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Herbert, Coleridge, Hopkins: Usefulness

by Margaret Turnbull

George Herbert's "Employment" (I) was a basis for Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "Work Without Hope," as Coleridge himself noted, and as Herbert's editor F.E. Hutchinson has pointed out.¹ "Employment" (I) may also have contributed to Gerard Manley Hopkins's "Thou art indeed just." N.H. Mackenzie has noticed the similarity between Hopkins's poem and Coleridge's, but has not made the further connection with Herbert's "Employment" (I).²

Each poet expresses feelings of frustration with his apparent uselessness. The frustration is demonstrated in each case by a contrast with the activities of nature. Coleridge's attitude towards nature, however, differs from Herbert's, and Hopkins's is slightly different again. Further, Coleridge does not have the same view of his role as a poet as Herbert or Hopkins, and Hopkins brings in the injustice of the earthly success of the sinner and contrasts it with his own failure, which Herbert and Coleridge do not.

I

Employment (I)

If as a flowre doth spread and die,
Thou wouldst extend to me some good,
Before I were by frosts extremitie
Nipt in the bud;

The sweetnesse and the praise were thine;
But the extension and the room,
Which in thy garland I would fill, were mine
At thy great doom.

For as thou dost impart thy grace,
The greater shall our glorie be.
The measure of our joyes is in this place,
The stuffe with thee.

Let me not languish then, and spend
 A life as barren to thy praise,
 As is the dust, to which that life doth tend
 But with delaies.

All things are busie; onely I
 Neither bring hony with the bees,
 Nor flowres to make that, nor the husbandrie
 To water these.

I am no link of thy great chain,
 But all my companie is a weed.
 Lord place me in thy consort; give one strain
 To my poore reed.

The productivity of nature shames the speaker. He is not concerned with his ability or popularity as a poet, as Coleridge, who adopted words from the fifth stanza, would be, but with living a holy life and bringing the life of God to others. The writing of poetry, however, is to the speaker one specific way of doing those things, as the musical reference in the last stanza suggests. Poetry is "that which while I use / I am with thee" ("The Quidditie," ll. 11-12). In "The Altar," Herbert's prayer is that "if I chance to hold my peace" (l. 13), perhaps because of illness or death ("frosts extremitie" in "Employment" [I], l. 13), then "these stones [his poems] to praise thee may not cease" (ll. 13-14).

We need not interpret "some good," "extension," "room," and "glorie" as referring only to "some place and power" ("Submission," l. 6). "Employment" may be partly a prayer for status, but only so far as that status would increase the speaker's ability to help others into and during the Christian life. Usefulness in extending the kingdom of God ("to water these") and personal holiness ("to thy praise") are the "employment" meant.

Also, the poem need not be autobiographical. Those of Herbert's poems which appear to be self-expressive are intended to allow the reader who may also be experiencing the same trouble to identify with the speaker. Herbert often puts himself in the wrong to show the anxious reader that there is a solution, even if it is simply, as here, to call upon the Lord. Herbert's didacticism is humble and gentle,

associating the speaking "I" with the struggling Christian, and – in a crucial difference from Romantic representation – pointing readers away from themselves, and from the poet, to God.

Herbert, then, is here not merely wringing his hands over personal failure. His poetry works by the Horatian rule of "teach and delight," or what Helen Wilcox, in her edition of Herbert's poems, calls his "unashamedly deceptive method";³ for he is teaching his readers, subtly, by the delights of memorable and appropriate form, sound, and imagery, that the only thing worth striving for is to praise God by life and word, and that success in this venture can only come through the grace of God.⁴ Elsewhere, he teaches his readers that the feeling of dusty barrenness will not persist. "Who would have thought my shrivel'd heart / Could have recover'd greenesse? . . . I once more smell the dew and rain / And relish versing," says the speaker in "The Flower" to his "Lord of love" (ll. 8-9, 38-39, 43).

This does not mean that there is no autobiographical element in Herbert's poetry. Certainly, the years of Herbert's own unemployment informed and provided occasion for "Employment" (I). At that time "employment" had far wider reference than merely being in a paid job. Cristina Malcolmson suggests that Herbert had three periods of unemployment, in every sense, in 1625, 1627, and 1628, and that these were caused both by sickness and by a change in theological, and therefore political, outlook, on the part of James I. Laud's pressure upon James to see all Calvinists as Puritans, that is, supposedly disloyal because supposedly anti-bishop and anti-monarchy, meant ultimately that Herbert received no court place or patronage.⁵ This is credible, and so it is the more remarkable that Herbert maintained his arguably Calvinist stance – not an ecclesiastical, but a theological Calvinism, misunderstood by Laud – throughout the poems of "The Church";⁶ and it is further remarkable that the tone of "Employment" (I) is of humble self-blame and not of resentment.

Here and in "Employment" (II), aspects of the natural creation are used as illustration and analogy, but are also considered in themselves, as part of the "great chain." When Herbert, in other poems, uses the word "Nature," it is somewhat ironically, unlike Coleridge's use of the word in his Herbert-derived poem. Herbert was perfectly aware that one of the works of the rebellious *human* nature which the poem "Nature" portrays is to attempt to make "Nature" a self-sufficient entity,

as it would appear two hundred years later in "Work Without Hope." The corrupt human nature is "saplesse" but full of "venome" against God in the poem "Nature" (ll. 16, 7), whereas the redeemed human nature in "Employment" (I) is able to see flowers and bees as giving glory to God, not (as in some Romantic poetry) as part of an entity detached from God. The speaker of "Employment" (I) is regenerate, but still, there is enough of the old unredeemed human nature to cause the speaker to fear he will be "barren," just as Hopkins would refer to himself as "Time's eunuch" who could not "breed one work that wakes." "Nature," then, has a double meaning in Herbert's poems.

The poem suggests that the unity of all creation consists in its origin and in its purpose. This is the opposite of a pantheistic unity, because it looks outside the natural order to a Creator and, as a corollary, to an end of glorifying that Creator. "All things are busie" praising God already; the speaker alone is not. He feels as if he is not fulfilling the purpose of his creation. Herbert's speaker, though knowing that through Christ he already has acceptance with God and ultimate purpose in existing, sees himself as useless as dry dust in generating that for which he was created, which is to praise God by thought, word, and deed. It is in this way he feels alienated from nature. Coleridge would also feel alienated from nature, but the glory of God would not be (at least in his Herbert-derived poem) his primary concern.

Frost and dust are the strong negative forces in "Employment" (I). Frost threatens to cut life short; the bud may not open into a glorious flower – the speaker may not have achieved anything useful in the Kingdom of God – before illness and death incapacitate: "Employment" (II) says "So we freeze on, / Untill the grave increase our cold," (ll. 29-30). Dust pictures a perceived inadequacy in the dual ministry of pastor and didactic poet. As pastor, he should bring to others the sweetness of the Word of God (compare "a hony gain" in the next poem in the sequence, "The H. Scriptures"), and as poet, he should bring the truth to his readers, thereby changing lives (see also "Love" [I] and [II], "A Wreath," "The Forerunners," and many other poems in *The Temple* on the theme of the use of beauty and art). Dust refers not only to the disintegration of the body in the grave to which we all "tend" ("shall the dust give thanks unto thee?" asks Psalm 30:10;⁷ and compare the dustiness of "Church-monuments"), but is a picture of spiritual death-in-life, a life "barren to thy praise." So all the poet's

“glorie” is in glorifying God, either in his own life or in the lives of others: the watering and the honey suggest the poet’s desire for spiritual growth in the lives of the readers.

