The Times* review makes this point in a style that mimics *The Water-Babies* when they connect Tom and Ellie's story to the mid-nineteenth century English fascination with sea anemones:

But when Mr. Gosse wrote books to describe the wonders which he saw on the coast of Devonshire and at Tenby, and Mr. Lewes exchanged biography, metaphysics, novels, and plays for sea-side studies, and another popular

author published *Glaucus; or, the Wonders of the Shore*, and Germans wrote fat books on the sea, and insisted that Germany ought to be a naval Power and Kiel a German port, and Frenchmen wrote lively books and built La Gloire, and every young lady had her aquarium, and maiden aunts carried about rare actinia in jam-pots, to the fearful punishment of pilfering pages fond of sweets, Tom and Ellie could no longer remain in obscurity, and their delightful history was accordingly written (*The Times*, 6).

The style here is indicative of Kingsley's poetic intellect. The Crimean War is connected to sea-side studies is related to Romance is linked to every young lady, her maiden aunt, jam-pots and pilfering pages. Kingsley uses a rhetorical microscope to focus in on a bit of a sea creature, moves a step out to place the sea creature within a young lady's home, and then takes up a telescope to gain perspective on the grand, political questions of his day. Sweets and ocean vessels are of a piece, pasted together in as delightful a form as Lewis Carroll's Walrus's promised discussion of shoes and ships and sealing wax and cabbages and kings. Mr Gosse and Mr Lewes and their like, men who aptly 'see a great deal' (to borrow Grandpater Huxley's words to Julian) enter the parlour and the nursery by way of Kingsley's tale. Those little boys who learn properly to shine their shoes may someday 'see the world, as an Englishman'. Kingsley's moral aesthetic is thus essentially English.

### 3. Painful Facts

This pastiche of the everyday domestic and the broadly global is apparent also in *Macmillan's Magazine*, the same publication featuring *The Water-Babies* serially and that, within a decade, presented Kingsley's seminal essay, 'The Natural Theology of the Future'. It is worth noting the previous issue of the publication, as an indication of the intersection *Macmillan's* represents. In February of 1871, the editors featured an essay on the necessity of fortifying London (complete with diagram and budget); a sonnet encouraging that 'he who soareth singeth all the way'; another installment of 'Patty', a romantic/morality novel by Katherine Macquoid; an encomium to the martyr for science, Giordano Bruno; the second part of a travel diary from France; a nifty historical essay on secret codes; and an essay by Francis Galton on 'Gregariousness in Cattle and in Men'. Galton's essay is itself a collage of matters 'abroad' and familial. Having had the 'fortune' of 'an intimate knowledge of certain classes of gregarious animals' – including 'the urgent need of the camel for the close companionship of his fellows' – Galton seeks to apply his observation of 'wild' oxen in Africa, their being apparently of a different kind altogether than the 'English ox'. (The English oxen are, he explains, 'far less gregarious'.) Galton introduces his article thus:

I propose, in these pages, to discuss a curious and apparently anomalous group of base moral instincts and intellectual deficiencies, to trace their analogies in the world of brutes, and to examine the conditions through which they have been involved. I speak of the slavish aptitudes, from which the leaders of men, and the heroes and the prophets, are exempt, but which are irrepressible elements in the disposition of average men . . . I shall endeavour to prove that the slavish aptitudes, whose expression in man I have faintly but sufficiently traced are the direct consequence of his gregarious nature, which, itself, is a result both of his primaeval barbarism and of his subsequent forms of civilization (Galton, 1871: 353).

The magazine, appearing as it would on the library table of the right sorts of homes, thus conveyed the connections between 'the clannish, fighting habits of our forefathers' and the 'savages' living in the region of Africa inhabited by the gregarious oxen. The 'black population of Africa' suffers in a way formally similar to the apparently brutish oxen, which in turn have a lesson to teach readers in 'the present day' about how 'blind instincts' toward sociality are continually 'destroying the self-reliant, and therefore the nobler, races of men'. As Galton closes with his summons for a proper breeding that would encourage 'vigorous, self-reliant men' in England, the magazine features a new essay, on 'England's Place Among the Nations,' by a 'military contributor'.

The editors began the next issue with 'The Natural Theology of the Future' (Kingsley, 1871). Kingsley first establishes the Anglican Church's place among the religions, showing that the 'three greatest natural theologians' (Berkeley, Butler and Paley) are representative of their Church, a Church that is 'eminently rational as well as scriptural.' Yet, he warns, those inheriting Wesley and Whitfield have gone over to a form of sung theology that verges on the irrational: 'There lingers about them a savour of the old monastic theory, that this earth is the devil's planet, fallen, accursed, goblin haunted, needing to be exorcised at every turn before it is useful or even safe for man' (Kingsley, 1871: 370). With the small 'exception of that first curse,' the 'voice of God expressed in facts' is evident 'according to the laws of Nature' (371). That small exception, the exception of the curse, is sufficiently small to make, as Kingsley reads it, a theology of grace indistinguishable from a theology of nature, for, 'the God of Nature and the God of Grace are one'. A natural theology fit for the new science may see that 'the God who satisfies our conscience ought more or less to satisfy our reason also'. Kingsley warns that Bishop Butler's compromise (as he reads it) is necessarily renewed in every age, for, not to compromise is to risk extinction: 'for if in any age or country the God who seems to be revealed by Nature seems different from the God who is revealed by the then popular religion, then that God, and the religion which tells of that God, will gradually cease to be believed in' (370). Religion must evolve.

