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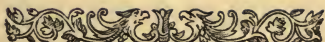


2 Coleridge, Samuel T  
Unpublished letters





UNIV. OF  
CALIFORNIA



UNPUBLISHED LETTERS FROM  
SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE  
TO THE REV. JOHN  
PRIOR ESTLIN.

COMMUNICATED BY HENRY A. BRIGHT.



70 200  
200 200

## UNPUBLISHED LETTERS

FROM SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE TO THE  
REV. JOHN PRIOR ESTLIN.



THE accompanying very interesting letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge have been kindly placed at my disposal by Miss Estlin, of Clifton. They were addressed to her grandfather, the Rev. Dr. Estlin, who was the Unitarian minister of the Lewin's Mead Congregation at Bristol. Dr. Estlin appears to have been a man of considerable ability and very highly respected; and it is clear that during the earlier part of Coleridge's career he exerted a remarkable influence over him. These letters range from 1796 to 1814, and are especially

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curious as showing, more fully than has hitherto been done, the circumstances under which Coleridge adopted and afterwards relinquished the profession of a Unitarian minister.

Two distinguished literary men have spoken of the time, to which the most important of these letters refer. In Hazlitt's "My first acquaintance with Poets," which he contributed to "The Liberal," he speaks of walking, when a boy, ten miles to Shrewsbury to hear Coleridge preach, for "a poet and a philosopher getting up into a Unitarian pulpit to preach the Gospel, was a romance in those degenerate days, a sort of revival of the primitive spirit of Christianity, which was not to be resisted."

It was some eight or nine years afterwards that De Quincey met Coleridge. "Coleridge told me that it had cost him a painful effort,

“ but not a moment’s hesitation, to  
“ abjure his Unitarianism, from the  
“ circumstance that he had amongst  
“ the Unitarians many friends, to  
“ some of whom he was greatly in-  
“ debted for great kindness. In  
“ particular he mentioned Mr. Est-  
“ lin of Bristol, a distinguished Dis-  
“ senting clergyman, as one whom  
“ it grieved him to grieve. But he  
“ would not dissemble his altered  
“ views.”

There is also an unpublished letter of February, 1798, from Theophilus Lindsey (who will be known to many of us from the interesting account of him in Trevelyan’s “ Life of Fox”) to a friend at Shrewsbury, in which he says:—“ You cannot well conceive how much you have raised my opinion of Mr. Coleridge by your account of him. Such shining lights, so virtuous and disinterested, will

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“ contribute to redeem the age we  
“ live in from being so destitute of  
“ apostolic zeal.”

The previous year, Mrs. Barbauld had addressed a poem to Coleridge, urging him to “ fair exertion for  
“ bright fame sustained.”

I have found it difficult to arrange these letters in their proper order, as many of them are without date, and though conjectural dates are often inserted, there is always liability to mistake. Cottle’s “ Early Recollections ” has served as a guide in some instances, but the letters he gives are often also without date, and are sometimes apparently misplaced.

Of the three poems,—the fragment copied out by Miss Wordsworth appears afterwards in a somewhat altered form, in Book I. of “ The Excursion.” The verses, “ To An Unfortunate Princess ” may be found in the “ Monthly Magazine ”



with the title "On a late Connubial  
"rupture in High Life," and they  
appear again in Pickering's edition  
of Coleridge, 1877:—they are not  
in the 1848 edition.

The lines to Horne Tooke I am  
unable to trace. They were written,  
it appears, for "Horne Tooke and the  
"company, who met on June 28th  
"to celebrate his poll," at the West-  
minster election. This celebration  
was held at the "Crown and Anchor"  
in the Strand and was largely at-  
tended, and we further learn from  
Hamilton Reid's "Life of Tooke,"  
that "excellent patriotic songs"  
were sung, but no words are given.

On the circumstances connected  
with Coleridge's visit to Mrs. Evans  
(in the first letter) I can throw no  
light, except indeed that Southey,  
writing to Cottle in 1836, says that  
in 1794 "Coleridge made his en-  
"gagement to Miss Fricker on our

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“return from this journey at my  
“mother’s house at Bath;—not a  
“little to my astonishment, for he  
“had talked of being deeply in love  
“with a certain *Mary Evans*.”

With regard to Coleridge’s Shrewsbury episode, it would appear that he first went on trial at Mr. Rowe’s request (Coleridge mis-spells the name *Row* throughout), and afterwards accepted the invitation of the congregation. The Wedgewoods’ present of 100*l.* he declined, but shortly afterwards came the second offer of 150*l.* a year, and this he (not unnaturally) did *not* decline.

The last letters here printed are in curious contrast to the earlier ones, but they are equally inconsistent with others of the same date which Cottle gives, and it is not quite easy to see what Coleridge’s views exactly were. I learn, however, that the estrangement which took place between him



and Dr. Estlin was owing less to the divergence in their opinions than to the fact that Coleridge's growing habit of opium taking, joined to an absolute recklessness in incurring debts and in failing to fulfil his engagements, had at this time entirely alienated Dr. Estlin's sympathy and respect.

HENRY A. BRIGHT.

THE HISTORY OF THE

... of the ... in the ... of the ...

... of the ... in the ... of the ...

[? Jan., 1796.]

MOSELY, BIRMINGHAM.

