

# Theology on the Web.org.uk

*Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible*

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



**PATREON**

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

**PayPal**

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

---

A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_churchman\\_os.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php)

nation is pledged, and to forfeit that understanding would weaken the influence in Egypt, on the Niger, and throughout Africa; because it will prevent France, Germany, or Belgium occupying the land; because it will avert anarchy and bloodshed; because all parties in that country demand it. It is the right one commercially, because Uganda is an admirable centre and outlet for new enterprises of trade and civilization. It is the right course from a philanthropic and Christian point of view, because it will tend considerably to put down the slave-trade, and because the position of all who trusted English honour—Soudanese, English missionaries, and native converts—would be hopelessly compromised by abandonment, and the continuity of our Christian policy would be roughly and rudely broken. The question now before the people of England is very clear, Shall the light of civilization which necessarily follows the introduction of Christianity be withdrawn from Uganda, and that country plunged once more into the darkness of anarchy and desolation, and become, as the people themselves pathetically say, a wilderness?

HENRY MORRIS.



#### ART. IV.—THE TEACHING OF TENNYSON.

##### I. BY THE DEAN OF SALISBURY.

IN the glowing and characteristic sermon preached by the Master of Trinity on the 16th of October, Dr. Butler—fit successor of Whewell and Thompson—spoke to the men of Trinity of the sense in which Tennyson “was a religious teacher, speaking to our hearts and minds some authentic word of God.” The preacher then recalled his hearers to the time when Julius Hare wrote, in the dedication of “*Guesses at Truth*,” of the glorious gift God bestowed on a nation when he gave them a poet—that poet being Wordsworth—whose praises and title to honour John Keble a few years afterwards so truly recounted in the dedication of his Oxford lectures. To the Master of Trinity there must have been a mournful satisfaction in writing the following sentence: “As it was said of Chatham, that no officer ever entered his room without coming out a braver man, so might it be said of our Trinity poet, that no man ever had the privilege of a walk or a talk with Tennyson without a deepening within him of the conviction how vast a part of all religion is the soul’s truth with its God.” Many years ago, Mr. Moultrie, himself a poet, the friend of Præd and Derwent Coleridge, in a poem called “*The Three Minstrels*,”

described in vigorous words his impression of a talk with Tennyson. We venture to give them *in extenso*.

Racy and fresh was all he said,  
 Not cramp'd by bands of sect or school;  
 He seem'd not one who thought by rule,  
 Nor one of any truth afraid!  
 But bold of heart and clear of head,  
 The course of human thought review'd,  
 And dauntlessly his path pursued,  
 To whatsoever goal it led.  
 A man, indeed, of manly thought,  
 Inhabiting a manly frame,  
 A man resolved, through praise or blame,  
 To speak and do the thing he ought.  
 Sometimes in phrase direct and plain,  
 At which fastidious ears might start,  
 He clothed the promptings of his heart,  
 The strong conceptions of his brain.  
 But in and o'er whate'er he said,  
 Ingenuous truth and candour shone;  
 In every word and look and tone  
 Was nobleness of soul display'd.  
 And if perchance, for form and creed,  
 Pugnacious less than some may be;  
 Yet Christian eyes at once might see  
 In him a Christian bard indeed.  
 And well may English hearts rejoice,  
 That queenly hands around the brow  
 Of one so graced the laurel bough  
 Have wreathed, as by a nation's choice.

In Professor Palgrave's selections from the lyrical poems of Lord Tennyson, there is a remarkable passage from a letter of Arthur Hallam to Mr. Gladstone: "I consider Tennyson as promising fair to be the greatest poet of our generation, perhaps of our century." These words were written in 1829, and there are few things more astonishing in the whole history of literature than the sure confidence possessed by Tennyson's friends that a day was coming when he would be fully recognised, not only as a poet, but as a spiritual guide. The friendship of Arthur Hallam and Alfred Tennyson has become, as the Master of Trinity well puts it, "as one of the chief factors in the mental and spiritual life of two generations." The time is not yet come when the proper place of Tennyson as a teacher can be determined; but some estimate may be formed of the gradual advance he has made towards the position from which a man feels justified in using his great power as an aid to "self-reverence, self-knowledge, and self-control." When we turn to the review of Tennyson's two volumes, written by John Sterling fifty years ago—a review which had a most remark-