God is the addressee of “Employment” (I). God is both receiver of praise and giver of the “good” which stimulates the praise. The all-creating God can be appealed to as a friend, and, while Herbert does not go as far as Hopkins, almost rebuked.⁸ Such freedom of address suggests that “some good,” which is being prayed for, has already been given: the poem itself represents an “easie free accesse” to the “supreme almightie power” (ll. 1, 7) as “Prayer” (II) puts it.

But this has not yet been understood by the speaker in “Employment” (I). In an increasing depression, he imagines himself first at the bottom of God’s “great chain” – dust – and then completely irrelevant to it. If that were true, there could be no greater loneliness; but the “great chain” included everything, and everything was seen as useful “upwards” and “downwards” in Nature, in a comprehensive feudal system of fealty and responsibility. Being out of the chain is a logical impossibility. Every created being has its place in the chain, so Herbert’s statement is analogous and hyperbolic, not literal.

Both grammatically and rhetorically there is a distinction made between the uselessness that is and the usefulness that might be. Grammatically, “I am no link . . . all my companie is a weed” is in the indicative mood, whereas line 1, where the speaker wishes to be “as a flower,” opening its beauty for God before death, is in the subjunctive mood (“If . . . thou wouldst”), as are the consequences: “The sweetnesse and the praise were thine . . . th’extension and the room . . . were mine.” It is a request, a possibility, dependent on the opening “If.” The flower is only wished for; the weed *is*. And rhetorically, a metaphor (I *am* a weed) brings its two terms more closely together than does a simile (I would *like to be* as useful and beautiful as a flower). The uselessness is the present actuality.

Wilcox relates the “weed” reference to that in “The Crosse,” “ev’n in Paradise to be a weed” (l. 30).⁹ The theme of “The Crosse” is similar to that of “Employment” (I), and there is a similar recognition that it is God who gives or denies opportunities. “The Crosse,” however, ends more stunningly, with the realization that to desire the scope to honor God publicly and yet apparently to be denied such scope by God was exactly Christ’s situation on the cross.

Herbert's metaphor changes at the end to that of a consort of musical instruments. It seems an odd and abrupt change after five-and-a-half stanzas of "nature" images. But it is not the productivity of nature, but the Christian's feeling of failure, which is the focus of the poem. The small-orchestra image is appropriate in describing the man or woman who, though both part of and above nature, feels of less use than the rest of nature; he or she is as superfluous as an instrument in a chamber ensemble without a part. An earlier draft, and one which better keeps the "great chain" analogy, finished the poem with "Lord that I may the Sunns perfection gaine / Give me his speed."¹⁰ But the musical analogy is more effective, because the pastoral shepherd-piper is a traditional figure for the poet. The change to "reed" may have been to describe the present poetic activity: he does have a "poore reed," a waterside rush-plant cut into a pipe or a mouth-part for a woodwind, but would like it to be more spiritually profitable.¹¹

Every "strain" of creation blends to praise God. Such employment is given, not achieved: "extend to me," "impart thy grace," "place me." Even not to "languish" must be given in answer to prayer. The "good" envisaged in the first stanza is not (as with Coleridge) inspiration, or creativity, but *thy praise* – a phrase whose two meanings (our praise of God, or his of us) are equally valid here.

"Employment" (I) has affinities with "Praise" (I), which begins

To write a verse or two is all the praise
 That I can raise:
 Mend my estate in any wayes,
 Thou shalt have more

and ends

O raise me then! Poore bees, that work all day,
 Sting my delay,
 Who have a work, as well as they,
 And much, much more.

As in "Employment" (I), God is cried to for an improvement in situation, which will result in more praise for him; praise is the "work" which is better than that of the bees.

As in Hopkins's poem, the speaker of "Employment" (I) does not quite see why he isn't being employed when all he wants is to serve God. He has a deeper lesson to learn, however. The speaker in "Submission" wonders about "some place or power" (l. 6), but has given his eyes back to God; that is, he has chosen to give up his idea that his perception of earthly circumstances will lead to correct judgments about them. "How know I, if thou shouldst me raise, / That I should then raise thee?" (ll. 13-14). He cannot be sure that if he were given his desired high position, he would use it for the glory of God (as he had been sure he would in the first stanza of "The Crosse"). In leaving behind the natural assumption that he knows what will be best for himself, the speaker in "Submission" in fact "sees" a little further than the speaker in "Employment" (I), despite – or because of – his giving up his eyes. The speaker of "Employment" (I) cannot yet cope with the thought that he might never do great things for God which others can notice, even if he and they give "the sweetnesse and the praise" to God and not to himself.

The flowers and bees praise God by their works and involuntarily, but "Onely to Man thou hast made known thy wayes / And put the pen alone into his hand, / And made him Secretarie of thy praise . . . Man is the worlds high Priest," as "Providence" (ll. 6-8, 13) says. The rest of creation is "mute," but it is man's job to praise God, on its behalf, in words. Christ is the Word, and the revelation of God is in words, therefore words are highly honored. Silence is not necessarily, as some mystics (and some writers on Herbert) have argued, the highest form of worship. The "secretarie of thy praise" unites both books of God, created nature and written revelation ("thy wayes"), by writing the praise of God on behalf of all creation, so that those who hear and read can use the poet's words to praise God. Wordsworth and Coleridge were to take this idea and secularize it; in their writings, the poet's function is to put into words the creating world-spirit of love, so remaking man and nature as a unity, which unity supposedly of itself brings happiness without reference to God. The Christian "secretarie," on the other hand, returns the natural environment to its Owner and Creator in written praise.

Yet in "Employment" (I) it seems as though the pen has fallen from the secretary's hand. Flora and fauna are still praising God in their mute ways, but the speaker who is meant to represent them is dumb. He feels

less contributive than the bees, less beautiful than the flowers, less productive than the gardener. But the very existence of this poem-prayer indicates that there is spiritual life, that he is not frozen, not yet crumbled into the dust of death. As Arnold Stein has said, Herbert's is an art which conceals art.¹² This poem is sincere in its complaint about uselessness, yet by this very complaint means to be useful. The poem is itself the "one strain" for his "poore reed," for it is an example of humble confession and of asking God for help. The poem's quiet cleverness contradicts the speaker's ostensible sentiments; it is useful, and is employed by God, because its rhetorical impact upon hearing and memory makes clearer the lesson about what life is for.

The poem speaks of barrenness, yet "The Dedication" calls the whole volume "my first fruits." The same "Dedication" asks the readers who look for spiritual "gain" to "turn their eyes hither." "Employment" (I), longing for usefulness, is in a collection whose aim is usefulness. Herbert does indeed have designs on us: the poem aims to have the reader identify himself with the speaking "I" in asking to be useful in God's kingdom and in acknowledging that, as "The Dedication" says, any such fruitfulness can only come from God. So the poem itself functions as fruitful "employment."

