



# Form and Faith in Victorian Poetry and Religion

*Kirstie Blair*

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## **Form and Faith in Victorian Poetry and Religion** Kirstie Blair

Kirstie Blair explores Victorian poetry in relation to Victorian religion, with particular emphasis on the bitter contemporary debates over the use of forms in worship. She argues that poetry made significant contributions to these debates, not least through its formal structures. By assessing the discourses of church architecture and liturgy in the first half of the book, *Form and Faith in Victorian Poetry and Religion* demonstrates that Victorian poets both reflected on and affected ecclesiastical practices. The second half of the book focuses on particular poets and poems, including Browning's *Christmas-Eve* and Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, to show how High Anglican debates over formal worship were dealt with by Dissenting, Broad Church and Roman Catholic poets and other writers. This book features major Victorian poets - Tennyson, the Brownings, Rossetti, Hopkins, Hardy - from different Christian denominations, but also argues that their work was influenced by a host of minor and less studied writers, particularly the Tractarian or Oxford Movement poets whose writings are studied in detail here. *Form and Faith* presents a new take on Victorian poetry by showing how important now-forgotten religious controversies were to the content and form of some of the best-known poems of the period. In methodology and content, it also relates strongly to current critical interest in poetic form and formalism, while recovering a historical context in which 'form' carried a particular weight of significance.

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