Ecotheological elements in Wordsworth's idea of heavenly dwelling in Part III of the *Ecclesiastical Sonnets*

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1. *Context*

ONE OF THE ESSENTIAL THOUGHTS with which Wordsworth is concerned throughout his poetry is the idea of dwelling. Following John Kerrigan's idea, I divide the development of Wordsworth's search for home into three periods: an early period in which the poet 'sought security in rural cottages'; a second phase, based on the awareness of the 'insecurity and vulnerability of stone-built dwellings', is concerned with the tomb which Wordsworth thought 'an immutable place to dwell'; finally, in a third phase, Wordsworth 'committed himself to thoughts of heavenly dwelling', and 'cottages and tombs are replaced by chapels and churches'.[1] Focusing on Part III of the *Ecclesiastical Sonnets*, this paper aims to argue that Wordsworth's idea of journey to a heavenly dwelling, which is the third phase of his idea of historical as well as of spiritual development, is ecotheological in that it represents the relationship Wordsworth establishes between humanity, nature and God.

The *Ecclesiastical Sonnets* consist of 132 sonnets that, while beginning with the establishment of Christianity in England to the situation of religion in Wordsworth's day and dramatizing its ebb and flow, describe a journey or pilgrimage to an eternal city, along with a struggle over the uncertainty of faith in a fallen world, as well as a yearning for political stability and a spiritual goal over and against mutability, decay, change and paradox.[2] While the uncertainty of faith was not resolved yet in *The Excursion*, the composition of *Ecclesiastical Sonnets* 'marked a very important moment in Wordsworth's intellectual life' in which he claimed 'the necessity of defending' faith as 'the safeguard against anarchy', 'social retrogression', mutability and mortality.[3] In particular, it is clear that the poet is still preoccupied with the fear of death and the vulnerability of any earthly home in the sonnets. In *Three Essays Upon Epitaphs* and *The Excursion*, death is discussed in a positive sense as the poet attempts to be reconciled with it by uncovering the meaning and influence of death for the living. In the *Ecclesiastical Sonnets*, however, the poet focuses upon the destructive power of death, which is in marked contrast with the immortality and eternity of the heavenly dwelling.

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[1] John Kerrigan, 'Wordsworth and the Sonnet: Building, Dwelling, Thinking', *Essays in Criticism*, 35 (1985), 45-75 (pp. 50-51).

[2] The series were originally published in 1822 as the *Ecclesiastical Sketches* with 102 sonnets, but in 1837 Wordsworth changed the title to the *Ecclesiastical Sonnets in Series,* and he had added thirty sonnets to the original 102 by 1845. See, Anne L. Rylestone, *Prophetic Memory in Wordsworth's Ecclesiastical Sonnets* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1991), p. xi.

The quotations from *Ecclesiastical Sonnets* refer to *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth*, 4 vols., ed. by E. De Selincourt and Helen Darbishire (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), vol. 3, pp. 341-416.

[3] See, Stephen Gill, *William Wordsworth: A Life* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), pp. 343-344.

2. *The experience of death in the journey of our life*

If the sonnets outline the whole of British Church history, Wordsworth, interestingly, draws a picture of a person's whole life-journey from birth to death in part III from Sonnet XX to Sonnet XXXIV. His understanding of the journey of life is now entirely conditioned by the link between the mortality of human life and the promise of faith. Each stage of life, overshadowed by the fear of human mortality, is marked by a sacrament, such as Baptism (XX), The Marriage Ceremony (XXVI), and Funeral Service (XXXI).[4] Although the sacrament of Baptism is meant to celebrate the sense of a new beginning for a new born baby under 'parental Love' and 'Grace from above', Wordsworth juxtaposes life and death in Sonnet XX (Baptism). In the first half the sacrament of baptism is described as a transformation into 'a christian Flower / A Growth from sinful Nature's bed of weeds!', which reminds us of St. Paul's idea that 'Therefore as by the offence of one *judgement came* upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one *the free gift came* upon all men unto justification of life'.[5] The new born baby thus changes from death to life through baptism. Yet, a tension between life and death dominates the second half of the sonnet in the sense that 'The tombs – which hear and answer that brief cry, / The Infant's notice of his second birth - / Recall the wandering Soul to sympathy / With what man hopes from Heaven, yet fears from Earth'.[6] In spite of the grace of life 'from above', the awareness of 'fears from Earth' recalls the unavoidable reality of death.