Herbert's poem longs to praise God, yet does praise God by its very complaining to God. It acknowledges there can be no useful activity unless God wishes it, no glory without grace, no music without a royal placement into the king's consort. "All things are busie" only because "by [in] him [Christ] all things consist" (Colossians 1:17) and because Christ is "upholding all things by the word of his power" (Hebrews 1:3); they do not act by themselves. Therefore even to be thankful, or useful to others, must be given, and given in order to return as praise. This was not Coleridge's theme when he used Herbert's poem as a basis for his own.

II

Work Without Hope: Lines composed 21st February 1825

All Nature seems at work. Slugs leave their lair –
 The bees are stirring – birds are on the wing –
 And Winter slumbering in the open air
 Wears on his smiling face a dream of Spring!

And I the while, the sole unbusy thing,
Nor honey make, nor pair, nor build, nor sing.

Yet well I ken the banks where amaranths blow,
Have traced the fount where streams of nectar flow.
Bloom, O ye amaranths! Bloom for whom ye may,
For me ye bloom not! Glide, rich streams, away!
With lips unbrightened, wreathless brow, I stroll:
And would you learn the spells that drowse my soul?
Work without Hope draws nectar in a sieve,
And Hope without an object cannot live.¹³

As F.E. Hutchinson commented, the first six lines of this sonnet, written well after the main period of Coleridge's poetic creativity, echo the fifth stanza (ll. 17-20) of Herbert's "Employment" (I). Sara Coleridge noted in her copy of Coleridge's 1834 *Poetical Works* that he had drawn on Herbert's "Employment" (I).¹⁴

"Work Without Hope" was originally a longer poem. On 21 February 1825, Coleridge sent the above fourteen lines, plus another twenty-one, to an unknown correspondent, prefaced by these words:

This premature warm and sunny day, antedating Spring,
called forth the following Strain in the manner of G.
Herbert – : which might be entitled, THE ALONE MOST
DEAR: a Complaint of Jacob to Rachel as in the tenth year of
his Service he saw in her or fancied that he saw symptoms of
alienation.¹⁵

The lines which follow those which we now know as "Work Without Hope" give the image of the world as a spider, and its webs as a "dusky chamber that excludes the Day." His "Faith . . . hung as a mirror there" and "one Sister Mirror hid the dreary Wall." The lines end with the loss of hope being specified:

But *That* is broke! And with that bright Compeer
I lost my Object and my inmost All –
Faith *in* the Faith of THE ALONE MOST DEAR!
Ah! me!!

It is signed "Jacob Hodiernus," that is, "today's Jacob."¹⁶ Presumably Coleridge apparently came to believe, when "Work Without Hope" was first published, that only the first fourteen lines had poetic merit. As that was his wish for publication, we can read it as it stands and need not allow for the handwritten extra lines, interesting though those extra lines are for their suggestion of a "faith" dependent upon another's.

"Work Without Hope" was published in *The Bijou*, an annual that published poetic and artistic contributions. The 1828 issue contained another work of Coleridge's, "Youth and Age," which starts:

Verse, a breeze midst blossoms straying,
Where Hope clings feeding like a bee,
Both were mine! Life went a maying
With Nature Hope and Poesy
When I was young!

The same allusion to Herbert's "Employment" (I) is here, and the same tone of regret, as in "Work Without Hope." Coleridge felt a separation from "Nature Hope and Poesy" as an inevitable and ironic result of his earlier attempts to think himself into the saving oneness of poet and Nature, under the influence of the pantheism of German Romantic philosophy. "Man and nature will unite," said Hölderlin, "in one all-embracing divinity."¹⁷ Poets were to be the means of uniting man and nature. Yet the separation was necessary to mature personhood, as Schiller pointed out: "So long as man . . . himself is simply world, there is no world yet for him. Not until he sets it outside himself or contemplates it . . . does his personality become distinct from it."¹⁸ In his *Philosophical Lectures*, Coleridge spoke of "that unity with nature which gladly concedes to nature the life, thought, and even purposes of man" who however is inevitably "forced . . . to make a distinction between the object perceived and the percipient."¹⁹ That distinction is forced upon Coleridge in "Work Without Hope," but unlike Herbert, who sees such separation as symbolic of his fruitlessness in praising God or serving others, Coleridge is concerned for his earthly fame. This, I think, remains true despite the many changes by 1825 in Coleridge's theological and philosophical thinking.

In 1797 and 1798 Coleridge seemed full of hope. Then, he did feel a oneness with nature. "Frost at Midnight," which tries to present

nature and poet as almost united, is the opposite of "Work Without Hope." Confidence in himself as poet-prophet is displayed also in "This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison," which declares that "Nature ne'er deserts the wise and pure."²⁰ In "France: An Ode," he addresses Liberty:

And then I felt thee on the sea-cliff's verge,
Whose pines, scarce travelled by the breeze above,
Had made one murmur with the distant surge!
Yes, while I stood and gazed, my temples bare,
And shot my being through earth, sea and air,
Possessing all things with intensest love,
Oh Liberty, my spirit felt thee there!

(ll. 99-105, my emphasis)

The speaker is not only one with nature, but is the owner of it. This is a pantheism which, contradictorily, makes the poet God. In the early poem "Religious Musings" the poet (or "man") usurps the post-creation words of God in Genesis:

From himself he flies
Stands in the sun, and with no partial gaze
Views all creation; and he loves it all,
And blesses it, and calls it very good!²¹

The same poem suggests that mankind will one day, in a semi-secular millennial triumph, throw open "the massy gates of Paradise" from which will come "odours snatched from beds of amaranth" (snatched by poets, presumably).²² "The Messiah's destined victory" is not the ingathering of all the redeemed and the manifestation of Christ's kingship, but a time when a vague "whole" will become "one self" ("Religious Musings," ll. 153-58). In "The Aeolian Harp" Coleridge's own pantheism ("one intellectual breeze / At once the soul of each, and God of all") is ironically rebuked by words put into the mouth of his wife as being "shapings of the unregenerate mind" and "vain philosophy's aye-babbling spring" (ll. 36-40, 47, 49). Despite this disarming self-awareness, the Coleridgean philosophical spring babbled on for several years more. Perhaps it was not only the opium, but secular philosophies of natural unity, which had become "spells that

drowse my soul" and which dried up the "streams of nectar" by the time of "Work Without Hope" in 1825.²³

Is it Coleridge only who is "without hope," or does he mean to implicate his readers? The relation of the speaking voice to the poet's real autobiography is impossible finally to prove in any poet's case. While Herbert's "I" persona is usually a representative and teaching device, motivating the reader through empathetic identification, it is much harder to detach Coleridge's "I" from the historical person. Many of Coleridge's poems seem indeed about Coleridge. "Sincerity" is always limited, of course, by the distance and formalizing a poem needs. In this poem, the final couplet is generalized and maxim-like, but even these lines the reader tends to apply primarily to Coleridge, coming as they do at the end of twelve lines of (probably) personal complaint.

