

one, if any, of the essential facts and the outstanding doctrines of Christianity, which he does not touch upon, and touch upon in such a way as to carry the conviction of his own believing acceptance. His faith may be somewhat differently expressed; you do not expect a poet to put his creed in dogmatic theological form. His hope may be larger than that of any church, or perhaps than that of all the churches, his interpretation of evil and atonement somewhat different and his belief in Divine forgiveness somewhat broader; but there is a deep, beautiful religious atmosphere breathing throughout all his poetry; indeed, you can scarcely get away from religion in anything he wrote. Religion, in all its forms, in its darkest bigotry, and in its most priestly superstition, and in its most rationalistic license, has been treated by him. Judaism, Mohammedanism, Paganism, Christianity in all their developments, skepticism in all its phases, coarse and refined, materialism, spiritualism, humanitarianism, scientific evolution, have all been taken up and treated, so much so that one might construct a fairly inclusive history of religious development and manifestation from his works. I only wish in this paper to emphasize what runs through and is really the deepest ground-work of all he writes. Optimism is the key-note, as I have said, and yet an optimism which I feel sure the church would be slow to condemn. It may conflict—it does conflict—with certain cherished doctrines and traditions of the Christian church; but, on the other hand, it is in harmony with and powerfully supports many others. Browning teaches, and have we no reason to welcome such teaching from such a source, that there is a God, that He is immanent in nature and in human nature, that there is a Providence, that everywhere are traces of the wisdom and watchfulness—of the righteousness and the love of God, that there is an immortality, a life beyond this life, and which explains this life, that there is Eternal Righteousness and Infinite Love, and that the whole universe is in the hand of Infinite Love. Speaking generally, that is Browning's creed. He may seem to leave out of his creed a personal