In Sonnet XXII (Catechising), Wordsworth continues to evoke a painful experience of mortality, being reminded of the loss of his mother at an early age. This Sonnet uses the narrator's recollection of the occasion on which the children were tested to decide whether they were ready to be confirmed into the church. The first seven lines describe well the anxious little children who were gathering around 'the Pastor', wearing 'new-wrought vest' and holding 'a vernal posy': some were murmuring 'like a distant bee', but some made 'a bold unerring answer'. The next few lines recall an affectionate relationship between the narrator and his mother as her 'anxious heart for me' may have been 'fluttered' by 'a bold unerring answer' and her son wore 'the flowers' 'bound' by the 'happy hand' of 'Beloved Mother'. And yet, this loving relationship is juxtaposed with a bitter remembrance of her death. A picture of her face is conjured up by the 'inaudible command' of 'Sweet flowers', but the last two lines disclose that the narrator was too young to understand the idea of death

[4] The following sonnets show the journey in detail: XX. Baptism, XXI. Sponsors, XXII. Catechising, XXIII. Confirmation, XXIV. Confirmation Continued, XXV. Sacrament, XXVI. The Marriage Ceremony, XXVII. Thanksgiving After Childbirth, XXVIII. Visitation of the Sick, XXIX. The Commination Service, XXX. Forms of Prayer at Sea, XXXI. Funeral Service, XXXII. Rural Ceremony, XXXIII. Regrets, XXXIV. Mutability.

[5] Romans, 5. 18.

[6] Interestingly, this sonnet reminds us of 'Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood', in which the poet regards life on earth as a distraction from our journey back to our heavenly home. For him, 'Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting', and he sees 'Shades of the prison-house' in this earthly life. Then he calls 'God' and 'Heaven' as 'our home', 'that imperial palace whence he came' (ll. 58, 64, 67, 84).

and to mourn his loss, and that his present 'heartfelt sigh' does not seem to compensate properly for the loss: 'O lost too early for the frequent tear, / And ill requited by this heartfelt sigh!' In a similar vein, Sonnet XXIV (Confirmation Continued) expresses a mother's painful experience of her older daughter's death, creating a tension between a vision of Heaven and human mortality. Although the sonnet imagines that the 'Sister-child' may dwell in Heaven, the questions the poet asks – 'Did gleams appear? / Opened a vision of that blissful place / Where dwells a Sister-child?' - underline the hard fact of the girl's death reserved for the last lines of the sonnet: 'And was power given / Part of her lost One's glory back to trace / Even to this Rite? For thus She knelt, and, ere, / The summer-leaf had faded, passed to Heaven.'[7] Just as the poet reveals 'ill requited' loss in the final line of Sonnet XXII, so he finds an insecure balance between an eternal life in Heaven and human mortality on earth in Sonnet XXIV.[8]

Wordsworth then carries on the journey of life from birth to death on earth through other sacraments, and ends finally with Sonnet XXXIV (Mutability), acknowledged as the greatest poem in the entire series and the final sonnet in the series on liturgy.[9] The ubiquity of mutability and our inability to control it are contrasted with 'Truth'; which, however, is without substance as the 'outward forms of 'Truth' are compared to 'frosty rime, / That in the morning whitened hill and plain / And is no more', but this sense of mutability is ubiquitous:

> From low to high doth dissolution climb,
> And sink from high to low, along a scale
> Of awful notes, whose concord shall not fail

Further, 'the unimaginable touch of Time' suggests our inability to control death and dissolution. Although he wants to transcend mortality by reference to 'Truth' in the sonnet 'Mutability', it seems to be hardly a resolution as it has no form. On the one hand, the poem is bleak and it is not sure whether the poet is able to overcome the frustration of mortality. On the other hand, he may try to reaffirm at least a Christian hope through the power of eternity, which is communicated by church buildings. It should be noted that the sonnets about a life's journey from birth to death are immediately followed by the sonnets on the subject of church architecture (XXXVIII—XLVII), which symbolises the heavenly dwelling as well as the house of God for common worship. Although the poet conceives human life as 'grass that springeth up at

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[7] Nancy Easterlin, *Wordsworth and the Question of "Romantic Religion"* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press; London: Associated University Presses, 1996), p. 147.

