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Religion in Browning
and Tennyson.

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By
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1. Spirit of the Nineteenth Century.

Change has ever marked the progress of the world. The Nineteenth Century just passed has been essentially an age of change. There have been startling discoveries and world-transforming inventions. But greater than these has been the change of man's mind. Thoughts and ideas have been reformed and transformed.

It was in this age that Arnold and Clough, Browning and Tennyson lived; and they have as their birth-right a part of the feeling of unrest and that spirit of doubt which characterized the century in which they were cast. Hence, in order to understand their thoughts and feelings as exemplified in their poems, it will be necessary to know something of the spirit of the age in which they lived.

First of all, the nineteenth century was an age of science. Science dominated all fields of thought. Men in their laboratories revealed truths which could not be reconciled with the old ideas of science, philosophy and religion. Students of life and religion found them-

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selves confronted by many compelling facts unearthed by science; and these searchers after truth could not ignore the facts, yet in their early enlightenment they could not say the final word which would break the tie which bound them to their blind creeds.

However, the discrepancies shown by scientific experiment caused men to investigate things for themselves; blind credence was no longer a virtue. Doubt in all things had crept in, but particularly doubt in theology.

Now doubt is, and has ever been the mother of all progress, the progenitor of all new truth. Tennyson says that from doubt emerges stronger faith. Through doubt comes knowledge. So long as men are content with existing institutions, those institutions will remain in their same fixed state. It is when men become dissatisfied with things as they are that progress begins.

So it was in the time of these men. Humanity, actuated by the spirit of research, continued to press on, and new vistas of truth opened up before them. Then some of their old notions about science and religion - or more correctly speaking theology - had to be righted if they *acted?*

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meant to cling to truth.

Chief of the agents in this movement was Charles Darwin. His scientific treatises and his biological works, the "Origin of Species" and the "Descent of Man" set forth his theory of evolution and aroused a great storm among church officials. In these books he offered a natural explanation of what had before required a supernatural explanation, and the reasonableness of his theory appealed to the scientific mind. In his theory development by law took the place of the special creation hypothesis. His views were defended and supported by Huxley, Tyndall and Herbert Spencer.

This theory of the beginning of humanity on the earth did not accord ^{entirely} with the account set forth in Genesis, so men began to doubt other theses of the Bible. In their increasing knowledge of the universe and the phenomena connected therewith, they ceased to regard God as a de-humanized man. For many He was no longer regarded as a personal God; but He became for them the life-essence of the Universe. He was not a magnified man, but a conscious energy which was the controlling force of the world. Matthew Ar-

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nold defines God as the "Eternal not ourselves which makes for righteousness." It was not reverence for God, but the sense of familiarity with God which was decreased.

In this new conception, it was not religion, but that which Matthew Arnold calls the "Aberglaube" which was disturbed. Religion, which helps man to know his relation to the universe about him, was not attacked.

There was one other influence, second only to scientific investigation, which helped to mould the religious thought of the time; that was the bringing of the great religions of the East before the minds of thinking men. They began the study of comparative theology and they realized the fact that all men of all times and of all countries had recognized a ruling force; that all men recognized an overruling intelligence which in some way had to do with the world in which they lived; and in the realization of these things they took a broader view of life. Their ideas of God broadened, and while to Arnold God became the "Eternal not ourselves which makes for righteousness", to some He could be found in all the living Universe; and the Pantheistic theory spread.

The religious world was also shaken at this time by the liberal movement known as the Oxford, or the Tractarian movement. Influenced by this movement, John Henry Newman turned to the Catholic Church as a refuge from his doubts, while Arthur H. Clough and Matthew Arnold departed from traditional theology.

Clough, discarded all the "Aberglaube" save a hope for immortal life. Matthew Arnold, one of the most radical men of the movement, discarded everything. He only held to a belief in morality and a belief in "the Eternal not ourselves that makes for righteousness!"

Browning was influenced more by the philosophical side of the controversy, Tennyson more by the scientific side. Tennyson was never so sure of his position and his belief as was Browning; but Browning was more liberal in his view of Christ and God, broader in his view of life than was Tennyson. Browning, representing the influence of philosophy upon religious thought, will be considered first.

II. Robert Browning.

Robert Browning stands forth as the most virile poet of the nineteenth century. What Wagner was to music, Browning is to ^{poetry} (the) modern (poets.) Possessed of the ^{equal} same strength and marvelous sweetness, he has also ^{as much} ~~the same~~ power to present great dramatic and tragic scenes; ~~as~~ Wagner's innovations in music were criticized, so was the new form in poetry introduced by Browning criticized; but what is of most interest in this discussion is that he, as Wagner has so clearly done in his operas, has presented a philosophy of life, the religious life of men, free from theology or creed.