"Wreathless brow" expresses sadness at his perceived personal failure as priest and prophet of nature. "Fount" suggests a double resource: both nature now, and nature as written about by the ancient poets, whose poems are "amaranths." (One is reminded of Herbert's "The Pearl": "I know the ways of Learning; both the head / And pipes . . . What reason hath from nature borrowed [ll. 1-3]). "Lips unbrightened" implies that the speaker wished to be, but cannot now be, an interpreter of nature to others. He now can neither be part of nature nor explain nature's meanings to others. While Herbert in "Employment" (I) uses nature images as metaphors of a life of useful praise to God, Coleridge hopes to find "religious meanings in the forms of Nature" ("Fears in Solitude," l. 24) and express them in poetry. By "religious" he does not (here) mean the worship of the God of biblical revelation. He means that the individual forms of nature point to a general unified, universal and self-sufficient "Nature," whose meaning can be found independently of God and declared by metaphorically "wreathed" poets.

Wordsworth had expressed Romantic religion of nature in one of his "spots of time," in which he looked back on his boyhood night-skating on the lake as a time of sensing a role for himself as poet-priest and poet-prophet: priest by being an intermediary between other men and the rest of creation, and prophet, not by being inspired by God to declare the words of God, but by being inspired by the spirit of nature and of humanity, and declaring the triumph of man in union with nature.²⁴ Coleridge broadly agreed with this, as his letter to Wordsworth of 30 May, 1815, indicates.²⁵ The Romantic poet-prophet

is to "proclaim the great hidden Truths of human existence."²⁶ That Coleridge has failed in this self-appointed secular imitation of the biblical priest and prophet is suggested in the phrase "sole unbusy thing" in "Work Without Hope." This is far from Herbert's "All things are busie; onely I . . . ," because Herbert has a biblical frame of thinking, in which Christ is the cause, upholder, center, and purpose of nature. To Herbert, nature cannot be interpreted without Christ. Christ, not the poet, is ultimate priest and prophet. He is priest as mediator for man's alienation from God (not primarily from nature, though nature is implicated, as Romans 8:19-22 suggests), and prophet as declarer of God's nature and of perfect human nature in his own incarnate Being. Coleridge does not have this comfort when lacking the wreaths and bright lips of poetic prophecy.²⁷

The prophetic role of the Romantic poet thus made any lack of inspiration serious indeed. Coleridge's apparent failure was darker to him than Herbert's was to Herbert because Coleridge saw the Romantic poet as the redeeming hero of mankind, the bearer of a secularly saving Word. Herbert wished that his poetry would do good, but only by exalting Christ, not himself or the poem. Coleridge – though he may not have seen the implication – had become the prophetic focus, not only of any particular poem, but of Poetry. So "lips unbrightened" implies hopelessness for mankind as well as for a poetic career.

Winter's long dream gives way to Spring's wakeful activity, but the poet's drowsiness continues. Herbert too felt rebuked by this; but in "Work Without Hope" nature appears to wake, and work, for its own purposes, not in the providence and for the glory of God as they do in Herbert's poem. The octet's metaphoric flowers represent (absent) poetic inspiration for Coleridge, while Herbert's (absent) garland-flower is for the head of Christ. "For *me* ye bloom not" contrasts strikingly with "the sweetnesse and the praise were *thine*."

Coleridge was not necessarily representing nature as purposeless, random process, but there is no mention of the praise of God. Winter, and (to an extent) flowers and streams, are personified, but the personification says nothing about the human relation to God. The animal creation does what it does, but not for the glory of God. It is not for God that "slugs leave their lair" (surely there is a wry smile on the poet's face at this less-than-Parnassian image). They do so not for or at the pleasure of God but because of the "nature" of things. Only

the poet does nothing – but the regret is not for his lack of praising God, but for his lack of poetic output and therefore of fame. He imagines he cannot inherit that amaranthine literary eternity that would renew itself as Spring renews nature. His regret is not the repentance *coram Deo* implied in Herbert's poem. The poem is "without hope" in that it is entirely self-regarding. Neither poet nor nature have a purpose beyond themselves.

A.J. Harding has said that Coleridge did not fully follow the German "pantheists" in making the poet a prophet inspired by and one with nature, or in the belief that we may know God (or be gods) through nature, since Coleridge to some extent believed that the Old Testament prophets spoke by a power above nature.²⁸ Coleridge saw that the error of Schelling and others was to make nature all, in a closed universe.²⁹ Coleridge said that the poet does not have his imagination from "the impersonal entelechies of nature" but from the "personal 'act of creation in the infinite I AM.'"³⁰ I suspect, though, that Herbert would have had as much trouble accepting the second proposition as the first. So although Coleridge was never fully pantheistic, and by 1825 was accepting most traditional tenets of Christianity, his worry about the separation of the poet from nature is not the same worry as Herbert's. The speaker is neither comparing himself to the slugs, bees, birds as if his existence, too, might praise God; nor is there any mention of "husbandry," of (literally) caring dominion over nature or (metaphorically) caring for others. Others are not to be cared for but envied: "bloom for whom ye may, / For me ye bloom not." Only the mention of "honey" suggests feeding others – and even in this regard, "nectar," which for a bee/poet is the input, we might say, not the output, is much more significant in the poem than honey.

The amaranths of inspiration and poetic immortality known well in Coleridge's past weren't picked on the banks of Jordan; the nectar flowed from the fountain of the ancient pagan poets, not from the Bible. The great source and resource of the antique poets is well known to Coleridge, but knowing is not enough for him. He must be personally wreathed by the Muses, must have his own lips wetted by the fountain of inspiration. Thus he could have a literary immortality, just as the amaranth flower is supposed to bloom forever. Milton, in *Paradise Lost* (Book III, ll. 353-64), associates the amaranth with the river of life and with "an inheritance . . . that fadeth not away" (I Peter

1:4) rather than with earthly poetic fame.³¹ But “Work Without Hope” is an instance of M.H. Abrams’s concept of “natural supernaturalism,”³² in which a Romantic poet takes words, phrases and ideas (in this case from Herbert and from Milton) which were in their first instance about man’s relationship with God as expressed in the Bible, and transforms them into words about a man-centered universe. Man’s separation in the Romantic universe is not from God, but from nature.

Coleridge does not address God, as Herbert does, but addresses himself and the poem’s audience (“you” in line 12); the poem, like the personified Hope, is “without an object.” Herbert asks God if he may be part of God’s garland, or wreath. Coleridge grieves *to* himself about the lack of a wreath *for* himself. Another self-communing poem, “To William Wordsworth” (1807), associates flowers and a futile life. In that poem, he laments lost Love, Hope, Youth, Manhood, Genius, Knowledge,

And all which I had cull’d in wood-walks wild,
And all which patient toil had reared, and all,
Commune with thee had opened out

as being

but flowers
Strewed on my corse, and borne upon my bier
In the same coffin, for the self-same grave!³³

So “Work Without Hope” uses Herbert’s words but refuses his theology. And it may owe another debt to Herbert. Coleridge’s nesting birds may have come from another Herbert poem, “Affliction” (I):

I reade, and sigh, and wish I were a tree;
For sure then I should grow
To fruit or shade: at least some bird would trust
Her household to me, and I should be just. (ll. 57-60).