able influence upon the reading public of the time, we find, to our surprise, that the poems, which to many minds had a real didactic influence, failed to attract the admiration of the reviewer, and are somewhat perverted from their original intention in his representation of their meaning. Sterling's estimate of the "Palace of Art" is utterly different from that of the Master of Trinity, and it is curious to read his censure of "The Two Voices," which he calls a dispute on immortality, adding nothing to our previous knowledge. There are, however, in this article, admirable as it is in many respects, significant traces of the supremacy which Goethe exercised over Sterling's mind in his later years. Led by Carlyle, Sterling had brought himself almost to deny that the poet has a right to be a teacher at all. In his eulogy on Wordsworth, after saying that Wordsworth has strangely wedded his philosophic love to the sweetness of poetry, he adds: "But the poetry would have streamed out in a freer gush, and flushed the heart with ampler joy, had the moral been less obtruded as its constant aim." During the years between 1842, and the publication of the "Princess" in 1847, remarkable changes of opinion became evident in both our great English Universities. At Oxford especially, the rapid changes of religious feeling, caused by the defection of the great religious leader, threw many minds into confusion and bewilderment. The phases of doubt and faith so palpably reflected in the poetry of Arthur Hugh Clough and Matthew Arnold are the standing memorials of a time of great intellectual excitement, and are in themselves passionate expressions of a desire for satisfaction and rest in a time of disquietude. Many, however, turned to Tennyson, with the hopeful feeling that a great poet might one day assist their efforts to escape into a clearer atmosphere. The noble passages of the "Morte d'Arthur," the grave pathos of the "May Queen," and the exquisite picture of pure affection and wedded love in such poems as "The Gardener's Daughter," were prophecies to many hearts of what was coming, and when at last "In Memoriam" admitted readers to the intimate knowledge of the secrets of the poet's heart, it was widely felt that a true teacher had sounded the depths of human sorrow, and brought out into strong, clear relief the contrast between sickening doubt and the sublimest hopes.

It is not, perhaps, quite easy for those who felt many years ago, as Robertson of Brighton once expressed it, that the debt which human beings owe to the author of "In Memoriam" was only second to that which they owed to Dante, to write calmly and tranquilly as to the soothing influence produced by many of the best-known passages in the poem. Mr. Brimley has well said: "There are thousands of men and women whose affections are akin to those of these great poets

—Shakespeare and Tennyson—and who are grateful for the power of reading in beautiful poetry an adequate expression of their own deepest feelings. We know that such persons find in ‘In Memoriam’ the sort of consolation and strength they find in the Psalms of David. The *suspiria de profundis* of great minds give articulate expression to, and interpret the sorrows of, lesser minds, which else would darken life with ‘clouds of nameless trouble,’ and perhaps never find a peaceful solution.” In the volume of “Lectures and Addresses,” published in 1858 by the friends of Robertson of Brighton, there is a reprint of two lectures on poetry, in one of which is contained an eloquent and vigorous vindication of “In Memoriam,” in answer to a review in the *Times*. What Robertson says of the real, essential character of “In Memoriam,” as appealing to the grand, primary, simple truths of our humanity, is the reason why it has become so dear to the minds of English men and women.

