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REVIEW SECTION.

I.—APOLOGETICS IN THE PULPIT: ARE THEY NOT MORE HURTFUL THAN USEFUL AT THE PRESENT TIME?

NO. III.

BY PROF. HERRICK JOHNSON, D.D., CHICAGO, ILL.

DEFINITION before discussion is hardly less important than diagnosis before prescription. Hap-hazard work, in dealing either with truth or life, involves too great risks to be allowed place anywhere. Let us know the ground we are to stand on. What is apologetics?

Apologetics is, in brief, the defense of the faith. It is the vindication of Christianity by the presentation of its evidences. Surely this is a good thing, and not open to reasonable challenge. The faith that asks anything but an open field; that cannot itself challenge attack, and meet it, and shiver the lances of assailing unbelief; that is not ready to welcome investigation and to prove its right to be, is a faith of darkness and not of light, a faith of superstition and not of intelligent trust. If Christianity is not defensible, let us find a faith that is. That upon which we hang our dearest hopes should give us something surer than a "perhaps." Apologetic, falsely so-called, begging pardon for Christianity's presence and claims—this is a thing Christianity does not wish, and will not brook, but turns its back upon with a feeling of infinite dignity and calm. Apologetic, in the sense of vindicating its right to be, Christianity welcomes and glories in as the answer of a reasonable faith to the demands of an intelligent reason.

But granting the desirableness, and even necessity, of Christian evidences in the general field of debate, are they ever even desirable in the pulpit? Let us here again begin with exact definition, and understand by "the pulpit," any place occupied by a minister of Jesus Christ for the public oral proclamation of God's truth to men. It is not, therefore, the pulpit as indicating a profession, but as indicating a locality and a function, that we are concerned with in the present discussion. This, then, is the question before us; Christian evidences, as

The one thing, therefore, to be intensely emphasized to every eager ministerial apologete, before he enters the pulpit to bang away at assaulting unbelief, is this: *Be sure of your guns.*

In brief, the following points seem to get their ample warrant from our discussion:

1. Apologetics have a legitimate place in the pulpit, for they are in the Word which every ambassador for Christ is commissioned to preach.

2. Chiefly, the pulpit should be used for attack. Preaching should be aggressive rather than defensive. This is the genius of Christianity. This is the spirit of a conquering church. Holding the fort is necessary. But the bulk of apologetic may well be outside the pulpit. Let the printed attack be answered by the printed defense. But this is not at all to be understood as meaning that the pulpit is to be forever occupied with "cries of alarm" and "Come to Jesus." It means the unfolding of fundamental truths; the fathoming of fathomless depths, and the scaling of scaleless heights; the intense insistence on duty; the taking some things for granted in the profound conviction that they already have the grip of conscience; and the fervid, tremendous pressure of the gospel's claims, charging on men's judgments and hearts with truth that is believed to have behind it all the power of the infinite God.

3. As error is championed by the ripest scholarship, truth must be alike championed. When apology is undertaken in the pulpit it should be with full equipment, with thorough knowledge of the situation, with trust in God and with assurance of victory. The supernatural in Christian conflict is wholly consistent with the use of means under the law of adaptation. God is not arbitrary, though sovereign. He will not perform a miracle in the interests of intellectual indolence or ignorant assumption.

4. After all, the best defense of Christianity in the pulpit is a consecrated, Christ-like life, filled with "the spirit of glory and of God." This is an apologetic possible to every pulpit: to prove the resurrection by the resurrection wrought in the preacher's soul; to show in his self-sacrificing and cross-signed life "*the print of the nails.*"

II.—THE STUDY OF WORDSWORTH'S POETRY.

BY PROF. J. O. MURRAY, D.D., DEAN OF PRINCETON COLLEGE.

