

Mark Rutherford Recalls Cowper: A Study of Some Allusions

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We have learnt, however, from Zachariah that even before Wordsworth's days people were sometimes touched by dawn or sunset. The morning cheered, the moon lent pathos and sentiment, and the stars awoke unanswerable interrogations in Cowfold, although it knew no poetry, save Dr. Watts, Pollock's *Course of Time*, and here and there a little of Cowper.¹ This is from *The Revolution in Tanner's Lane* (1887), the third and best-known novel of William Hale White (1831-1913), who wrote his fiction and some of his other works under the name of 'Mark Rutherford'. Cowfold is a fictitious town in the eastern counties, based on Bedford where Hale White was born and raised in a family of devout Nonconformists. On close scrutiny the passage presents certain problems of interpretation. Rutherford has just noted Cowfold's ignorance of 'that worship of landscape and nature' which developed 'under the influence of Wordsworth'. It is not entirely clear, however, in which period he locates this relative limitation of sensibility. We would assume it to be the 1840s, when the action of the second half of *The Revolution in Tanner's Lane*, which Rutherford is here introducing, takes place; but by then most of Wordsworth's important poetry, including the 'spots of time' destined eventually for *The Prelude* (1850), had long been in the public domain. Much of it had indeed been published well before the Scottish cleric Robert Pollock's *Course of Time*, a blank-verse poem in six books on the theme of man's spiritual history, appeared in 1827. Can Pollock's work be said to belong to a time 'before Wordsworth's days'?

Several possibilities spring to mind in response to these difficulties. Has Hale White lost his grip on dates and chronology? Should we view 'Mark Rutherford', not as an omniscient author ('pseudonym'), but as 'an other' ('heteronym'), a narrator of limited knowledge and reliability?² Or does Hale White instinctively think of Wordsworth's influence as a gradual permeation that achieved full impact in the latter part of the century?³ Or is Cowfold simply conceived as a backwater resistant to modern ideas and revolutions of feeling? There may be truth in any or all of these speculations. The only certainty is that the short extract emphasizes for us one important reason for Cowper's popularity and appeal in the nineteenth century. His works found a ready place, alongside such volumes as Isaac Watts's *Psalms and Hymns* and Pollock's epic of the Christian life, in the homes of what Carlyle called 'the religious classes',⁴ especially those of Dissenters and others of an Evangelical cast. In the last issue of this journal we discovered Cowper's poems in the kitchen of a potato merchant in the Scottish Borders,⁵ and we encounter them now among the artisans, shopkeepers, and small farmers of provincial England. This is very much the milieu of the printer Zachariah Coleman (the character who is the narrator's supposed source of information), a prominent strand in Cowfold society (as in the Bedford of Hale White's early life, when he belonged to the very church where John Bunyan had been pastor), and a principal focus of *The Revolution in Tanner's Lane*. Even then we are left wondering whether or not the inhabitants of Cowfold owed anything to their scant acquaintance with poetry in their exchanges with morning, moon, and stars, for Watts and Pollock too take inspiration from the Creation of the Artificer Divine, the former notably, for example, in his well-known envisioning of Heaven in 'There is a land of pure delight'. Either way, the passage of course recognizes nothing of Cowper's own depth and richness as a poet of nature.

We meet two particular Cowfold admirers of Cowper in Hale White's first novel, *The Autobiography of Mark Rutherford* (1881), an account of his own life liberally laced with fiction.⁶ The elderly Misses Arbour, daughters of a carriage maker, are members of the congregation at Water Lane Independent chapel where Mark settles as minister after

completing his course at theological college (whereas Hale White had himself been expelled for voicing allegedly heretical views). Their aura of ‘perfect repose’ and ‘tempered cheerfulness’, love of domestic ‘order’, and deep sincerity (being ‘pious in the purest sense of the word’) sets them apart from the rest, who are at best decently commonplace, and stands in striking contrast to the cant and arrogant narrow-mindedness of Mark’s enemy, the deacon Snale.⁷ Mark’s last words in introducing the sisters point to ways in which their frame of mind differs from his own:

