CHRISTIAN VALUES TO BE FOUND IN TEACHING THE ROMANTIC AND VICTORIAN POETS TO HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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To

Professor Ray W. Hazlett

who cultivated in me
an appreciation for the
poets.

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

A. Statement and Delimitation of the Problem.

It is the concern of many, both inside and outside the religious and educational worlds, that American education, except in a few instances, has become completely secularized. One partial solution to this problem has been the establishment of the Christian school on every level. If this type of school is to be thoroughly Christian, it must have curriculum materials suited to its purpose. The aim here is to discover the possibilities in the teaching of English literature from this standpoint and to consider the course of study for the fourth year of high school as it might be developed in the curriculum integrated about Christian teaching.

The major poets of the Romantic and Victorian eras of English literature together with their works which appear in a current high school text widely used in the United States and the Philippine Islands, will be considered. In the interest of conserving space, comments on background and literary style and form will be omitted except where they bear directly upon the Christian implications of the material under consideration.

B. Significance of the Problem.

No Christian believer will deny that modern education has fallen far short of Cornelius Jaarsma's definition of it: "... a purposeful process, having its goal the perfecting of man in the image of God."[1] It has long been recognized that the school curriculum, in order to be in any measure effective, must be integrated within itself and with actual life situations. If the goal of Christian education is the one here stated, the curriculum calls even more strenuously for integration. Since Christianity involves ideally a total response on the part of the individual, what better center of integration exists than Christian teaching itself? Jaarsma, describing the philosophy of a European educator, says that all subjects ordinarily included in the curriculum should "... revolve about the central core of a religio-ethical education which has its center organically in the greater spiritual significance of the entire universe."[2]

Admittedly, the Christian school has failed with respect to the curriculum. Too often it has allowed Christianity to be relegated to the status of an extra-class

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1. Cornelius Jaarsma, The Educational Philosophy of Herman Bavinck, A Textbook in Education, p. 215.
2. Op cit., p. 215.

activity.[1] To judge from the writer's personal experience, the basic reasons for this are two-fold: lack of suitable texts and other materials, and lack of training of teachers for this sort of integration. Only the first reason comes under the scope of this treatment.

Literature is a subject easily integrated into the Christian curriculum, as it expresses a definite philosophy of life and often sets forth well-defined Christian values. Furthermore, it is an indicator of the thinking of successive ages, as well as an influence over them.[2]

C. Method of Procedure.

The poets to be discussed and the specific works to be examined have been selected, as suggested above, from the Romantic and Victorian eras as set forth in a current high school text in English literature, Literature and Life, Book Four, by Miles, Pooley, and Greenlaw. As background, the main streams of thought and civilization will be outlined insofar as they bear on Christian teaching. Individual authors and their views will be

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1. Cf. Gordon H. Clark, A Christian Philosophy of Education, p. 209ff. and Barbara Frances Beck, The Problem of Secularism in Christian Education, The Biblical Seminary in New York, New York, 1948.
2. Cf. Miles, Pooley, and Greenlaw, Literature and Life, Book Four, p. 2 and Edgar Whitaker Work, The Bible in English Literature, pp. 15ff.

considered in the same manner. Omitting those irrelevant to this problem, each poem given in the text will be analyzed with respect to those Christian values emphasized by leading commentators on these periods, and in many cases, with respect to non-controversial Christian truth.

D. Sources of Study.

The primary sources are the textbook mentioned above and a generally accepted college anthology covering these periods, valued for its comments. Secondary sources include treatments of the relation of the Bible to literature and those treating the theology of the poets and their times, selected for their relevance to the problem under discussion. Two recent textbooks in Christian educational philosophy have been consulted relative to the significance of the problem.

CHAPTER I

CHRISTIAN VALUES TO BE SOUGHT IN THE ROMANTIC AND VICTORIAN POETS

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CHRISTIAN VALUES TO BE SOUGHT IN THE ROMANTIC AND VICTORIAN POETS

A. Introduction

In seeking to ascertain those Christian values which may be found among the Romantic and Victorian poets to be used in teaching high school students, it has seemed advisable to consult scholars in the field of literature and religion and in the field of literature alone. Since literature is outstandingly a vehicle of man's feelings, religious and otherwise, it is natural that a body of commentary should have arisen on the relation of literature to religion. In addition to these specialized treatments, it may be noted that scarcely a chapter has been written, especially on poetry, that does not in some manner touch on its religious and spiritual values or lack of them.

The values to be sought in this study are those discussed by recognized authors, both recent and of long standing in their field. In many cases they have been suggested by other authors in this field. [1] A preliminary

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1. See bibliographies in "The Influence of the English Bible upon the English Language and upon English and American Literature" and Lawrence Nelson, Our Roving Bible.

study of these books revealed that the values discussed were loosely under four headings under which they will be analyzed: conception of God, nature of man, philosophy of life, and use of the Bible.

B. Values Emphasized by Selected Writers

Statements of fact regarding the non-material realm are indefinite and inclined to be nebulous at best. For this reason it may easily be seen that Christian values may be studied in a variety of relationships. If grouping is necessary, they may be grouped as mentioned above. Although the poet's view of God and his ideas on man influence his philosophy of life, other considerations which do not properly fit into either of these categories make the third one necessary. Indeed, Brooke uses this idea for his point of reference in one work.[1] In that it is often determined by his philosophy of life, the poet's use of the Bible is also related to this idea. These values will now be considered in turn.

1. The Concept of God.

Since the conception of a Supreme Being underlies all religious thinking, the basic question asked of the poet

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1. Stopford Brooke, Religion in Literature and Religion in Life, pp. 1 - 25.

is that pertaining to his concept of God. Almost without exception the writers studied include this as an evident Christian value. The commentator often finds clues to the answer scarce or difficult to interpret. They may be in either positive or negative form. They are often expressed indirectly in relation to his views on some other subject, such as nature or history.[1] If the poet mentions God at all, he is certain to be labelled atheist, pantheist, or by some similar name. He is rarely found to be orthodox. In this connection, one of the favorite methods of expounding a poet's view of God is to compare his utterances with the doctrines of orthodox religion as set forth in the Scriptures. The nature of revelation and the activities of God in the universe are some of the points on which he is tested. His view of history might show that God is a personal being, One who set the universe in motion and then withdrew his presence from it, or a being who falls somewhere between these two extremes. Jesus Christ might be anyone from a mere human being to the revelation of God on earth.[2]

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1. Cf. Stopford Brooke, Theology in the English Poets, pp. 93-286; Edwin Mims, Great Writers as Interpreters of Religion, Chapter IV; Augustus Hopkins Strong, The Great Poets and Their Theology, pp. 333-524; and Edward Mortimer Chapman, English Literature in Account With Religion, Chapters III, IV, XI, and XIII.
2. Cf. A.M.D. Hughes, The Theology of Shelley, and Edwin Mims, The Christ of the Poets, Chapters X-XII.

2. The Concept of Man.

In specific relation to the nature of God is found the nature of man, considered individually and socially. Again, all of the writers investigated found that, depending on the poet describing man, he is variously good, evil, needing God, or self-sufficient. The nature and extent of his communion with God has received much consideration by several commentators. Further, to some he is the object of a special creation and the possessor of a well-defined soul; to others he is an accident in the universal scheme of things. So, too, most writers feel that these factors influence the poets' views on social and governmental order. The nobility or baseness of the individual is the basis for a strict or tolerant view of him for the granting or deprivation of rights and privileges. His world and achievements are important or unimportant as he is important or unimportant.[1]

Much space is given in literary analyses to the discussion of man's immortality, also a part of his nature. According to various authors consulted, it is seen to mean preëxistence, eternal life, or it may not be mentioned. Upon immortality in turn depends the import of his conduct.[2]

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1. Cf. Edwin Mims, Great Writers as Interpreters of Religion, Dudley Miles, Robert C. Pooley, and Edwin Greenlaw, Literature and Life, Book Four, pp. 379-390.
2. Cf. Stopford Brooke, op. cit., Religion in Literature and Religion in Life, pp. 1-25, and Edgar Whitaker Work, The Bible in English Literature, Chapter XVII.

Commentators on poetry of these periods occasionally find opportunity to mention the worth of woman which is so much a concern of Christian teaching and which is so closely related to the nature of the individual. None of the writers mentions this value negatively, but the positive treatment of it has definite value.[1]

3. Philosophy of Life.

As stated above, those Christian values summarized under the designations "concept of God" and "nature of man" are contributory to what may be termed "philosophy of life". As with all humankind, the poet has been found to have a point of reference or a core of orientation for his philosophy. Various authors find this consisting in the presence or the absence of faith. Mims even heads a chapter "Doubt or Faith, a general survey".[2] If pessimism is present instead of faith, it is of value to discover what underlies it. The mention of faith arouses with many scholars a query as to the object of the faith. Even a humanist may be said to have a kind of faith. The growth or change of the poet's spiritual or religious point of view is also considered noteworthy by literary authorities.[3]

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1. Edwin Mims, op. cit., p. 46.
   Augustus Hopkins Strong, op. cit., p. 465.
2. Edwin Mims, The Christ of the Poets, Chapter I.
3. Cf. Edwin Mims, Great Writers as Interpreters of Religion, Chapter V; Augustus Hopkins Strong, op. cit., pp. 333-524; Stopford Brooke, op. cit., pp. 1-25.