[8] It should be noted that Wordsworth and his wife, Mary, lost their daughter Catherine, who died of convulsions at the age of three in June in 1812. Their son Thomas, six and a half years old, also died of pneumonia in December of the same year. In his letters the poet shows that he is struggling not only with sorrow but with uncertainty: 'I write with a full heart; with some sorrow, but most oppressed by an awful sense of the uncertainty and instability of all human things', *WL III*, p. 25.

[9] Gill comments that Mutability is rightly anthologized as an example of Wordsworth's later manner at its most august', *William Wordsworth*, p. 344.

morn, / grows green, and is cut down and withereth / Ere nightfall' (XXXI. Funeral Service), he attempts to move beyond this view by looking at the eternity of the heavenly dwelling through church architecture.

3. *Church architecture as a symbol of heavenly dwelling*

If cottages and tombs are key elements to formulate the idea of dwelling in Wordsworth's early years, they are 'replaced by chapels and churches' in his later years, which are 'increasingly treated as types of heaven, images of the Father's house with many mansions which Christ promised his followers'.[10] In other words, in the *Ecclesiastical Sonnets*, the Church 'suddenly imposes itself upon the reader's consciousness much like a mountain that has long dominated a familiar landscape'.[11] Whereas the poet was able to find solace and vision in landscape in the past, he now turns to church architecture in which he uncovers an imperishable eternal home. He tries to locate a safe and eternal home, over and against mutability, in the church building which symbolises a heavenly dwelling.

Most of all, the poet establishes the Church as a place of shelter for Faith, for the exiled and the distressed. In Sonnet XXXIX, the church which would be built from 'Those forest oaks of Druid memory, / Shall long survive, to shelter the Abode / Of genuine Faith'. The Church of England is also described as 'a fearless resting-place' for 'self-exiled / From altars threatened, levelled, or defiled' during the French Revolution in Sonnet XXXVI (Emigrant French Clergy). Roaming through the aisles of Westminster Abbey, the poet holds that, 'in hours of fear / Or grovelling thought', the believers can 'seek a refuge' here (Sonnet XLV).

Further, church buildings as a shelter present a sense of eternity and immortality. Just before introducing Sonnet XXXVIII (New Churches), Wordsworth offers two sonnets on 'Old Abbeys' (XXXV) and 'Emigrant French Clergy' (XXXVI) which deal with the destruction of churches. The former traces back to the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1539, and the latter originates with the French Revolution in 1789. For Wordsworth, one of the decisive common features between them is that churches were reduced to ruins or dust during those periods: 'MONASTIC Domes! Following my downward way, / Untouched by due regret I marked your fall! / Now, ruin' (XXXV); 'EVEN while I speak, the sacred roofs of France / Are shattered into dust' (XXXVI). Although they were wrecked in ruin and dust, a sense of continuity flows through them: 'Once ye were holy, ye are holy still' (XXXV), and the 'self-exiled' find 'a fearless resting-place' for 'their Faith' in England (XXXVI). Finally, in Sonnet XXXVIII (New Churches), he declares 'the wished-for Temples rise!' again 'through England bounds'. In the prefatory letter to *Ecclesiastical Sketches* (1822), Wordsworth informs us that the composition of the sonnets was inspired by his and his friend Sir George

[10] Kerrigan, 'Wordsworth and the Sonnet', pp. 50-51.
[11] Rylestone, *Prophetic Memory*, p. 1.

Beaumont's search for a site for a new church in his Esate in 1820.[12] Just as a phoenix burns itself on a funeral pyre every five centuries and rises from the ashes with renewed youth, the poet imagines that new churches rise from ruins and dust. The notion of re-rising thus, like a phoenix, embodies the ideas of eternity and immortality, which resonate through the sonnets on church architecture: 'ye everlasting Piles!' (XLII), 'born for immortality' (XLIII), 'dreamt not of a perishable home' (XLV), 'Infinity's embrace' (XLV), 'the eternal City' (XLVII).