They read books — a few — but they were not books about which I knew very much, and they belonged altogether to an age preceding mine. Of the names which had moved me, and of all the thoughts stirring in the time, they had heard nothing. They greatly admired Cowper; a poet who then did not much attract me. (III, 38-39)

How well Hale White came to know and appreciate Cowper’s work will remain to the end an open question. The immediate reference operates nevertheless to an ambiguous but on balance positive effect. On the one hand it helps to situate these women as belonging to the previous generation and as untouched by the great issues of the present, which, in the light of Hale White’s life and writings, must be above all the Victorian crisis of faith, in which, a troubled refugee from orthodox Christianity, he was himself firmly implicated. On the other hand it augments their status as representatives of the traditional virtues of spiritual and moral integrity, those anchors of personal and social stability that are dragging in the late nineteenth century under the pressure of accelerating secularization and scientific approaches to the human condition. We may be reminded here of Jane Austen’s attachment to Cowper, on her brother’s authority her ‘favourite moral writer’ in verse, as a spokesman for conservative values in times of change and unsettlement — an estimation reflected when the unfashionable heroine of *Mansfield Park*, Fanny Price, cites *The Task* in quiet defiance of the encroachments of modernity.⁸

The younger Miss Arbour and Cowper make a surprise reappearance later in the *Autobiography*. Aptly named, she emerges one day to give Mark a shelter of understanding and good advice when he is beset by a storm of indecision over whether or not he should end his engagement to a woman he no longer loves. It turns out that Miss Arbour was once Mrs Hexton, trapped, partly through her own poor judgement and impetuosity, in an ill-fated union with a mean and abusive partner, from whom she eventually ran away. This secret history, which she recounts to Mark as a cautionary tale, includes an occasion on which Cowper played a part in bringing about her cruel humiliation for daring to speak up and take the lead when the Hextons were entertaining the minister, his wife, and other friends to tea. The discussion had turned to the subject of how to occupy winter evenings. Mrs Hexton maintained that ‘rational human beings’ ought to shun ‘childish games’ and ‘interest themselves with talk’:

Talk, I said, — not gossip, but talk, pleases me better than chess or forfeits; and the lines of Cowper occurred to me —

*‘When one, that holds communion with the skies,
Has filled his urn where these pure waters rise,
And once more mingles with us meaner things,
‘Tis even as if an angel shook his wings;
Immortal fragrance fills the circuit wide,
That tells us whence his treasures are supplied’*

I ventured to repeat this verse, and when I had finished, there was a pause for moment, which was broken by my husband's saying to the minister's wife, who sat next him, 'O Mrs. Cook, I quite forgot to express my sympathy with you; I heard that you had lost your cat.' (V, 75)

We should presumably take the quotation from Cowper simply as Mrs Hexton's suggested starting-point for a dedicated religious conversation, unless it also refers in her mind to a divine spirit informing and emanating from such conversation. Be this as it may, Hale White's intention is to show her eager intelligence, knowledge, and unconstrained piety. It would be fitting, in the light of her topic, if the verses came from the poem 'Conversation'. They are in fact from another of the Moral Satires, 'Charity' (lines 345-50), where Cowper develops and glosses a portrait of the man possessed of this greatest of Christian virtues. (In the standard edition Baird and Ryskamp cite as a comparison St Paul's disquisition on spiritual gifts in i Corinthians 13.)⁹ A reader would need to be well acquainted with Cowper's poetry to know these facts. Anyone who is, however, can hardly miss the irony that Mrs Hexton's enthusiastic declamation of lines from a text extolling charity solicit from her husband only a stingingly merciless rebuff. In retrospect Miss Arbour confesses to Mark an obvious lack of propriety in so 'placing myself above the level of my guests'; but this frank admission of personal shortcoming renders the original act more rather than less innocent, well-meaning, and undeserving of open reproof.

