

‘Upon the Rack’: George Herbert, William Cowper, and the Discourse of Dis/ability¹

In 1876, George Herbert and William Cowper were jointly memorialized on a window in St. George’s Chapel in Westminster Abbey². This placement of the portraits of ‘Herbert at Bemerton, and Cowper at Olney’ side by side seems natural given their shared history as students at Westminster school and Cowper’s high regard for Herbert’s spiritual vision³. It is true that Cowper describes Herbert’s poetic style as ‘gothic and uncouth’ in his spiritual autobiography, *Adelphi*, echoing the late Augustan view of Herbert’s poems as outmoded and unpolished⁴. However, here and elsewhere, Cowper is adamant that Herbert’s poetry is therapeutic for those on the ‘Brink’ of ‘Ruin’⁵.

Although Cowper shares the emotional volatility of John Donne – from whom his mother, Ann Donne, claimed descent – it is in the poems of Herbert that he finds a restorative agent for the suffering body and spirit⁶. During one of Cowper’s earliest depressive episodes, he describes suffering ‘day and night [...] upon the rack, lying down in horrors and rising in despair’, finding a measure of relief only in the poems of Herbert. Immersing himself in them ‘all day long’, he finds ‘delight’ in their ‘strain of piety’⁷. Though Cowper admits that the poems do not completely cure his ailment, in the act of reading them, his dis/abled mind is ‘much alleviated’⁸. Cowper returns to Herbert’s poetry later in life when he finds his brother John near death and possibly damnation⁹. When John is so ill that ‘his case is clearly out of the Reach of Medicine’, Cowper again succumbs to a psychological panic that only Herbert can assuage. ‘I go to Sleep in a Storm’, he laments, ‘imagining that I hear his Cries, and wake in Terror lest he should just be departing’, only to hear in his dreams the soothing voice of Herbert: ‘[I awoke] yesterday Morning with these Words, which are plainly an Imitation of [Herbe]rt, some of whose Poems I have been reading to my Brother: *But what, my lovely One? And meek / Tho’ maimed, who liv’st, with Bruises dying-*’¹⁰. Herbert’s words, for Cowper, serve a Eucharistic function, as he consumes them to experience divine presence and spiritual wellbeing: ‘I thought of them while at Dinner, and made a comfortable Meal upon them, while the Lord was pleased to spread my Table in the Wilderness’¹¹. Yet they comfort not only Cowper but others, like his brother, on the threshold of desolation.

Cowper’s indebtedness to Herbert has received sporadic and brief attention over the years. The Victorian critic John Nichol claimed that Cowper and Herbert ‘breathe[d] the same ‘spirit’, despite his conclusion that Herbert had the ‘more cheerful faith’¹². More recently, Donald E. Demaray identifies ‘reminiscences of Herbert’ in the Olney Hymns and Vincent Newey takes note of the influence on Cowper’s poetry of Herbert’s poetic expression of the ‘lived experience’ of the Christian faith¹³. However, the interpretive lens through which Cowper reads Herbert and the way in which he absorbs and re-constitutes Herbert’s ‘strain of piety’ in his own works has never received sustained critical attention.

The dearth of criticism in this area is unsurprising given Cowper’s struggle to avoid the ‘gothic and uncouth’ quality of Herbert’s poems. Cowper rarely borrows linear features or structural patterns from *The Temple*. It is hard to find a single direct quotation of more than two words from Herbert’s poems in Cowper’s works, and formal similarities are the exception rather than the rule. Yet, to use an expression recently invoked in John Donne studies, Herbert’s ‘voiceprint’ is clearly sounded in Cowper’s hymns and verse. For example, there is something Herbertian about Cowper’s lines ‘Sin twines itself about my praise, / And slides into my pray’r’, even if they cannot immediately be linked to a single poem from *The Temple*¹⁴. Raymond-Jean Frontain explains, ‘A voiceprint is a richly amorphous artifact. It is not like a fingerprint, which can be isolated and its recurrence identified with a relatively high degree of certainty. Nor can it, like a footprint, serve to map physical presence’; yet ‘soundings’ of an author can have a varied, fluid, and complex ‘afterlife’ that extends beyond quotation and allusion¹⁵. Such is the case with traces of Herbert in Cowper – and the Herbertian voiceprint is clearly refracted, we propose, through Cowper’s overarching dis/abled interpretive framework.