But whatever his use of Herbert’s imagery, Coleridge’s understanding of nature, of usefulness, and of the purpose of poetry, was not Herbert’s.

Yet there is hope in the poem. In saying “All Nature seems at work [except me]” Coleridge is objectifying it and separating it from himself.

It is that unwanted objectification which makes the poem possible. There is something outside the poet. Because nature is not the poet, and because the poet's perceptions do not create nature, there is hope. The poet is part of nature-as-creation, but he is also more than and other than nature, or he could not write objectively about it. Therefore the poem itself somewhat contradicts its title.

There is a similar paradox in "Dejection: An Ode," in which Coleridge complains that he has lost his "shaping spirit of imagination" (l. 87). If by "shaping" Coleridge meant giving reality and meaning to the universe, almost making a universe, as in Wordsworth's "what [eye and ear] half-create / And what perceive" ("Lines Written a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey," ll. 7-8), or if he meant a mind which "Creates, creator and receiver both" (The 1799-1806 *Prelude*, l. 273), then Herbert would have found this a blasphemous arrogation to himself by the poet of the activities of God, for "Employment" (I) does not express disappointment that the speaker cannot shape a world, but that he is useless to the God who shaped him and it. "Work Without Hope" portrays a poet who can no longer author worlds – though it is not put so bluntly. But "shaping," in "Dejection," may refer only to the making of analogies necessary to poetry, as when his own mind was creating what he saw in the fire in "Frost at Midnight" (although, ironically, it was another's mind which provided this idea: Cowper's "The Task" [1785], Book Four, gave Coleridge "myself creating what I saw"). On either understanding, the existence of the "Dejection" poem itself paradoxically indicates an actively shaping imagination. So with "Work Without Hope"; the nectar *has* touched his lips, for here is the poem in its evocative beauty.

"Work Without Hope" may express more than a personal drought of inspiration; it may represent the shattering of dreams of being useful to others by bringing them out of dead materialism. Carlyle heard Coleridge speak on this "hope" at about the same time as this poem was written (1824-25), and thought that Coleridge still had misty dreams of being "a kind of prophetic or magician character," a pilot "into the high seas of theosophic philosophy."³⁴ Carlyle could not determine what Coleridge's grand scheme specifically was, and was bemused by Coleridge's "Kantian haze-world" of "theosophico-metaphysical monotony."³⁵ Carlyle's point is that Coleridge had no intelligible solutions, nor could even clearly define what he found wrong with the

world. Carlyle (whose own writings can be far from clear) may have been unnecessarily harsh. But certainly "Work Without Hope" expresses surprise that the poetic project has failed to save mankind. Herbert in "Employment" (I), however, implies trust in God's saving work, not poetry's.

Unlike Coleridge, neither Herbert nor Hopkins understood the "good" or "one work that wakes" to be mere beauty in poetry, or a philosophy or an imaginative vision which is other than the revelation of Christ. A poem may be beautiful in image and sound, or effectively evocative, or moving, or even purport to unite man and nature, but not thereby be part of "thy garland." Nor did Herbert see as divine the act of poetic creation. Although Herbert said that when he wrote poetry he was close to his Lord ("I am with thee," "The Quidditie," l. 12), he would not have agreed with Herder that the mere existence of a poem (or a work of prose, or drama, or visual art, or music) is in itself glorifying to God, or that every act of making echoes the First Maker.³⁶ That act of making, as Herbert often points out, also reflects the sinfulness of its maker and of its age. A poem may accurately picture the soul without God, but unless it praises the God of creation and order (as Herbert's poetics would demand) it is not useful "employment" in Herbert's terms. Even to make others aware of beauty, or feel joyful, apart from a context of worship of and obedience to the God who made beauty and joy, is not the usefulness Herbert meant – though Coleridge may have meant it so. Rather, "a work for whom?" is the implied question in Herbert's poetry and Hopkins's poetry and letters.³⁷ Coleridge's answer to that question is "me": "for me ye bloom not." So his work has a subject but is "without an object," the object for Herbert and, as we shall see, Hopkins, being the truth about and the praise of God.

III

*Justus quidem tu es, Domine, si disputem tecum;
verumtamen justa loquar ad te: Quare via impiorum
prosperatur? &c.*

Thou art indeed just, Lord, if I contend
With thee; but, sir, so what I plead is just.

Why do sinners' ways prosper? And why must
Disappointment all I endeavour end?

Wert thou my enemy, O thou my friend,
How wouldst thou worse, I wonder, than thou dost
Defeat, thwart me? Oh, the sots and thralls of lust
Do in spare hours more thrive than I that spend,
Sir, life upon thy cause. See, banks and brakes
Now, leavèd how thick! lacèd they are again
With fretty chervil, look, and fresh wind shakes
Them; birds build – but not I build; no, but strain,
Time's eunuch, and not breed one work that wakes.
Mine, O thou lord of life, send my roots rain.

Hopkins wrote in his personal spiritual journal:

I earnestly asked our Lord to watch over my compositions . . .
that they might do me no harm through the enmity or
imprudence of any man or my own; that he would have them
as his own and *employ or not employ them* as he should see fit.
And this I believe is heard.³⁸

Similarly, Herbert had asked God to take his poems as God's own, and to employ them: "*Accept of them and me, / and make us strive, who shall sing best thy name*" [implying, if I and my poems do not praise your name, put us aside] ("The Dedication," ll. 3-4).

We know Hopkins read and loved *The Temple*.³⁹ And while we cannot say for certain, as we can with Coleridge, that "Employment" (I) influenced this poem, there are several similarities.⁴⁰ The second half of the poem, from "See, banks and brakes," reflects Herbert's "All things are busie; onlie I . . ." Then, Hopkins's line 13, "not breed one work that wakes," and line 14, "send my roots rain," describe Herbert's dread of a life "barren to thy praise / As is the dust." The mainly single-syllabled words of Hopkins's lines 5 to 14 rap out frustration: "birds build – but not I build; no, but strain . . . and not breed one work that wakes," reflecting the bitter brevity of the sounds in Herbert's "I am no link of thy great chain." The verb "strain" echoes Herbert's musical noun. Alan Heuser remarks that "As in George Herbert, all nature was seen [by Hopkins] in terms of musical metaphor, and there was

ultimate harmony, harmony of nature in grace . . . to be restored [by] sacrifice.”⁴¹ “Time’s eunuch” is one who cannot reproduce, while the cycle of the seasons around him demands and demonstrates generative activity; just so does Herbert’s dusty speaker fear he will “languish” while bees and flowers are active in “thy praise.”

Hopkins, like Herbert, addresses God audaciously, proposing that his own work – which is really God’s “cause” – be allowed to flourish as much as that of the “sinners” (with whom he does not class himself). Like Herbert in “Artillerie,” he rhetorically confronts God antagonistically, yet knowing himself invited to do so. “But sir, so what I plead is just” is reminiscent of “But I have also starres and shooters too,” and “Mine, O thou lord of life” shows the same confidence of one who knows himself, as Herbert says, to be “thine infinitely.”