Apart from any actual profession of faith may be idealism of one sort or another. It may center in individual or social good and be purely humanistic or it may be ultimatly traceable to the recognition of a divine reality. It may even center in nature or beauty. The outcomes as well as the sources of idealism are valued by experts as relevant to the Christian viewpoint; idealism as well as immortality influences behavior.[1]

The ability to find a common meeting ground for culture and religion seems an important value to Mims.[2] Any worthwhile religious philosophy should include within itself all the finer elements of life, whether distinctly religious or not. Some of Mims' chapter titles summarize well the important Christian values in the poets as he classifies them "Harmonizers of Culture and Religion", "Revealers of Wonder and Mystery", and "Defenders of the Faith", among other epithets.[3]

4. The Use of The Bible.

Beyond the demonstration of spiritual principles, the most important Christian value found in poetry is its

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1. A.M.D. Hughes, op. cit.
   Edgar Whitaker Work, op. cit.
2. op. cit., Chapter I.
3. ibid., Chapters I, IV, V.

use of the Bible. In addition to references by nearly every writer to the use of the Bible in poetry, several authors have devoted volumes or parts of volumes to this interest.[1] They have shown that the influence of the Holy Scriptures may range from an actual word-for-word quotation through the recognizable allusion to the most obscure reference. In addition, many literary themes owe their origins to a Bible story or character. This extensive use of the Bible in poetry is a demonstration of its versatility and inspiration as well as its literary value. The revelation that many poets have been consistent and appreciative readers of Holy Writ renders more comprehensible the interweaving of its themes in their works. Work and Tiplady have demonstrated this value with exceptional thoroughness.[2]

C. Summary

The values to be sought for the presentation of the Romantic and Victorian poets on the high school level are those found significant by thorough scholars in the field of English literature. These fall into several categories, the first of which may be designated the concept of God, including His nature, mode of operation in the

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1. Lawrence E. Nelson, Our Roving Bible. (in part)
   Thomas Tiplady, The Influence of the Bible on Literature.
   Edgar Whitaker Work, The Bible in English Literature.
2. op. cit.

world, and how He is revealed. The nature of man covers the ideas of the second category and has in its scope his relation to God, his dignity and worth, and the prospect of immortality. Under the third title occur the observations on the interrelations of the two foregoing groups which may be headed philosophy of life. Those aspects of the nature of God and the nature of man which are unable to be isolated clearly are discussed here. The use and influence of the Bible constitute a fourth value observed by literary commentators. This influence is shown to extend from the most obscure and barely noticeable allusion to the outright quotation from the text of the Scriptures.

CHAPTER II

CHRISTIAN VALUES TO BE FOUND IN TEACHING THE ROMANTIC POETS (1798-1832)

CHAPTER II

CHRISTIAN VALUES TO BE FOUND IN TEACHING THE ROMANTIC POETS (1798-1832)

A. Introduction

1. Procedure to be Followed.

Each author of this period and the portion of his works presented in the current text, Literature and Life, Book Four, by Miles, Pooley, and Greenlaw, will be analyzed in terms of the Christian values set up in the preceding chapter. They will be treated in such a way as to clarify their relationship to Scriptural truth as it is generally interpreted. As each value is considered, the poems demonstrating it will be discussed either chronologically or topically, whichever is best suited to the instance. As stated in the introduction, background material and biographical material on the poets will be inserted only where they have a direct bearing on the Christian values under discussion. Useful biographical material included in works other than the text will be listed under a separate heading. Poems or sections of poems whose Christian values overlap will be discussed under the apparent one. Certain poets and poems will not be considered because they concern themselves neither negatively nor positively with Christian values. Quotations will be from the high school

text unless otherwise noted.

2. Background and Characteristics of the Romantic Movement.[1]

A brief survey of the Romantic period will render more meaningful the values about to be discussed.

The dawn of the Industrial Revolution and the resulting social conditions created a desire for political rights on the part of the common man which the "Glorious Revolution of 1688" had not achieved. These stirrings of freedom were given added emphasis by the revolutions in France and in America. The violent outworkings of the French Revolution, however, caused a despair equalled only by the hope which had been based on its attempts at establishing justice for the common man.

Parallel with the increased desire for social justice was the spiritual awakening manifest in the Evangelical Movement, particularly in the Wesleyan Revival, though it had commenced some fifty years before. Gill has felt the influence of the latter to be of enough import to devote an entire volume to it.[2] Bready cites its indirect influence on several poets.[3] Gill points out that it was not realized by the poets themselves, but that it revealed itself in reverence for virtue, Biblical knowledge,

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1. Miles, Pooley, and Greenlaw, Literature and Life, Book Four, pp. 379-390.
2. Frederick C. Gill, The Romantic Movement and Methodism.
3. Cf. J. Wesley Bready, This Freedom -- Whence?, pp. 218-219. Quoted post, p. 69.

belief in prayer, and faith in man's possibilities.[1]

B. Values to be Found in the Poetry Selected for High School Students.

1. Concept of God.

Poets are not theologians[2] and it is especially the case during the Romantic period that their views on God are not stated in obvious terms. None of them could be described as orthodox from an examination of his poetic works, though some are known from other evidences to have been so.[3] Christ, except for one irrelevant reference, does not enter into the concept of God as found in this period.

a. Wordsworth.

Since Wordsworth is predominately a poet of nature, it is not surprising that his few references to God should be in connection with her who seemed at times to be almost completely identified with Him. "It Is a Beauteous Evening, Calm and Free" exemplifies this well. The poet begins by delineating an awe-inspiring scene, hinting the presence of Deity:

"The holy time is quiet as a nun

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1. Cf. op. cit., chapter VI.
2. Cf. Edgar Whitaker Work, op. cit., p. 219.
3. Cf. post, p. 33ff.

Breathless with adoration." [1]

Then he proceeds to demonstrate what it means to his sister Dorothy[2] because of her constant spiritual contact with nature:

> "Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year,
> And worshipst at the temple's inner shrine,
> God being with thee when we know it not." [3]

Reducing these lines to a syllogism, one may deduce that to Wordsworth, to be in constant appreciation and communion with nature is to be in the same communion with God. Nature, then, is an important revelation of God.[4]

The poem whose long title is usually abbreviated to "Tintern Abbey" contains a further and more complete expression of Wordsworth's concept of God in nature and of how He is operative in that realm. In describing the beautiful scenes about the Abbey he says he has felt a "presence" and

> "a sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean and the living air,
> And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;
> A motion and a spirit that impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
> And rolls through all things..." [5]

From these lines it is evident that Wordsworth felt there

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1. P. 395.
2. Cf. Lawrence E. Nelson, op. cit., p. 146. He feels the reference is to the poet's young daughter.
3. P. 396.
4. Cf. Edwin Mims, op. cit., p. 125 ff.
5. P. 399.

is a higher power who is at once the Intelligence behind the universe and who is transcendent in that universe. His relationship to man in Wordsworth's view is that of indwelling his mind and being the dynamic force behind his thought and action. The poem continues to give this view of God apparent in nature as his reason for enjoying the realm of nature so fully. He even goes beyond enjoyment in recognizing in nature

> "The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
> The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
> Of all my moral being."[1]

Thus the guidance of God is exercised through nature. "The Prelude", of which "There Was a Boy" is a part, is an example of the influence of nature as is the opening part of "Tintern Abbey"[2], especially the description of the trance-like mood brought about by the contemplation of nature. Wordsworth is often accused of being a pantheist because of this view, but Brooke says that if this is true, it is the

> "true and necessary pantheism which affirms God in all, and all by him, but which does not affirm that the All includes the whole of God... He probably would have said that the personality of God in reference to Nature consisted in God's consciousness of Himself in every moment of time in

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1. P. 399.

2. Cf. Edwin Mims, loc. cit.

every part, as well as in the whole of the universe."[1]

If the poet seems to miss some of the aspects of God's personality, it is because is attempting only to deal with His relation to nature and not to men.

Perhaps the most God-conscious of the Romantics, Wordsworth in addition to discussing God specifically, shows that Deity is a natural part of his thinking by addressing Him in a personal and not irreverant manner -- "Dear God" in "Composed Upon Westminster Bridge" and in "The World is Too Much With Us", "Great God!".[2]

b. Byron.

The trend of the Romanticists to stress or to see only the revelation of God in Nature is further exemplified by Byron in Canto IV of "Childe Harolde". There the poet's utterances on his favorite theme of the great trilogy, mountains, sky, and ocean, are climaxed by his famous apostrophe to the ocean:

"Thou glorious mirror, where the Almighty's form
Glasses itself in tempests...
* * * * * *
The image of eternity, the throne
Of the Invisible; ..."[3]

These lines form the basis for Mims' statement that in

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1. Theology in the English Poets, p. 100.
2. P. 395, p. 397.
3. P. 421.

spite of Byron's scorn of all that was sacred, he was able to be stirred by great things and, at his best moments, even acknowledged a Higher Power.[1]

c. Coleridge.