The term ‘disabled’, when applied to William Cowper and his reading practices, can be interpreted in several ways. Cowper’s contemporaries often saw him as disabled in the more traditional sense in which ‘disability’ necessarily denotes *a lack of ability*¹⁶. Cowper’s friends in particular were deeply

concerned that his mental illness would inform and distort his interpretive framework, especially in response to a particular kind of text¹⁷. In *Adelphi*, Cowper says he was ‘advised by a very near and dear relation to lay aside [Herbert’s poems], for he thought such an author was more likely to nourish [his] melancholy than to remove it’¹⁸. Cowper was certainly capable of engaging in distorted reading practices¹⁹. Poring over the sermons of Archbishop Tillotson, for example, Cowper is convinced he is cursed by God and seeks alternative readings. He writes, ‘I [...] consulted my brother upon the true meaning of it – desirous, if possible, to obtain a different interpretation of the matter than my evil conscience would suffer me to fasten on it’²⁰. During a later period in his life, Cowper’s friends even manufactured fraudulent texts to compensate for the anguished interpretive strategies which left him convinced he was a ‘castaway’ ‘snatched from all effectual aid’²¹.

Works on mental illness in the eighteenth century confirm the belief that madness could distort perception, generating ‘praeternatural and false perceptions of objects’²². It was suspected that religious fervour intensified the misperceptions that accompany madness, as William Pargeter notes in *Observations on Maniacal Disorders*; he writes, ‘[t]he doctrines of the Methodists have a greater tendency than those of any other sect, to produce the most deplorable effects on the human understanding [...] the imagination [is] overpowered by the tremendous description of future torments’²³. It is no surprise, then, that Cowper’s relative advised him to stop reading Herbert’s poems, which may have been seen to promote the Calvinist doctrines of Methodism, a denomination Cowper embraced²⁴. However, Cowper was both religious and mentally healthy for long periods of time prior to and after becoming involved with the Methodist community, and his intersecting spiritual awareness and psychological sensitivity need not be seen simply as forces that distort his reading practices. In fact, we argue here that both traits left him capable of reading and responding to texts in nuanced, heightened, and discerning ways.

It is with this in mind that we use the term dis/abled in the recent sense of the word, which highlights its socially constructed nature and which interrogates the notion of ‘disability’ as ‘lack of ability’. Although not dismissing the reality that Cowper’s mental illness was frequently ‘disabling’ in the traditional sense of the word, we suggest that his mental illness can also be viewed as that which *enables* Cowper to read and appropriate Herbert’s spiritual vision with a heightened degree of sensitivity. Recent advancements in modern psychology suggest that some individuals who might be viewed as disabled by mood swings are, in fact, especially attuned to their surroundings. Elaine Aron has argued that while ‘highly sensitive people’ are often viewed as ‘neurotic’ or fanatical, they are also likely to display ‘great creativity, insight, passion, and caring’ and to sense and process ‘information’ intuitively ‘in a semiconscious or unconscious way [...]’²⁵. This certainly seems to be the case with Cowper’s reading of Herbert, as he processes his poems in an unconscious state (while asleep) during his brother’s illness and assimilates the Herbertian word creatively, producing lines of poetry as he returns to consciousness.