Browning's chief interest lay in humanity. He was no nature poet. With Pope, he believed that "the proper study of mankind is man." He was interested in life, in the human passions; and he has shown the human heart beneath the shams of conventional life, and made us to see it and to acknowledge that there is much of good even in the worst of men.

In his interest in humanity he draws examples

from all races, from all churches, from men and women of all classes and all callings; and in all this mass of humanity, he delights in showing how there is to be found somewhere a token of spiritual life either growing into power or flickering into extinction. The woman in her laboratory mixing the poison for her rival is not utterly hopeless, for she still has a spark of conscience. Fra Lippo Lippi, that delightful old sinner, realizes his shortcomings and at the same time takes a wicked pleasure in his naughtiness; but he isn't entirely bad, for he has no bad motives. Andrea Del Sarto, the faultless painter, is incapable of doing wrong, and his aspirations and his strivings raise him to a region beyond ordinary mortals. Paracelsus, striving toward his ideal, Little Pippa, whose songs teach the greatness of the divine order of things, and Pompilia, whose soul is mirrored through her sufferings, these are some of the souls laid bare to our view. Among all his characters I can think of but two who are entirely bad; those of the "Spanish Cloister" and "The Confessional": yes, and Guido, of the "Ring and the Book".

Through his characters Browning attempts to teach

that the world is, on the whole, a moral world in its true drift and significance. Not the clergyman's moral world, for the clergyman would have no spiritual conflict; he would desire all to be good; there would be no pain or evil in his moral world. But Browning's moral world is one where earthly pleasures and passions are prominent, yet where the nobler kind of passion ^{conquers} (wins out). He would have both sin and pain in the world; they are necessary for man's development. It is through pain and suffering that pleasure and good are appreciated and enjoyed.

A prominent theme in many of his poems is that no factor in man's life can be spared consistently with his development and progress. The prevalent idea in "The Ring and the Book" is that man is purified through suffering.

Browning is an idealist and an optimist; but he is no feeble optimist. He paints the world as real; he sees both the good and the evil in the world, but he sees the use of both. His justification of the existence of pain and sin is that opposition and struggle are the great factors in development. He is an optimist in that he has faith in the final triumph of good over evil. Man must

see "by the means of Evil that Good is best!"

His view of life, as just stated, is admirably summed up in the following stanzas from "Rabbi Ben Ezra,"-

"Then welcome each rebuff
That turns earth's smoothness rough,
Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand, but go!
Be our joys three parts pain!
Strive and hold cheap the strain;
Learn, nor account the pang: dare, never grudge
the throe!

For thence, - a paradox
Which comforts while it mocks,-
Shall life succeed in that it seems to fail:
What I aspired to be,
And was not, comforts me!
A brute I might have been, but would not sink
i' the scale!"

In this last stanza he touches upon a doctrine which forms another important element in his theory of life. "What I aspired to be, and was not, comforts me!"

He does not count all upon the outcome of the struggle. If the soul aspires and yet does not reach the goal toward which it is tending, still the very fact that it has aimed and striven toward that end ennobles it. Ibsen makes Brand to say -

"That you lacked strength may be forgiven,
But never that you wanted will;"

which is much the same as Browning's theory.

Paracelsus, who represents an aspiring soul, struggles upward for years and in his own mind and to all appearances his life was a failure; but he is pictured as coming out victorious, though he does not gain the end for which he strove.

Another poem presenting the same phase of thought is "Apparent Failure," in which Browning describes his visit to the morgue. There he saw three men, who had taken their own lives,

"Waiting to be owned,

I thought and think, their sins atoned!"

And he hopes

"That what began best, can't end worst,

Nor what God blest once, prove accurst!"

This is the same thought which Tennyson had in writing
"Somehow we hope that Good will be the final Goal of Ill!"

In "Rabbi Ben Ezra," in summing up the things in
life which count, he says-

"All instincts immature,
All purposes unsure
That weighed not as his work, yet swelled the
man's amount:

Thoughts hardly to be packed
Into a narrow act
Fancies that broke through language and escaped;
All I could never be,
All men ignored in me,
This, I was worth to God, whose wheel the pitch-
er shaped!"

The third element of his life-philosophy is the
value of action. He believes in the gospel of work. He
holds that action, even misguided action, is better than
slothfulness; that the mere striving for something is bet-

ter than indifference. His poem, "The Statue and the Bust," teaches that virtue does not lie in indecision and delay. While man is waiting, life is passing by; and if the delay be too long, the time for action will be forever gone. It is better to act, even though the deed be wrong. To be nothing, to be neither right nor wrong, is the most hopeless condition possible. Life was made for living; he who passes through life in an apathetic state, does not live. Live right if possible, but at all events live.

The teaching of "The Statue and the Bust" is attacked by Boyesen as being un-ethical and un-moral. It may be so considered; but the man and woman sinned in thought, and Browning would probably have held that a sin of thought is just as much a wrong as a sin of deed. But, be that as it may, the truth still remains, that he who never dares to act is of no use to himself nor to other; while he who really lives, though he may go wrong, has still the chance of righting himself.