Miss Arbour is a sympathetic character but odd. The same goes, though more emphatically, for Miss Leroy in the sequel to the *Autobiography*, *Mark Rutherford's Deliverance* (1885). An outsider of French extraction and unconventional ways, she in course of time marries the solid George Butts, pillar of town and chapel, so as to secure her status and material well-being. Her intellectual pursuits and self-assertiveness make her an early example in the line of Hale White's strong women that culminates in the complex figures of Madge and Clara Hopgood in *Clara Hopgood* (1896). Mrs Butts has no problems with quoting verse in the presence of visiting ministers, however much they may dislike her doing so:

It was not pleasant to be outbid in his own department, especially by one who was not a communicant, and to be obliged, when he went on a pastoral visit to a house in which Mrs. Butts happened to be, to sit still and hear her, regardless of the minister's presence, conclude a short mystical monologue with Cowper's verse—

*'Exults our rising soul,
Disburdened of her load,
And swells unutterably full
Of glory and of God.'*¹⁰

Relevant prior knowledge or a little research will turn this apparently unremarkable literary allusion into something strange, for the stanza quoted by Mrs Butts is not from Cowper at all but from one of Charles Wesley's best-known hymns, 'How can a sinner know?'. (If the minister on his visit recognized this source then he would no doubt find the trespass on his authority doubly unpleasant, since for him, as a Calvinist, only the elect were saved, while for the Wesleys and their followers salvation was available to all through faith. The preceding four lines of the hymn clearly express this doctrine.)¹¹ An old question reoccurs. Deliberate mistake or unconscious error? If the former, it can hardly have been introduced in expectation of many readers spotting it, in spite of the relatively wide circulation of Wesley's hymns. It might possibly be there as an automatic function of Hale White's mind-set involving the construction of a fallible narrator (again 'Rutherford' as heteronym) whose ideas,

observations, and experiences, though substantially the author's own, are subject to scrutiny and evaluation. But the mechanics of Hale White's first two novels are another story. The likelier of our alternatives is that Hale White simply got the wrong hymn-writer. This suggests, as we may have suspected from the other references we have considered, that he deemed Cowper historically significant (especially in religio-literary culture) and attractive to many (especially women) but did not know his work in detail or greatly value it. The one mention of the poet I have been able to discover in biographical material relating to Hale White tends to support this impression. His second wife, Dorothy Vernon White, reports in her diary a conversation in which he recalls once taking up Cowper for purposes other than those of his own taste and intellectual preferences:

He said that as a young man he was enthusiastic about poetry, more so even than in after years: used to wander about London streets at 6 o'clock in the morning, reading Tennyson's *Maud* and so on. His wife did not understand that kind of poetry; she liked Cowper, and he used to read Cowper aloud to her. He said several times that it was impossible to help loving such a tender affectionate creature.¹²

A little bit of Harriet White (who died in 1891), it seems, found its way into the portrait of Miss Arbour.

Whatever the larger picture, there is one of Cowper's works that did in all probability have a direct influence on Hale White's writing — the autobiographical memoir we now know as *Adelphi* (though that is actually Cowper's heading for the manuscript of two separate but linked narratives, one of his own life and one concerning the character and last illness of his brother John, which were not published together until the Oxford English Texts edition in 1979, the title *Adelphi* having been reserved up to that point for editions of the pages on Rev. John Cowper).¹³ Although Cowper was a firm adherent of the Established Church, his impeccable Calvinist, Evangelical, and Whig credentials made him *persona grata* with traditional Dissenters, including the Independents amongst whom Hale White was raised. The 'Memoir', however, featured in a special way in the immediate history of Hale White's family. His father William White, printer and bookseller, published an edition of the work in Bedford in 1835 under the title of — not insignificantly from our point of view as students of Hale White's first novel — *The Autobiography of Cowper*.¹⁴ This edition has the small but definite bibliographical distinction of printing for the first time, as an appended item, Cowper's 'Heu! quam remotus'.¹⁵ In a perceptive note connecting the autobiographies of Mark Rutherford and William Cowper, Charles Swann rightly claims that 'Since Hale White venerated and was very close to his father, he almost certainly must have known, read, and owned this edition'.¹⁶ The two works belong in general terms to the same tradition, that of Puritan spiritual autobiography, of which Bunyan's *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners* (1666) is the great and influential example, though *The Autobiography of Mark Rutherford* inverts the genre in that it charts the protagonist's loss of religious faith, the process of his *deconversion*. Reference to divine intervention constitutes the one substantive difference in the otherwise strikingly parallel passages quoted by Swann, which are worth reproducing at length.