An accurate critic of Tennyson’s poetry, who wrote before the publication of “In Memoriam,” could hardly have said “that the noble task of standing in the van of the world, and leading on to good, of marshalling all that it has of beauty and excellence for the battle, of suggesting new lines of operation, new channels of thought, and thus developing its powers by combining them, belongs to other parts, but not to him,” in the days when men found comfort and strength from the plaintive notes of Tennyson’s elegies, and gathered new ideas as to chivalry and love from the “Idylls of the King.” Those who are curious in such matters would do well to compare reviews of Tennyson’s poems, such as the one from which we have just quoted in the *Christian Remembrancer* of 1849, and attributed to a Fellow of Oriel, who is now from ill-health disabled from rendering real service to philosophy and theology, with the celebrated critique in which, ten years afterwards, Mr. Gladstone, in the pages of the *Quarterly Review*, poured forth his glowing enthusiasm over “In Memoriam” and “The Idylls of the King.” With the war verses in “Maud” the writer quarrels; but there are noble passages of eulogy expressive of the highest admiration for the truly religious tone which moves throughout the “Idylls of the King.” “The chastity and moral elevation of this volume, its essential and profound, though not didactic Christianity, are such as, perhaps, cannot be matched throughout the circle of English literature, in conjunction with an equal power.”

In the Master of Balliol’s introduction to the “Gorgias” of Plato, we find an expression, in strong and simple words, of what the real domain of poetry is. “The noblest truths, sung

out in the purest and sweetest language, are still the proper material of poetry. The poet clothes them with beauty, and has a power of making them enter into the hearts and memories of men. He has not only to speak of themes above the level of ordinary life, but to speak of them in a deeper and tenderer way than they are ordinarily felt, so as to awaken the feeling of them in others. . . . The poet of the future may return to his greater calling, of the prophet or teacher; indeed, we hardly know what may not be effected for the human race by a better use of the poetic and imaginative faculty. The reconciliation of poetry, as of religion, with truth, may still be possible."

It is the glory of Tennyson to have witnessed in a changeable age to the permanence of great primal truths. Without any deliberate attempt to impart belief as a necessity for man, he has shown with positive insight the real predominance and immortality of love and truth. The remarkable lines in "Locksley Hall, Sixty Years After"—

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,

strike the keynote of the poet's inward meditations, in his latter years, on the mystery of life and the great Hereafter. We can hardly be too thankful for such an influence, for such a teaching. The purity of a home, the love for ardent liberty, the scorn of all that is mean and low—all these things have had a weight and effect in moulding youthful thoughts and directing youthful energies. There is a real feeling, too, for the poor, a love for the path of duty, as the way to glory, sure to tell upon all who read the writings of great Englishmen in the years to come. The highest thoughts of men and the greatest deeds of the past are reflected in the teaching of Tennyson. There will be many differences of opinion as to the place he is to hold in the roll of English poets; but with one consent we may feel confident, that the critics of the future will extol his loftiness of aim, his purity of purpose, and his intense desire for truth.

G. D. BOYLE.

---

## II. BY E. H. BLAKENEY.

THE death of Tennyson has robbed England of the greatest of her poets since Milton. Not, indeed, that there have been no poets since then, who may have excelled Tennyson in special aspects of their art. Other poets have, doubtless, been wrought of stronger fibre, or possessed of a genius touched with a more consuming fire; Wordsworth, for instance, has

greater majesty; to Shelley there belongs a higher quality of lyrical expression; Browning, again, has a surer psychologic insight, more dramatic force, a greater decisiveness and incisiveness of thought. But to none of these great writers was accorded the supreme distinction of holding the poetic faculty in such completeness and ordered fulness. Tennyson, it must be confessed, is unique. His best work represents the characteristics of purity, dramatic fervour, unrivalled clearness of utterance, and subtle charm of language linked to beauty of thought, all welded together into harmonious unity and strength. A poem like the "Daisy" may fitly be deemed typical of the very highest form of expression of which language is capable. To none more justly than to Tennyson might be applied those words<sup>1</sup> of his in which he admiringly addresses Virgil:

Landscape-lover, lord of language  
more than he that sang the Works and Days,  
All the chosen coin of fancy  
flashing out from many a golden phrase.

We no longer marvel that Robert Browning should speak of him as "in poetry, lofty and consummate."