The fourth and last element of his theory of life is found in his answer to the question "What is the end of life?"

"Grow old along with me!

The best is yet to be,

The last of life for which the first was made!"

In youth bodily pleasures are more exalted. As man grows older, he gains experience and is disciplined; through experience he can see and know the Good; he has gained inward knowledge, and with it insight. He finds that life is but a process of development from beginning to end, and that all the factors of life enter into that development. The end of human life is soul development.

But he is hardly satisfied with this end of life, since here in Time the soul has too little chance for growth and perfection. Browning believes in the immortality of the soul because man is not yet complete. In man's greatness he sees the promise of greater things to come. His idea of the future existence is that it should somehow be a continuation of the present state, wherein those aspirations never attained in the world might be realized, and where men might round out their life-development.

His was no Orthodox view of immortality. In him

the hope of a life beyond the grave did not arise from the Bible, from any church or from the teachings of Christ: it arose rather from his own nature, a nature too active and too vigorous to admit the thought of annihilation. He did not think of the after-life as a reward for earthly deeds: still less did he believe in eternal punishment. He believed that there must be another existence because, according to the nature of things it seemed to him reasonable and because it seemed to be the outcome of the indications of the calm and liberal philosophy of which his mind was possessed.

He has voiced his doubts as to immortal life and his hopes for it in many poems, but the one most pervaded by these questionings is "La Saisaiz":

"Does the soul survive the body?

Is there God's self, no or yes?

If I know my mood, 'twere constant - come in

whatever uncouth

Shape it should, nay, formidable - so the ans-

swer were but truth?"

And again his doubts are expressed in these lines -

"Why should I want courage here?

I will ask and have an answer,- with no favor,
with no fear, -

From myself. How much, how little, do I in-
wardly believe

True that controverted doctrine? Is it fact to
which I cleave,

Is it fancy I but cherish, when I take upon my
lips

Phrase the solemn Tuscan fashioned, and declare
the soul's eclipse

Not the soul's extinction?"

Then there follows a long and involved answer, the sub-
stance of which is that there is an outside force which
has been since the beginning, a thing which needs must be.
This force may be called God. It cannot be proved a fact,
but the inability to prove it either true or untrue, proves
it to be a fact. As to continued existence he says-

"Anyhow, we want it; wherefore want?

Because without the want,

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Life, now human, would be brutish:

Just that hope, however scant,

Makes the actual life worth living: take the hope
therein away,

And all we have to do is surely not endure an-
other day!

In this poem he brings out the thought that if
all were right in this world, if the good always triumphed
over the evil, there would be no need of another life; but
since things are not as they should be here, the craving
for a second existence arises. Hence -

"Only grant a second life: I acquiesce

In this present life as failure, count misfor-
tune's worst assaults

Triumph, not defeat, assured that loss so much
the more exalts

Gain about to be. For at what moment did I so
advance

Near to knowledge, as when frustrate of escape
from ignorance!"

This poem, written because of the death of a friend, contains the old, old question which we are all equally powerless to answer. Those of absolute faith in scriptural promises, feel that they know; others only surmise.

Browning holds that it is this hope which gives zest to human life.

In the poem "Easter Day" he does not attempt to explain the physical significance of the Resurrection; he cared nothing about it; the official Redeemer was excluded from his creed. What he was interested in was the question of human longings for perfection and human failure.

The poem opens

"How very hard it is to be a Christian!"

At first the great difficulty is thought to be belief: man cannot believe unless the idea is at least probable. But he later learns that living according to the ideals set up by the Christian life is harder than mere belief. And from this idea of the unattainable arises the necessity of another state of existence, wherein man may realize that in which he has failed here.

In the poem "Cleon," the poet, Cleon, says that the thought of death is so horrible that he even dares at times to imagine some future state unlimited in capability for joy. But it is in "Evelyn Hope" that the greatest faith is shown. The soul may continue yet through many lives; it has probably passed through several lives before it reaches this present life. He also believes that in these future existences the soul "will awake, remember and understand."

Rabbi Ben Ezra, in perfect faith, without any didactic argument, pronounces Browning's thought-

"Fool! all that is, at all
 Lasts ever past recall;
 Earth changes, but they soul and God stand sure;
 What entered into thee
 That man is, and shall be;
 Time's wheel runs back or stops:
 Potter and clay endure.

He fixed thee midst this dance
 Of plastic circumstance

This Present thou, forsooth, would's't fain arrest!
rest!

Machinery just meant
To give thy soul its bent,
Try thee, and turn thee forth, sufficiently
impressed!"

Paracelsus has striven toward the heights, apparently in vain, when he is reminded by Festus that "there is yet another world to mend all error and mischance!" For a time he rejects this belief, but in the end he says

"I shall emerge one day.

