Path to Modern Painters

Levine: Carlyle’s optimism, according to Carlyle himself, lay in having “got rid of Materialism” for certitude of “mind”; and G. B. Tennyson argues that Carlyle was essentially a mystic. Nonetheless, Levine says, the religious impulse was in balance with an impulse to social reform (the idea beneath the clothes and the retailoring of the clothes themselves are equally pressing needs) (*Boundaries* 24-29). Is it this balance that makes *Sartor* the least dogmatic of Carlyle’s works?

In terms of adaptation of the *Intimations Ode,* the balance means that Carlyle solves the problem of the ode by urging the child to take up its work. The mourning or nostalgic desire for the lost visionary gleam is consumed in a forward-looking optimism of vocation. For Ruskin, was Wordsworth’s own message, that praise for what is left behind, is the source of strength? (Are those messages in fact contradictory?)