

COLERIDGE'S WRITINGS

General Editor: John Beer

Volume 1: On Politics and Society

COLERIDGE'S WRITINGS

Myriad-minded in his intellectual interests, Coleridge often passed quickly from one subject to another, so that the range and mass of the materials he left can be bewildering to later readers. *Coleridge's Writings* is a series addressed to those who wish to have a guide to his important statements on particular subjects. Each volume presents his writings in a major field of human knowledge or thought, tracing the development of his ideas. Connections are also made with relevant writings in the period, suggesting the extent to which Coleridge was either summing up, contributing to or reacting against current developments. Each volume is produced by a specialist in the field; the general editor is John Beer, Professor of English Literature at Cambridge, who has published various studies of Coleridge's thought and poetry.

Coleridge's Writings

Volume 1

On Politics and Society

Edited by

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MACMILLAN

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Foreword © John Beer 1990

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For my Father and Mother

Contents

| | |
|---|------|
| <i>Foreword by John Beer</i> | ix |
| <i>Preface</i> | xi |
| <i>List of Abbreviations</i> | xiii |
| <i>Coleridge's Life</i> | xiv |
| Introduction | 1 |
| 1 The Politics of Radical Religion: The Bristol Lectures of 1795 | 25 |
| (a) <i>Conciones ad Populum: "Introductory Address"</i> | 26 |
| (b) <i>Conciones ad Populum: "On the Present War"</i> | 37 |
| (c) "Lectures on Revealed Religion, Its Corruptions and Political Views": Lecture 5 | 38 |
| (d) From <i>The Plot Discovered; or An Address to the People, against Ministerial Treason</i> | 41 |
| 2 The Retreat from Radicalism, 1798–1802 | 49 |
| (a) The Limitations of Political Change (letter of 1798) | 49 |
| (b) "Recantation" (poem of 1798) | 52 |
| (c) "On the French Constitution" (<i>Morning Post</i> , 1799) | 54 |
| (d) "Comparison of the Present State of France and that of Rome under Julius and Augustus Caesar" (<i>Morning Post</i> , 1802) | 65 |
| (e) "Once a Jacobin, Always a Jacobin" (<i>Morning Post</i> , 1802) | 72 |
| (f) The Virtues of Church Establishments (letters of 1802) | 77 |
| 3 Principles and Prudence in Politics: <i>The Friend</i> (1809–10) | 79 |
| 4 Property and Responsibility: <i>A Lay Sermon</i> (1817) | 97 |
| 5 The Idea of the Constitution: <i>On the Constitution of the Church and State, According to the Idea of Each</i> (1829) | 152 |

| | |
|--|------------|
| 6 A Few Late Reflections: Coleridge on the 1832 Reform Act | 221 |
| (a) <i>Table Talk</i> , 21 November 1830: "House of Commons" | 221 |
| (b) <i>Table Talk</i> , 20 March 1831: "Government" | 221 |
| (c) <i>Table Talk</i> , 25 June 1831: "Popular Representation" | 222 |
| (d) <i>Table Talk</i> , 20 November 1831: "Conduct of Ministers on the Reform Bill. – The Multitude" | 223 |
| (e) <i>Table Talk</i> , 22 February 1832: "Ministers and the Reform Bill" | 224 |
| (f) <i>Table Talk</i> , 3 March 1832: "Disfranchisement" | 225 |
| (g) <i>Table Talk</i> , 4 April 1832: "Moral Law of Polarity" | 226 |
| (h) <i>Table Talk</i> , 21 May 1832: "Professor Park. – English Constitution. – Democracy" | 226 |
| (i) The Reform Bill in Caricature (letter of 1832) | 227 |
| <i>Notes</i> | 228 |
| <i>Select Bibliography</i> | 245 |
| <i>Index</i> | 248 |

Foreword

The appearance of hitherto unpublished material in the present century has brought out more fully the range and complexity of Coleridge's intelligence and knowledge. The *Notebooks* and *Collected Works*, both now well on the way to completion, together with the *Collected Letters*, have made it increasingly clear that this was the most extraordinary English mind of the time. The specialist or more general student who wishes to know what Coleridge had to say on a particular subject, however, may find the sheer mass of materials bewildering, since in his less formal writings Coleridge passed quickly from one subject to another. *Coleridge's Writings* is a series addressed to such readers. In each volume a particular area of Coleridge's interest is explored, with an attempt to present his most significant statements and to show the development of his thought on the subject in question.