EMERSON, in his essay on "Books," after laying down the postulate that, "for the most part, they work no redemption in us," proceeds to give three practical rules in regard to their use:

1. Never read any book that is not a year old.
2. Never read any but famed books.
3. Never read any but what you like.

The trouble with many of us is that we take prejudices against books, as we do against people, from what is said by others against them. We should like them if we only came to know them. Of such prejudices Wordsworth has been a conspicuous victim. He has hardly yet, in some minds, recovered from the criticisms of Jeffrey. Others are repelled from him, as from Browning, by the silliness and affectations of a Wordsworth cult. But his hour has come at last, and every day brings more students of his poetry, who find a redemptive quality, to use Emerson's fine phrase, in his verse. Very much depends on the time and place in which we read books. I remember some years ago, while on a vacation in summer from pastoral cares, to have been sitting in a railway train just behind a ministerial brother, like myself enjoying his summer vacation. He was absorbed in a book. The train was dashing along through choice scenery, but he never lifted his eyes from its pages. My curiosity was roused, and glancing over his shoulder at the book in hand I found it was "Calvin's Institutes," the last book I should have dreamed of for such a season and place. But Wordsworth's poetry is eminently a book for summer vacations. And as the readers of this monthly are scattered on vacation tours by lake or sea or mountain, I wish to say something in favor of Wordsworth as a companion for their trips. Every minister, as his trunk is packing, raises the question what books to take. "The fewer the better," we should say. Only let that few be very choice ones, and be sure to have Wordsworth's Poems as one. And in confirmation of views here put forth I must refer the reader to a fine essay in *The Presbyterian Review* published some years since by Dr. John De Witt of Lane Seminary, on the homiletical value of Wordsworth.

In coming to Wordsworth "we come to the greatest of the English poets of this century; greatest not only as a poet, but as a philosopher. It is the mingling of profound thought, and of ardent thought, with poetic sensibility and power (the power always the master of the sensibility) which places him in this high position. He does possess a philosophy, and its range is wide as the universe. He sings of God, of man, of nature, and, as the result of these three, of human life, and they are all linked, by thought and through feeling, one to another, so that the result is a complete whole which one can study as if it were a world of its own." *

No better general description of the poetry of Wordsworth could be put into words.

The poetry of nature in Wordsworth has several notes peculiar to itself. It is, in fact, the poetry of God in nature. He never looked on natural objects as only so much inert matter—wonderfully organized into forms of beauty or grandeur. Nor did he look on the life that

* "Theology in the English Poets." Brooke, p. 93.

he saw everywhere around him as life apart from God. He speaks of

“ The Being that is in the clouds and air,
That is in the green leaves among the groves,
Maintains a deep and reverential care
For th' unoffending creatures whom He loves.”

Again, in his Prelude, he says :

“ Thus while the days flew by, and years passed on,
From nature and her overflowing soul
I had received so much, that all my thoughts
Were steeped in feeling ; I was only then
Contented, when with bliss ineffable,
I felt the sentiment of Being spread
O'er all that moves and all that seemeth still ;
O'er all that lost beyond the reach of thought
And human knowledge, to the human eye
Invisible, yet liveth to the heart ;
O'er all that leaps and runs, and shouts and sings,
Or beats the gladsome air ; o'er all that glides
Beneath the wave, yea, in the wave itself
And mighty depths of waters.”

The same conception is found in one of his choice sonnets :

“ It is a beauteous evening, calm and free,
The holy time is quiet as a nun
Breathless with adoration ; the broad sun
Is sinking down in its tranquility ;
The gentleness of Heaven is on the sea.
Listen ! the mighty Being is awake,
And doth with His eternal motion make
A sound like thunder—everlastingly.”

Hudson is right in saying that God in nature was Wordsworth's master-vision. It is his philosophy of the poetry of nature, or, as Stopford Brooke has well put it, “ It is more . . . than a mere influence : it is a conscious life which realizes itself as a personality, in realizing itself within the sum of things. In fact, this Being, who is the life of the universe, is the all-moving Spirit of God, the soul which is the eternity of thought in nature.”

Wordsworth has been charged with pantheism. But how does his view differ from that of the old inspired Hebrew poetry on the same theme. Is it pantheism which bids all souls

“ Sing praises upon the harp unto our God,
Who covereth the heaven with clouds,
Who prepareth rain for the earth,
Who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains.”