In addition to those passages which demonstrate a definite concept of the Supreme Being in the consciousness of a poet, other instances may be cited which bear witness to the acknowledgement of His presence and operation. Coleridge's contribution to the Romantic Movement was mainly the use of a medieval and supernatural atmosphere as a reaction from the stiff classicism of the preceding literary period.[2] In one of the most characteristic of his poems of this type, "Christabel", he does not hesitate to employ the preoccupation with religion which characterized the people of the Middle Ages. Ten references to religious matters may be counted in the poem's three hundred thirty-one lines, the most oft-repeated of which are to prayer. They are distinctly Roman Catholic and are interspersed with elements of superstition.

d. Summary.

Definite impressions regarding a poet's view of God must often be inferred by the reader. The primary concept of God during the Romantic era seemed to be confined

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1. Cf. op. cit., pp. 121, 123.
2. Cf. Miles, Pooley, and Greenlaw, op. cit., pp. 382-383.

to His self-revelation in nature. Wordsworth saw in nature a Being who permeated the universe. Communion with nature and consequently with God, would provide guidance and instruction for the individual. When Lord Byron beheld the majesty and wonder of nature, his reaction was rather one of awe. Nature reflected a Creator rather than a "nurse". This seems to have been his sole acknowledgement of a Supreme Being.[1] Coleridge includes God as a part of his background[2], while the poems of Keats and Shelley fail to mention a supreme being at all.

2. The Concept of Man.

a. Man's Earthly Existence.

(1.) Wordsworth. The Romantic Movement in literature was only a part of the growing concern for the rights and individuality of man, of which the French Revolution was a major manifestation. Wordsworth, a man of revolutionary sympathies[3], felt himself repelled by materialism and admired the common people because they exemplified the simple and virtuous life which he felt was the epitome of man's character as it was intended to be. This love for the common people is seen in the quality of the characters described in "We Are Seven", "She Dwelt Among the Untrodden

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1. Cf. ante, pp. 15-16.
2. Cf. ante, p. 16.
3. Cf. Miles, Pooley, and Greenlaw, op. cit., p. 380.

Ways", and the "Solitary Reaper". Not only were his poetic interests centered in humble people, but he considered them ideal men because they had never been corrupted by the luxury and artificiality of social life in cities.[1] Two of his protests against the materialistic philosophy of the early nineteenth century, "London, 1802" and "The World is Too Much With Us" will be discussed at length in a later category.[2] Most men, thinks the poet, in addition to being too materialistic, are too worldly and too prone to gossip. A few lines from "A Personal Talk" substantiate this:

> "...yet still among your tribe,
> Our daily world's true worldlings, rank not me!
> Children are blest and powerful; their world lies
> More justly balanced...
> * * * * * *
> Whose mind is but the mind of his own eyes,
> He is a slave - the meanest we can meet!
> * * * * * *
> ...For thus I live remote,
> From evil-speaking; rancor, never sought,
> Comes to me not; malignant truth, or lie."[3]

Man's true worth, then, lies in simplicity and in an enlarged and generous view of his fellow man. The common man is the important man because this is his way of life. A single line from "London, 1802" suggests godliness as a laudable quality in a man's life as Wordsworth expresses a nostalgia for the poet Milton and his times.

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1. Cf. Miles, Pooley, and Greenlaw, op. cit., pp. 381-382.
2. Cf. post, p. 27 ff.
3. P. 394.

Furthermore, Wordsworth is seen to have an idealistic concept of woman in keeping with the increased respect of this era for personality. At the conclusion of "She Was A Phantom of Delight", which describes his relationship with his wife, he says that she is

> "A perfect woman, nobly planned,
> To warn, to comfort, and command:
> And yet a spirit still, and bright
> With something of angelic light."[1]

This tribute to Mrs. Wordsworth expresses appreciation both for her physical and spiritual attractiveness. That the poet believed in a divine Intelligence behind man's personality is suggested by the words "nobly planned". In contrast to those Romantics who felt that human existence was a failure, Wordsworth is seen to regard life as a transition period as he describes his wife as "a traveler between life and death".[2]

(2.) Byron. A revolutionary as much on personal as on humanitarian or social grounds was Lord Byron. The reaction of society to his dissolute life had made him a voluntary exile from England. "A rebel against English society, he raised a loud voice against oppression everywhere because he hated tyranny profoundly, fiercely, nobly."[3] The self-centered "Childe Harold" provides the

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1. P. 393.
2. Loc . cit.
3. Miles, Pooley, and Greenlaw, op. cit., p. 416.

most abundant proof of his opinion of the majority of mankind about him. Though hating tyranny, Byron was a thorough-going snob and scorned Wordsworth's love for the common people.[1] Speaking of Lake Geneva he says scornfully, "There is too much of man here..,"[2] but later,

> "To fly from, need not be to hate, mankind.
>
> * * * * * *
>
> Is it not better, then, to be alone
> And love earth only for its earthly sake?"[3]

After describing the world of men as some desert where he has been cast to suffer for some sin, he sums up in several succinct lines the underlying nature of man, viewed from his prejudiced position:

> "From mighty wrongs to petty perfidy
> Have I not seen what human things can do?
> From the loud roar of foaming calumny
> To the small whisper of the as paltry few,
> The subtler venom of the reptile crew,
> The Janus glance of those whose significant eye,
> Learning to lie with silence, would seem true,
> And without utterance, save the shrug or sigh,
> Deal round to happy fools its speechless
> obloquy."[4]

The picture of man's failure as a creature is rounded out more fully in several stanzas in the apostrophe to the ocean, in which the poet ruthlessly mocks the frailty

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1. Cf. Miles, Pooley, and Greenlaw, op. cit., p. 386.
2. P. 416.
3. Loc. cit.
4. Pp. 417-418.

and short endurance of man and his artifacts alike. The phrase "clay creator" is particularly telling in this connection. In fact, according to another stanza, part of the section on the Coliseum, man's life is, in the end, not greatly valuable and it is not important whether he dies naturally, or in defense of some great cause (as Byron himself later did) -- "Both are but theaters where the chief actors rot."[1] The nadir of despair is reached in the lines:

> "Rome and her Ruin past Redemption's skill,
> The World, the same wide den -- of thieves,
> or what ye will."[2]

(3.) Shelley. It was not Byron and Wordsworth alone who realized that human efforts have no permanence on the earthly scene; Shelley strikes the same note in "Ozymandias". The inscription on the base of the Sphinx, "Look on my works, ye mighty, and despair,"[3] belies the scene of emptiness and decay which surrounds it. The work of men's hands, points out Shelley tersely, are as nothing.

b. Immortality.

The poets' favorite aspect of man's nature is the presence or absence of immortality. It has been ex-

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1. P. 418.
2. P. 420.
3. P. 427.

pounded by them from every point of view and to every degree.

(1.) Wordsworth. Wordsworth, whose writings contain the most that is of spiritual moment in the Romantic period, reiterates this theme more constantly than his contemporaries. "We Are Seven" displays the belief in immortality in its simplest form -- an existence in heaven after death. The small girl interviewed by the poet is certain that her dead brother and sister are in heaven, and that since they are in heaven, they are perforce alive. In contrast, "There Was A Boy" (an excerpt from "The Prelude") closes with the recollection of the poet as a boy standing by his friend's grave in a meditative mood -- a situation which might be expected to evoke a comment on immortality, but from which any such observation is absent. Perhaps this omission is due to the immaturity of boyhood thinking. "She Dwelt Among the Untrodden Ways" likewise mentions the grave without mentioning immortality.

The most exhaustive poetic treatment of immortality to come out of the Romantic Movement was Wordsworth's "Intimations of Immortality"[1]. During his later life he began to explain man's immortality by "the assumption that before birth the soul had lived among the splendors of heaven. In childhood he still remembered the

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1. Full title -- "Ode on Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood."

glories of his heavenly home, but as he grew older, this memory gradually faded away."[1] An examination of "Intimations" and other poems will demonstrate how the poet expressed this feeling. The first stanza describes the heavenly aura surrounding his childhood:

> "There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
> The earth, and every common sight
> To me did seem
> Appareled in celestial light,
> The glory and the freshness of a dream."[2]

The loss of the aura is summed up in the words:

> "But yet I know, wher'er I go,
> That there has passed away a glory from the earth.
>
> * * * * * *
>
> Whither is fled the visionary gleam?
> Where is it now, the glory and the dream?
>
> Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting;
> The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
> Hath elsewhere had its setting."[3]

He continues to tell how these memories of childhood give worth to all life. That this value survives, whether in influence or in a future life, is suggested by a line in the closing stanza : "Another race hath been, and other palms are won."[4] The superiority of children in percep - tion, understanding, and judgment because of their proximity to heaven is also evident in the tenor of "We Are

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1. Miles, Pooley, and Greenlaw, op. cit., pp. 400-401.
2. P. 401.
3. Pp. 401-402.
4. P. 404.