That to Tennyson belongs of right this pre-eminence, certainly among all who were his contemporaries, is a fact which no one will dispute who is really competent to judge. But his greatness is not limited to a perfect mastery over all the keys and stops of our language. Never have the sorrows of the human heart mourning for

The touch of a vanished hand,  
And the sound of a voice that is still,

been dealt with so tenderly, or with such inimitable delicacy as in the well-known and well-loved cantos of "In Memoriam," where the poet's grief for the death of his friend, Arthur Hallam, is depicted. There are but three other tributes to the memory of the dead raised by the classic poets of England in imperishable verse—Milton's "Lycidas," Shelley's "Adonais," and Matthew Arnold's "Thyrsis." Yet how far do even these masterpieces of threnody fall short of the noble lines in which Alfred Tennyson has enshrined his sorrow! For "In Memoriam" is something far more than the sole record of an abiding grief; it is sorrow sublimated, and carried

---

<sup>1</sup> Written "at the request of the Mantuan for the nineteenth centenary of Virgil's death," some time in 1881. This ten-verse poem is an astonishingly fine production, and *alone* sufficient to rebut the impertinent suggestion of some critics, who would have it that Tennyson's later poems show a falling off from the productions of his earlier years. See an admirable article by Mr. Herbert Paul, M.P., in the *New Review* for November, which deals with this very matter.

out of and beyond itself, by the instrumentality of Faith, Hope, and Love;—faith in that

One far-off divine event

which shall gather up the broken fragments of human life, and knit them together into the indissoluble unity of the Divine life; hope, which trusts that "beyond the veil" the mystery of sin and suffering and death shall be solved in the light of the Divine presence; love, which, "despite the distance and the dark," can yet look unflinchingly up, even when calamity's waves beat fiercest against the soul, and still believe that the trial does but work patience, and patience the full knowledge of that Divine love which passeth all understanding.

Steel me with patience! soften me with grief!  
Let blow the trumpet strongly while I pray,  
Till this embattled wall of unbelief,  
My prison, not my fortress, fall away!  
Then, if thou wilt, let my day be brief,  
So Thou wilt strike Thy glory thro' the day.

The thought embodied in the magnificent sonnet<sup>1</sup> from which I quote these six lines, forms (I conceive) the central point of all the prophet's moral teaching; and, in the compass of a few lines, written but a short while ago, I find the final expression of a life's unwavering faith.

The forces which were at work at the beginning of the present century are well-nigh played out—or, rather, have been deflected into other channels. The early years of the century were abundantly rich in expectations, expectations which, though in many cases doomed to grievous disappointment, have unquestionably helped to mould (or modify) all subsequent thought and speculation. Wordsworth had sung us his great "Exordium," preface—so to say—of what was to follow, well before the sands of the first stirring decade had run out. Keats, unrivalled as a painter of the sensuous and emotional, died early—too early, in fact, to give us any message, if message he had to give. Shelley, despite his splendid genius, and notwithstanding his wistful craving after intellectual beauty (in company with some not very healthy ideals engendered by a curiously unbridled imaginative gift), was far from fitted to deliver any true message to humanity, which humanity could not better have done without. Disguise it with all the borrowed beauty we please,

<sup>1</sup> Entitled "Doubt and Prayer," printed in the collection of singularly beautiful poems which go to make up "The Death of Ænone"—a volume that now, alas! we must sorrowfully cherish as the poet's farewell gift to us. It was only published on October 28th, three weeks after the death of its writer.

still Atheism remains Atheism, nothing but a sounding synonym for Death; moreover, to be told that "this mighty sum of things for ever speaking" is, when all's said and done, but merest carrion—*this*, I say, would not be likely to commend itself as a gospel of good tidings to mankind at large. "Man," says a modern writer, "is a spirit inhabiting a universe, not a mere biped trudging about on a dirt-heap;" and it is the natural outcome of this that he refuses to acquiesce in any system or creed that ultimately is powerless to raise him into closer communion with Him Who is Himself the Eternal Wisdom, and Living Spirit, of the Universe.