The present volume, *On Politics and Society*, attempts to meet one of the most commonly encountered needs. Coleridge is often referred to as an important thinker on these questions, yet particular works read in isolation do not properly convey his achievement. The arrangement here, where short statements are interspersed among extended works, draws attention to the elements of development, while the commentary, tracing the cross-links between ideas, indicates his intellectual range.

Other features also emerge. Coleridge's style and his manner of ordering ideas changed from one period of his life to another; they could also vary according to his audience. His early political writing veers towards the declamatory and images are chosen with an eye to immediate effect. During his middle period his tone ranges between subtle reasoning and reproaches of the age that can be slightly querulous, while an elegiac note marks his later attempts to bring Church and state into a single, unified vision. Despite some unevennesses, however, the reader of these extracts will most often be struck by the energy of Coleridge's thinking throughout his life, the acuteness of his criticisms and distinctions, his instinctive sense of style. There was a quiet struggle, also, between the call to be a prophet and a larger sense of himself as reconciling priest; both roles can often be traced in the same piece. Dr Morrow's skill in selecting the most important statements highlights this interplay.

Further projected volumes will include Coleridge's writings on religion, on humanity and on nature. There will be no attempt at exhaustive presentation of Coleridge's writings on any of the subjects to be dealt with; for these, and for most other purposes the collected editions will remain indispensable. The purpose of the volumes in this series is to complement those more comprehensive presentations by drawing attention to his key statements and presenting them, with apposite commentary, in a full and coherent form.

J. B. B.
General Editor

Preface

In preparing the texts for inclusion in this volume I have attempted to cater primarily for the needs of the general reader, and graduate and undergraduate students; all readers, however, will wish to avail themselves of the definitive editing in the *Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (Princeton, NJ, 1969–), which is the standard edition, and to which much in the present volume is introductory. My greatest debt in compiling this volume is to the scholars involved in that project; I have depended heavily upon their work, and must record my thanks to them and to the Princeton University Press (the copyright-holders) for permitting this volume to benefit from it. Because most of the writings published here have already appeared in the *Collected Works*, it seemed sensible to base the texts on that source wherever possible. However, the works published in the present volume have been abridged somewhat, and I have supplied linking commentaries, notes, and English translations of Latin and Greek phrases; the translations appear in square brackets, as do any other intrusions into the texts. Some of Coleridge's notes have been retained as footnotes; the editor's textual notes are printed as end notes. Unless otherwise stated, all works cited in the notes and included in the Bibliography were published in London.

The extracts from Coleridge's correspondence which appear as items 2(f) and 6(i) are based on the texts in the *Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Earl Leslie Griggs, 6 vols (Oxford, 1956–71); I am grateful to Oxford University Press for allowing me to use this material. I must also acknowledge the financial help of the Leave and Internal Research Committees of Victoria University, and assistance rendered by the staffs of the Cambridge and Victoria University Libraries. My stay in Cambridge was made very pleasant by a connection with Robinson College, and I am most grateful to the Warden and Council for electing me to a Bye Fellowship for the winter of 1984–5. I would also like to take this opportunity to record my thanks to Mark Francis of the University of Canterbury, New Zealand, and Paul Harris, Geoffrey Debnam, Chris Parkin and Arthur Pomeroy of Victoria University for their help in scholarly matters; to Marion Beardsmore, Jenny Berry and Coula Pastelides for their good-humoured and professional secretarial

help, and to my wife, Diana, for all sorts of help and encouragement. Paul Harris and my wife very kindly shared the burden of checking the proofs. Professor John Beer's interest and advice and encouragement have been crucial. Carl Woodring, editor of the *Table Talk* for the *Collected Coleridge*, was kind enough to look at the relevant entries in proof and make one or two suggestions. In thanking these people for their help I must also acknowledge that final responsibility for any shortcomings rests with me.

