



# The Moral Mapping of Victorian and Edwardian London: Charles Booth, Christian Charity, and the Poor-but-Respectable

*Thomas R.C. Gibson-Brydon*

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Charles Booth's seventeen-volume series, *The Life and Labour of the People in London* (1886–1903), is a staple of late Victorian social history and a monumental work of scholarship. Despite these facts, historians have paid little attention to its section on religious influences. Thomas Gibson-Brydon's *The Moral Mapping of Victorian and Edwardian London* seeks to remedy this neglect. Combing through the interviews Booth and his researchers conducted with 1,800 churchmen and women, Gibson-Brydon not only brings to life a cast of characters – from “Jesusist” vicars to Peckham Rye preachers to women drinkers – but also uncovers a city-wide audit of charitable giving and philanthropic practices. Discussing the philosophy of Booth, the genesis of his *Religious Influences Series*, and the agents and recipients of London charity, this study is a frank testimony on British moral segregation at the turn of the century. In critiquing the idea of working-class solidarity and community-building traditionally portrayed by many leading social and labour historians, Gibson-Brydon displays a meaner, bleaker reality in London's teeming neighbourhoods. Demonstrating the wealth of untapped information that can be gleaned from Booth's archives, *The Moral Mapping of Victorian and Edwardian London* raises new questions about working-class communities, cultures, urbanization, and religion at the height of the British Empire.

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