You understand me? I have said enough!"

Closely connected with his belief in Immortality is his idea of Christ. He was not and could not be a Christian in the Orthodox sense. His conception of Christ was that Christ was a manifestation of Divine love; he was a spiritual mystery, a great spiritual teacher. Christ, the Redeemer, he did not know. He spoke of the gospel teachings as valid only for mental states other than his

own. But if to be a follower and a preacher of Christ's teachings is to be a Christian, he was a Christian.

In the poem "Christmas Eve" when discussing whether Christ be divine or not, the Göttingen Professor says -

"I would praise such a Christ, with pride
 And joy, that he, as none beside
 Had taught us how to keep the mind
 God gave him, as God gave his kind,
 Freer than they from fleshly taint!"

And again he says

"'Tis one thing to know, and another to practice
 And thence I conclude that the real God-function
 Is to furnish a motive and injunction
 For practicing what we already know;
 For such an injunction and such a motive
 As the God in Christ, do you waive, and 'heady'
 'High-minded' hang your tablet votive
 Outside the fane on a finger post?
 Morality to the uttermost,
 Supreme in Christ, as we all confess:

Why need we prove would avail no jot
To make him God if God he were not?"

Christ was the moral guide and the perfect example for men. Whether he be divine or not can have no effect on his influence upon the lives of men. His divinity was not the point upon which Christ laid most stress. The value of his life was in the example he placed before men. He would have called the belief in the Christ as a Redeemer, "Aberglaube" as did Matthew Arnold.

Again in the "Medical Experience of ~~Kaishish~~" he expresses doubt as to the healing power and as to the Divinity of Christ. But even though he reject the accepted idea of the Divinity of Christ, he has embodied Christ's teachings in his poems.

His idea of God as expressed in his poems shows God as an abstraction. He recognized no personal God. His religion was one of pure Theism. He recognized but one God, and but one force controlling human destiny: there was no intercessor in his scheme of things. In this one God he had faith; but this God was a controlling force,

not a personal God.

Browning had been influenced to such an extent by the Buddhist philosophy that he had become something of a mystic, and his conception of God was that of a philosopher.

Consequently, he was not a believer in prayer. In "Ferishtah's Fancies" he rails against the custom of prayer. To pray, he says, is to oppose one's will to God's will; and God's will must of necessity be for the best in the end. Prayer implies lack of faith in God's judgment. Why pray for the averting of evils which will in the end prove blessings, and make pleasures so much the more enjoyable when they come?

His conception of God approached, at times, to the Pantheistic view. To him the whole universe is a crystallized thought of God.

"God is seen God

In the star, in the stone and in the flesh

In the soul and in the clod -"

And again he says

God dwells in all
From life's minute beginnings up at last
To man!

All nature is viewed by him as a thought of God.
He sees God in nature. This is a Pantheistic view.

Browning says that he knows nothing of God except that he is the cause of love in man. His God was good and reasonable; hence he refused to accept the doctrine of Eternal Damnation; it did not seem to him consistent with the attributes of God. To him Justice, Mercy and Truth spelled God.

In "Ferishtah's Fancies" he sets forth his view of God as a God that can neither be "credited with benevolent consciousness of the gift nor sensibility to the gratitude which it inspires." This view makes him entirely non-personal, yet he remains so much the governing power of the world that little Pippa can sing

"God's in his Heaven, all's right with the world!"

Even holding such views as these with regard to Christ and God, Browning was in the essential things of life, a Christian. His Christianity is without creed, or

dogma. He restates Christianity in its earliest, simplest and too long forgotten forms. He believes in an exalted Theism of the noblest kind; he proclaimed that the greatest truths of Christianity rest upon philosophical and scientific foundations. He contends that the dogma and the creeds built up around these principles obscure the real truth; the only way to see and live religion truly is to get rid of these superstructures.

This is what he has tried to do. He believed that religion is a thing human and vital and he has given it to us in poetry, the language of feeling, in its simplest form.

111. Alfred Tennyson.

Alfred Tennyson was, even more clearly than Robert Browning, the product of his time, since he represented more definitely the scientific spirit of the age. Both men were possessed of active, inquiring mind; both were acquainted with the thought and onward movement of their time. But where Browning, because of his philosophical tendencies was more interested in man and the nature of God, Tennyson cared less about the nature of God, and less about man as a human being; his interests were engaged more with the "whence" and the "whither" of man; and he accepted as his explanation of these questions the Evolutionary Theory. Where Browning accepted the idea of immortality as a reasonable view, Tennyson believed it to be contrary to the laws of nature, and was hence thrown into doubt.