Cowper reveals himself to be an *enabled* reader of Herbert’s poetic and spiritual vision on two levels. First, his sensitivity to features of Herbert’s voice is evidenced by the fact that Herbert’s writings provide him with relief during times of distress. Second, his ability to merge Herbert’s voice with his own in his hymns and lyrics illustrates his responsiveness to the subtleties of Herbert’s spiritual vision. Tracing the Herbertian ‘voiceprint’ in Cowper’s short lyrics and hymns allows one to decipher the features of Herbert’s verse that Cowper found most attractive, particularly in regard to their therapeutic value.

Though Cowper does not explain what ‘strain of piety’ in Herbert so appeals to him, we suspect it is the authenticity and trajectory of Herbert’s spiritual belief. Cowper appears to be particularly drawn to Herbert’s expression and treatment of affliction. Herbert does not ignore the harsh reality of spiritual and emotional suffering, yet he often presents affliction as that which ultimately enables the believer to draw closer to the divine. Daniel Doerksen has written very insightfully on ‘The Christian’s Response to Suffering in Herbert’s *The Temple*’. Doerksen argues that in *The Temple*, especially in the five ‘Affliction’ poems, Herbert demonstrates ‘[t]hat afflictions come from God, that they unite the believer with Christ in a bearing of the cross, that they nevertheless involve spiritual conflicts with God himself, that they can be persistent and painful and yet must be accepted in a correct way, one that leads to spiritual renewal’²⁶.

Despite what Vincent Newey describes as Cowper's life-long 'quest for identity and psychic integration' and 'struggle for a balanced and fruitful being-in-the-world', Cowper is more inclined than Herbert to remain entrenched in affliction and spiritual angst, as he feels less convinced of his access to divine grace²⁷. Newey contrasts the mood of dissatisfaction at the conclusion of Cowper's 'Hark, my soul! It is the Lord' with the sense of comfort at the end of 'The Collar'. Where Cowper leaves on a note of spiritual lack and longing,

Lord, it is my chief complaint,
That my love is weak and faint;
Yet I love thee and adore,
Oh for grace to love thee more. (lines 21-24)²⁸

Herbert moves toward a moment of serene intimacy with God:

But as I rav'd and grew more fierce and wilde
At every word,
Me thoughts I heard one calling, *Childe*:
And I reply'd, *My Lord*. (lines 33-36)²⁹

It is, in part, this *difference* between Herbert's and Cowper's perception of and response to affliction and the vicissitudes of existence that renders Herbert's poetry a source of comfort to Cowper, an individual who often envisioned himself as a tortured soul in conflict with an omnipotent divine³⁰. The spiritual trajectory of Herbert's poetry, one in which affliction can be owned and viewed as fortifying, can thus be perceived as a spiritually healing agent for Cowper, helping him to move closer to integration and balance. Through the reading and ingesting of *The Temple*, Cowper can learn to say with Herbert – if but for a moment – 'Affliction then is ours; / We are the trees, whom shaking fastens more' and can 'reach heav'n' and God³¹. Indeed, the words that Cowper says are 'plainly [in] Imitation of Herbert' during his brother's illness convey the Herbertian theme of suffering as ultimately enlivening and restorative. The afflicted may be 'maim'd and Bruised,' yet God 'maintains' the 'Life' of his 'lovely One', whose broken bones will 'rejoice' in due course³². Such is the vision of Herbert's 'Repentance', in which we read,

But thou wilt sinne and grief destroy;
That so the broken bones may joy,
And tune together in a well-set song,
Full of his praises,
Who dead men raises.
Fractures well cur'd makes us more strong. (lines 31-36)³³

Cowper thus 'grafts' Herbert's spiritual sensibility onto his own 'to prove', as Newey puts it, 'his own state of grace'³⁴. In *The English Hymn*, J.R. Watson seems to find evidence of this grafting process when he reads Cowper's 'The heart healed and chang'd by mercy' as 'an eighteenth-century version of "The Collar", less sharp in focus and more evangelical in tone but still powerfully dramatic'³⁵. In Cowper's final lines,