Developments with the new science tell us is that 'natural facts' are still trustworthy to guide the work of man, as the 'lord of creation'. This lordship is what allows man to repeal the 'exception' that is the curse. Through godly gardening, man is able to 'root up the thorns and thistles'. Kingsley advises *Macmillan's* readership, 'keep your land clean, then assuredly you will grow fruit-trees and not thorns, wheat and not thistles.' From small to large matters, this fact of nature must guide. While this may sound harsh, Kingsley reminds readers that Scripture 'reveals a God not merely of love, but of sternness'. It is at this point that Kingsley elucidates the natural theology of *The Water-Babies*. If natural theologians are going to keep apace, they must bring these natural and Scriptural facts together to consider 'questions of Embryology and questions of Race' (373). The preponderance of the words 'beget and bring forth' show the importance in Scripture of the scientific study of embryology. Thus, the new theology will need to address questions of ontogeny and phylogeny (that is, Haeckel's questions). But, in order to do so well, theologians will need to risk the disapprobation of some, some who think that the new finding 'endangers the modern notions of democratic equality'.

There are those who fear the new findings, those who fear that 'it may be proved that the negro is not a man and brother'. Yet, Kingsley explains, according to 'Mr. Darwin', 'science has proved that he must be such'. Polygenesis thus disproven, monogenesis now established, how is the natural theologian of the future to think about 'the negro'? For, as Kingsley explains, 'the one fact of the unique distribution of the hair in all races of human beings' is 'full moral proof that they had all had one common ancestor'. Common ancestry does not resolve the question of race. Rather, as Kingsley explains,

Physical science is proving more and more the immense importance of Race; the importance of hereditary powers, hereditary organs, hereditary habits, in all organized beings, from the lowest plant to the highest animal. She is proving more and more the omnipresent action of the differences between races; how the more favored race (she cannot avoid using the epithet) exterminates the less favored, or at least expels it, and forces it, under penalty of death, to adapt to new circumstances; and, in a word, that competition between every race and every individual of that race, and reward according to deserts, is (as far as we can see) a universal law of living things. And she says – for the facts of history prove it – that as it is among the races of plants and animals, so it has been unto this day among the races of men (373).

Instead of arguing for the supremacy of science over revelation, Kingsley argues that, when read through proper spectacles, the 'painful facts' of science are evident at the heart of Scripture itself. In so doing, Kingsley uses the potent rhetoric of Christian supersessionism:

The natural theology of the future must take count of these tremendous and even painful facts: and she may take count of them. For Scripture has taken count of them already. . . . Its sense of the reality and importance of descent is so intense, that it speaks of a whole tribe or whole family by the name of its common ancestor, and the whole nation of the Jews is Israel to the end. And if I be told this is true of the Old Testament, but not of the New, I must answer, What? Does not St. Paul hold the identity of the whole Jewish race with Israel their forefather, as strongly as any prophet of the Old Testament? And what is the central historic fact, save one, of the New Testament, but the conquest of Jerusalem – the dispersion, all but destruction of a race, not by miracle, but by invasion, because found wanting when weighed in the stern balances of natural and social law?

Gentlemen, think of this . . . by the light which our Lord's parables, His analogies between the physical and social constitution of the world afford – and consider whether those awful words, fulfilled then and fulfilled so often since – 'The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits hereof' – may not be the supreme instance, the most complex development, of a law which runs through all created things, down to the moss which struggles for existence on the rock? (374)

Tying together the 'importance of race' and the superiority of Christianity, Kingsley effectively reformulates the tale of Roman dispersion as a tale of natural law. A people incapable of winning the struggle of existence is replaced by a superior. The 'central historic fact' of the 'destruction of a race' is congruent with the 'stern balances of natural and social law' now established by the new science.

There is still hope, 'if not to the virtue of all-embracing charity' (indeed), then for the 'virtues of self-sacrifice and patriotism'. Here Kingsley shapes the question of divine grace into a serviceable endorsement of human progress, wrought through the hard work of a superior people:

Do I say that this is all? That man is merely a part of Nature, the puppet of circumstances and hereditary tendencies? That brute competition is the one law of his life? That he is doomed for ever to be the slave of his own needs, enforced by an internecine struggle for existence? God forbid. I believe not only in Nature, but in Grace. I believe this is man's fate only as long as he sows to the flesh, and of the flesh reaps corruption. I believe that if he will *Strive upward, working out the beast, And let the ape and tiger die*; if he will be even as wise as the social animals... then he will rise to a higher sphere; towards that kingdom of God of which it is written, 'He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him' (374).