Tennyson came of a family of clergymen, and it would have been the natural thing for him to have accepted blindly the faith of his fathers. This is what he would have liked to do; but his reason would not permit him to

do it. So, groping blindly for light, and struggling against his doubts, he arrives at the agnostic point of view. It is only near the end of his life that he is imbued with that larger hope which amounts almost to faith.

Tennyson ^{held} (believed) that belief in the Christian teachings was of vital importance in human life, but he could not believe in them himself and still be honest. In his searching after truth he had the interest of humanity at heart as well as his own satisfaction. Like Browning, he is a poet with an aim, but he keeps his purpose more in the background. In reading Tennyson, the interest may be in the poem as mere verse; in Browning the interest is always in what he has to say. Tennyson puts form first, subject after: Browning says what he has to say in the most vigorous way, and leaves the form to adapt itself to the subject. Hence it comes that the ethical teachings of Browning, concretely and forcibly presented, are more generally understood to be moral lessons than the more subtle and allegorical teachings of Tennyson.

Yet Tennyson was not a man who would have said

"Art for Arts' Sake" but rather "Art for Arts' Sake and Humanity's Sake." His interest in humanity was genuine, but he had not the broad love and sympathy for men and women which so characterized Browning. He pictured men and women largely from the upper classes, rather than present-^{ed}ing the great mass of humanity. And even as his sympathies and his range of characters were more narrowed, so was his working philosophy of life more restricted.

The first and most important tenet in this philosophy of his, is that the higher life is the only life worth living, regardless of a future existence. Being without faith in another life - at least through the greater part of his life - he believes that man may get much satisfaction here from the consciousness of having done good deeds. "The Palace of Art" is an allegory whose lesson is that man cannot live unto himself. It is the life of unselfishness, the life interested in its fellow-creatures, that counts. Dora, the modern Ruth, though cruelly treated, is happy in the thought that she has acted for the good of her friends. And Enoch Arden, in all his wretchedness, goes away with the comfortable feeling that

through the sacrifice of himself, he is helping his family.

Another phase of the same thought is presented in "The Vision of Sin" and "The Idylls of the King." In the "Vision of Sin" two Sinners are pictured, the youth and the old man hardened in his evil ways. The old man, on the eve of death, is still unrepentant. But the daylight discovers his guilt;

"At last I heard a voice upon the slope
 Cry to the summit, 'Is there any hope?'
 For which an answer pealed from that high land,
 But in a tongue no man could understand;
 And on the glimmering limit far withdrawn
 God made himself an awful rose of dawn"

Here the awfulness, the blackness of sin is made evident by means of contrast. The sublime beauty of the "awful rose of dawn" is a revelation of God himself, and as such it brings condemnation upon the evil portrayed.

The "Idylls of the King" is said to be an allegory representing the soul's search after God. The story

teaches that sin is the cause of disorder and misery; it brings trouble not only upon the guilty, but also upon the innocent; it is contagious, and it has a fatal influence upon the lives of others.

Another truth set forth in this poem, which forms a part of his doctrine, is that all things must conform to law. It is the duty of each individual to yield obedience to law, else there can be no progress. Every life must be lived according to righteousness, and righteousness is conformity to law. "Nothing is that errs from law," by law he does not mean the written laws made by men: of these he says in Rizpah

"Often justice drowns

Between the law and letter of the law"

The higher men stand, the more fatal is their disobedience to law, the more wide-spread is their influence. His idea of law, as shown in the "Higher Pantheism," will explain his reverence for it.

"God is law, say the wise; O Soul, and let us
rejoice,

For if he thunder by law, the thunder is yet
his voice.

Law is God, say some: No God at all, says the
fool;

For all we have power to see is a straight staff
bent in a pool!

Another belief upon which Tennyson's theory of life is based is his belief in the freedom of will, without which there could be no responsibility of the individual for his own progress and for the progress of society. The doctrines of Foreordination and Predestination did not find in him an adherent. He says: "In my boyhood I came across the Calvinistic creed, and assuredly, however unfathomable the mystery, if one can not believe in the freedom of the human will as of the Divine, life is hardly worth having." It is this power of man to will his own actions that forces upon him moral obligations, without which there would be no formation of character. It is because of his own free-will that man is urged on to the pursuit of moral perfection.

This possession of will over one's own acts is a strange thing-

"This main-miracle that thou are thou

With power on thine own act and on the world!"

He explains, in the poem entitled "Will", upon the good and the ill use of Will -

"O well for him whose will is strong!

He suffers, but he will not suffer long;

He suffers, but he cannot suffer wrong;

х х х х х х х х х х

But ill for him who, bettering not with time,
Corrupts the strength of heaven - descurred will,
And ever weaker grows thro' acted crime,
Or seeming-genial venial fault,
Recurring and suggesting still!"

Man's success, his progress in life, depend largely upon the strength of his Will. The vacillating will becomes weaker instead of stronger.