Seven" and in "A Personal Talk". Even the regard for nature as a teacher is taught by the child. The closing lines of "My Heart Leaps Up" demonstrates this view:

> "The child is the father of the man;
> And I could wish my days to be
> Bound each to each by natural piety."[1]

(2.) Coleridge, Byron, and Keats. Wordsworth's contemporaries treated immortality to a lesser extent than he. The line, "His soul is with the saints, I trust," at the close of Coleridge's "The Knight's Tomb"[2] seems almost to have been added as an afterthought. In the section on Lake Leman in "Childe Harold", Byron hints at some sort of continuing life without actually committing himself. In the Coliseum section, his concept of immortality resembles the more modern one of the continuing influence of a man's life and personality after his death, rather than the more orthodox idea mentioned by literary commentators.

> "But there is that within me which shall tire
> Torture and Time, and breathe when I expire.
> Something unearthly which they deem not of,
> Like the remembered tone of a mute lyre,
> Shall on their softened spirits sink, and move
> In hearts all rocky now the late remorse of love."[3]

If Keats believed in immortality, his belief was

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1. P. 400.
2. P. 412.
3. P. 418.

not of sufficient importance to affect his thinking, for "When I Have Fears" reflects the feeling that it is the earthly existence which is the important one, the opportunity to be well utilized. His thesis that life, when contemplated, seems too brief (in view of his premonition of an early death) is rounded out by the words:

> "... then on the shore
> Of the wide world I stand alone, and think
> Till love and fame to nothingness do sink."[1]

Life is worthless without accomplishments, poetic in the case of Keats, and no completer and fuller life holds out a hand of hope.

c. Summary

Almost without exception the Romantic poets found their fellowmen boring, materialistic, or downright obnoxious. Society to them was universally lacking in idealism. Byron, whose sentiments in this direction were particularly virulent, dwelt on the vileness of man and with Shelley laughed to scorn his attempts at creating anything of permanence. By contrast, Wordsworth's view of woman struck a positive note.

Immortality received a large share of attention wherever humankind was under consideration. Wordsworth was the most articulate, believing in a definite heaven, and even more emphatically (a belief which lacks Scriptural

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1. P. 437.

basis), a preëxistence. This belief in preëxistence gave rise to a peculiar idea about children, i.e., that because of their recent habitation in heaven they possessed unusual powers of judgment and discernment which wore off as the child grew to maturity. This was said to be especially true with regard to perceiving values in nature. Byron's conception of immortality was limited for the most part to the conviction that his memory and influence would continue after his death. Coleridge's only mention of immortality is one consistent with the background of the poem within which it occurred.[1]

3. Philosophy of Life.

As mentioned above, this category includes those phases of a poet's thinking which cannot properly be isolated under other categories. As the philosophy of each poet is discussed, views mentioned in other sections of this chapter will be mentioned if they are relevant to the total picture. Wherever possible different poems will be quoted than those already cited.

a. Wordsworth.

The philosophy of William Wordsworth was oriented about nature.[2] His conception of God has been discussed in

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1. Cf. ante, p. 17.
2. Cf. Stopford Brooke, op. cit., pp. 93ff.

a previous section.[1] Nature as the expression of God is his teacher and guide. "It is a Beauteous Evening" almost suggests that God should be approached from the standpoint of nature, not nature from God. Some hint of the value he placed on nature may be derived from the closing line of "Intimations of Immortality":

> "Thanks to the human heart by which we live,
> Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,
> To me the meanest flower that blows can give
> Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears."[2]

The child who is seen in this same poem to possess superior insight is referred to as "nature's priest". In what sense he is nature's priest is further explained in the lines already quoted from "My Heart Leaps Up"[3]. It is the child who is able to retain in manhood the piety which derives from the understanding of nature and which the poet wishes to keep throughout life.

The negative aspect of Wordsworth's regard for the wholesomeness symbolized by nature is found in his protests against pettiness[4] and contemporary materialism. The latter is best demonstrated in two sonnets. "London, 1802" is a plea for the return of the days of Milton, for

> "(England) is a fen
> Of stagnant waters; altar, sword, and pen,
>
> . . . . . .

1. Cf. ante, pp. 16-17.
2. P. 404.
3. P. 400. Cf. ante, p. 24.
4. Ante, p. 18.

Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
Have forfeited their ancient English dower
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men."[1]

"The World is Too Much With Us" is in its entirety a cry against an acquisitive philosophy. Not only does man consume too much time and effort in the gaining of possessions, complains the poet, but he neglects to see personal values in nature for his life. The closing lines state in desperation that paganism would be better than such a state.

b. Coleridge.

Coleridge's break with the literary past consisted not so much in the adoption of common subjects and equally common language for poetry, as in the escape from everyday life to Medieval and Oriental atmospheres. The lack of any expression of his feelings or of life values is due to the extensive use of imagination in his works as in contrast to his various moral and religious pronouncements including the final lines of "The Rime of Ancient Mariner":

"He prayeth best who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all."[2]

c. Byron.

Almost every stanza of Lord Byron's "Childe Harolde" reveals that he himself is the constant center of his

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1. P. 396.
2. Not included in the high school text; quoted from Bernard D. Grebanier and Stith Thompson, English Literature and Its Backgrounds, Book Two, p. 171. The high school senior will have studied this poem previously.

thinking. Lines already quoted express his contempt for men. His outstanding source of consolation seemed to be the more spectacular aspects of nature:

> "Are not the mountains, waves, and skies a part
> Of me and of my soul as I of them?
> Is not the love of these deep in my heart
> With a pure passion? Should I not contemn
> All objects, if compared with these?..."[1]

He even modifies his grudge against mankind by saying preferring nature does not cause him to dislike man the more. But even nature was unable to counteract the results of his selfish and dissipated life. As he sounded his own death knell in the poem "On This Day I Complete My Thirty-Sixth Year", he said:

> "My days are in the yellow leaf;
> The flowers and fruits of love are gone;
> The worm, the canker, and the grief
> Are mine alone!"[2]

d. Shelley.

Shelley, too, true to the revolutionary spirit of the Romantic Age, was greatly dissatisfied with the state of society, though not on such personal grounds as was Byron. He hated injustice of any sort and longed for a society in which all could dwell in tranquillity. In "A Dirge" he makes the more gloomy elements of nature sing a lament for the world's wrongs. His idealism as applied personally is refreshingly apparent in "One Word is

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1. P. 417.
2. P. 422.

Too Often Profaned" in which he declares his concept of love to be superior to the usual connotation of that word, His refuge from care is in pure appreciation of the delicate phases of nature such as those of "To a Skylark", "The Cloud", and "To Night", or in identifying himself and his aspirations with nature, as in "Ode to the West Wind".

e. Keats.

The enjoyment of beauty for its own sake constituted almost a religion for John Keats. The Proem to "Endymion" states concisely his pleasure at putting this beauty into verse:

> "A thing of beauty is a joy forever;
> Its loveliness increases; it will never
> Pass into nothingness; but will still keep
> Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing."[1]

The "Ode on a Grecian Urn" also expounds the fact that Keats considered beauty a panacea for the vanity and brevity of life, as he summarizes in the oft-quoted closing lines:

> "'Beauty is truth, truth beauty' -- that is all
> Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."[2]

Not only did Keats revel in the classic beauty of Greek culture as shown in the two preceding examples and in "On

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1. P. 431.
2. P. 436.

First Looking Into Chapman's Homer", but also, like his contemporaries, in the beauty of nature. The sonnet "On the Sea" offers the caves of the ocean as a respite from the wearying sounds of daily life in the city, while "Ode to a Nightingale" eulogizes the song of "the immortal bird" as a sweet medicine for heartache and weariness. Like Coleridge, Keats also found release in fantasy and imagination such as that found in "The Mermaid Tavern" and "La Belle Dame Sans Merci".

f. Summary.

Many of the personal philosophies of life bear the unmistakeable influence of the revolutionary spirit of the Romantic Age. Weary of the materialism and decadence of society, Wordsworth turned to nature for inspiration and instruction. The child, he said, was closer to nature and therefore had a more wholesome outlook on life than the adult. Coleridge's escape was to the realm of imagination and to the Oriental and Medieval atmospheres. The self-centered and world-weary Byron sought a panacea in the grandeur of earth, sky, and ocean. In spite of all this, he died with the conviction that his life had been altogether unprofitable. Shelley's response to the revolutionary spirit was an idealism which made him turn from the world of injustice to the finer aspects of natural beauty. It was the same materialistic scheme of things which caused John Keats to formulate a religion of beauty,

revelling in the ideals of ancient Greek culture and taking refuge in nature's beauty. To the majority of poets, nature was in some degree the answer to the individual's disappointment in life as he experienced it and saw it.

4. The Use of the Bible.

The Romantic Age was one of increased interest in books and in literature generally, fostered to a large degree by the popularization of cheap publications and of the Bible during the Wesleyan Revival some years before.[1] Many literary commentators tell how extensive was the reading of the Bible among the great poets of this period.[2]

Wordsworth apparently felt that his readers were familiar to some extent with the Scriptures, for he uses without explanation the expression "Abraham's bosom"[3] for heaven in "It is a Beauteous Evening". In this study, Coleridge's use of the Bible is limited to those elements which appeared in the vocabulary of Medieval Catholicism.