In Sonnet XLIII (Inside of King's College Chapel, Cambridge), the poet is able to refer explicitly to the notion of immortality in the interaction between the 'immense' / And glorious' interior architecture of the chapel and music, light, and shade which 'directs the human spirit to reveries of paradise'[13]:

> These lofty pillars, spread that branching roof
> Self-poised, and scooped into ten thousand cells,
> Where light and shade repose, where music dwells
> Lingering-and wandering on as loth to die;
> Like thoughts whose very sweetness yieldeth proof
> That they were born for immortality.[14]

In fact, the church building itself is not the heavenly Jerusalem, but the symbol and prototype of the eternal home, 'a microcosm of the celestial world on earth', which links the earthly with the heavenly home and enables the believers to overcome the fear of mortality in an earthly home.[15] Wordsworth thus, at the beginning of the next Sonnet XLV, writes that 'They dreamt not of a perishable home / Who thus could build'. In addition, he asserts, 'The house that cannot pass away be ours', in a sonnet, published in 1842, which implies his yearning for heavenly dwelling, in contrast with the mutability and mortality of any earthly dwelling.[16]

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[12] 'Advertisement', in *Ecclesiastical Sketches* (1822).

[13] John Delli-Carpini, *History, Religion, and Politics in William Wordsworth's Ecclesiastical Sonnets: with an Appendix Containing the Text of the Ecclesiastical Sonnets* (Lewiston, N.Y.; Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 2004), p. 98.

[14] Interestingly, it reminds us of Satan's speaking in Milton's *Paradise Lost*; 'And that must end us, that must be our cure, / to be no more; sad cure; for who would loose, / Though full of pain, this intellectual being, / Those thoughts that wander through Eternity,' (Book II, ll. 145-48).

[15] See Delli-Carpini, *History, Religion, and Politics*, p. 97: 'Sunlight shining trough the stained glass windows of gothic cathedrals on the whitewashed walls of its interior was intended to foreshadow the gems of the heavenly Jerusalem as described in Revelation 4. 2-3.'

[16] The most alluring clouds that mount the sky
Owe to a troubled element their forms,
Their hues to sunset. If with raptured eye
We watch their splendor, shall we covet storms,
And wish the Lord of day his slow decline
Would hasten, that such pomp may float on high?
Behold, already they forget to shine,
Dissolve – and leave to him who gazed a sigh.
Not loth to thank each moment for its boon
Of pure delight, come whensoe'er it may,
Peace let us seek, - to stedfast things attune
Calm expectations, leaving to the gay
And volatile their love of transient bowers,
The house that cannot pass away be ours.' (Sonnet XXVIII in *Micellaneous Sonnets*)

4. *Nature in the heavenly dwelling*

Unlike the earthly dwelling, a heavenly dwelling involves transcendence and 'the world above' (XLII), rather than the material world of a landscape in nature. Intriguingly, however, in the sonnets on church buildings nature as corporeal reality continues to play a key role in the church building with reference to the spatial and emotional and mental contexts. First of all, nature is incorporated into church buildings in terms of beauty, purity and caring. When the poet and Sir George Beaumont were searching for a site for a new church in 1820, he referred to the beauty of nature.[17] What is striking is how the beauty of nature stimulated him to look at human life from the perspective of the power of faith: 'It was one of the most beautiful mornings of a mild season, -- our feelings were in harmony with the cherishing influences of the scene; and such being our purpose, we were naturally led to look back upon past events with wonder and gratitude, and on the future with hope.' This beautiful landscape thus encouraged the poet to embrace the past and the future in the light of God's love for the world during his search for a site for a new church. Looking at 'Old Abbeys', the poet detects 'beauty' and 'ancient stillness' as well as 'ruin' in Sonnet XXXV, which vividly reminds us of *Tintern Abbey*, in which the beauty of nature near Tintern Abbey is praised.

The purity of nature also contributes to building a new church in that the chosen site for a new church is not an arbitrary one, but a place which maintains its innocence in nature. At the very beginning of Sonnet XXXIX (Church To Be Erected), he proclaims:

> Be this the chosen site; the virgin sod,
> Moistened from age to age by dewy eve,
> Shall disappear, and grateful earth receive
> The corner-stone from hands that build to God.

Interestingly, the phrase, 'Moistened from age to age', implies additionally the awareness of a sacredness which points to primitive gods. In the next lines, it is mentioned that 'Those forest of oaks of Druid memory' will 'shelter the Abode Of genuine Faith'. This primitive sacredness then is consecrated as God's dwelling place by His holiness:[18]

> [. . .] there let the holy altar stand

[17] 'During the month of December, 1820, I accompanied a much-loved and honoured Friend in a walk different parts of his Estate, with a view to fix upon the Site of a New Church which he intended to erect. It was one of the most beautiful mornings of a mild season, --our feelings were in harmony with the cherishing influences of the scene; and such being our purpose, we were naturally led to look back upon past events with wonder and gratitude, and on the future with hope. Not long afterwards, some of the Sonnets which will be found towards the close of this Series were produced as a private memorial of that morning's occupation', 'Advertisement', in *Ecclesiastical Sketches* (1822).

