Francis Maria Cowper, â??The Retrospectâ?•

Description

FRANCES MARIA COWPER

â??The Retrospectâ?•

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,
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:
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
Of a believerâ??s heart.

Oft hast thou cast me to the ground,
Oâ??erwhelmâ??d with grief and pain;
Yet hath thy pitying hand restorâ??d,
And led me forth again;
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 love
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,
That follows on departed joys
In lifeâ??s contracted span?

Timeâ??s little inch, that steals away
With every fleeting breath,
And points to an eternity
Beyond the reach of Death.
Enough, my soul, enough of Time,
And Timeâ??s uncertain things;
Farewell that busy hive, the world,
And all its thousand stings.

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,
My lifted soul aspires:
Thither my wandering thoughts ascend,
And all my best desires.

Awhile I strive, awhile I mourn,
â??Midst thorns and briers here;
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,
â??That Jesus died for me.â?•

NOTES:

15 *consecrated veil* â??To the human body as a sacred vessel for the soul; Christâ??s body considered as concealing or clothing his divinityâ?• *(OED).*

21 *sullen woe* â??Gloomy and heavy occurrence(s) of distress, misfortune or griefâ?• *(OED).*

27 *gavâ??st â??*Of a higher power, esp. of the Deity; to bestowâ?• *(OED).*

29 *peevish* â??Petulant; irritable; hard to pleaseâ?• (Johnson).

44 *verdant grove* A green group of trees.

45 *climes* â??Region, realmâ?• *(OED).*

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

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

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

Edited by Juliana Guerrero