Or was Paul pantheistic in his declaration that “ in Him we live, and move and have our being.” Such charges are volumes for the fact that, while in his poetic treatment of nature Wordsworth affirms God in all, and all by Him,” he never affirms that the All includes the whole of God. Is there not, after all, a Christian pantheism found in inspired

poetry, and found in Wordsworth as nowhere else this side of psalmists or prophets. For Wordsworth, this divine life in nature manifested several distinct aspects, each of which is reflected from his poetry. The gladness which pervades nature seemed to him an emanation from God. Was he wrong in this view? The Psalmist surely has sung this strain: "He maketh the outgoings of the morning and the evening to rejoice. Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in Thy name." No better expression of this thought in Wordsworth can be found than in his lines

"It was an April morning, fresh and clear." *

But it runs through all his poetry. He repudiated wholly the habit, not only of poets, but of many distempered minds, of reading into nature their own morbid feelings, feeding their melancholy fancies with unhealthy depressions, which they could gather only by distilling the joy of nature in the alembics of their own gloom. For Wordsworth, communion with nature was to be some restoration, or, to use Emerson's phrase, redemption. Hence we find pictured in all his poetry the tranquilizing, soothing, calm-giving influences of nature.

"Central peace subsisting at the heart
Of endless agitation."

On this Hudson has beautifully spoken, and his words are well worth quoting. "Who of us, indeed, has not sometimes felt, nay, who of us does not often feel, what a blessed thing it is to be so at home with nature, and so attuned to her life, that she can speak her own deep peace into our souls?" Many are the times, in bright and vocal mornings, in hushed and sober evenings, and all day long in still and lonely places, when she "sends her own deep quiet to restore our hearts," and when her tranquilizing power seems to steal over us and melt into us, soothing and sweetening away our evil thoughts and unhealthy perturbations, our anger, impatience, discontent, and all our inordinate loves, and cares and fears, and along with these, also, "the fretful stir unprofitable and the fever of the world."

"To interpose the covert of her shades,
Even as a sleep, between the heart of man
And outward troubles, between man himself
Not seldom, and his own uneasy heart."

The most distinctive note of Wordsworth's poetry regarding nature is, as Mr. Stopford Brooke has pointed out, "his conception of everything in nature as having its own peculiar life—yet as bound up with all the others in a common life," and that "this endless interchange of life and joy was in reality not the type of, but actually the never-ceasing self-reciprocation of God." Let the reader turn to "The Excursion," †

* Poem on Names of Places.

† Book Second.

and read for himself what the Solitary there says of the two great brother mountain-peaks which overhung the glen.

For Wordsworth, indeed, natural religion meant far more than to serve as natural theology, that is, a set of proofs of the divine existence, divine power and wisdom. It meant, to use the common phrase, religious experience—a direct calling out of the worship of the soul—and even more, a direct impression on the soul of moral teachings. The Fourth Book of “*The Excursion*” will show how profoundly he felt this as the mission to his soul of the divine life in nature. It would be easy to dwell on this theme, for Wordsworth is full of it. It marks him as the great high-priest of natural religion, and gives him his unique and glorious place in our poetry. Rather, however, let me refer the reader to the excellent volume of Mr. Stopford Brooke on “*Theology in the English Poets*,” and to Mr. Hudson’s kindred volume “*Studies in Wordsworth*.” Wordsworth was profoundly Christian in his beliefs. He never for a moment catered to the sentimental and wicked nonsense which would supersede church-going by walks or drives into the country on Sundays. He was a devout worshiper all his life in the parish church, and was the more earnest worshiper in the temples of the outer world, “not made with hands,” simply because he was so profound a believer in Christ and His church. The religion of Christ and the religion of nature are not two, but one—as the divine Word and the divine works find their unity in the Word made flesh. “All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that hath been made.” With poetry thus inspired no minister can afford to be unfamiliar. It will give him help, imparting devotion to his work. No poet is more prized by some of our profoundest Christian thinkers, and it will refresh many a timid worker in the ministry to spend some of his vacation hours with Wordsworth among the lovely scenery so abundant in our land.