Then my stubborn heart he broke,
And subdued me to his sway;
By a simple word he spoke,
'Thy sins are done away' (lines 21-24)³⁶

he hears an evangelistic re-working of 'Me thoughts I heard one calling, *Childe*: / And I reply'd, *My Lord*' (lines 35-36).³⁷

The possible *difference* between the religious dispositions of both poets is no doubt one of the reasons that Cowper is drawn to Herbert's poetry; yet, it is also important to keep in mind that Herbert did not always voice a sense of spiritual comfort in *The Temple*. Carl Philips reminds us that we should not ignore Herbert 'unrepentantly railing against God [...] inquiring into and challenging the fairness of God's ways', displaying 'the irregular, unpredictable shifts of heart and mind'³⁸. Cowper is not only attracted to those poems in *The Temple* in which the speaker rests easy in the divine; he also responds to, and imitates, Herbert's vision of the unstable and volatile human subject. Like Herbert, Cowper

often feels that his ‘thoughts are all a case of knives / Wounding’ his ‘heart,’ and envisions himself as ‘A wonder tortur’d in the space / Betwixt this world and that of grace’³⁹. As J.R. Watson persuasively argues, Cowper sought to reproduce Herbert’s ‘dramatic’ representation of ‘the inner weather of the human soul’, whether that led him to share Herbert’s sense of assurance or his anxiety about his worthiness before God⁴⁰. That is, Herbert represented for Cowper *both* the believer capable of hearing and resting in God *and* the believer aware of the profound divide between the self and the divine. Thus Cowper could discover in *The Temple* evidence of his own human failings and limitations – which would reduce his sense of psycho-spiritual isolation – while also receiving instructions on how to attend and reply to the divine voice.

Herbert’s poetic representation of the flawed human conversing with the Transcendent Other is, in fact, something that Cowper tries to mimic in his religious lyrics. This has not always been the case for imitators of Herbert. In Henry Vaughan’s *Silex Scintillans*, which transparently and extensively imitates *The Temple*, God’s voice is rarely heard, and when it is, it is a *whisper*. However, in many of Cowper’s hymns and short lyrics we see a pronounced imitation of Herbert’s dramatically dialogic encounters with the divine⁴¹. This is particularly the case in Book III of the *Olney Hymns*, ‘On the Progress and Changes of the Spiritual Life’. In Cowper’s hymn ‘Contentment’, for example, God’s voice is made manifest in the language of love. The Lord proclaims,

‘In life my grace shall strength supply,
Proportion’d to thy day;
At death thou still shalt find me nigh,
To wipe thy tears away’ (lines 25-28)

to which the speaker concludes,

Taught in my Saviour’s school of grace,
[I] have learnt to be content (lines 31-32)⁴².

Similarly, in Cowper’s ‘A Song of Mercy and Judgment’ – composed during the Huntingdon period (1765-67) following his release from the St. Alban’s mental institution – he hears ‘a word of Healing / Sweeter than an angel’s note’ spoken ‘in love and sealed with pow’r’ from ‘the Saviour’s lips’ (lines 43-45, 52):

I, He said, have seen thee grieving,
Loved thee as I passed thee by,
Be not faithless, but believing,
Look, and live, and never die
.....
God, thy God, will now receive thee,
Faith hath saved thee, thou art whole (lines 54-58, 63-64)⁴³.

In response to these words of comfort, the speaker experiences new determination to ‘relate the wondrous story’ of his communion with the divine ‘To thy list’ning Saints around’ (lines 75-76).