As Herbert does in some of his other poems, Hopkins makes a deliberately awkward scansion of lines which express life’s, or his own, cross-grainedness. “Disappointment all I endeavour end” or “Them; birds build – but not I build; no, but strain” are lines which strain indeed, not just by the difficult enjambment and syntax but by the falling of the stresses. By an ironic contrast, the “sots and thralls of lust” is a euphonious phrase, and these sinners are implicitly pictured in the weeds which are “leaved how thick,” shaken with “fresh wind.” These attractive wild plants, not Herbert’s garland-flowers or Coleridge’s amaranths of poetic eternity, form the contrast with the unproductive speaker.

Hopkins goes where Herbert and Coleridge have not gone: to a consideration of the inequities of life, and therefore, implicitly, to a speculation about God’s justice. Could God’s planting be at fault, as is suggested – momentarily – in the biblical source of this sonnet, Jeremiah 12:1-2?

Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee: yet let me talk of thy judgements: Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? Wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously? Thou hast planted them, yea, they have taken root: they grow, yea, they bring forth fruit . . .

So the Authorized Version. But the Rheims Douai translation (1582-1610) is closer to the Vulgate, and to Hopkins:

Thou indeede O Lord art just, if I dispute with thee, but yet
I wil speake just thinges to thee . . .

“You are just in your arranging of things,” Hopkins is saying, “but I am just, too, when I complain about the wicked. Why should they prosper? Why have you planted them, and allowed them to flourish?”

The answers to these questions appear to be in Psalm 1, which seems to refute Jeremiah, and Hopkins’s sonnet and its imagery, point for point:

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the
ungodly He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of
water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also
shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. The
ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind
driveth away. . . . For the Lord knoweth the way of the
righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish. (Psalm 1:1,
3, 4, 6; Authorized Version)

But the Psalms elsewhere also express the puzzlement of Jeremiah and Hopkins. Psalm 73 starts with the goodness of God, while Hopkins starts with His justice; but then the psalmist for many verses portrays the flourishing of the wicked, and complains that “I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency. For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning” (vv. 13-14) – much as Hopkins asks “Wert thou my enemy, O thou my friend, / How wouldst thou worse, I wonder, than thou dost / Defeat, thwart me?” Psalm 73 ends with a confession of these resentments: “I was as a beast before thee” and with the realization that God sets up the wicked for a fall, and that after all, “whom have I . . . but thee?” just as Hopkins calls on God only, not on himself or nature, to send his roots rain.⁴²

An answer which Herbert might have given to Hopkins concerning the ancient dilemma of the earthly prosperity of the enemies of God is one which is biblical, but unpalatable to the modern mind. Herbert suggests throughout “The Church Militant” that the apparent success of the wicked has always been to the eventual benefit of the church. The fruitfulness of the wicked, and their very being,

serves God's purposes. "I will harden Pharaoh's heart" so that the Israelites would see the miraculous work of God (Exodus 7:3; compare Paul's comment in Romans 9:17ff). The weeds are raised up in order to be destroyed, and both their flourishing and their ultimate destruction are to the praise of God.

Hopkins would of course have also been able to make this theologically correct answer, as well as the more usual one about waiting for things to be made right in the eternal judgment, but disappointment with his own failures has made doctrine, however true, temporarily unsatisfying. Hopkins is poetically representing the universal temptation to put God in the dock, to use C.S. Lewis's phrase, and to judge the justice of God by human standards.⁴³ "Herod in judgement sits, while I do stand" says Christ in Herbert's "The Sacrifice" (l. 81). Yet the Psalmist in Psalm 143, as unhappy as Hopkins, knows for certain that "in thy sight shall no man living be justified" (v. 2), not even he whose life is spent "upon thy cause"; and Job asks "how should man be just with God? If he will contend with him, he cannot answer him one of a thousand. . . . For he is not a man, as I am, that I should answer him, and we should come together in judgment" (9:2-3, 32). Human ideas of justice are not sufficient; a human court of justice, in which there can be equality of pleading, is not an adequate analogy. Hopkins admits that God is just. But like Jeremiah, he sees that there must be a disconnection between the human and the divine understanding of justice. Yet he sees too that it is God's justice which allows him to state his case, even though that case is that God appears to be unjust. The parent poem, "Employment" (I), gives a hint that the solution to these paradoxes is "thy grace" – not a grace which ignores justice, but one which depends on the justice-satisfying work of Christ.

The voice of this poem lies between that of "Employment" (I) and "Work Without Hope." Vimala Herman rejects any autobiographical element, arguing that

what Hopkins "really" experienced in his private self in relation to the issues raised in the poem . . . remains inviolate. . . . What we have is not transparency, or some kind of "realism," but a displaced projection – the presentation of an

imaginative drama, structured as poetry and realized as art, within the . . . public medium of language.⁴⁴

Yet these qualifications do not prevent the poem from being one of the voices of the "real" Hopkins; and Herman does not extend her argument to the original, the passage in Jeremiah. "Thou art indeed just" may be more autobiographical than Herbert's poem, but it is less autobiographical than Coleridge's, because it is a revoicing of an Old Testament complaint. How much it is a modernized Jeremiah, how much Hopkins's own complaints, and how much the giving of words to the common experience of Christians, it is impossible to say.

The pathetic fallacy is reversed in "*Justus quidem tu es*," as it is also in Coleridge's and Herbert's poems. So far from reproducing the speaker's emotions, nature is flaunting its useful happiness while the speaker is chafing in his uselessness and disappointment. Even the weeds are beautiful in their luxuriance, just as those whose god is lust (Mackenzie suggests "rakish poets"⁴⁵) "thrive" even in their "spare hours." All, except the poet, are fruitful, regardless of morality or belief.

"To seem the stranger seems my lot, my life," said Hopkins elsewhere (poem no. 43). He is outside nature's relationships as well as its fruitfulness: eunuch and alien. But Isaiah 56:3-5 is an answer to both these descriptions:

Neither let the son of the stranger, that hath joined himself to the Lord, speak, saying, The Lord hath utterly separated me from his people: neither let the eunuch say, Behold, I am a dry tree. For thus saith the Lord unto the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant; Even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters; I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off. Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the Lord, to serve him, and to love the name of the Lord . . . Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.

The "dry tree" of this passage, as well as the flourishing plants of Jeremiah 12, is a basis for Hopkins's sonnet. The gracious, overflowing acceptance demonstrated here – "*better* than of sons and of daughters" – is recognized in the sonnet's last line. "Mine" is the lord of life: the word is first for emphasis. The One who has the ultimate "husbandrie / To water these," as Herbert says, is "mine," says Hopkins, and he will "send my roots rain." In fact he has done so, for the poem lives.

It is the "rain" of spiritual fruitfulness which Hopkins wants, not Coleridge's nectar and wreaths of poetic immortality. To write a poem of excellence does not appear to him "a work that wakes." His concern is not, as Coleridge's, whether the Muse has ignored him, but that all his endeavors in "life upon thy cause" appear to be disappointed. His attention is not on whether his poetry is eternal, but whether all his life and work are pleasing to God and fruitful in the lives of others.