Here is Cowper setting out as a young lawyer:

I was struck not long after my settlement in the Temple with such a dejection of spirits as none but they who have felt the same can have the least conception of. Day and night I was upon the rack, lying down in horrors and rising in despair . . . In this state of mind I continued near a twelvemonth . . .

A change of scene having been recommended to me, I embraced an opportunity of going with some friends to Southampton . . . Soon after our arrival we walked together to a place

called Freemantle . . . The morning was clear and calm, the sun shone bright upon the sea, and the country upon the borders of it were the most beautiful I have ever seen . . .

Here it was that on a sudden, as if another sun had been kindled that instant in the heavens on purpose to dispel sorrow and vexation of spirits, I felt the weight of all my misery taken off . . . I must needs believe that nothing less than the Almighty Fiat could have filled me with such inexpressible delight . . . But Satan and my own wicked heart quickly persuaded me that I was indebted for my deliverance to nothing but a change of season and the amusing varieties of this place.¹⁷

This is the unhappy Rutherford one day early in his career as Dissenting minister:

I reproached myself bitterly that my own creed would not stand the stress of an hour's actual trial . . . [W]hen the dull daylight of Monday came, all support had vanished, and I seemed to be sinking into a bottomless abyss . . . [T]his was my first acquaintance with that most awful malady hypochondria . . . For months — many months, this dreadful conviction of coming idiocy or insanity lay upon me like some poisonous reptile with its fangs driven into my very marrow, so that I could not shake it off . . . The mere knowledge that something had to be done agitated me and prevented me doing it . . . I went with them [his parents] to Ilfracombe. I had been there about a week, when on one memorable morning, on the top of one of those Devonshire hills, I became aware of a kind of flush in the brain and a momentary relief such as I had not known since that November night. I seemed, far away on the horizon, to see just a rim of olive light low down under the edge of the leaden cloud that hung over my head, a prophecy of the restoration of the sun, or at least a witness that somewhere it shone. (III, 42-43)

The journey south and the experience of finding relief through and in response to an event in nature, more particularly the action of the sun, are not the only things the two writers have in common. Both, for example, describe their long-lasting inward affliction in vividly physical terms, Cowper as being 'upon the rack', Rutherford as being bitten to the bone by 'some poisonous reptile'. The condition itself is in neither case, even Cowper's, the soul-trouble of conventional spiritual autobiography, the 'wrestl[ing] hard . . . / With sins, and doubts, and fears' (as Isaac Watts puts it)¹⁸ that is the prelude to conversion or else (as in the powerful psychodrama of *Grace Abounding*) an obsessive preoccupation with the irresolvable question of 'Am I really of the elect or not?'. It is, rather, a state of unaccountable depression and agitation, which Rutherford labels 'hypochondria' and Cowper leaves unexplained. (With Rutherford it later shades not only into prolonged mental crisis as his faith slips inexorably away but also into the ache of modernity as, filled with a 'sense of loneliness', he looks out from his London garret upon the far-reaching urban sprawl and in 'nameless dread' totters once more on the edge of 'the bottomless abyss' [X, 133-34].) The notable difference between the passages lies of course in the way the understated epiphany — the brief episode of inner renewal — is interpreted. Cowper takes three approaches. Ultimately he perceives his restoration as all under the direction of the Almighty, reminding us of the credo of *The Task* that 'Nature is but a name for an effect / Whose cause is God' (VI. 223-24). The corollary of this for Cowper is that his initial crediting of a mere 'change of season' and the 'amusing varieties' of his surroundings had been a sinful error born of Satan and his 'own wicked heart'. Yet this final sentence of the extract gives what is clearly a reductive version of the process of deliverance as it is originally framed in the paragraph, where it consists of a lively interaction between self and nature, an instantaneous give-and-take by which a weight is lifted. Exactly such a moment as this arises for Rutherford on the Devonshire hills, albeit in a relatively minor key and involving not so much a kindled sun as a silver — or, more accurately, 'olive' — lining. There comes into the heavy sky a faint light