The influence of the Bible reveals itself in literature, not only in direct quotations or in obvious references, but also in the acknowledgement of Biblical doctrines and concepts. When Byron in "Childe Harold"

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1. Cf. Frederick C. Gill, loc. cit.
2. Cf. post, p. 33f.
3. Luke 16:22, several versions.

speaks of "Redemption's skill", his capitalization of "Redemption" suggests that the word has a Biblical connotation for him. The expression "creation's dawn" occurs in the same poem. If Byron did not believe in a literal creation, he was at least aware of the existence of such a concept and its connotation. Keats used the Biblical character Ruth to clarify his feelings of sadness and the comfort for this melancholy in the song of the nightingale when he says:

> "Perhaps the selfsame song that found a path
> Through the sad heart of Ruth, when sick for home,
> She stood in tears amid the alien corn."[1]

C. Additional Biographical Facts of Value in Teaching.

In addition to the Christian values found in the actual poetry of the Romantics, much data regarding the religous views and practice of the poets not commonly found in textbooks for the high school student would seem to enhance these values.

Wordsworth, though less Biblically minded than his contemporaries, referred to the Bible as "the voice that roars along the bed of Jewish song" and as God's pure "Word by miracle revealed."[2] The American Bible So-

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1. Ruth 2.
2. Cf. Lawrence E. Nelson, op. cit., p. 146, and "The Influence of the English Bible and Upon English and American Literature", p. 12.

ciety quotes from a poem in which he extolls the Bible, contrary to Nelson's assertion that he was not prone to do so.[1] He valued the Church of England only as a moral guardian, an upholder of ideals, and a refuge for the poor.

Gill, in his thorough treatment of the influence of the Wesleyan Revival, divulges the little known fact that though Coleridge was in his early days a Unitarian, he later became an evangelical Christian and was even rumored to have become a Methodist preacher.[2] In addition, he was a lover of the Bible and felt that it was an aid to progress and a wholesome influence on literary style .[3]

Fiery young Lord Byron, though outspoken against all things religious, was felt by his wife to have believed in the inspiration of the Scriptures. However this may have been, it is certain that he was familiar with the Bible from his school days and utilized Biblical themes more than once in his poems.[4] Though Brooke thinks that "Byron believed more in Fate than in God"[5], Nelson points out that he was able to see God in nature as a Creator.[6] His wife was also of the opinion that the extreme contem-

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1. Loc. cit. and Lawrence E. Nelson, op. cit., p. 145.
2. Cf. Frederick C. Gill, loc. cit.
3. Cf. Lawrence E. Nelson, op. cit., pp. 141-143.
4. Ibid., pp. 152-154.
5. Op. cit., p. 228.
6. Loc. cit.

porary emphasis on Calvinism had distorted his view of the orthodox God into that of an Avenger rather than a Father.

Though Shelley was an avowed atheist, Browning believed that had he lived longer, he would have become a Christian believer.[1] The known fact that he was an avid reader of the Scriptures might have been responsible for this conjecture. Though not a frequent user of Biblical themes, he regarded the Bible as a bulwark of morality and civilization.[2]

Seldom orthodox, the Romantic poets presented here, except Keats, were known to have been familiar with and to have appreciated the Bible in varying degrees. Their views on spiritual matters reflected this familiarity and and also the impact of the Evangelical Movement.[3]

D. Summary.

As the methods and subjects of poetry in the "Romantic Revolt", as Miles, Pooley, and Greenlaw have called this period[4], constituted a departure from the conventional, many of the ideas expressed in that poetry were unorthodox religiously and revolutionary in spirit. The contributions of Coleridge were largely confined to an

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1. Cf. Edgar Whitaker Work, op. cit., p. 241.
2. Lawrence E. Nelson, op. cit., pp. 142-144.
3. Cf. ante, p. 11.
4. Op. cit., chapter XI.

escape to the realm of fantasy and the supernatural.

The school of nature poetry brought with it an emphasis on the revelation of God in nature, especially on the part of Wordsworth. The question arises as to whether the amount of space given to this idea and its extension to the concept of nature as a teacher is not out of proportion when compared with the slight mention of natural revelation in the Bible. Byron's feeling for God in nature seems more in accord with the nineteenth Psalm and the single sentence in the New Testament, "Ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made."[1]

Wordsworth saw God in every phase of nature about him to the extent that he was taught and guided by nature. Nature was even said to exert a moral influence over the individual who communed with her. Byron's idea of natural revelation was confined to evidences of an eternal creator.

Of man, the Romantic poets held a common view that in his present state, his society was not to be desired. Wordsworth found that man's thoughts were centered in the material rather than the spiritual. Byron and Shelley as revolutionaries found the conventions of society

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1. Romans 1:20, Revised Standard Version.

too restraining. Wordsworth idolized the common man while Byron despised him. However, the Romantics to a man denounced all forms of tyranny.

As to man's ultimate destiny, all were agreed that his accomplishments are not of enduring or admirable quality. Wordsworth's peculiar doctrine of immortality in the sense of preexistence set him apart from the other Romantics who were uncertain about a life beyond the grave or who avoided the issue. Byron and Keats expressed complete despair for man, in sharp contrast to the view of orthodox Christianity. Shelley, though an agnostic, was an idealistic optimist.

The organizing centers or life philosophies of the various poets represent the greatest diversity of opinions. Wordsworth's is the religion of nature of which the child is the priest because of his proximity to heaven. Shelley's first consideration was the identification of nature with his idealism. Browning felt that Shelley would eventually have become an orthodox believer had he lived longer.[1] Byron's thinking was centered about himself and found an outlet in the contemplation of earth, sky, and ocean. His life ended in frustration and disillusionment. Like others, Keats reacted violently to materialism,

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1. Cf. ante, p. 35.

but with a religion which consisted in the sheer enjoyment of natural and classical Greek beauty. Mims, while finding this sense of beauty almost pagan, observes that Christians seldom appreciate the wonder and beauty about them, thus realizing a genuine contribution by this poet to religious thinking.[1]

An observation of this same author on Wordsworth will serve to compare the general tenor of the outstanding Romantic poets: "(Wordsworth) was more realistic than Shelley, more truly devout than Byron, more spiritual than Keats."[2]

An age which had been stirred to a new interest in the Bible by the Evangelical Movement understood and recognized easily the references to the Scriptures as well as the use of Biblical ideas prevalent at this time.

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1. Cf. op. cit., p. 120.
2. Ibid., p. 125.

CHAPTER III

CHRISTIAN VALUES TO BE FOUND IN TEACHING THE VICTORIAN POETS (1832-1901)

CHAPTER III

CHRISTIAN VALUES TO BE FOUND IN TEACHING THE VICTORIAN POETS (1832-1901)

A. Introduction.

1. Procedure to be Followed.

In approaching the Victorian poets to discover the values to be found in their writings, the plan of procedure will parallel that of the preceding chapter. Each of the values as it is found in the poetry of this period will be discussed in turn together with whatever biographical material may have a definite bearing upon the Christian value of the poem. Additional biographical facts not found in the text, Literature and Life, Book Four, by Miles, Pooley, and Greenlaw, but relative as a means of emphasizing these Christian values, will be included as a seperate section. As before, unless otherwise indicated in the footnote, all quotations will be from the text.

2. Background and Characteristics of the Victorian Age.

The mention of a few pertinent factors in the history of this period will serve as reference and explanation for the sections to follow.[1]

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1. Cf. Miles, Pooley, and Greenlaw, op. cit., pp. 469-470 and 551-560.

The Industrial Revolution which had begun in the preceding era[1] spread so rapidly during the reign of Queen Victoria that many necessary reforms were enacted. Thus the expanded democracy, characterized by the extension of the franchise, increase in representation, and widespread education, became an established institution. A new interest in learning and science paralleled the growth of democracy, and geological discoveries were made which seemed to some a challenge to orthodox faith. The Oxford Movement arose at this time to counteract this tendency to liberalize the tenets of the Church of England. John Henry, Cardinal Newman was associated with this movement. The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood of writers and artists, including Dante Gabriel Rossetti and William Morris, like the Oxford Movement, inherited the taste for Medieval spiritual and artistic values and applied them in its own field. The influence of the Evangelical Movement more than a century before was still felt in subtle ways.[1] This was, on the whole, a religiously conscious age.

B. Values to be Found in the Poetry Selected for High School Students.

1. Concept of God.

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1. Cf. ante, p. 11.

a. The Doubts of Tennyson.

The idea of God is only one of the subjects for discussion in an age of religious doubts, Poets expressed themselves freely regarding His nature. Thinking about Him and using His name became common.

Of the Victorian poets here presented by Miles, Pooley, and Greenlaw[1] for high school study, Tennyson presents the most complete view of God. This is to be expected, since a large part of his important work, "In Memoriam", which was prompted by the death of a close friend, is studied. That Tennyson believes that God will bring about a consummation of all things in which every life has a purpose is evident from stanza LIV. However, such phrases as "O yet we trust that somehow..." and "Behold, we know not anything," indicate an immature conviction of these truths. The following stanza asks whether the likeness of God is not seen in men, but explains the source of doubt as the conflict between science and religion so prominent during this period. His faltering faith is epitomized in the final quatrain:

> "I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,
> And gather dust and chaff, and call
> To what I feel is Lord of all,
> And faintly trust the larger hope."[2]

. . . . . .