[18] Mircea Eliade comments on the link between primitive and modern religious architecture: 'Thus religious architecture simply took over and developed the cosmological symbolism already present in the structure of primitive habitations', *The Sacred and the Profane* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1959), p. 58. Quoted by Delli-Carpini, *History, Religion, and Politics*, p. 96.

> For kneeling adoration; - while – above,
> Broods, visibly portrayed, the mystic Dove,
> That shall protect from blasphemy the Land.

'The mystic Dove' implies that the purity and ancient holiness of nature will turn into the sacredness of God. Wordsworth uses a similar image about the relationship between nature and a new church-yard in Sonnet XLI (New Church-Yard). Just as 'the virgin sod' shall be offered to the site for the new church, so 'The encircling ground, in native turf arrayed' is now 'given to social interests, and to favouring Heaven' 'by solemn consecration' even to the extent that 'the lonely Sexton's spade shall wound the tender sod'. Yet, this pure place will become a place for encounter between the people and God: 'The prayers, the contrite struggle, and the trust / That to the Almighty Father looks through all.'

Furthermore, the caring aspect of nature appears to replace the power of incense in the new churches. In Sonnet XL, Wordsworth describes the moment of burning incense inside the church: 'clouds of incense mounting and veiled the rood'. But he sees it as an 'appalling rite', which 'Our Church prepares not, trusting to the might / Of simple truth with grace divine imbued'. Rather than 'concealing the precious Cross, like men ashamed', with clouds of incense, he imagines that caring nature will venerate it:

> [. . .] the Sun with his first smile
> Shall greet that symbol crowning the low Pile:
> And the fresh air of incense-breathing morn
> Shall wooingly embrace it; and green moss
> Creep round its arms through centuries unborn.

Just as the Grasmere vale receives a new dweller with tenderness, so the smile of the Sun, morning fresh air and green moss, will pay homage to the cross. Soothing nature's veneration of the cross brings to mind the pedlar's mystic experience in nature through which he was able to feel 'the lesson deep of love' (ll. 180-185), rather than by the traditional way of religious education. The landscape is thus integrated spatially and spiritually into the church, which suggests that a soothing experience in nature can point to the idea of a heavenly dwelling.[19]

The coalescence of nature and the church is also found when Wordsworth articulates the emotional, psychological and spiritual solace in church architecture, which bears a close parallel to the images of nature creating consolation and hope. When the poet contemplates the interior architecture of the church, the account of his experience is very close to the account of his

[19] Rylestone comments that 'the cooperation between the elements of nature and the Church is portrayed forcefully by John Constable in his *View of Salisbury Cathedral from the Bishop's Grounds* (1826), in which the trees nurturingly frame, indeed embrace, but do not oppress or visually overpower the cathedral. The friendship between Wordsworth and Constable began in 1806 and continued to the painter's death in 1837. Although they admired each other's work, there is no record that Wordsworth commented on this particular painting', *Prophetic Memory*, p. 118 n. 3.

experience in nature. In fact, there is nature's literal assimilation into the church in Sonnet XXXIII (Regrets) in which 'the church building, filled with greens at Christmas', serves as a 'counter Spirit to nature in winter'[20]:

> Go, seek, when Christmas snows discomfort bring,
> The counter Spirit found in some gay church
> Green with fresh holly, every pew a perch

Here the solace and 'Hope' (XXXIII) created by the church's Christmas rituals seems tantamount to an experience of nature.[21] Further, for Wordsworth, the sensual aspects of nature, such as light, dark and sound, are of great significance in that they themselves bring about consolation and at the same time enable the poet to perceive the depth of life in his poetic imagination. Intriguingly, we can find such images inside the church, 'where light and shade repose, / where music dwells' (XLIII), even to the extent that darkness and light or solitude and joy in nature are held together in one vision.[22] In Sonnet XLIV, he expresses how the fusion of the darkness of Night and the music leads to a mystical experience in King's College Chapel:

> Shine on, until ye fade with coming Night!-
> But, from the arms of silence-list! O list!
> The music bursteth into second life;
> The notes luxuriate, every stone is kissed
> By sound, or ghost of sound, in mazy strife;
> Heart-thrilling strains, that cast, before the eye
> Of the devout, a veil of ecstasy! (XLIV. The Same).