of promise that answers to the ‘flush’ of revival within him. He makes no move to look beyond nature to any Artificer Divine. As Swann suggests, this, in comparison with Cowper’s express Judaeo-Christian piety, reflects Rutherford’s (and Hale White’s) transfer of spiritual allegiance to Wordsworth, whose real God (in the words of the *Autobiography*) ‘is not the God of the Church, but the God of the hills, the abstraction Nature’ (II, 22).¹⁹ Yet things are hardly ever straightforward, and all in all Rutherford’s Ilfracombe recollection throws a mixed and varied light back upon Cowper. It is debatable, incidentally, whether nature can properly be termed an ‘abstraction’ in either of the two passages, for in both it is present in solid and substantial form. Neither is it clear that even Rutherford grants nature a numinous quality, although the sudden ‘flush’ does imply that the event itself is somehow mysteriously ‘given’. What is certain, however, is that his refusal of any idea of an interposition of the Almighty at once distinguishes his account from Cowper’s and yet serves to reinforce attention to the fact that in practice Cowper too, whatever his doctrinal position, draws inner well-being from — finds a salvation in — communion with nature itself. To put the case somewhat differently, both narratives infer to us that in turning from nature to the Almighty Cowper betrays his own strength and own best interests. To see that in the longer run he did keep faith with them, at least intermittently, we need only visit the winter landscape in the last book of *The Task* (VI. 57ff), where he finds repose and stimulation in a series of reciprocities between the life within and abroad (again not at all an ‘abstraction’), including the familiar oaks and elms that, intercepting ‘the silent fall’, have ‘kept a path’ for him as he journeys to the interior and the redbreast ‘flitting light’ that is his double, ‘content / With slender notes and more than half suppress’d . . . / Pleased with his solitude’.

The final allusion to Cowper in Hale White’s writings appears in his late monograph on John Bunyan.²⁰ This book, a study of the life and works, is the last of three landmark revaluations that took Bunyan from the margins of English cultural history into the mainstream, the others being Lord Macaulay’s review of Robert Southey’s 1830 edition of *The Pilgrim’s Progress* and J.A. Froude’s *Bunyan* of 1880 for the ‘English Men of Letters’ series.²¹ Hale White’s concluding chapter opens with a summary of Bunyan’s past and present reputation, before developing a powerful defence of Puritanism against its nineteenth-century detractors, not least Matthew Arnold with his charge of Philistinism. He arrives at ‘Cowper’s well-known lines in the *Tirocinium*’ (p. 224) after justifiably arguing that, with the notable exception of Dr Johnson who privately declared himself fond of *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, eighteenth-century critics and arbiters of taste were made blind to Bunyan’s merits by his low social status and Dissenting background. Cowper’s appraisal, which naturally attained a wide circulation with the rest of his poetry, represents a salient advance in the appreciation of Bunyan — but Hale White does not see it that way.