Herbert’s ‘voiceprint’ not only makes itself known in Cowper’s hymns in spiritually fertile encounters with the divine which sustain him during times of affliction, but also in the treatment of divine love and immanence, especially in sacramental moments. Cowper’s sense of a loving and graceful God during Eucharist is evident in ‘Welcome to the Table’, which shares much imagery of divine / human relations with Herbert’s ‘Love [III]’. As in Herbert’s poem, in ‘Welcome to the Table,’ Cowper’s God beckons or ‘calls’ the sinner to partake of the bread, despite the reluctance of ‘the vile, the lost’ to look upon His face (line 9). Cowper writes,

If guilt and sin afford a plea,
And may obtain a place;
Surely the Lord will welcome me,
And I shall see his face. (lines 17-20)⁴⁴

In these lines we hear traces of ‘Love [III]’, in which Herbert’s speaker recalls that, though ‘Guiltie of dust and sinne’, he was ‘welcome[d]’ by ‘quick-ey’d Love’ and instructed to ‘sit down’ and ‘taste’ the body of Christ (lines 1-3, 17-18)⁴⁵.

3. *The Bookseller: A Newspaper of British and Foreign Literature* 218 (Jan 4., 1876).
4. William Cowper, *Adelphi*, in *Letters and Prose Writings Vol. I*, ed. King and Ryskamp, p. 9. In terms of what Cowper means by gothic in this context, see 'gothic' in the *Oxford English Dictionary*: 'Belonging to, or characteristic of, the Middle Ages; medieval, "romantic", as opposed to classical' (3a *adj.*). For another late Augustan view on Herbert, see Henry Headley's descriptions of Herbert's poems as 'inferior' to those of Crashaw and Quarles; Headley believes the poems in *The Temple* exhibit 'enthusiasm without sublimity' and 'conceit without ingenuity and imagination' (*Select Beauties of Ancient English Poetry* [London, 1787], quoted in C.A. Patrides, ed., *George Herbert: The Critical Heritage* [London and New York: Routledge], p.164).
5. Cowper, *Adelphi*, in *Letters and Prose Writings Vol. I*, ed. King and Ryskamp, p. 214.
6. Research indicates that Cowper's mother, Ann Donne, is not a direct descendant of John Donne.
7. Cowper, *Adelphi*, in *Letters and Prose Writings Vol. I*, ed. King and Ryskamp, p. 9.
8. *Ibid.*
9. Letter from William Cowper to Mrs. Unwin, Monday, 26 February 1770, in *Letters and Prose Writings Vol. I*, ed. King and Ryskamp, p. 214.
10. *Ibid.* In this passage, Cowper appears to be alluding to 'Repentance', but he may also have Herbert's 'Longing' or 'Affliction' in mind as both of these poems centre on the paradox of death in life as a necessary part of the purgative stage in the spiritual journey.
11. *Ibid.*
12. John Nichol, 'The Life and Poetry of George Herbert', quoted in *George Herbert: The Critical Heritage*, ed. Patrides, p. 265.
13. Donald E. Demaray, *The Innovation of John Newton (1725-1807): Synergism of Word and Music in Eighteenth Century Evangelism* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 1988), 219; Vincent Newey, 'Olney Hymns'. *The Cowper and Newton Bulletin* 2.3 (Autumn 2003): 15, 17.
14. William Cowper, 'Jehovah our Righteousness', *Olney Hymns*, in *William Cowper: Selected Poetry and Prose*, ed. David Lyle Jeffrey (Vancouver: Regent, 2007), p. 156. This sense of the creeping of spiritual forces into the human soul is present in Herbert's 'The Holy Communion': 'But by the way of nourishment and strength / Thou creep'st into my breast; / Making thy way my rest, / And thy small quantities my length; / Which spread their forces into every part, / Meeting sinnes force and art' (lines 7-12) (*The English Poems of George Herbert*, ed. Helen Wilcox [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007], 182). Although Herbert here refers to the healing power of the divine, the presentation of strength and nourishment 'creeping' into the human heart is similar to the 'artful' manner that Cowper envisions sin twining and sliding into his prayers. The image of twining, but also in a more spiritually positive sense, is found as well in Herbert's 'Christmas': 'His beams shall cheer my breast, and both so twine, / Till ev'n his beams sing, and my musick shine' (lines 33-34) (*The English Poems of George Herbert*, ed. Wilcox, p. 292). J.R. Watson also quite rightly suggests that Cowper may be recalling lines 13 to 16 of Andrew Marvell's 'The Coronet' (*The English Hymn*, 298).
15. Raymond-Jean Frontain, 'Registering Donne's Voiceprint: Additional Reverberations', *John Donne Journal* 26 (2007): 295; on the term 'soundings', see the brief introductory note by M. Thomas Hester, 'More Signs of Donne', *John Donne Journal* 26 (2007): 269.
16. See the *Oxford English Dictionary*, in which disability is defined as 'a physical or mental condition which limits activity, movement, sensation'.
17. In eighteenth-century England more generally, both the physically and mentally ill often received a measure of sympathy and care, but there were notable exceptions. As Jacob Simon observes, 'It seems that in the 18th century, people in society treated those with disabilities with kindness within their own terms of reference, though we have little firm evidence. But this was not always the case, as can be seen from the controversy surrounding two very public figures: satirical poet Alexander Pope and radical politician, John Wilkes. Both men [...] were subject to vituperative attacks, singling out their conspicuous disabilities' ('Disability in the 19th Century: A National Portrait Gallery Trail', *Trails: News, Listings, and Features from 3000+ Museums, Galleries, and Heritage Sites*. http://www.24hourmuseum.org.uk/trout_gfx_en/TRA41901.html).
18. Cowper, *Adelphi*, in *Letters and Prose Writings*, ed. King and Ryskamp, 9.