Four great teachers did assuredly arise out of the confusion and strife of those days, destined, in the providence of God, to give greater permanence and reality to the spiritual conviction of humanity, and to quicken and intensify belief in God, the soul, and immortality. Carlyle (1795-1881), pessimist as he undoubtedly was—he had some reason for it, too—never, in his darkest moment of despondency, ceased to reiterate *that*. The Eternities, the "Immensities" (as he called them), the awful responsibility of the human soul before its Creator, the need of noble effort in doing the thing that is righteous and true, and in working while it is yet light—these were themes he never wearied of expatiating upon.<sup>1</sup> The message might not be complete—what message of man ever could be?—but it was a veritable message, outspokenly denouncing lies and cant and sham, and shaking with its trumpet-notes the heart of the people, too often, alas! lapped in indifference and girded about with godlessness—not the less godless, one whit, because thinly disguised with the hollow semblance of religion that had no relation to conduct. Carlyle's great and never-to-be-forgotten merit is his having recalled men to think of those truths which verily have been, and are, and shall be hereafter. "Is not the life more than meat?"

And if we owe to Carlyle this powerful initiative, we as truly owe to the teaching of Ruskin the furtherance of those eternal principles of right and wrong which no honourable man can dare to neglect. Ruskin not only insists upon, but also indefinitely applies, this great principle, that, inasmuch as "the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof"—fulness, that is, of intellect, of emotion, of bodily strength, and of beauty also—

<sup>1</sup> Comp. his Journals of 1868-1869 *passim*. I extract one or two striking bits:—"Had no God," he indignantly exclaims, "made this world, it were an insupportable place. Laws without a lawgiver, matter without spirit, is a gospel of dirt. All that is good, generous, wise, right . . . who or what could by any possibility have given it to me, but One who first had it to give?" Again he well says, "He who traces nothing of God in his own soul, will never find God in the world of matter."

life is but a passing shadow and a thing of naught, unless we are resolved to walk humbly before Him; loving righteousness and hating iniquity; and prepared to maintain those things that are lovely and of good report, folded far from all fear of ravin, and shepherded in peace. To Ruskin's teaching we owe the perpetual insistence on the acknowledgment of the Almighty as the Beginning and Ending of all truth, power, goodness, and beauty.

Let knowledge grow from more to more,  
 But more of reverence in us dwell;  
 That mind and soul, according well,  
 May make one music as before,  
 But vaster.

*In Memoriam.*

In 1812, just seven years prior to Ruskin's birth, and three years after Tennyson's, was born Robert Browning; and he, too, had a message of cheer and strong encouragement for his generation. In song he is, in many respects, the counterpart of Carlyle with his titanic prose. And throughout all the splendid triumphs of his dauntless genius went the echo of words whose burthen is one of high confidence, whose cadence is a cadence of hope.

He at least believed in soul, was very sure of God.

But confidence, hope—in what? Surely a confidence—which he, in common with all wise and noble men, shared—in the ultimate triumph of right over wrong; the quiet illuminating hope that, with God in His heaven, all was—nay, *must be*—ultimately right with the world. This was the secret of Browning's influence upon his generation. Can we, if we reflect upon the hopelessness of the new creed of these latter days, and its paralyzing effects on all sound religion, regard that message save as big with blessing hereafter?

Thro' the cloud that roofs our noon with night,  
 Break, diviner light!

Never, perhaps, since the break up of the crude beliefs of ancient Greece, and the subsequent rise of the various philosophical schools, has there been such perpetual burden of doubt, such weary heart-searching, such perplexity (and, in too many cases, such intellectual anarchy), such "obstinate questionings" and "blauk misgivings," as in the present day. It is the Nemesis, possibly the inevitable Nemesis, of the scientific spirit of the age. To what extravagant hopes did this science, at its birth, give rise! True, science has done much; but has it brought up the golden years, as men fondly, vainly imagined? No; it has not even bound up the heart of one single soul that was sorrowful, or calmed the deathbed of one single tired spirit. The awakening out of that dream has been bitter to many.