The verses in *Tirocinium: or, A Review of Schools* (1784) go as follows:

Oh thou, whom borne on fancy’s eager wing
 Back to the season of life’s happy spring,
 I pleased remember, and while mem’ry yet
 Holds fast her office here, can ne’er forget,
 Ingenious dreamer, in whose well-told tale
 Sweet fiction and sweet truth alike prevail,
 Whose hum’rous vein, strong sense, and simple stile,
 May teach the gayest, make the gravest smile,
 Witty and well-employ’d, and like thy Lord,
 Speaking in parables his slighted word,
 I name thee not, lest so despised a name
 Should move a sneer at thy deserved fame,

Yet ev'n in transitory life's late day
That mingles all my brown with sober gray,
Revere the man, whose *Pilgrim* marks the road
And guides the *Progress* of the soul to God.
(ll. 131-46)

Anyone who reads these celebratory lines, especially if also acquainted with Hale White's usually thoughtful and balanced response to texts, must be surprised by his merely dismissive introductory remark that they 'are little better than patronage and show no real appreciation of Bunyan's genius' (p. 224). The fact is, however, that Hale White then quotes and is assessing, on the surface quite reasonably, only the first two words of the fifth line ('Ingenious dreamer') and the sixth couplet ('I name thee not. .'). Why does he do this? It is surely because he wishes to underpin his main contention, broadly accurate in itself, that prior to the nineteenth century Bunyan had been routinely treated with hauteur, indeed 'despised', and that the true estimation of his worth began with Southey and Macaulay, continued with Froude, and was being updated for a new epoch by himself. He falls victim to an occupational hazard of all historians — that of adapting the evidence by being economical with the truth.

Hale White perhaps took a cue from Macaulay when foregrounding Cowper's fear of raising a sneer at Bunyan's name, for Macaulay cites this detail as he reflects, in his closing paragraph, on the taste of 'forty or fifty years ago' and the advent of his own 'better times'.²² More importantly, however, Macaulay may well owe a debt to something positive in Cowper's tribute to the 'Ingenious dreamer' whose book he first knew in childhood and 'can ne'er forget'. The following passage comes early in the review of Southey's *Pilgrim's Progress* and sets a tone for the whole:

It is the highest miracle of genius, that things which are not should be as though they were, that the imaginations of one mind should become the personal recollections of another. And this miracle the tinker has wrought. (p. 401)

This has marvellous rhetorical shape and movement. Of particular note is the way the unfolding syntax across the two sentences postpones and so throws weight onto a climax which, in a challenge to any that would look down on the low-born artisan, resoundingly affirms that the tinker who hammered out pots and pans also worked wonders in words. The central point, however, beautifully simple yet utterly convincing, that Bunyan's genius lies in his gift for affecting permanently the mental life of others so as to influence their perception and experience of the world, is already implicit in Cowper's encomium. Though the devout poet naturally praises the combination of pleasure and instruction that makes *The Pilgrim's Progress* so effective as a work of religious teaching, he begins and ends by bearing personal witness to its power to alter consciousness by implanting images and ideas that last from childhood into old age. Macaulay's confident starting-point had been in Cowper a half-formed but signal new horizon. Should we doubt either the authenticity or the importance of the perspective Cowper thus opens up and Macaulay articulates fully, we need only think of the many creative writers who travelled Bunyan's imagined realms when young and in maturity drew upon their scenes, characters, and concepts. These include, as well as Cowper and Hale White themselves, Wordsworth, Scott, Ruskin, Dickens, George Eliot, and Hardy.²³ Given Hale White's connections with Protestant tradition, not to mention his ministrations to his first wife's enthusiasm for the poet, it is arguably surprising that Cowper does not feature more widely in or behind his writings. There is nonetheless a real presence. We have identified several direct allusions and one case of possible influence or at least closely