Wordsworth is the poet of man even more than he is the poet of nature. He has been misjudged by many and deemed a cold nature, dwelling apart from the great world, self-absorbed and having no large and living sympathies with human life. Carlyle’s judgment of him is utterly mistaken. Probably Wordsworth was as strongly repelled from Carlyle as Carlyle seems to have been from Wordsworth. Carlyle was the worshiper of the strong and the great. Wordsworth’s soul went out to the weak and the lowly. In fact, in all those aspects of human life which appeal most powerfully to the Christian ministry, it is Wordsworth among all the English poets who finds most and sings sweetliest. Cowper, indeed, had begun the strain. It echoes all through “*The Task*.” Burns caught the same note and sent it forth loud and clear. But Wordsworth’s poetry of man is far more complete, far deeper, and far richer. There are three strains of this poetry, Wordsworth is in all their notes.

A poetry of the home—that is of the affections which are of kin to the home. He has written no “love poetry,” so-called. In fact, he told a friend that he dared not attempt it—that it would have been too passionate. English poetry is rich enough in this, and he did well to leave it to the Herricks and the Lovelaces of an earlier day, and to Burns of a later time. Nor, again, are such strains as we find in his celebrated “Ode on the Instincts of Immortality” frequent. Lofty as that ode is, it is not so characteristic of Wordsworth as some others. All through his poetry, in which human affections are the inspiration, he holds that “what is lowest in our human loves must be at once restrained and ensouled by what is highest.” As with his “Skylark,” so with the human heart, it must be unfailingly “true to the kindred points of heaven and home,” so that all through his poetry it is the sweet, simple, kindly affections of our nature that are mentioned and expressed. He deals in no fascinations of romance, no dark, turbulent passions, such as swell and heave in Byron, but, as Hudson has well said, “All the sweetness of his home distils itself into and through his poetry, sometimes in direct articulation, oftener in deep, soft induction.”

Wordsworth is also a true poet of human liberty. It has been said of him that he was a Republican by nature. He shared, at first, in all that generous enthusiasm for liberty which in many minds the earlier stages of the French Revolution roused. He was in France during the year 1792, and though the atrocities of that terrible year gave his growing enthusiasm a rude shock, he was not driven into reactionary and hostile mood toward a true enfranchisement of the oppressed. This note is struck in his sonnets most distinctly. For religious liberty not even Milton has written in more fervid strains. His sonnet on the “Persecution of the Scottish Covenanters,” that on “Wickliff,” on the “Emigrant French Clergy,” on “English Reformers in Exile,” on the “Waldenses,” and the noble sonnet on Milton, all show the freedom-loving spirit of the man. It was nursed in him by his love of the mountains, as so noticeably in the case of the liberty-loving Swiss. In one of his poems we find these lines :

“Here might I pause and bend in reverence
To nature and the power of human minds,
To men, as they are men within themselves.”

The line italicized is what inspired his love of human freedom. It is the absolute contrast of what is found in the poetry of Pope. Wordsworth never wrote for what is called society. Factitious distinction went for nothing with him compared with the innate glory of manhood.

“Love had he found in huts where poor men lie,
His daily teachers had been woods and rills ;
The silence that is in the starry sky,
The sleep that is among the lonely hills.”

These daily teachers had done for him what they have always done

for poets. He has a firm, clear note for liberty always. More than once he has reminded us of our own poet Whittier, whom in simplicity of life and unworldliness he so strongly resembles.