Wellington, New Zealand

J. M.

List of Abbreviations

- C & S S. T. Coleridge, *On the Constitution of the Church and State According to the Idea of Each*, ed. John Colmer (1976), CC 10.
- CC *Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, gen. ed. Kathleen Coburn (Princeton, NJ, 1969–).
- CL *Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Earl Leslie Griggs, 6 vols (Oxford, 1956–71).
- CM S. T. Coleridge, *Marginalia*, ed. George Whalley (1980–), CC 12.
- CN *Notebooks of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Kathleen Coburn (New York and Princeton, NJ, 1957–).
- DNB *Dictionary of National Biography*.
- EOT S. T. Coleridge, *Essays on his Times*, ed. David V. Erdman, 3 vols (1978), CC 3.
- Friend* S. T. Coleridge, *The Friend*, ed. Barbara E. Rooke, 2 vols (1969), CC 4.
- JHI *Journal of the History of Ideas*.
- LS S. T. Coleridge, *Lay Sermons*, ed. R. J. White (1972), CC 6.
- Lectures 1795 S. T. Coleridge, *Lectures 1795: On Politics and Religion*, ed. Lewis Patton and Peter Mann (1971), CC 1.
- OED *Oxford English Dictionary*.
- PW *The Complete Poetical Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. E. H. Coleridge, 2 vols (Oxford, 1912).
- Table Talk *Specimens of the Table Talk of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. H. N. Coleridge (1835; 2nd edn, corrected, 1836).
- WPW *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth*, ed. Ernest de Selincourt and Helen Darbishire, 5 vols (Oxford, 1940–9).

Coleridge's Life

The following outline shows some crucial events in Coleridge's career in relation to his social and political writings. Full chronologies are printed in the various volumes of the Princeton *Collected Works*.

- 1772 (21 Oct) Coleridge born.
- 1782–91 At school at Christ's Hospital.
- 1791–late 1794 At Jesus College, Cambridge (enlisted as a dragoon Dec 1793–April 1794).
- 1794 (June) Meeting with Southey at Oxford initiates pantisocratic scheme.
- 1795 (Jan) Bristol lectures begun.
(May–June) Six Lectures on Revealed Religion.
(Dec) *Conciones ad Populum; The Plot Discovered*.
- 1796 (Mar–May) *The Watchman*.
- 1797 (Nov) 'The Ancient Mariner' begun.
- 1798 (Mar) 'The Ancient Mariner' completed.
(Apr) 'Recantation' (later 'France: an Ode'); 'Fears in Solitude'.
(Sep) *Lyrical Ballads* published; to Germany with the Wordsworths.
- 1799 Attends lectures on literature, biblical criticism and physiology at Göttingen.
(July) Returns to England.
(Nov) In London writing for the *Morning Post* until April 1800.
(Dec) 'On the French Constitution'.
- 1801 (Nov) In London writing for the *Morning Post* until March 1802.
- 1802 (Sep–Oct) 'Comparison of France and Rome'.
(Oct) Letter of April to Sara Hutchinson published in revised form as 'Dejection'.
(From Sep) In London writing for the *Morning Post*.
- 1803 (July–Aug) 'The Men and the Times' in the *Morning Post*.
(Aug/Sep) Stuart sells and leaves the *Morning Post*.
- 1804 (Jan–Mar) In London, writing for *The Courier*.
- 1804–6 In Malta and Sicily, first as under-secretary to Alexander

- Ball, British High Commissioner. Drafts 'Observations on Egypt'.
- 1805 Brief items for and in *The Courier*.
 (Jan) Acting Public Secretary in Malta.
 (Sep) To Sicily and Italy.
- 1806 (Aug) Returns to England.
- 1807 (Mar) Slave trade abolished.
- 1808 (July) Review of Clarkson, *History of the Abolition of the Slave-Trade*.
 (Nov) First prospectus of *The Friend*.
- 1809 (May) Wordsworth, *Convention of Cintra* pamphlet.
 (June) First number of *The Friend*.
- 1810 (Mar) Last number of *The Friend*.
- 1811 (Apr–Sep) On staff of *The Courier* as regular contributor.
- 1812 Second edition of *The Friend*.
 (Jan–May) Essays in *The Courier*.
- 1814 (Sep–Dec) 'Letters to Mr Justice Fletcher' in *The Courier*.
- 1815 (June) Battle of Waterloo.
- 1816 (May) 'Christabel', 'Kubla Khan' and 'The Pains of Sleep' published.
 (Dec) *The Statesman's Manual*.
- 1817 (Jan) *A Lay Sermon*.
 (July) *Biographia Literaria* and *Sibylline Leaves*.
 (Nov) *Zapolya*.
- 1818 (Jan) 'Treatise on Method' in *Encyclopaedia Metropolitana*.
 (Nov) New edition ('rifaccimento') of *The Friend*.
- 1818–19 (Dec–Mar) Lectures on the history of philosophy and on literature.
- 1825 *Aids to Reflection* published by 1 June. Work on *Church and State* begun.
- 1828 *Poetical Works* (3 vols).
- 1829 (Dec) *Church and State* (2nd edn 1830).
- 1832 (May) Reform Bill passed.
- 1834 (25 July) Death of Coleridge.