19. Allan Ingram has argued that such reading practices resulted in the experience of 'linguistic estrangement' in Cowper, who has both 'betrayed' and been 'betrayed by language' (*The Madhouse of Language: Writing and Reading Madness in the Eighteenth Century* [London and New York: Routledge, 1991], pp. 124, 126).
20. 'Memoir of the Early Life of William Cowper, Esq. Written by Himself,' in *William Cowper: Selected Poetry and Prose*, ed. Jeffrey, p. 16.
21. Cowper, 'The Castaway' (1799), *William Cowper: Selected Poetry and Prose*, ed. Jeffrey, 143. While these words are spoken by the speaker of the poem, historical evidence suggests that Cowper personally experienced a sense of despair akin to those voiced by the 'destined wretch' of the poem (p. 141). For a helpful account of the lengths that Cowper's friends went to manufacture texts in order to mitigate his fear of damnation, see Blakey Vermeule, *The Party of Humanity: Writing Moral Psychology in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), pp 199-204.
22. William Battie, *A Treatise on Madness* (1758), in *Patterns of Madness in the Eighteenth Century: A Reader*, ed. Allan Ingram (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1998), p. 113. Of the causes of mental illness, Battie identifies two: 'internal disorder of the nervous substance' (p. 114) and 'the second [...] owing to the same nervous substance [...] but disordered *ab extra*' (p. 114). In describing his own condition, Cowper writes, 'My mind at this time possibly began to be disordered; however, it was, I was certainly given up to strong delusion' (quoted in Ingram, ed., *Patterns of Madness*, p. 138).
23. Quoted in Roy Strong, 'Mental Illness', *The Cambridge History of Medicine*, ed. Roy Porter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 246. His quotation from William Pargeter is taken from *Observations on Maniacal Disorders* (Reading, 1792), p. 31.
24. In 1789, Andrew Harper advised that 'unpleasant ideas of every kind should be removed as much as possible' from the mentally ill 'because they are invariably attended with spasmodic excitement or irritation'; we imagine that Cowper's relative felt *The Temple* should be set aside for this reason. See Andrew Harper, *A Treatise on the Real Cause and Cure of Insanity* (1789), in *Patterns of Madness*, ed. Ingram, p. 177.
25. Elaine N. Aron, *The Highly Sensitive Person* (New York: Broadway Books, 1996), pp. 5, 7.
26. Daniel W. Doerksen, 'Bearing the Cross: The Christian's Response to Suffering in Herbert's *The Temple*', *Through a Glass Darkly: Suffering, the Sacred, and the Sublime in Literature and Theory*, ed. Holly Faith Nelson, Lynn Szabo, and Jens Zimmermann, forthcoming.
27. Vincent Newey, *Cowper's Poetry: A Critical Study and Reassessment* (Totowa: Barnes & Noble Books, 1982), p. x.
28. *Olney Hymns in Three Books*, 6th ed. (London, 1797), p. 119.
29. *The English Poems of George Herbert*, ed. Wilcox, p. 526.
30. In a letter to John Newton dated 21 August 1781, Cowper writes, 'the state of your mind is such as discovers, even to yourself, in spite of all its wanderings, that there is a principle at bottom whose determined tendency is towards the best things' (Jeffrey, *William Cowper: Selected Poetry and Prose*, p. 177). We believe that in many of Herbert's poems, Cowper discovered a similar 'state of [...] mind' which offered him great comfort and which he hopes to imitate, despite recognizing that his 'thoughts are clad in a sober livery' and governed by a 'loud voice' that 'is continually crying [...] *Actum est de te, peristi!*' (*William Cowper: Selected Poetry and Prose*, ed. Jeffrey, p. 177).
31. Herbert, 'Affliction [V]' (lines 19-20) and 'Affliction [IV]' (line 30), *The English Poems of George Herbert*, ed. Wilcox, pp. 350, 328.
32. Letter from William Cowper to Mrs. Unwin, Monday, 26 February 1770, in *Letters and Prose Writings*, ed. King and Ryskamp, p. 214.
33. Herbert, 'Repentance', *The English Poems of George Herbert*, ed. Wilcox, p. 170.
34. Newey, *Cowper's Poetry*, p. 34.
35. J.R. Watson, *The English Hymn: A Critical and Historical Study* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 299. Watson believes that because Cowper is not a member of the clergy, 'his hymns are less inclined to preach than Newton's, more introspective, more probing into the uncertain moods of the self' (p. 288). Watson maintains that the hymns reflect the spirit of 'an uncertain Christian', but they do not reveal a Christian in 'despair' (290). Watson identifies as the 'most distinctive feature' of Cowper as a 'hymn-writer' 'the feeling mind', emphasizing that the *Olney Hymns* were produced 'at the intersection of the Evangelical Revival with the age of sensibility' (p. 298).
36. *The Works of William Cowper*, ed. Robert Southey 8 vols. (London, 1854), vol. 5, p. 81.