In the unfinished "Thee, God, I come from, to thee go," Hopkins recognizes that a lack of successful employment must be traced to the always-just will of God. "Just thou art" admits the speaker in the poem, which also contains this stanza:

I have life before me still
 And thy purpose to fulfil:
 Yea a debt to pay thee yet:
 Help me, sir, and so I will. (ll. 17-20)

Herbert may have disagreed. The debt has been paid by Christ ("Redemption"). But the disagreement would still be sympathetic, for in "The Thanksgiving" and "The Reprisal" he acknowledges and ridicules his own wish to repay what has itself already fully covered all obligation. There can be no human matching of the work of God, no possibility of earning equality with God. It is this attempt which leads to the frustration expressed in "*Justus quidem tu es*": I am spending my life upon thy cause, yet I thrive less than the sots and thralls of lust. But the very language undermines the speaker. "Thralls" implies pity for the servitude of those bound by their sin, and therefore gratitude that he is not such; "thy cause" suggests a knightly quarrel whose basis, in the squire's eyes, is justice: a just cause.

"The just man justices," says Hopkins in "As kingfishers catch fire." He does not make himself just by acts of justice. He does justice

because he is made just, justified: he “acts in God’s eye what in God’s eye he is” (l. 11). So God is justice and is grace, and the two are not contradictory. As it is the grace of God which allows sinners temporarily to flourish, so it is the grace of God (“friend” and “mine”) which allows the poem to be, and to be useful, as a contradiction of its own thesis of barrenness. The poem wakes; the roots have been sent rain.

IV

Coleridge changed Herbert’s prayer for usefulness into an expression of beliefs about a poet’s work which Herbert and his first readers would have been unlikely to hold. Hopkins then used both poems and a biblical theme to complain about the success of the wicked and his own unfruitfulness. Both “descendants” are sonnets, unlike their parent poem – though the conceptual, rather than formal, shape of Hopkins’s poem is similar to Herbert’s, ending with a cry to God to send what is needed, while the end of Coleridge’s cries only to the reader for sympathy.

All three speakers look at nature’s productiveness and compare it with their own deficiencies. In Herbert’s poem, the “nature” of created beings is to declare the glory of God (Psalm 19) by their very existence. Sin makes him feel useless and as though he has broken the chain of created purpose. However, that is to make the sin greater than God – as Herbert very well knows: for there is the poem, glorifying God and humbling man.

Coleridge in his later prose departed from ideas about union with nature, but his later poetry still betrays a longing for the imagined usefulness of being a prophet of nature.⁴⁶ Therefore he thought himself “without hope” when this was not achieved. Coleridge’s speaker feels alienated from nature precisely because he is trying to be the Word, to wear the “wreath” instead of making a “garland” for Christ. But the poem is not a “work without hope,” for admission of failure in this case is healthy. Hopkins’s expression of frustration is sincere, yet its complaint, like those of the two earlier poems, is ultimately an untruth. “Birds build – but not I build”; but he does build, for here is the poem, “leaved how thick,” glorifying God by its beauty and truth, and fruitful in its entire dependence upon the justice of God.

That “the sweetnesse and the praise were thine” is Herbert’s longing. His complaint has no bitterness, unlike Hopkins’s, and is concerned with glory for God, unlike Coleridge’s. So far from being “barren to thy praise,” it is an expression of trust. What greater usefulness, what better “employment,” could there be?

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Notes

1. F.E. Hutchinson, ed., *The Works of George Herbert* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1941), note on ll. 17-20, p. 495. All further references to Herbert are from this edition and will be cited by line numbers only.

2. Norman Mackenzie, ed., *Poetical Works of Gerard Manley Hopkins* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), p. 501.

3. Helen Wilcox, ed., *The English Poems of George Herbert* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. xxx.

4. An example of its appropriate auditory meaning is in the first stanza. “Spread” and “extend” are in relatively long lines; then “Nipt in the bud,” a short line of short syllables, brings the abrupt and untimely frosty ending for the unopened flower.

5. Cristina Malcolmson, *George Herbert: A Literary Life* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp. 77-81.

6. See Daniel Doerksen, *Conforming to the Word: Herbert, Donne, and the English Church Before Laud* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1997), ch. 1 and *passim*.

7. Wilcox, *The English Poems of George Herbert*, p. 206.

8. See Richard Strier, *Love Known: Theology and Experience in George Herbert's Poetry* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983). Strier cites Luther, Calvin, Sibbes, and others as recognizing that God can be approached with boldness by his adopted children, and decorum ignored (see Romans 8:1, 15, 32, and Hebrews 4:15-16); see pp. 176 and 179, and all of chapter 7.

9. Wilcox, *The English Poems of George Herbert*, p. 206.

10. Williams MS, cited in Robert Boenig, “Herbert’s Poor Reed: Musical Irony in “Employment” (I),” *Notes & Queries* 35 (March 1988): 64-66. The “poet” application is mine.

11. Malcolmson says that “the speaker becomes the pastoral piper, poor in abilities but capable of improvement and contributing to a larger harmony” (*George Herbert*, p. 117).

12. Arnold Stein, "George Herbert: The Art of Plainness," in *Seventeenth-Century English Poetry*, ed. W.R. Keast (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 257-78.

13. *Samuel Taylor Coleridge: Selected Poetry and Prose*, ed. Kathleen Raine (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1957), p. 108; see also *Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. H.J. Jackson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 139, where the capitalization of "Hope" has been removed.

14. Morton D. Paley, *Coleridge's Later Poetry* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), p. 73; see Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, ed. George Watson (London, J.M. Dent & Sons, 1906; rev. 1960), pp. 225-28; *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, Bollingen Series LXXV, vol. 16, *Poetical Works (I): Reading Text Part 2*, ed. J.C. Mays (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), p. 1032: "Coleridge was reading Herbert in Jun 1825 and Feb-Jun 1826." See in the same series, *Marginalia II*, ed. George Whalley, p. 1033 (where Coleridge's changing views on Herbert from 1809 to 1826 are also documented): "By then Coleridge was annotating this [1674] copy for the second time, with deep and steady admiration. . . . Notes of admiration are also found for June and October 1830." See also *The Notebooks of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Kathleen Coburn and Merton Christensen, vol. 4 (1810-26) (London: Routledge, 1990), entry 5192: "Coleridge was annotating the 1674 edition [of *The Temple*] in June 1824 and returned to *The Temple* frequently."

15. *Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. E.L. Griggs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956-71), V, pp. 414-16.

16. See the editorial comments about the probably identity of "Rachel" in *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Poetical Works (I), Reading Text Part 2*, ed. J.C. Mays, Bollingen Series LXXV (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), pp. 1031-33.

17. Friedrich Hölderlin, *Hyperion* (1797), quoted in M.H. Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature* (New York: Norton, 1971), p. 30.

18. Friedrich Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man* (1795), trans. R. Snell, quoted in Stephen Prickett, *Words and The Word: Language, Poetics and Biblical Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 147, n. 171.