Sin and misery are still present in the world, and science has devised no remedy; the golden age is still afar off. At a period like this, of mental depression and spiritual crisis, Tennyson has assuredly proved himself supremely helpful; not because he quells the doubts that do so easily beset us, or resolves the discordant note in our lives, but because, with ever-growing persistency, he summons to our aid those half-forgotten truths that "wake, to perish never."

He points to the underlying unity in which, when analysis has finished its appointed work, and all the weapons of the warfare of criticism are perished, a sublimer synthesis may be reached, and a final reconciliation be made. By such reconciliation alone can the conflict be at length adjusted; this alone is the dialectic of the world.

It is something that, among the noblest treasures of English song, Tennyson has given us the invocation to Divine love which prefaces "In Memoriam."

Strong Son of God, Immortal Love,  
Whom we, that have not seen Thy face,  
By faith and faith alone embrace,  
Believing where we cannot prove.

Is it not something too, that, with sympathetic insight, the poet has touched our hearts with the story of Enoch Arden, who saw that in self-sacrifice lay the secret of all the purest, most enduring affection? that he has stirred our feelings to the very depth, as we re-read there, in the parting scene between Arthur and Guinevere, the story of human sin, suffering, and repentance? or that our hearts burn within us, while we listen to those wild words of anguish wrung from the dying Rizpah? Is it not something for which our profoundest gratitude is due, that, in this iron age, the poet has penned us a few of the most stirring of patriotic lines, and some of the most exquisite of English lyrics, flawless in workmanship, and so inevitably human in their design?

He found us when the age had bound  
Our souls in its benumbing round;  
He spoke, and loosed our heart in tears.<sup>1</sup>

Of the four Greater Prophets of this century, three have already passed into the "Silent Land"—Carlyle in 1881; Browning at the close of 1889; and now Tennyson, a greater, perhaps, than them all, the spokesman of his generation, the audible voice of all that was fairest in the thought of the time, whose words have, even during his lifetime, written themselves for ever upon the heart of a mighty people—he, too, has faded

---

<sup>1</sup> From Matthew Arnold's fine "Memorial Lines, 1850," written on the occasion of Wordsworth's death.

into the Unknown. With eye undimmed, and natural force unabated, he has gone, in the plenitude of his age, his fame, and his affection. How better can we take leave of him than in his own noble words, composed a few short months ago, on the death of the Duke of Clarence ?

The face of Death is toward the Sun of Life,  
His shadow darkens earth : his truer name  
Is " Onward," no discordance in the roll  
And march of that Eternal Harmony  
Whereto the worlds beat time, tho' faintly heard  
Until the great Hereafter. Mourn in hope !

EDWARD HENRY BLAKENEY.

SOUTH-EASTERN COLLEGE, RAMSGATE,  
November 5, 1892.



## ART. V.—THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY NOT A SACERDOTAL PRIESTHOOD.

### PART I.

THE doctrine of a sacerdotal order carried on under Christianity draws on in its train so many perilous consequences to the faith and practice of Christians, that its revival among us at the present time cannot but awaken the most serious anxieties in the minds of all who look upon the oneness and exclusiveness of the priesthood of Christ as the very corner-stone of the New Testament, the one foundation of the faith and the hope of the disciple in every age and place. We can hardly honestly maintain such a doctrine unless we remove from the canon of scripture the Epistle to the Hebrews, which constitutes a professed and elaborate argument against the revival of it in any form. The contention of the writer of that epistle, or rather, connected discourse, is that a priesthood of succession is impossible in a case where the only possessor of the priesthood has an everlasting life, and, therefore, can have no successor; that there can be, therefore, no sacrifice beyond or in addition to that which He has made once for all, no altar but that on which He was offered, and which He Himself becomes to all who offer up spiritual sacrifices to God on the altar of His great atonement.

In the examination of this subject it is necessary to consider—

- I. The original constitution of the Church as an outward community—during the life of Christ.
- II. The nature and character of the Church as it came out from Judaism.