37. Herbert, 'The Collar', *The English Poems of George Herbert*, ed. Wilcox, p. 526.
38. Carl Phillips, 'Anomaly, Conundrum, *Thy-Will-Be-Done*: On the Poetry of George Herbert', *Green Thoughts, Green Shades: Essays by Contemporary Poets on the Early Modern Lyric*, ed. Jonathan Post (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), p. 136.
39. Herbert, 'Affliction [IV]' (lines 7-8, 5-6), *The English Poems of George Herbert*, ed. Wilcox, p. 328.
40. Watson, *The English Hymn*, pp. 298-299.
41. The *Olney Hymns* were published in 1779. Cowper contributed approximately 19% (67) of the 348 hymns (Watson, *The English Hymn*, p. 282).
42. *William Cowper: Selected Poetry and Prose*, ed. Jeffrey, pp. 162-163.
43. *Ibid.*, pp. 111-113.
44. *Ibid.*, pp. 164-165.
45. Herbert, 'Love [III]', *The English Poems of George Herbert*, ed. Wilcox, p. 328.
46. Herbert, 'Affliction [I]', 'Deniall', and 'Repentance', *The Poems of George Herbert*, ed. Wilcox, pp. 162, 289, 170.
47. Herbert, 'Ephes. 4.30: Grieve not the Holy Spirit, etc.', *The English Poems of George Herbert*, ed. Wilcox, p. 474.
48. *Olney Hymns in Three Books*, p. 80.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 285.