It is, however, as the poet of *humble life* that he deserves fullest recognition from those who are the ministers of Him whose word invests humanity with new sacredness. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." "He was the first who poured around the dalesmen's cottages, and the wandering life of the peddler and the unheard struggles of the country and the mountain-folk, the consecration and the poet's dream. He was the first who isolated life after life in tender and homely narration, and made us feel that God was with simple men and women, . . . that this same equal heart beat in the palace and the hamlet hidden in the hills ;" that all men were brothers in the charities which soothe and bless, in the moral duties which God demands, in the feelings which nature awakens in their hearts." *

This is not our dream. Such poems as "The Brothers," "Michael," "Alice Fell," "The Idiot Boy," "The Leech-Gatherer," "Matthew," "Lucy," "Simon Lee," and many others that might be named, fully justify Mr. Brooke's eloquent words. We may concede to the critics that here and there a note of false simplicity is heard. It is a hard task to find poetry in a modern tramp, and Peter Bell was an attempt in this direction. Shelley made a clumsy attempt at satirical parody, and yet with all its faults there is a truer note of the poetry of philanthropy in Peter Bell with all its faults than in much of Shelley's sounding lines. The way in which Wordsworth has invested humble life with sacredness attests his genius. It does, in fact, much more than this. It has inspired much of literature since his day. Its influence is seen in Hood's "Song of the Shirt," in Mrs. Browning's "Cry of the Children ;" in all Dickens's characters, like "Little Nell," and in George Eliot's "Silas Marner." It is what every philanthropist should fully recognize. "This will never do," the critics of the *Edinburgh Review* said of his poetry. Nothing else than this will do, for this and a coming age. The enthusiasm of humanity is no poet's dream—though such a poet as Wordsworth has given it full voice. And we venture the assertion that any minister who imbues his soul freely with this element of Wordsworth's poetry will find his labors among the poor and the lonely assume new sacredness and new loftiness.

There is a large class of poems by Wordsworth lying outside the poetry thus far discussed, in which all true lovers of poetry delight. His "Dion and Laodamia," "Stepping Westward," "The Solitary Reaper," his "Ode on Sound," and the great "Ode on Immortality" are specimens of the class to which we refer. Much of his later poetry

* Theology in English Poets, p. 253.

can be neglected. He wrote too much. But whoever wishes for poetry that in the best sense of the words is a "criticism of life"; whoever delights in a poetry that soothes and blesses his soul; that always elevates and cheers and gladdens the heart; whoever seeks for a poetry that, eschewing the poor and false idea in art—that its only aim is to please and not to bless and quicken the whole being, moral as well as æsthetic—will turn to Wordsworth, the more frequently and the more enthusiastically the more he becomes familiar with the great poet. He is in English poetry the brightest example of what has been called the "correlation of the religious and the poetical instincts." Professor Shairp, in his "Studies on Poetry and Philosophy," has a delightful essay on "Wordsworth, the Man and the Poet." To that we may safely commend the readers of this REVIEW for a fuller discussion of what could only be suggested in so brief an article as this. His fitting biography is yet to be written. On a beautiful evening in July, 1867, I stood at his grave in Grasmere churchyard. The day had been spent in wandering among the scenes he so much loved and which live immortal in his poetry. The air was serene and the evening sky was full of that soft and tender light he loved so deeply. For one I was glad his dust lies there rather than in the great Abbey. It was his own wish to be buried there.

• "Let him be free of mountain solitudes,
And have around him, whether heard or not,
The pleasant melody of woodland birds."

III.—THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM AND THE MINISTRY.

BY PROF. JOHN BASCOM, D.D., WILLIAMSTOWN, MASS.

WHILE the American people constantly boast of their public school system, regard it as a wise tradition of the fathers, and are really ready to do a good deal for it, it is has not, after all, taken that firm and deep hold of the national mind to which it is entitled. The conflict is constantly deepening, the accumulation of adverse causes is on the increase, which are to settle with us the success of republican institutions and republican society. The two, in long periods, are inseparable; or if not inseparable, the freedom of civic institutions is of little worth without the social life that is properly associated with them. To save the prosperity and strength of this nation for the masses of men is not to be, under the increasing encroachments of wealth, an easy achievement. Our public schools, the universality of knowledge, are to be a chief means of success in this truly patriotic, philanthropic and Christian labor. This system will not, retained merely as a lingering national predilection, be able to be the center of popular life. It must be constantly given new breadth, and handled with fresh efficiency, if it is to resist the designed and undesigned encroachments upon it, which are