

TENNYSON'S VIEWS OF RELIGION.

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The conservatism and evenness of Tennyson's mind preserved him from extremes and made him what might with a certain degree of propriety be called "an all-round poet."

We are wont to classify these writers, according to the peculiar bias of their minds, as poets of nature, philosophy, society, etc; but Tennyson has looked upon the world of matter, and the world of mind, and life in all its relations with such an impartial eye, that each receives, generally speaking, a fair proportion of attention. And yet in his nature, as in every man's, there was one overtopping quality which, though it did not warp his judgment, and weaken the force of his teaching, was still sufficiently strong to colour, but not obscure, the landscape of his mind. With him it was the virtue of religion. It is this spirit that clasps the hands of Grief and Love in "In Memoriam," and walks towering from section to section determining its tone and insuring its immortality. It is the central thought of "The Idylls of the King," and it breathes out the breath of a sweet incense from almost every page of his works. This tendency of the poet was doubtless hereditary. It was the rich gift of a pious father and a godly mother—a gift which, like every other talent, increased in value with the using. But notwithstanding this, his religion was not of that kind which accepts without hesitation every dogma and theological conclusion. It could not be possible that one with so strong an intellect would be content to wrap around him the mantle of a simple unquestioning faith until he had "fought his doubts" and "faced the spectres of the mind" with every other weapon at his command. The momentous problems of life, both here and hereafter, which press for solution on the attention of every thoughtful mind, were brought to his notice with terrible reality, through the agency of grief in the years of his early manhood. They were not to be