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Sub :- English (M.A., Sem-II, CC-7, Unit-3)

Topic :- William Wordsworth : Preface to the Lyrical Ballads

Q) What are the views of Wordsworth about poetry and religion?

Ans) Wordsworth speaks of a deep relationship between poetry and religion. Like religion, poetry also provides comfort. In consoling and sustaining it has affinity with religion. There are those who go to poetry to seek moral comfort and an escape from the anxieties of life. But these people become serious through the cares of life and their sympathies and passions have narrowed. They are unable to appreciate much of what is beautiful in a poem. Further they seek preconceived moral and religious views in the poetry which they read. When they fail to find them, they are led astray. Such people are unable to bring out the worth or beauty of a poem impartially. Instead of expecting from a poem what the poet has imparted to it, they impose their

passions and conceptions on it. The critics with religious mind look for religious and moral truths in poetry and remain blind to its beauty, passion and imagination. Therefore according to Wordsworth religious men cannot be competent critics of poetry. The poet embodies in his vision concrete and sensuous images. He soars high on the wings of imagination. This results into misunderstanding and error of judgement on the part of critics.

Wordsworth gives very significant views on the relation between poetry and religion. He can realise the affinity between poetry and religion because he had learned to read Nature as living testament. He saw nature from religious angle. According to him poetry cannot be appreciated devoid of religion in its achievement of eternal through the temporal, of the infinite through the finite and of the ideal through the concrete.