In "In Memoriam" he speaks again of freedom of the human Will, this time naming its purpose,

"Our wills are ours, we know not how;

Our Wills are ours, to make them thine!

Our wills are our own, and again we are free to "make them thine" or not: it is a matter for the individual to determine. "Man is man and master of his fate," man, guided by his conscience, must exercise his will so that he may live the moral life, the life of law.

Browning justifies the existence of pain and evil in the world by ^{holding} claiming that they are necessary for the fulfillment of the higher destiny: without evil there can be no good. So Tennyson says that without night there is no day; without evil there is no good. Browning hopes that

"What began best can't end worst,

Nor what God blest once, prove accurst!"

And Tennyson says

"O yet we trust that somehow good

Will be the final goal of ill!"

Both poets here show a faith that good will in the end triumph over evil. Since there is sin in the world, it is man's duty to aid the sinners, the despairing and the beggar, and to keep himself from harming any creature. Good

deeds will follow good thoughts; and then

"if thou

Look higher, then - perchance - thou mayest -
beyond

A hundred ever-rising mountain lines,
And past the range of Night and Shadow - see
The high-heaven dawn of more than mortal day
Strike on the Mount of Vision!"

Influenced as he was by the scientific thought of his day, Tennyson naturally became interested in the Evolutionist's view of the world, and he adopted the Evolutionist's theory of the beginning and the growth of the world and of man. According to this theory, all bodies develop in accordance with law. Man is the highest stage of development which has yet been reached, but there is no reason to believe that the process of Evolution is finished; there is still much of the brute in man.

Much of Tennyson's poetry was influenced by his Evolutionary conception of the world. Darwin's theory of the struggle for existence gave a staggering blow, in his

opinion, to faith in the goodness and the love of God. His poem "By an Evolutionist" shows his belief in the origin of man by the process of development. The first half is a complaint against the theory -

"The Lord let the house of a brute to the soul of
 a man,
 And the man said 'Am I your debtor?'
 And the Lord 'not yet:' but make it as clean as
 you can
 And then I will get you a better!"

In the next half he refutes the idle questionings of the first by saying that if the body be that of a brute, the human soul should still rule the province of the brute. Then the bestial will be stamped out.

"I have climbed to the snows of age, and I gaze at
 a field in the Past,
 When I sank with the body at times in the slough
 of a low desire;
 But I hear no yelp of the beast, and the man is
 quiet at last
 As he stands on the heights of his life with the

glimpse of a height that is higher"

Animalism is strong in man, but by his own will he can determine his own development: the spirit can conquer the flesh.

The poem "Dawn" expresses the idea that man is now only in the morning of his development, but the end is not yet, and he will soon reach noon-day in his upward course. The "Making of Man" is another expression of his belief that man is gradually rising above the beast; he is in the process of being made.

"Where is one that, born of woman, altogether can
escape

From the lower world within him, moods of tiger
or of ape?

Man as yet is being made, and ere the Crowning
Age of Ages

Shall not aeon after aeon pass and touch him in-
to shape?

"All about him shadow still, but, while the races
flower and fade,

Prophet-eyes may catch a glory slowly gaining on
 the shade,
 Till the peoples all are one, and all their voices
 blend in choric
 Hallelujah to the Maker 'It is finished, Man is
 made!"

The process is slow but the end is sure.

In "In Memoriam" he explains the origin of the
 Universe: it began in "tracts of fluent heat" and slowly
 grew into form: and at last man arose, and he has been im-
 proving more and more. In "The Play" he says

"Act first, this Earth, a stage so gloomed with
 woe

You all but sicken at the shifting scenes.

And yet be patient. Our playwright may show

In some fifth act what this wild Drama means!"

He does not exclude God from his conception of the Uni-
 verse, God is guiding the process of Evolution, and he
 knows what the end is to be.

Tennyson never clearly formulates his idea of God.

At times it seems that he, like Browning, conceives an impersonal, abstract God, but in most cases He is represented as a very real and personal God. First of all, he says that God is not a matter of knowledge, but of faith -

"We have but faith: we cannot know
 For knowledge is of things we see;
 And yet we trust it comes from thee,
 A beam in darkness: let it grow!"

He feels that faith is a higher knowledge, revealed to the soul who is aspiring toward God. "The Ancient Sage" presents the Agnostic view and the answers to the questions put by the Agnostic. Tennyson, though he is not sure as to the nature of God, rejects the materialistic view. The Agnostic believes that only things seen can be believed -

"The nameless Power, or Powers that rule
 Were never heard or seen!"

To which the Sage replies,

"If thou wouldst hear the Nameless, and wilt dive
 Into the Temple-cave of thine own self,
 There, brooding by the central altar, thou

May'st haply learn the Nameless hath a voice,
 By which thou wilt abide, if thou be wise
 As if thou knewest, tho' thou canst not know!"

