

## **Editions of the Writings of William Cowper: An Annotated Bibliography 1960-2013**

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This bibliography of editions complements Ashley Chantler's cumulative record of critical writing on Cowper since 1980, which is a regular feature of the journal. A list of editions published before 1960 is included in Lodwick Hartley, *William Cowper: The Continuing Reevaluation: An Essay and a Bibliography of Cowperian Studies from 1895 to 1960* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1960). I have given the number of pages in a selection where this provides guidance to its scope and scale.

Baird, John D. and Ryskamp, Charles, eds, *The Poems of William Cowper*, 3 vols, Oxford English Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980-95). The definitive edition of the poetical works, with extensive textual and contextual apparatus, explanatory notes, and commentary on the poems.

Bruce, Michael, ed., *William Cowper: Selected Poems*, Everyman Poetry (London: J.M. Dent, 1999), xxix + 97 pp. A selection of major poems, including extracts from *The Task*, with a 'Chronology of Cowper's Life and Times', brief introduction, and notes. Useful for students and others seeking a first acquaintance with Cowper's verse.

[John Newton and William Cowper], *Olney Hymns in Three Books, 1779* (Olney: The Cowper and Newton Museum, 1979). A facsimile edition issued to celebrate the bicentenary of first publication. Reprinted 1984 and 1997. An item for the discerning reader and for the collector.

King, James and Ryskamp, Charles, *The Letters and Prose Writings of William Cowper*, 5 vols, Oxford English Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979-86). The definitive edition, with full apparatus. Prints all extant letters and the complete prose writings, including the first authentic text of *Adelphi*, Cowper's autobiographical memoir. Consolidates Cowper's standing as a great letter-writer and the status of his correspondence and other prose as a major literary and historical resource.

Malpas, Simon, ed., *William Cowper: The Centenary Letters* (Manchester: Carcanet Press, in association with The Cowper and Newton Museum, Olney, 2000), xxi + 157 pp. A balanced and accessible selection, published on the bicentenary of Cowper's death. The introduction,

discreet headnotes, and chronological arrangement enable the reader to build a narrative of Cowper's inner life, relationships, and activities, while also experiencing his force as a shrewd and committed observer of his times and environment.

Milford, H.S., ed., *Cowper: Poetical Works*, 1905, 4th edn with corrections and additions by Norma Russell, Oxford Standard Authors (London: Oxford University Press, 1967). The standard one-volume edition of the complete poetical works.

Nicholson, Norman, *A Choice of Cowper's Verse* (London: Faber & Faber, 1975), 95 pp. Verse selected and introduced by a fellow poet and author of an incisive short monograph, *William Cowper* (London: John Lehmann, 1951).

Rhodes, Nick, ed., *William Cowper: Selected Poems* (Manchester: Carcanet Press, 1988), 119 pp. A solid selection from a leading poetry publisher, with minimal annotation but a thoughtful and sympathetic introduction.

Sambrook, James, ed., *William Cowper: The Task and Selected Other Poems*, Longman Annotated Texts (London: Longman, 1994), 333 pp. A unique addition to the range, printing the whole of *The Task* and a generous selection of other texts, among them all the important shorter poems, extracts from the 'Moral Satires', and (unusually) passages from the translations of Homer. Has an authoritative critical introduction, extensive annotation (conveniently presented as headnotes and footnotes), a chronology, and a bibliographical guide to further reading. Especially suitable for advanced students but rewarding at all levels.

Spiller, Brian, ed., *Cowper: Poetry and Prose*, The Reynard Library (London: Rupert Hart Davis, 1968), 1018 pp. Something of a landmark in its time and still valuable. A very substantial selection, with compact introduction and economical, well-judged annotation and other supporting material. Includes a generous choice of shorter poems, all the long poems of 1782, the whole of *The Task*, some translations, and such pieces as the essay on Cowper's pet hares, as well as almost 500 pages of letters. Professionally edited, expertly presented, attractively produced, an excellent single-volume collection for general use and an all-round view of Cowper.

Turner, Katherine, ed., *Selected Poems of Thomas Gray, Charles Churchill, and William Cowper* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1997), pp. 98-160. A distinctive selection setting Cowper alongside two other 'pre-Romantics', Gray and the satirist Churchill, a poet greatly

admired by both Cowper and Byron. The introduction offers thought-provoking perspectives on the 'Age of Sensibility' through consideration of the 'network of coincidences and contradictions' formed by the work of these three writers. An edition that intervenes unreservedly in the process of critical and literary-historical debate, underlining Cowper's significance as a poet of both self-conscious reflection and outgoing social concern.

William Cowper, *Poems 1782* (Ilkley: Scolar Press, 1973). A handsome facsimile reprint of Cowper's first volume.

William Cowper, *The Task 1785* (Ilkley: Scolar Press, 1973). Facsimile reprint of the volume of 1785. Contains 'Epistle to Joseph Hill', *Tirocinium*, and John Gilpin in addition to *The Task*.