19. Coleridge, *Philosophical Lectures*, pp. 343-34, quoted in Prickett, *Words and The Word*, p. 146.

20. Duncan Wu, ed., *Romanticism: An Anthology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), p. 512, l. 61. When not indicated otherwise, poems by Coleridge and Wordsworth are quoted from this edition, and cited by line numbers only.

21. Quoted in William Christie, *Samuel Taylor Coleridge: A Literary Life* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), p. 68, ll. 110-13.

22. Coleridge, "Religious Musings," ll. 346, 349, in *Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. H.J. Jackson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), pp. 13-

23. The French Revolution gave poets ideas of a secular Millennium, a restoration of humanity and nature which did not involve Christianity.

23. Eventually, Coleridge changed his position, saying that "the very purpose of my life is to overthrow Pantheism." Thomas McFarland says of him that "a Unitarian deity could never really serve Coleridge's philosophic-religious needs." See *Coleridge and the Pantheist Tradition* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), pp. 252, 234. McFarland's choice of words is telling, when we compare Coleridge to Herbert. Herbert wishes to serve Christ, not to have a Christ who serves Herbert's needs; paradoxically, he finds against all apparent justice and reason that Christ does serve him ("Love" [III]). Coleridge wants a God who will satisfy his intellectual and emotional needs, and even his later "Trinitarian" writings do not suggest that a consciousness of his own sin, or the holiness, justice, love and wrath of God, have driven him to an acceptance of orthodox Christian doctrines, but rather, that he has taken a philosophic position.

24. Wordsworth, *The Prelude* (1799-1806), ll. 453-90. See also Book I, ll. 61-63: "clothed in priestly robes / My spirit thus singled out . . . for holy services." Note that while the cliffs "wheel around him" and fade off into feebleness behind him (ll. 485-89), still the hills send "an *alien* sound of melancholy" (ll. 471-72, my emphasis).

25. "[I understood that you would] point out . . . a manifest scheme of redemption, of reconciliation from this enmity with nature [in "The Recluse"]." Coleridge's disappointment demonstrates what both poets had earlier thought to be the Romantic "program." Letter to Wordsworth, 30 May 1815, in *Selected Poetry and Prose*, ed. Raine, p. 131.

26. Prickett, *Words and The Word*, p. 101.

27. Coleridge's turn away from Unitarianism and towards Trinitarian theology has the sound of a reluctant admitting of a hypothesis he can't argue against. See Letter to his brother George, July 1802, *Collected Letters*, ed. Griggs, II, p. 807. Neither his poems nor his prose writings convey Herbert's overpowering sense of gratitude to a substitutionary Redeemer.

28. A.J. Harding, *Coleridge and the Inspired Word* (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1985), p. 66. Harding cites four Old Testament occasions on which fire fell from heaven upon an offering.

29. On Schelling's synthesis of spirit and nature, see Roger Scruton, "Fichte to Sartre," in *The Illustrated Oxford History of Western Philosophy*, ed. Anthony Kenny (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 198-201. William Hazlitt describes Coleridge as having "lost himself in the labyrinths of the Hartz Forest and of the Kantian philosophy, and amongst the cabalistic

names of Fichte and Schelling and Lessing." *The Spirit of the Age*, in Wu, ed., *Romanticism*, p. 661.

30. Harding, *Coleridge and the Inspired Word*, p. 72, quoting *Biographia Literaria* I:304.

31. "As an ardent reader of Luther's *Colloquia Mensala* . . . Coleridge could hardly have missed the description of the amaranth . . . 'It is called Amaranthus (said Luther) from hence, that it neither withereth nor decaieth. I know nothing (said Luther) more like unto the Church then this flower Amaranthus (called with us in Germanie, Thousand fair.' " In *The Notebooks of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Coburn and Christensen, entry 5192.

32. "Many of the most distinctive and recurring elements in both the thought and literature of the age had their origin in theological concepts, images, and plot patterns which were translated, in Wordsworth's terms, to "men as natural beings in the strength of their nature." M.H. Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism*, p. 65 and *passim*. The title phrase was originally Carlyle's, in his remarks on German transcendentalism (*Sartor Resartus*, Book 3, ch. 8).

33. Coleridge, *Selected Poetry and Prose*, ed. Raine, p. 102.

34. Thomas Carlyle, *The Life of John Sterling* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1871), pp. 46, 49.

35. Carlyle, *Sterling*, p. 50.

36. "The poetick art [is] an imitation of that Divine agency which creates." J.G. Herder, *The Spirit of Hebrew Poetry* (1782), trans. J. Marsh, 1833, ii, 40; cited in David Lyle Jeffrey, *People of the Book* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), p. 302). Dorothy Leigh Sayers takes a Coleridgean "image of the Maker" position in "Towards a Christian Aesthetic" and "Creative Mind" (*Unpopular Opinions*, 1947), and to a lesser extent in "The Image of God" and "Problem Picture" (*The Mind of the Maker*, 1941), all reprinted in *The Whimsical Christian* (New York: Collier Books, 1978).

37. Compare, for example, Herbert's "A Wreath" and "A true Hymne," and Hopkins's "Morning, Midday, and Evening Sacrifice" and "As kingfishers catch fire," in *Gerard Manley Hopkins: Poems and Prose*, ed. W.H. Gardner (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985), pp. 25, 34. Hopkins wrote to R.W. Dixon: "Now if you value what I write, if I do myself, much more does our Lord" (*Poems and Prose*, p. 195). All further quotations from Hopkins are from this edition, and will be cited by line numbers for poetry and page numbers for prose.

38. Quoted in Ron Hansen, "Art and Religion: Hopkins and Bridges," *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture* 7, no. 1 (2004): 78-96, at 95, my emphasis.

39. Alan Heuser, *The Shaping Vision of Gerard Manley Hopkins* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958), p. 2 and *passim*.

40. R.W. Dixon, "Introduction," in Hopkins, *Poems and Prose*, xix.

41. Heuser, *The Shaping Vision*, p. 96.

42. Compare Jeremiah 9:24, 10:24, and 11:20 – on the just character of God, but also on "my cause" – with Jeremiah 12:1-2.

43. "For the modern man the roles are reversed. He is the judge: God is in the dock. He is quite a kindly judge: if God should have a reasonable defence for being the god who permits war, poverty and disease, he is ready to listen to it. The trials may even end in God's acquittal. But the important thing is that man is on the bench and God is in the dock." C.S. Lewis, *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology*, ed. Walter Hooper (London: HarperCollins, 1979), p. 100; originally "Difficulties in Presenting the Faith to Modern Unbelievers," *Lumen Vitae* 3 (September 1948): 421-26.

44. Vimala Herman, "Subject Construction as Stylistic Strategy in Gerard Manley Hopkins's 'Thou art indeed just . . .,'" *Lingua e Stile* 22, no. 3 (1987): 449-68, at 468.

45. Mackenzie, ed., *Poetical Works of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, p. 501.

46. In the same year that "Work Without Hope" was written, Coleridge wrote: "The whole scheme of the Christian Faith . . . is *ideally, morally, and historically* true [and] necessarily involving Revelation." "Aids to Reflection," 1825, quoted in Christie, *Samuel Taylor Coleridge: A Literary Life*, p. 209, secondary emphasis in bold added.