1. Op. cit., chapter XV.
2. P. 567.

In continuing, Tennyson elaborates on the doubts caused by scientific research and refers to the concept of a God of love in the past tense in the following lines:

> "Who trusted God was love indeed
> And love creation's final law --"[1]

But in a later stanza a note of triumph is sounded as he connects the love for his departed friend with God. "Crossing the Bar" illustrates the growth in his faith as near the end of life he expresses the expectation of seeing God "face to face".

b.The Faith of Browning and Rossetti.

In sharp contrast to Tennyson's faith which wavered in the early years of his literary career and grew stronger as life drew to a close, Robert Browning represents a constant faith in God and a robust optimism. "Why I Am a Liberal" gives the theistic basis for his belief in the rights of man. God has a purpose for the body of each man, says he, and no one has the right to impede it. He goes so far as to say that each person should be guided by God to think as he does. In concluding "The Patriot", a poem which describes first the adulation, then the denunciation of a political hero, Browning points out that he who fails to receive the praise of men will be rewarded by God. It is plain from the final lines that he thinks of

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1. P. 567.

God as a personal being:

> "'Paid by the world, what dost thou owe
> Me?' -- God might question; now instead,
> 'Tis God shall repay. I am safer so."[1]

Dante Gabriel Rossetti, a founder of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, reveals a high degree of God-consciousness in his poem "The Blessed Damozel". Heaven is "God's house" and in two stanzas God is explicitly a Person to Whom prayer is to be addressed. His presence in Heaven is also apparent.

As evidenced in the material presented in the text, the poetry of the Victorian Age is replete with epithets descriptive of God. Tennyson in "Crossing the Bar", hopes to meet his "Pilot", thus indicating that God has been a guide through life. To Newman in a crisis over religious matters, God is also a guide in the well-loved "Lead, Kindly Light"[2] -- expressed in terms of the word "Light". "The Master of All Good Workmen" and "The God of Things as They Are" are the terms employed by Kipling to imply God's pleasure in good and honest work, especially in the literary field. Kipling bears witness to God as creator when he makes the soldier in "Gunga Din" say, "By the living God that made you..."[3]

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1. P. 575.
2. This poem is more correctly titled "The Pillar of the Cloud".
3. P. 600.

c. The Mention of Christ and the Holy Spirit.

Christ is mentioned, though briefly, in the selections given for this period. As Tennyson's faith mounts in the famous "Ring out" stanza of "In Memoriam", he climaxes it with "Ring in the Christ that is to be"[1], thus setting forth Christ as the solution to the problems enumerated in the preceding lines. Rossetti's line in "The Blessed Damozel", "There will I ask of Christ the Lord,"[2] indicates the poet's belief that Christ is One to Whom to pray and that He is a divine being. The Holy Spirit is referred to in the line concerning the "Dove". Only the attribute of His unseen presence is described.[3]

d. Summary.

The Victorian conception of God was affected in some quarters by the progress of science. The apparent ruthlessness of nature seemed to deny the Scriptural view of God's high purpose for man. The poetry of some mentions no Supreme Being at all. Others had an enlarged vision of Him and of His dealings with men. He was in Heaven, listened to men's petitions, and would meet them after death. After death, too, He would reward and avenge. In addition, he was recognized as Creator, a guide during life, and one pleased with work well done. The Holy Spirit was mentioned

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1. P. 568.
2. P. 589.
3. P. 589.

and Christ was decribed as One Who hears prayer and, more important, as the solution to social problems.

2. Concept of Man.

The bulk of musings on the nature of man during this period are concerned with immortality or related themes. The so-called conflict of science and religion seems to take precedence as a subject of poetry over the struggle of the masses for their rights. The nature of man as he is related to God may be inferred from the preceding section.

a. Belief in Immortality.

(1.) Tennyson. The entire theme of Tennyson's "In Memoriam" is that of immortality and other aspects of man's existence which bear upon it. Man's potentialities are described in the following lines of the first stanza:

> "...men may rise on stepping stones
> Of their dead selves to higher things."[1]

This destiny is attained by building upon past experiences and profiting from them. The experience of his friend's death was doubtless in his mind as wrote these lines, for he proceeds to explain that it is better to have known and loved his friend than to have been spared the experience of grief:

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1. P. 566.

"'Tis better to have loved and lost
Than never to have loved at all."[1]

Having arrived at this positive conclusion regarding the value of friendship, Tennyson continues in another section here presented to doubt the reality of a future life on the basis of the seeming wantonness of nature belying the benevolent purposes of God in protecting all life. He is able only to hope that

"Nothing walks with aimless feet;
That not one life shall be destroyed,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete."[2]

This doubt that every creature has a purpose and an eternal existence seems baseless as the following stanza presents the presence of God in man as grounds for hope of immortality. This stanza also concludes with a weak hope.

The third of the series (LIV, LV, LVI) pleads the evidence of geology against a faith in eternal life. The poet hesitates to believe that the human creature has any more endurance that the animals whose fossil remains were the subjects of extensive scrutiny during this era. Was man in danger of being

"...blown about as desert dust,
Or sealed within the iron hills?"[3]

The answer, felt Tennyson at this time, was only to be

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1. P. 566.
2. P. 567.
3. P. 567.

found "behind the veil". His conception as to what the hoped-for immortality might be is expressed in lines which show that he was "Thinking of his friend as an influence diffused throughout nature"[1] and associated with his thought of God.

"Crossing the Bar", written in his eighty-first year, is proof that all doubts about immortality and its character have been dispelled:

> "I hope to see my Pilot face to face
> When I have crossed the Bar."[2]

The earlier "Break, Break, Break" had indicated only gloom surrounding death.

(2.) The Brownings, Rossetti, and Kipling. Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning believed that immortality was a state governed by God in which they should meet again. Browning describes in "Prospice" his courage in meeting the actual experience of passing from this world to the next, which is climaxed as follows:

> "O thou of my soul! I shall clasp thee again,
> And with God be the rest!"[3]

Mrs. Browning reaches the heights of sublimity as she describes her love for her husband in Sonnet XLIII of "Sonnets from the Portuguese". The epitome of her love is

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1. Miles, Pooley, and Greenlaw, op. cit., p. 568.
2. P. 569.
3. P. 579.

reached in the closing lines:

"... and, if God shall choose,
I shall but love thee better after death."[1]

Another to consider immortality in terms of reunion with loved ones was John Henry Newman. After depicting guidance through life by the God who is Light[2], and the night that is finally gone, he describes the morning:

"And with the morning those angel faces smile
Which I have loved long since and lost awhile."[3]

Rossetti, using the artistic values of religion, placed his "Blessed Damozel" in a heaven which differs from the completely happy one spoken of in the Scriptures in that the fair maiden pines for reunion with her lover who remains on earth, while other pairs of lovers have but recently been reunited. However, the presence of the Trinity, Mary, and other souls make the picture more traditional.

More robust and hearty is the verse of Rudyard Kipling than that of others, but not so robust that it does not hold out a belief in heaven. "The Ballad of East and West" commences with the words:

"Oh, East is East, and West is West, and
never the twain shall meet,
Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's
great Judgment Seat."[4]

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1. P. 582.
2. Cf. ante, p. 44.
3. P. 585.
4. P. 600.

A hereafter with its judgment seat is not only a reality, but it is also a place where the fundamental differences of earth are resolved. The "tommy" of "Gunga Din" believes in eternity, too, but for him it is hell where he will still see the faithful Indian water-carrier carry on his ministrations to the thirsty. Din's kindness is so much a partoof him that it does not seem inconsistent with the character of hell!

b. Denials of Immortality.

A picture diametrically opposed to the preceding ones is that given by Edward Fitzgerald who selected[1] the stanzas of Omar Khayyam's "Rubaiyat" which advised a man to live for this existence alone as it will only end in "dust". Life is futile at best, so enjoy it while you may:

> "Ah, take the cash and let the credit go,
> Nor heed the rumble of the distant drums!
>
> * * * * * *
>
> The worldly hope men set their hearts upon
> Turns ashes...
>
> * * * * * *
>
> Ah, my beloved, fill the cup thatclears
> Today of past regret and future fears.
>
> * * * * * *
>
> Ah, make the most of what we yet may spend,
> Before we, too, into the dust descend."[2]
>
> . . . . . .

1. Cf. Miles, Pooley, and Greenlaw, op. cit., p. 586.
2. Pp. 586-587.

Charles Swinburne shared Fitzgerald's conviction that death ends all. "The Garden of Proserpine" is the view of a Roman of the pre-Christian era who is gratified at the thought that there is, as he supposes, no after-life. He expresses disgust at the hopes of immortality entertained by others:

> "I am tired of tears and laughter,
> And men that laugh and weep;
> Of what may come hereafter
> For men that sow to reap."[1]

One of the closing stanzas even implies that the hope of a hereafter for man is enslaving, something from which to be delivered.

c. The Social View of Man.

