

Francis Maria Cowper, "The Retrospect"

Description

Â FRANCES MARIA COWPER

•âœThe Retrospectâœ•

Come, Holy Spirit, love divine,  
 Thy cleansing power impart;  
 Each erring thought and wish refine,  
 That wanders near my heart.  
 There let thy quickening breezes blow, Â 5  
 Thine influences be,  
 Such as revive thy hidden-ones,  
 And lift their souls to Thee.

Throâ€™ darkâ€™ning rains and theatâ€™ning storms  
 My little bark doth ride: Â  
 Â Â Â 10  
 O save me from the fatal wreck  
 Of Sinâ€™s devouring tide.  
 By past corrections humbled still,  
 Let no vain passion start,  
 Within the consecrated veil Â  
 Â Â Â 15  
 Of a believerâ€™s heart.

Oft hast thou cast me to the ground,  
 O'erwhelm'd with grief and pain;  
 Yet hath thy pitying hand restorâ€™d,  
 And led me forth again; Â  
 Â Â Â 20  
 Forth from the shade of sullen woe,  
 From darkness and dismay;  
 And oâ€™er my anguish pourâ€™d the sweet  
 Consolatory ray.

O Lord! how mingled was thy  
 loveÂ  
 25  
 In all my deep distress!  
 Thou gavâ€™st the knowledge of thy word,  
 That gift of sovereign grace!

And shall my peevish heart regret

The momentary pain, 30

That follows on departed joys

In life's contracted span?

Time's little inch, that steals away

With every fleeting breath,

And points to an eternity 35

Beyond the reach of Death.

Enough, my soul, enough of Time,

And Time's uncertain things;

Farewell that busy hive, the world,

And all its thousand stings. 40

As feathers on the passing stream,

Our earthly pleasures move;

And transient as the evening beam,

That gilds the verdant grove.

To other climes, to other

skies, 45

My lifted soul aspires:

Thither my wandering thoughts ascend,

And all my best desires.

Awhile I strive, awhile I mourn,

'Midst thorns and briars here; 50

But God vouchsafes with love divine

My drooping heart to cheer.

Though meaner than the meanest saint,

My heavenly Guide I see;

I hear a voice behind me say, 55

"That Jesus died for me."

**NOTES:**

**15 consecrated veil** – To the human body as a sacred vessel for the soul; Christ's body considered as concealing or clothing his divinity (OED).

**21 sullen woe** – Gloomy and heavy occurrence(s) of distress, misfortune or grief (OED).

**27 gâve** – Of a higher power, esp. of the Deity; to bestow (OED).

**29** *peevish* – Petulant; irritable; hard to please (Johnson).

**44** *verdant grove* A green group of trees.

**45** *climes* – Region, realm (OED).

**50** *briers* – A prickly thorny bush or shrub in general, formerly including the bramble, but now usually confined to wild rose bushes (OED).

**51** *vouchsafes* – Sense relating to conferring or bestowing, especially graciously (by God) (OED).

**Source:** *Original Poems, on Various Occasions* (London, 1792), pp. 25-27. [\[Google Books\]](#)

*Edited by Juliana Guerrero*