There is no need for Kingsley to prove 'marks of design' within the new science. 'If the heavens do not declare to you the glory of God, nor the firmament show you His handy-work,' he explains, 'then our poor arguments about them will not show it.' To many of the magazine's

readers, it will seem 'self-evident' that 'wherever there is arrangement, there must be an arranger . . . wherever an organization, there must be an organizer.' There is hardly a need for proving a design, for the natural theology of the future is here designed to justify a particular arrangement, a particular organization, and a particular set of stewards for bringing into the world an ever fitter people. Employing Alfred Lord Tennyson, Kingsley shows the usefulness of Darwinian theology in an age marked for colonial expansion. By climbing above, occupying the newly distributed 'kingdom of God,' those within 'the more favored race' may distinguish themselves not only from moss, ape, and tiger but from those peoples whose failure calls for tutelage and/or dispersion. If only 'we clergy' will 'summon up the courage' to tell this story, the 'unknown x' left in the new science may be effectively replaced by 'The Breath of God; The Spirit who is The Lord and Giver of Life' (378).

#### 4. Lastly, To See the World as an Englishman?

Tom has the courage to go on his journey, and evolve to be able to 'view the world' as an Englishman, the fairy tells him. One of Kingsley's last works is *At Last: A Christmas in the West Indies*, which he dedicated to Sir Arthur Gordon, the former governor of Trinidad who had recently been named governor of Mauritius. The book is illustrated with images such as 'Gulf-Weed', 'Sea-Side Grape', 'The Little Ant-Eater', as well as 'Coolies Cooking' and 'A Coolie Family' (Kingsley, 1887). Kingsley's own journey to see the world involved his attempt to sort through the natural laws of flora, fauna, and people. Predictably, he must see the 'brutality' contrasted with the 'refinement,' the 'savage' compared with the 'gentleman'. The 'brutality' of 'negro' coal bargaining offends what he names as a belief that 'all God's human children may be somewhere, somewhere, somehow, reformed into His likeness' (Kingsley, 1887: 21). (He is not offended by the treatment of the workers, but by the way that the system 'enables Negroes of the lowest class to earn enough in one day to keep them in idleness'.) Troubled by what he perceives to be 'the mere excitability and coarseness of half-civilized creatures', Kingsley declares the workers to be excused from 'deliberate depravity'.

Yet, in his last years, many days of sea voyage away from home, Kingsley also receives what he perceives to be a sort of grace. This had been a dream that he symbolically names as having lasted forty years: 'From childhood I had studied their Natural History, their charts, their Romances, and alas! their Tragedies; and now, at last, I was about to compare books with facts . . .' (Kingsley, 1887: 1). The *facts* are all mixed up, however, as Kingsley meets a 'little brown child' who has been renamed at his Christening for this eager, visiting Englishman (362). A

little later, while watching a local spectacle, thinking 'what a strange creature man is,' Kingsley sees an 'old gentleman seemingly absorbed in the very same reflection.' His 'aquiline, high-cheek-boned features' prompt Kingsley to assume him 'an old Scot', but, as the man 'turned his head deliberately round to me', he sees to his 'astonishment' the 'features of a Chinese'. As they look one another 'full in the face', Kingsley 'fancied' that they 'understood' one another about 'many things'. Noting that 'the Chinese visage is unfathomable', Kingsley wonders whether the man is 'an honest man and true', or if he is hiding something. Kingsley decides to take 'the more charitable judgment', being 'weak enough to believe that I should know the man and like him' (368).

By one reading, this fancy is no less quixotic than *The Water-Babies* and no less dangerous in its romantic epistemology than the future's natural theology. But, by another reading, this is a crack in the edifice of the solid, English gentleman. Reading this story through the blessing of new wine, one might interpret Kingsley as barely glimpsing, as in the blink of his eye, what it might mean, eventually, for the dispersed 'savages' to enter and inhabit the manifest world of Great Britain. By this (less than fully virile) reworking of Kingsley, it is 'weakness' that must come to bear on his inheritors if he is to get his wish – a wish that, someday, the 'great and worthy exertions' by which English missionaries have converted 'the Negro and the Heathen,' will be returned home to England. In other words (taking only a bit of liberty) Kingsley wished for his grandchildren that Christians from the previously colonized world might bring a vital, Christian word back to bear on a church that thought itself previously to be providentially fit to spread. Those who had been the objects of English perception and subjection would, he hoped, send their own missionaries back, even to 'convert the London Season itself' (371). (I would add here that they might, perhaps, even return to convert dear Cambridge.)

Here, at the end of a historical sort of essay, I would suggest a full, moral – theological, stop. Kingsley's hope at the end of his life – for receptive collaboration with Christians from mission worlds abroad – begs for difficult reckoning with the implications of his influence as a Christian Darwinist for the British Empire. The possibility Kingsley glimpsed *at last*, in the West Indies, was one of Christian truth over cultural presumption, beckoning toward a kinship that has much less to do with evolutionary biology or a muscular military and more to do with Baptism. This possibility will likely raise more sneers from Britain's cultured despisers. Yet it may still be true. The strangers Kingsley encountered in *At Last* might, as he put it, 'assist [England] to take the beam out of its own eye, in return for having taken the mote out of theirs.' Reader, might it be so?