parallel passages. The latter, as we have seen, raises awareness of the tension in Cowper between a cerebral theology and a practical philosophy of well-being rooted, like Wordsworth's, in a relationship with nature and foreshadowing the displacement of shared faith by individual therapy of which Hale White became a conscious early-modern advocate.²⁴ Almost all the former, the direct references, pay respect in some way to Cowper's place in the lives of provincial readers, particularly women, and those in the 'Miss Arbour' segments of the *Autobiography* play a part in the plot and definition of character and setting. The misattribution to Cowper of a hymn by Wesley, whether intentional or not, by author or by narrator, can only increase a sense of Cowper's popularity, presenting him as a name in currency, a name to be conjured with. This curious moment in the *Deliverance* is interpretable as a reflection of Hale White's positioning of Rutherford as an independent narrator whose vision, opinions, and even facts are open to question. This is one facet of the pre-modernist genre of 'autobiografiction' of which Hale White was, as Swann and Saunders have shown, a main progenitor.²⁵ On the other hand, the episode may simply fuel the suspicion which is all along difficult to resist — that Hale White was more interested in the idea of Cowper than in Cowper's actual works. Of one thing we can be sure. He knew the lines in praise of Bunyan in *Tirocinium* and chose to hide them from his readers; but the act of wilful omission (signalled by conspicuous rows of dots on the relevant page of *John Bunyan*) has paradoxically led us back to the full original and to renewed recognition of the poet's uncannily prescient embrace of a hitherto undervalued classic of our prose. One writer's occlusion of another's insight has ironically made it all the more visible.

Notes

- 1 Mark Rutherford [William Hale White], *The Revolution in Tanner's Lane* (1887), intro. Claire Tomalin (London: Hogarth Press, 1984), ch. XVI, pp. 294-95.
- 2 The concepts of 'pseudonymity' and 'heteronymity' are discussed both generally and with particular regard to Hale White's texts by Max Saunders, *Self Impression: Life-Writing, Autobiografiction, and the Forms of Modern Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 109-24 (on 'Mark Rutherford') and ch. 7. See especially p. 113: '[A] pseudonym is normally taken to refer to the author, while concealing his or her identity. Whereas the 'Mark Rutherford' who does things Hale White did not, refers to someone who doesn't exist: a fictional character who also writes his (fictional) autobiography: namely, a heteronym . . . Because the *Autobiography* combines Hale White's autobiography with fiction, 'Mark Rutherford' hovers between pseudonym and heteronym.'
- 3 In the 'Autobiographical Notes' published shortly after his death as *The Early Life of Mark Rutherford (W. Hale White) by Himself* (London: Oxford University Press, 1913) Hale White describes his own momentous encounter with Wordsworth's poems at the age of 'about eighteen' (that is, *circa* 1850), when he found 'a new capacity . . . for the love of natural beauty' and discovered 'a living God, different from the artificial God of the churches' (pp. 61-62).
- 4 *Correspondence between Goethe and Carlyle*, ed. C.E. Norton (London, 1887), p. 161.
- 5 Vincent Newey, 'Cowper's Task: An Unexpected Reference', *Cowper and Newton Journal*, 4 (2014), 34-37.
- 6 The relation between autobiography and fiction in the *Autobiography* and its sequel, *Mark Rutherford's Deliverance* (1885), has been much analysed, notably by Saunders, *Self Impression* (see note 2 above) and Charles Swann, 'Autobiografiction: Problems with Autobiographical Fictions and Fictional Autobiographies. Mark Rutherford's *Autobiography* and *Deliverance*, and Others', *Modern Language Review*, 96.1

(2001), 21-37. Hale White's own statement at the beginning of *The Early Life of Mark Rutherford* (p. 5) takes a straightforward approach: 'A good deal of it [his early life] has been told before under a semi-transparent disguise, with much added which is entirely fictitious.'

⁷ [William Hale White], *The Autobiography of Mark Rutherford, Dissenting Minister* (1881), ed. William S. Peterson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), ch. III, p. 37. Subsequent references are bracketed within the text.

⁸ In chapter 6 Fanny quotes the line 'Ye fallen avenues, once more I mourn your fate unmerited' (*Task*, I. 138-39) when it is proposed that 'improvements' be made to the grounds at Sotherton. Jane Austen's enthusiasm for Cowper's traditional values is again apparent when, in chapter 45, she has Fanny, during her exile at Portsmouth, refer to sentiments in *Tirocinium* (ll. 559-62) concerning the attractions of 'home'.