In the two poems "Ballad of the East and West", by Kipling, is revealed the author's high concept of a brotherhood which places character above race or nationality. The British Tommy thinks Gunga Din is "a better man than I am", and the Colonel's son is surprised and grateful for the friendship of Kamal of the raiding native tribe. Kipling sums up thus:

> "But there is neither East nor West, Border,
> nor Breed, nor Birth,
> When two strong men stand face to face,
> though they come from the ends of the earth!"[2]

To Browning in an England struggling over the

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1. P. 592; cf. Edgar Whitaker Work, op. cit., p. 251.
2. P. 602.

rights of the common man, brotherhood was recognizing a man's rights because his individuality is God-given.[1] "Why I Am a Liberal" concludes with a salient question and its forthright answer:

> "Who, then, dares hold, emancipated thus,
> His fellow shall continue bound? Not I,
> Who live, love, labor freely, nor discuss
> A brother's right to freedom. That is 'Why'."[2]

"The Patriot" describes the fickleness of man toward man. He can calmly execute a man whom he has cheered but a short while before.

d. Summary.

The Victorian view of man, then, was that of a glowing hope of an endless union with God and loved ones on the one hand, and a death which puts a final end to a hedonistic existence on the other. The poet with the high concept of immortality was also the one who held to an idealistic view of man. His relation to God, his rights, and his potentialities stood out in distinct contrast to those lines pleading the futility of life and which omitted any reference to man's divine origin or destiny.

3. Philosophy of Life.

a. Faith and Optimism.

Robert Browning was the most conspicuous and con-

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1. Cf. ante, p. 43.
2. P. 574.

sistent as a man of faith among the major poets of his time. As indicated above, he did not fear death, but anticipated eternal life. This was reenforced by his statement at the end of "The Patriot", that vengeance and reward were better left to God.

> "... (Browning) felt that no endeavor or struggle on earth was completely successful. 'What difference does tht make? There is a heaven to come,' he would cry exultantly, 'in which one can carry to its perfect completion the activity left incomplete on earth.'"[1]

His social philosophy was based on his personal philosophy -- because God as master of all had created man and set a purpose for his existence, man was entitled to certain individual rights.[2]

The faith of John Henry, Cardinal Newman is revealed in "Lead, Kindly Light", to consist in replacing self-guidance with God-guidance, sight with trust, and pride with humility, climaxed by eternal union with God. Kipling's ideals, insofar as they are studies here, manifest themselves mainly in racial equality and performing one's work to please God rather than men.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson may be considered a man of faith by virtue of that quality which emegged from his early questions and struggles, and the fact that he main-

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1. Miles, Pooley, andGreenlaw, op. cit., p. 555.
2. Cf. ante, pp. 43, 52.

tained a high level of idealism through out life. Unlike Browning, he was deeply disturbed by the advances in science which seemed to conflict with religion. The sudden death of his close friend intensified his uncertainty about the meaning and end of existence. "Crossing the Bar" sees the end of these feelings and even within the great work, "In Memoriam", stanza CVI presents a refreshing and uplifting optimism. As the poet looks hopefully for social reforms, the departure of grief, poverty, and disease, Christ is seen to be the basis for these hopes. This is by way of contrast to those poems which reveal how heavily he, like Rossetti, drew upon the past for his sense of values, such as in "The Princess" and "The Idylls of the King".[1] "Of Old Sat Freedom on the Heights" is a lofty tribute to freedom, identifying her with Great Britain which is climaxed with the telling lines:

> "Turning to scorn with lips divine
> The falsehood of extreme."[2]

For his harmony between a new and deeper faith and the science whose problems he studied so avidly, Mims calls him the "mediator between the new thought and the old faith."[3]

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1. The selections given in the text from these works are "Tears, Idle Tears", and "The Lady of Shallott".
2. P. 564.
3. Op . cit., p. 166. Cf. p. 165.

b. Doubt and Pessimism.

The terms "Doubt and Pessimism" are used here to include those points of view which are opposite to the Christian ones described above, whether or not the poets concerned would have thus designated them.

Matthew Arnold, as he stands on "Dover Beach", looks upon the "Sea of Faith" as a thing of the past now empty. All of life appears to have been full of doubts for him. Human strife and misery immersed the poet in a sea of doubt from which he never emerged. He concluded that the world

> "Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
> Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain."[1]

The attitude of William Ernest Henley, long an invalid, expressed itself in reliance on his own powers as contrasted with the Christian practice of relying on God for strength in a crisis. The lines from "Invictus":

> "I thank whatever gods may be
> For my unconquerable soul,"[2]

express at once his agnosticism and his self-reliance.

Swinburne and Fitzgerald have been seen to believe in no after-life. The former's consolation seems to have lain in the fact that death would put an end to the displeasures of life, while the latter's selections from

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1. P. 585.
2. P. 597. Cf. Dorothea Day's Christian paraphrase of this poem, "My Captain".

Omar Khayyam'advocate compensating for the absence of immortality by adopting a hedonistic philosophy of life: "Take the cash and let the credit go." One is foolish to be concerned about the future.[1] William Morris, like Arnold, felt that life was futile and burdensome. "An Apology" (from "The Earthly Paradise") describes the use of literature as an escape from life. His agnosticism is indicated in the lines:

> "Of heaven or hell I have no power to sing,
> I cannot ease the burden of your fears."[2]

c. Summary.

Life philosophies of this time were centered about faith or about doubt and agnosticism. The optimistic view of life, which in Tennyson's case emerged from a period of uncertainty, received many of its ideals from the past. Orthodox conceptions of Deity (q.v.) led to confidence in eternal life as the fulfilment of man's destiny. In the social realm, ideals of freedom and brotherhood were proclaimed. Poetry in these cases dwelt on the best in life.

On the other hand, there were those who could see no meaning to life, whose chief impressions were those of pain and misery. The only remedy was a grim reliance on self or a life of pleasure. Immortality was scorned.

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1. Cf. supra, p. 50.
2. P. 591.

4. Use of the Bible.

Tennyson's poetry is said to contain more than four hundred references to the Bible.[1] A study of the stanzas given here from "In Memoriam" yields three. In LVI, a distinctive feature of man's being embraces praying and singing psalms. The quatrain which follows[2] describes the outworking of God's love in a manner reminiscent of the verse, "God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him."[3] The entire discussion of the issue of science versus religion refers constantly to the creation account in the first chapter of Genesis. Especially, the phrase, "what we have that likest God within the soul", bears the influence of, "And God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him."[4] The content of Genesis 1 is also evident in the phrase, "man, her last work". "Her" refers to nature, but the order of creation is Biblical.

At the conclusion of "The Patriot", Browning's attitude is that of leaving to God matters of personal honor. Surely the verse, "'Vengeance is mine,'says the Lord, 'I will repay!'"[5] when he writes, "'Tis God shall

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1. "The Influence of the Bible Upon the English Language and Upon English and American Literature, p. 12 and Henry Mortimer Chapman, op. cit., p. 364.
2. Quoted ante, p. 43.
3. I John 4:16b, Revised Standard Version.
4. Genesis 1:27a, American Revised Version.
5. Romans 12:19, Revised Standard Version.

repay..."[1] When Newman addressed God as "kindly Light", he was acting upon Jesus' statement, "I am the Light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness."[2] Tiplady feels that "The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam" as Fitzgerald rendered it shows the influence of the book of Ecclesiastes.[3]

The scene of Rossetti's "The Blessed Damozel"[4] is laid in heaven and contains several references to the Scriptures. The phrases "God's house," and "the fixed place of heaven" reflect Jesus' words of comfort to the disciples, "In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?"[5] His statement in Matthew, "Again, I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven,"[6] is undoubtedly the source of Rossetti's line, "Are not two prayers a perfect strength?" The mention of the Dove in a later stanza is a reference to the Holy Spirit as He appeared immediately following the baptism of Jesus.[7] Rossetti also drew on the Bible for a description of heaven and its inhabitants. His stanza:

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1. P. 575.
2. John 8:12, Revised Standard Version.
3. Cf. Thomas Tiplady, op. cit., p. 85.
4. Pp. 588-589.
5. John 14:2, Revised Standard Version.
6. Matthew 18:19, Revised Standard Version.
7. Cf. Matthew 3:16, John 1:32.

"... Him round whom all souls
Kneel, the clear-ranged unnumbered heads
Bowed with their aureoles;
And angels meeting us shall sing..."

In the book of Revelation appears the following:

> "... a great multitude which no man could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, 'Salvation belongs to our God who sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb!' And all the angels stood round the throne."[1]

Kipling's "Ballad of the East and West" mentions "God's Great Judgment Seat" in its opening and closing stanzas. The verse, "For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God,"[2] had exercised its conscious or unconscious influence in conjunction with several passages in the book of Revelation. The same poem refers in a later stanza to, among other things, an oath taken on the "Wondrous Names of God". Here is mirrored a familiarity with the many revelations of God to Old Testament characters under the names that were significant of the various phases of his personality.[3] The heaven of "When Earth's Last Picture is Painted" is peopled fittingly with Biblical characters -- Magdalene, Peter, and Paul, and it is the "Master's" praise or blame which awaits us.[4]

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1. Revelation 7:9-11a, Revised Standard Version.
2. Romans 14:10, Revised Standard Version.
3. These are to be found mainly in the Pentateuch.
4. Pp. 602-603.

