

LORD TENNYSON AND THE BIBLE.

IN *Lord Tennyson's Memoirs*, by his son, we have this exceedingly interesting statement, which shows how highly the great poet esteemed the Scriptures:

"That my father was a student of the Bible those who have read 'In Memoriam' know. He also read all notable works within his reach relating to the Bible, and traced with deep interest such fundamental truths as underlie the great religions of the world. He hoped that the Bible would be more and more studied by all ranks of people, and expounded simply by their teachers; for he maintained that the religion of the people could never be founded on mere moral philosophy, and that it could only come home to them in the simple, noble thoughts and facts of a Scripture like ours.

Dr. Henry Van Dyke, in his valuable book on "The poetry of Tennyson," takes the ground that one cause of Tennyson's popularity is that there is so much of the Bible in his poems. He has undertaken to collect and collate all the Scriptural allusions and quotations in his works, and has found that there are nearly three

Enoch Arden's parting words to his wife contain some beautiful fragments of Scripture embedded in the verse:

"Cast all your cares on God; that anchor holds."

Is He not yonder in the uttermost Parts of the morning? If I flee to these Can I go from Him? and the sea is His, The sea is His: He made it."

"The Idylls of the King" are full of delicate and suggestive allusions to the Bible.

'In the "Holy Grail," the hermit says to Sir Percivale, after his unsuccessful quest:

"Thou hast not lost thyself to find thyself."

This is evidently a reference to Christ's words, "He that loseth his life shall find it."

In "The Coming of Arthur," there is this line:

"The King will follow Christ, and we the King."

Doubtless the inspiration of this thought came from the words of St. Paul: "Be ye followers of me even as I also am of Christ."

Tennyson made free use of Bible characters and incidents. In "The Princess" we find the Queen of Sheba, Vashti,

ate Tennyson's allusions to the life of Christ, from the visit of the Magi, which appears in "Morte d'Arthur" and the "Holy Grail," down to the line in "Balin and Balan" which tells of

"That same spear Wherewith the Roman pierced the side of Christ."

Perhaps the most beautiful of all the references to the New Testament is the passage in "In Memoriam" which describes the reunion of Mary and Lazarus after his return from the grave.

There are many places in Tennyson's poems where prayer is not explained, but simply justified as the highest activity of a human soul and a real bond between God and man. Take the following as an example:

"Speak to him thou, for he hears, and Spirit with Spirit can meet,—
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet."

Of Enoch Arden, in the dreadful loneliness of the island where he was cast away, it is said that

"Had not his poor heart Spoken with That, which being everywhere Lets none, who speaks with him, seem all alone,
Surely the man had died of solitude."

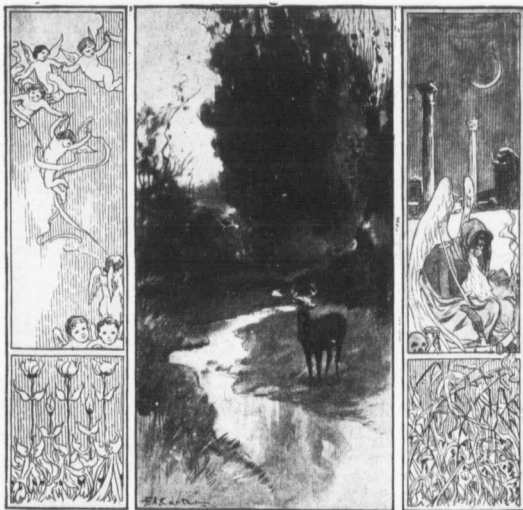
King Arthur, bidding farewell to the last of his faithful knights, says to him:

"Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day,
For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
For so the whole earth is ever way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God."

Dr. Van Dyke closes his chapter on "The Bible in Tennyson" by saying: "We cannot help seeing that the Bible gains a wider influence and a new power over men as it flows through the poet's mind upon the world. Its narratives and its teachings clothe themselves in modern forms of speech, and find entrance into many places which otherwise were closed against them. I do not mean by this that poetry is better than the Bible, but only that poetry lends wings to Christian truth. People who would not read a sermon will read a poem. And though its moral and religious teachings may be indirect, though they may proceed by silent assumption rather than by formal assertion, they exercise an influence which is perhaps the more powerful because it is unconscious."

TENNYSON LOVED CHILDREN.

WHEN Tennyson was a young man living at home, he so attracted the children of the family that they would sit on his knees or cling about his feet while he told them stories of his own invention. He would make himself a Colossus of Rhodes for the boys, the fun being to rush under the archway of his legs without receiving a whack from his open hand. The poet was devoted to his own children. The mother not being strong enough to walk far, was drawn in her garden carriage by her two boys,



THE BROOK.

I chatter over stony ways,
In little sharps and trebles,
I bubble into eddying bays
I babble on the pebbles.

I chatter, chatter, as I flow
To join the brimming river.
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.—Tennyson.

hundred direct references to the Bible in the poems of Tennyson.

We have no space for all these, but a few instances may prove of interest.

One of the most melodious verses in "The May Queen" is a direct quotation from the third chapter of Job:

"And the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest."

Miriam, Lot's wife, Jonah's Gourd, and the Tower of Babel.

In the "Palace of Art" we behold the handwriting on the wall at Belshazzar's Feast.

In "Godiva" we read of the Earl's heart:

"As rough as Esau's hand."

It would be impossible to even enumer-