

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.