The use of the term "master" raises the question as to whether Henley was not using the words "master" and "captain" as intentional contrast to Christian philosophy when he employed them to describe his control over his own destiny.[1] Swinburne's "men that sow to reap" is likewise suggestive of "...whatever a man sows, that he will also reap."[2]

In addition to these specific references, attention must be called to the numerous uses of the concepts of heaven and hell in their Biblical sense which have not been amplified in the preceding paragraphs. "Gunga Din" provides examples of this type.[3]

The use and influence of the Holy Scriptures during the Victorian period shows that the usual ideas of heaven, hell, God, and similar ones were a part of the consciousness of educated persons of the period.

C. Additional Biographical Facts of Value in Teaching.

The study of Christian values in the poets and their works uncovers many data and attitudes not included in the text for high school students which further enhance these values for teaching purposes.

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1. Cf. supra, p. 55.
2. Galatians 6:7b, Revised Standard Version. Poem, p. 592.
3. Cf. supra, p. 49 ff.

Nelson says that Tennyson professed to be a great lover of the Bible, but that characteristic of his vascillation, it was Shakespeare for which he called on his deathbed.[1] Browning made no claims, but used Biblical allusions frequently in his correspondence with Elizabeth Barrett, who replied in kind. He was raised in a home which contained many rare Bibles which were not left idle.[2] His optimism was a thoroughly Christian one:

> "I say, the acknowledgement of God in Christ,
> Accepted by thy reason, solves for thee
> All questions in the earth and out of it,
> And has so far advanced thee to be wise."[3]

Elizabeth was raised in a strictly orthodox home and attended a Dissenter chapel. She was known to be deeply grieved by denominational strife. Her Christianity was not confined to belief, but made itself felt in her writings, as she wished it to be.[4] The Biblical revelation of Christ was her belief.[5]

Matthew Arnold's agnosticism was born of Biblical criticism as well as of science, but he nonetheless encouraged Bible study. The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood had as one of its standards early Christianity but rejected immortality except in the literary sense. William Morris,

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1. Lawrence E. Nelson, op. cit., p. 172.
2. Ibid., p. 173.
3. Edwin Mims, op. cit., p. 172.
4. "The Influence of the English Bible Upon the English Language and Upon English and American Literature", p. 13.
5. Cf. Martha Foote Crow, Modern Poets and Christian Teaching - Elizabeth Barrett Browning, p. 9ff.

one of its members, was manifestly unreligious and was influenced strongly by mythology in his writings. Like, Swinburne, he believed that "In devotion to beauty is the salvation of society."[1] Nearly all the poets, Christian in belief or not, used Biblical allusions in some of their works, though not always in the poems given in this text.

D. Summary.

Conceptions of God during the Victorian era were definite despite the advances in science and Biblical criticism which threatened the traditional ones. He was recognized as having a personal interest in man, extending even beyond the grave. The God of the Victorians was the God of the Bible. A new consciousness of man's personality held out both more and less hope for him. He was ascribed immortality or an aimless existence, according to the author speaking. Believers in immortality exalted social justice and brotherhood. Philosophies of life, like views of man, showed a sharp cleavage. Some resolved their doubts and joined the ranks of believers. Others, the agnostics, turned to the religion of beauty, the pursuit of pleasure, or merely to themselves.

The Scriptures asserted themselves directly or

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1. Stopford Brooke, Religion in Literature and Religion and Life, p. 25.

indirectly in the writings of the Victorian poets. The doubters joined the faithful in expressing themselves in Biblical terms. Scriptural apsects of God and heaven were especially prominent. Many writers read the Bible and appreciated it both for its literary and spiritual values. This was an age fully conscious of religious issues.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

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A. Restatement of the Problem.

As a partial means of combatting the secularism in modern education, some schools have been established with the Christian faith as an organizing center. However, for lack of materials, to mention one reason, they have often failed to incorporate Christian teachings into the total curriculum. Since integration, both with life and within itself, is a prerequisite to an effective curriculum, the Christian philosophy of education finds Christian teaching the ideal organizing center of the curriculum. In literature one finds an excellent example of the possibilities of such integration. Therefore, an attempt has been made in this study to approach the Romantic and Victorian eras of poetry on the secondary school level from this standpoint.

B. Summary and Comparison of Findings.

Authoritative commentaries on literature, especially where it is concerned with religion, were consulted to ascertain the Christian values present in the poetry and background of the two periods mentioned above

as they are presented in a current high school text. Those found were the concept of God, the concept of man, philosophy of life, and the use of the Bible; they form the basis for the fact that though both eras demonstrated these values to some extent, the Victorian age showed a decided advance over the Romanticiin religious thinking. Each value will be summarized separately.

The concept of God, basic to all Christian teaching, it is evident from the study, differss markedly between the two periods. During the Romantic period it largely limited to natural revelation, which found in God a Creator and a transcendent force in nature. The Victorians added to this the reality of a personal relationship with man, culminating in union with him in a real heaven. To them He was also a guide during the earthly life and one who approves careful work on the part of His followers. The Victorian attitude reflected the strong religious emphasis of the age.

A comparison of the viewpoints of the two periods regarding man shows an increased spiritual value similar to that in the concept of God. The Romantics were found to paint a dark picture of an evil, grasping mankind (with only a hope, in varying degrees, for immortality) which the Victorians were seen to brighten by setting forth his potentialities under God, climaxed by the cer-

tainty of eternal life. Those who saw physical death as the cessation of all life still retained a grim insistence on some sort of triumph in life, however transitory.

It was further revealed that while the poets of the Romantic school resembled one another greatly in their tendency to escape from the wearying society of other men, the Victorians were sharply split into opposing camps of doubt and faith. A man was either an agnostic who determined to make the most of an existence which terminated with the grave or a believer seeking a more perfect life in the hereafter. The effect of the Evangelical Revival which had made itself somewhat evident in the preceding epoch, had gathered momentum. This enlarged religious tendency, it was discovered, asserted itself as greatly in the form of an increased interest in and use of the Bible as it did in a more optimistic outlook on life.

C. Conclusion.

Christian values are present to some degree in nearly all poetry. As Chapman has said, "Practically all poetry deals with religion."[1] Even negative viewpoints are valuable in that they provide the basis for the consideration of similar problems confronting modern youth and encourage discernment in spiritual matters. The ag-

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1. Edward Mortimer Chapman, English Literature in Account With Religion, p. 464.

nosticism of Shelley, the rebellion of Byron, and the slowly dissolving doubts of Tennyson all have their modern counterparts, especially in the wake of a war. Nor have Kipling's brotherhood and Browning's social justice lost their relevance.

While none of the poets studied presented the whole or even nearly the whole of Christian truth, almost every one was found to put forth some ideal whose source is in that truth. William Hazlitt has said, "A man may state many truths while coming to a conclusion with which we do not agree."[1] Thus, while no Christian finds life as empty and hopeless as Byron did, he cannot fail to recognize that this poet has presented an accurate picture of the depravity of man. A multiplicity of similar examples could be drawn from the preceding chapters. The literature of these periods is also an excellent indicator of the force exerted by the Bible and other religious factors. The quotations from and allusions to the Bible in both periods serve in part to prove the statement of Work that literature and the Bible have run a parallel course foroover twelve hundred years.[2] Other evidences of the measureless influence of the Scripture on literature could be mentioned. Just as significant to

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1. Quoted in Edwin Mims, op. cit., p. 146.
2. Cf. Edgar Whitaker Work, The Bible in English Literature, p. 243.

the student are the far-reaching effects of the great religious revival which swept Europe and England during the eighteenth century. An adequate understanding of these effects upon the two literary periods may be gained from Bready's question,

> "Can anyone (familiar with the Evangelical Movement) fail to recognize in the more soulful poems of... Wordsworth and Coleridge, of Browning and Tennyson... the permeating influence of that mighty re-creation of soul and conscience?"[1]

If English literature is to be integrated into the total Christian educational program, some departures from the usual type of high school text suggest themselves. Research into recognized commentaries on literature reveals biographical data which enlighten the pronouncements of poets on religious and philosophical matters which would be valuable as an integral part of the text. Even lacking these facts, the little known spiritual and Christian ideals of many poets would be heightened and intensified in the consciousness of students by the inclusion in the textbook of works or selections from works presenting these ideals graphically. An example from Tennyson's "In Memoriam" will suffice:

> "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."[2]

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1. J. Wesley Bready, This Freedom -- Whence?, pp. 218-19.
2. Edgar Whitaker Work, op. cit., p. 238.

The re-writing of the background and explanatory material to point up the relation of literature to its contemporary religious movements and to the historic Christian faith would constitute a final integrating factor in utilizing the Christian values in that literature.[1] (The Roman Catholic Church has already led the way by compiling textbooks integrated with its faith.[2]) Until this ideal is attained, there rests upon each teacher in the Christianity-centered curriculum the responsibility of supplementing the materials at hand with her own research.

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1. Cf. the purpose of the text used as stated on page iii. The reading of literature is encouraged chiefly as a means of pleasure.
2. Cf. Sister Mary Lambertine, Lessons in Literature.

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