The interplay between music and darkness can create a sense of ecstasy, but in fact it is the power of darkness that enables the music to maximise the experience of bliss in the church. In a similar vein, in *On the Power of Sound*, the mortality of Arion, whose music 'could humanise the creatures of the sea', becomes immortalized by 'one chant' in 'silent night': 'And he, with his preserver, shine starbright / In memory, through silent night' (IX).[23] The image of darkness, which is associated with the darkness inside the tomb, calls to mind human mortality, which may be transformed into immortality through music.

There is also a metaphorical interplay between nature and the church. To reveal the historical continuity and connectedness between the world and God, the poet uses the metaphor of a river or a stream of water. Wordsworth

[20] Rylestone, *Prophetic Memory*, p. 96.

[21] I also quoted above a passage from XLIII. Inside of Kings College Chapel, Cambridge, which shows how the perception of the interior architecture is typically associated with the meditation of nature, in particular, with respect to the sense of immortality: 'These lofty pillars, spread that branching roof / Self-poised, and scooped into ten thousand cells, / Where light and shade repose, where music dwells / Lingering-and wandering on as loth to die; / Like thoughts whose very sweetness yieldeth proof / that they were born for immortality.'

[22] Florence Marsh, *Wordsworth's Imagery; a Study in Poetic Vision* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1963), p. 53.

[23] Composed in 1828; published in 1835.

describes his intention in the introductory sonnet in Part I:

> I, who essayed the nobler Stream to trace
> Of Liberty, and smote the plausive string
> Till the checked torrent, proudly triumphing,
> Won for herself a lasting resting-place;
> Now seek upon the heights of Time the source
> Of a Holy River [. . .] (I. Introduction)

And in the very last sonnet in Part III 'That Stream upon whose bosom we have passed' finally 'has reached the eternal City-built / For the perfected Spirit of the just!' (XLVII). The journey motif of a nation or an individual in the *Ecclesiastical Sonnets* is developed and exemplified by the image of a river. As a river is born and flows, a human being or a society is born and grows. In the final sonnet of *The River Duddon,* whose name is mentioned in Sonnet I in Part I of *Ecclesiastical Sonnets*, the ever-gliding stream is described as 'a type of the ever-vanishing yet ever developing race of man'.[24] Whereas human beings 'go toward the silent tomb', the river does not pass away. But the poet's advance to 'the source / Of a Holy River' suggests 'the mingling of the soul with eternity'.[25] In this respect, the river as an image of growth and eternity constitutes a crucial element in exploring the journey into the permanent dwelling place through the metaphorical interplay between nature and the church.

5. *Conclusion*

In conclusion, in the *Ecclesiastical Sonnets*, the poet expresses the immortality and eternity of heavenly dwelling through church architecture over and against the destructive power of death. The church building itself is not the heavenly Jerusalem, but the symbol and prototype of the eternal home, which links earthly home with heavenly home and enables the believers to overcome the fear of mortality in an earthly home.

For Wordsworth, dwelling does not mean simply a place for living, but it is fundamentally based upon a close relationship between humanity, nature, and

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[24] I THOUGHT of Thee, my partner and my guide,
As being past away. – Vain sympathies!
For, backward, Duddon! As I cast my eyes,
I see what was, and is, and will abide;
Still glides the Stream, and shall for ever glide;
The Form remains, the Function never dies;
While we, the brave, the mighty, and the wise,
We Men, who in our morn of youth defied
The elements, must vanish; - be it so!
Enough, if something from our hands have power
To live, and act, and serve the future hour;
And if, as toward the silent tomb we go,
Through love, through hope, and faith's transcendent dower,
We feel that we are greater than we know. (XXXIV. After-Thought).

[25] Marsh, *Wordsworth's Imagery*, p. 94.

God, which develops at the level of emotion and psychology and also as an environmental locality. First, it communicates the immortality of God. Secondly, various aspects of nature constitute crucial parts in it. Nature as material reality is incorporated into church building in terms of beauty, purity and caring, and the coalescence of nature and the church is also found in articulating the emotional, psychological and spiritual solace in the church architecture which bears a close parallel to the images of nature in creating consolation and hope. In addition, there is a metaphorical interplay between nature and the church.

In this sense, the idea of the heavenly dwelling, represented by church buildings, has two principal ecotheological aspects, the independent sacred value of nature, and its inter-relatedness with humanity and God.