

ment, what stronger can be adduced than is to be found in the preface to the poem which contains the truest record of his religious views ?

" Strong Son of God, Immortal Love "

This is his own prayer. It could only have been written by one who believed in and had had experience of its helpful efficacy.

Leaving the realm of speculative theology and faith, let us next inquire as to the poet's teaching on the subject of lived-out religion. What is his ideal of life ? In his works, as, in the Book of Books itself, we have no one-sided picture. The wrong course and the right one are both set before us, by example, and we are taught, either directly or indirectly, to avoid the one and to follow the other. There are some who think that man's highest and truest life here consists in complete retirement, where by frequent prayer and fasting and scourging, the flesh may be mortified and the soul developed. This view of life the poet clearly shows is false, and at variance with duty. He does not positively say so, but no one can read " St. Simeon Stylites " without feeling that although it is only an historical portrait, it is drawn to repel rather than to attract. Never was the harsher side of monastic life painted in stronger colours. We turn from the picture in disgust as we gaze at the figure on the pillar, " half deaf, almost blind, and with both thighs rotted with the dew," and when we study the inner man, as we can through his words, we are not less strongly repelled. Why all this suffering ? What is the main motive behind it all ? " To be registered and calendared as a saint." One thought sustains him and enables him to endure—that a time may come

" When you may worship me without reproach ;
For I will leave my relics in your land,
And you may carve a shrine about my dust,
And burn a fragrant lamp before my bones,
When I am gathered to the glorious saints."