⁹ '. . . And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.' See *The Poems of William Cowper*, ed. John D. Baird and Charles Ryskamp, 3 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980-85), I, 535. My references to Cowper's poetry are from this edition.

¹⁰ [William Hale White], *Mark Rutherford's Deliverance, Being the Second Part of His Autobiography* (1885; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1936), ch. III, pp. 41-42.

¹¹ The hymn was first published in 1749 and has appeared continuously in collections ever since. The previous stanza reads: 'We who in Christ believe / That He for us hath died, / We all His unknown peace receive / And feel His blood applied' (*Methodist Hymn-Book* (1933), hymn 377, ll. 9-12).

¹² Dorothy V. White, *The Groombridge Diary* (London: Oxford University Press, 1924), p. 93.

¹³ *The Letters and Prose Writings of William Cowper*, ed. James King and Charles Ryskamp, 5 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979-86), I, 1-59 prints the full text of *Adelphi*. For the complete textual history of the work, see pp. xxiii-xxix.

¹⁴ Norma Russell, *A Bibliography of William Cowper to 1837* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 200-01 gives a detailed bibliographical description of this edition, naming White as publisher.

¹⁵ See Thomas Wright, *The Life of William Cowper* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1892), pp. 218-19.

¹⁶ Charles Swann, 'William Cowper's *Adelphi* and William Hale White's *The Autobiography of Mark Rutherford*: Parallels or Influence?', *Notes and Queries*, 240.2 (1995), 198-99 (p. 199). I am indebted to this article for both the core comparison and points of information.

¹⁷ *Letters and Prose Writings*, ed. King and Ryskamp, pp. 8-10.

¹⁸ From the hymn 'Give me the wings of faith to rise': 'Once they [the saved in heaven] were mourning here below, / And wet their couch with tears: / They wrestled hard, as we do now, / With sins, and doubts, and fears' (ll. 5-8).

¹⁹ Swann, 'Parallels or Influence?', p. 199. See also *Early Life*, note 3 above.

²⁰ William Hale White, *John Bunyan* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1905). Page references are given within the text.

²¹ See my 'Centring Bunyan: Macaulay, Froude, Hale White', *Bunyan Studies*, 17 (2013), 68-97.

²² 'Review of Southey's edition of *The Pilgrim's Progress*', *Edinburgh Review*, 54 (Dec. 1831), 450-61, repr. in *Thomas Babington Macaulay: Critical and Historical Essays*, arranged by A.J. Grieve, 2 vols (London: J.M. Dent, 1961), II, 399-410 (p. 410).

²³ See, for example, Barry Qualls, *The Secular Pilgrims of Victorian Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982) and my 'Bunyan's Afterlives: Case Studies', in W.R. Owens and Stuart Sim (eds), *Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress: Reception, Appropriation, Recollection* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2007), pp. 25-48.

24 The view that each person must live by his or her own resources rather than any collective system of belief is expressed at one of the points in *Mark Rutherford's Deliverance* where Rutherford clearly voices Hale White's own opinions:

I cannot too earnestly insist upon the need of our holding, each man for himself, to some faith which shall anchor him. It must not be taken by chance. We must fight for it, for only so will it become our faith. . . . It will not be a complete system, perfect in all parts, an answer to all our questions, but at least it will give ground for hope. . . . No theory of the world is possible. The storm, the rain slowly rotting the harvest, children sickening in cellars are obvious; but equally obvious are an evening in June, the delight of men and women in one another, in music, and in the exercise of thought. (VI, 89)

25 For Saunders and Swann, see notes 2 and 6 above. The genre of 'autobiografiction' and the part of the *Autobiography* and *Deliverance* in inventing it were first identified in an intriguing short article by the minor Edwardian novelist and critic Stephen Reynolds, 'Autobiografiction', *The Speaker*, new series, 15:366 (1906), 28, 30.