Again the questioning voice,

"And since - from when this earth began -
 The Nameless never came
 Among us, never spake with man,
 And never named the Name;" -

and the answer is one of faith, even in the Unknown,

"Thou canst not prove the Nameless, O my son,
 Nor canst thou prove the world thou movest in,
 Thou canst not prove that thou art body alone
 Nor canst thou prove that thou art spirit alone,
 Nor canst thou prove that thou art both in one;
 For nothing worthy proving can be proven,
 Nor yet disproven. Wherefore thou be wise,
 And cling to Faith beyond the forms of Faith!"

This last stanza embodies Tennyson's view of things. Nothing can be known, nothing can be proven; man ought not therefore to disbelieve, but he should cling the closer to Faith in God.

Tennyson believes that the soul is derived from God and is essentially one with Him. Whatever man is has come from and is a part of the Nameless One, who is unknown save by faith. This thought is voiced in "The Human Cry."

"Hallowed be thy name- Halleluiah!

Infinite Ideality!

Immeasurable Reality!

Infinite Personality!

Hallowed be thy name - Halleluiah!

"We feel we are nothing - for all is thou and in thee;

We feel we are something - that also has come from thee;

We know we are nothing - but thou wilt help us to be.

Hallowed be thy name - Halleluiah!"

God is an infinite Personality, of which man is a part: He is a power in darkness whom we guess! God is law, say some: law is God, say some:- of Him it is said

"And the ear of man cannot hear,
 And the eye of man cannot see;
 But if we could see and hear, this Vision - were
 it not He?"

God is personal, but He is not a self-conscious, finite being:

"For is he not all but that which has power to
 feel 'I am I?'"

This view is hardly the orthodox view of God. Their God is a self-conscious being.

God as an avenger had no part in his conception of Him, and the doctrine of Eternal Damnation was hateful to him. In "Despair" of which this doctrine is the theme, he shows agnosticism more than in any other single poem. The man, who has been saved from drowning, when attempting suicide, does not thank his rescuer. He says it were better for him to have drowned; he might then have found God; he will never find Him so long as he lives in this world. He even doubts if there be an after life; if there be, it will only be a continuation of what we have on earth. He blames the creeds for all his hopelessness -

"See, we were nursed in the drear nightfold of your
fatalist creed

And we turned to the growing dawn, we had hoped
for a dawn indeed,"

but when the dawn came, the promise had faded away. Men
had

"bawled the dark side of your faith and a
God of eternal rage,

Till you flung us back on ourselves, and the hu-
man heart and the Age!"

The poem shows doubt, yet the reasoning is clear. If God
be a God of love, then the doctrine of Hell is inconsis-
tent with his nature,

"but were there a God, as you say,
His love would have power over Hell till it
utterly vanished away.

"And yet I have had some glimmer, at times in my
gloomiest woe,
Of a God behind all - after all - the great God,
for aught that I know:

But the God of love and of hell together - they
cannot be thought;

If there be such a God, may the great God curse
him and bring him to nought!"

In spite of the fact that reason tells us there is no God
of love, faith still clings to the hope that there may be
such a God.

Tennyson is sometimes charged with being a Pan-
theist.. At times he does express Pantheistic views: he
shows the Pantheistic tendency more markedly than does
Browning. He must at some period of his life ^{have} believed in
this conception of the Universe. In speaking of his
friend in "In Memoriam" he says

"Thy voice is on the rolling air;
I hear thee where the waters run;
Thou standest in the rising sun,
And in the setting thou art fair.

Where art thou, then? I cannot guess;
But tho I seem in star and flower
To feel thee some diffusive power,

I do not therefore love thee less;
 My love involves the love before;
 My love is vaster passion now;
 Tho' mixed with God and Nature thou,
 I seem to love thee more and more."

The idea of the mingling of the soul after death with God and with the elements is one of the tenets of the Pantheistic creed. In the "Higher Pantheism" he represents God as a part of nature; "the sun the moon, the stars and the seas" are a part of the Vision of God; the thunder is his voice. But his belief in Pantheism could not have been permanent for this belief precludes the belief in prayer. Tennyson believed in prayer. In the "Idylls of the King" he urges prayer saying,

"More things are wrought by prayer
 Than this world dreams of"

He himself refutes the idea of Pantheism when with regard to the nature of God he says,

"I found him not in world or Sun,
 Or eagle's wing, or insect's eye;

Nor thro' the questions men may try,
The petty cobwebs we have spun"

He even goes so far as to contend that nature is at variance with God: nature is careful of the type but careless of the individual. But God, if he be a God of love, will care for the single life.

Tennyson has formulated his creed in these words: "There is a something that watches o'er us; and our individuality endures; that's my faith and that's all my faith"

He was less doubtful as to the place Christ should occupy in his scheme of things, and has consequently said less about him. His idea of Christ is some thing of a contradiction. He claims Christ as a Redeemer, as the Divine Redeemer. He never voices any doubt as to his Divinity; a belief which does not seem consistent with the abstract idea of God which he held. This fact may be accounted for, however, by the poet's varying beliefs.

In the poem "Despair" he names Christ as "our human brother and friend"; in "In Memoriam" he is the Son of

God -

"Strong Son of God, immortal Love
Whom we that have not seen they face,
By faith, and faith alone embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove!"

The sections of "In Memoriam" devoted to Christmas day reveal a belief in the divine Christ; and later in his treatment of the raising of Lazarus from the dead his belief in Christ's divinity and his power over death is voiced. Browning, in treating the same subject, looks at that miracle in a different light, since he does not accept Christ as a Redeemer.

Tennyson's wish for immortality was that he might know God. He did not know him in this life; there was no way of knowing. Nature could not tell him -

"Little flower - but if I could understand
What you are, root and all and all in all,
I should know what God and man is!"

but the flower could not tell; men could not tell: only another life could reveal the nature of God.

Of the second life he is not so sure. He wants to believe in it, but his mind can accept nothing which does not seem reasonable; a blind faith he cannot have. There is nothing in nature which seems to justify for him the hope of immortality. Nature says "the spirit does but mean the breath." Still there is that which bids him hope, and his reason, struggling against his natural faith, produces doubt.

Whether it is good to doubt, he does not know. Man may be perplexed in faith and pure in deeds; he may fight his doubts and emerge from them in stronger faith. The poet thinks

"There lives more faith in honest doubt
Believe me, than in half the creeds"

Where man cannot know he can only hope. Faith is a higher knowledge. Without faith man says with nature

"The spirit does but mean the breath,
I know no more!"

and man, who loved God, who trusted God was love, will be "blown about the desert dust" and he can only cry out

"O life as futile, then, as frail!
 O for thy voice to soothe and bless!
 What hope of answer, or redress?
 Behind the veil, behind the veil!"

"In Memoriam," occasioned by the death of his friend, Arthur Hallam, contains the most complete expression of his hope for and arguments in favor of immortal life.

No man ever longed for death;
 it is more life and fuller life that he wants. Since God is a just God he will not disappoint man whom he has made.-

"Thou madest man, he knows not why,
 He thinks he was not made to die
 And thou hast made him. Thou art just!"

His hope is based upon the justice of God and His love for man. But in another mood and in an earlier poem he has written

"from the narrow house

The cheeks drop in; the body bows;
 Man dies: Nor is there any hope in dust!"

In his more sanguine moods, he does not say I believe, but

"I trust" or "I hope!" Of his friend he expresses the wish,

"I trust he lives in thee, and there
I find him worthier to be loved!"

It is "the wish of the living whole

That no life fail beyond the grave!"

and he "trusts" that he has not wasted breath: he "thinks" man is not wholly brain: he was born to other things.

If there be no future existence, there would be no love; at least, if there were love, it would not rise above the bestial. It is the thought of the life beyond, and the hope of meeting the lost friends there, which raises love to its lofty plane. "If Death were seen at first as Death, Love had not been" or it would have existed only in a coarser form.

In this coming life, where he hopes to meet his lost friend, he somehow fears his friend may have outstripped him, and that they may no longer be friends, but

"If Sleep and Death be truly one,
And every spirit's folded bloom
Thro' all its intervital gloom

In some long trance should slumber on,

к к ж ж ж ж ж ж ж- ж ж

So there were nothing lost to man", -

Then his friend will remain his friend, and love will last
beyond the grave.

Do the dead remember? Only at rare intervals;
according to Tennyson "God shut the doorways of his
head!" Like Browning, he gives hints of lives which have
preceded this, as well as lives to come; and as in this
life there are only rare moments when man has any memory
of his former existence, so will it be in the life beyond;
memory of this life will recur only occasionally.

Life, without another existence, would be a mock-
ery; it would be worse than useless.

"My own dim life should teach me this,

That life shall live for evermore,

Else earth is darkness at the core,

And dust and ashes all that is;

"This round of green, this orb of flame,

Fantastic beauty; such as lurks

In some wild poet, when he works
Without a conscience or an aim?

Earth, without this hope, would be chaos

"Truth for truth and good for good! the Good,
the True, the Pure, the Just -
Take the charm "for ever" from them, and they
crumble into dust!"

Man longs for eternal life; his religious nature proves
him akin to God, and indicates his need of another life
to complete his development.

From this course of reasoning, Tennyson is led
to have a great hope, amounting almost to faith,
in immortal life. His doubts are conquered. He can now
say

"O living will that shalt endure

When all that seems shall suffer shock;"

and the faith which he came to feel near the end of his
life is beautifully expressed in the lyric "Crossing the
Bar?"

"Sunset and evening star,

And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea,

"But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

"Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark;

"For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crossed the bar!"

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