My dear and honoured friend



IN my return from Ottery, (where I was received by my mother with transport, and by my brother George with joy and tenderness, and by my other brothers with affectionate civility) I found at Mr. Wades' a letter for me from Mrs. Evans—a most impassioned letter, in which she informed me that after she had acquainted her Brothers, &c., that she had determined to hazard all consequences rather than lose me, they then came forwards and divulged what before this they had kept secret from her,—that even her children's own fortunes were in great measure dependent on the will of the grandfather, and that every thing—the

worst was to be expected from his implacable resentment. She was therefore forced to give up the scheme, and requested me to fly back to her immediately. I accordingly stepped almost immediately into the mail coach—this was Saturday night—and arrived at Darley by dinner-time on Sunday. I hastened to relieve Mrs. Evans's embarrassment. "I cannot be said to have lost that which I never had, and I have gained what I should not otherwise have possessed—your esteem and acquaintance." "Say rather" (she exclaimed) "my veneration and love." After this we spent a lovely week at Matlock, and then visited Ilam, the most beautiful of valleys, and Dove-dale, the most tremendous of Sublimities. Mrs. Evans behaved with great liberality. A little before I was about to quit her, she insisted on my acceptance of 95*l.*,

and she had given Mrs. Coleridge all her baby clothes, which are, I suppose, very valuable. Well, on the Wednesday I was to have left Darley, when in the morning Dr. Crompton came home. From the time that I first left Darley, after having settled with Mrs. Evans, he had been absent at Liverpool. He came to make me the following offer, viz., that if I would take a house in Derby, and open a day-school, confining my number to twelve, he would send his three children on the following terms:—Till I had completed my number he would allow me 100*l.* a-year for them; when I had procured my full number twelve, he should give twenty guineas for each, exclusive of writing masters, drawing, &c. The children to come at nine and leave me at twelve; to come again at two and leave me at five; from three to

five in each afternoon to be occupied with their writing masters, &c. He had not a shadow of doubt on his mind that I should complete my number almost instantly. If so, twelve times twenty guineas = 240 guineas, —and my mornings and evenings at my own disposal, —is a good thing; so I accepted his proposal, it being understood that if anything better should offer, I am at liberty to accept it. The plan is to commence in November; the intermediate time I spend at Bristol, where Mrs. Coleridge will of course lie in. On Thursday I left Derby, and am now at Mr. Hawkes's, at Mosely near Birmingham, where I shall stay till Monday morning next, and shall be at Bristol Monday night. I preached yesterday morning from Hebrews, c. iv. v. 1 and 2, "Let us therefore fear . . . heard it." 'Twas my *chef-d'œuvre*. I think of writing it down



and publishing it with two other sermons, one on the character of Christ, and another on his universal reign, from Isaiah xlv. 22 and 23. I should like you to hear me preach them. I lament that my political notoriety prevents my relieving you occasionally at Bristol. Mrs. Evans requested me to make you and Mrs. Estlin know and love her; she says that she already knows and loves you both, for indeed, my dear, very dear friend! I do love to talk about you. Kiss the dear little ones for me, and give my love to Mrs. Estlin—Mrs. Estlin who is *my sister!* Indeed, I feel myself *rich, very rich,* in possessing your love and esteem.

S. T. COLERIDGE.

Monday morning.

P.S.—If you can afford time, give me a line or two.

Rev. Mr. Estlin,  
St. Michael's Hill,  
Bristol.

[Bristol, 1796?]

*Monday Morning, July 4th.*

My dear and highly-honored  
Friend,



AM alarmed lest I should be obliged to leave Bristol before you come back, which, I assure you, would be chill and comfortless to my feelings beyond expression. On Friday last I received a message from Perry, the editor of the *Morning Chronicle*, through Dr. Beddoes, stating that if I would come to town and write for him, he would make me a regular compensation adequate to the maintenance of myself and Mrs. Coleridge. Grey, the co-editor with Perry, died at the Hotwells, on Wednesday or Thursday. Dr. Beddoes thought it a fine opening for



me, and added that Perry expected an immediate answer. My feet began mechanically to move towards your house. I was most uncomfortably situated. You and Mrs. Estlin out of Bristol, and Charles Danvers out of Bristol, and even Mr. Wade was absent. So I had nobody to speak to on the subject except Mr. Cottle, which I did, and he advised me to write to Perry immediately and accept his proposal. I did so, and expect to-morrow a letter from him with particulars, which I will immediately acquaint you with. My heart is very heavy, for I love Bristol and I do not love London. [Besides, local and temporary politics are my aversion,—they narrow the understanding, they narrow the heart, they fret the temper. But there are two Giants leagued together, whose most imperious commands I must obey, however re-

luctant—their names are BREAD and CHEESE.

I received from your sister your kind note with Mr. Hobhouse's and Dr. Disney's kindness. You will believe, and will acquaint Dr. Disney, that I feel as I ought to do. I have myself written a few lines to Mr. Hobhouse.

You have had delightful weather, and you have that calm sunshine of the soul that gives you senses to feel and enjoy it. I am with you in spirit; and almost feel "the sea-breeze lift my youthful locks." I would write Odes and Sonnets morning and evening, and metaphysicize at noon, and of rainy days I would overwhelm you with an Avalanche of Puns and Conundrums loosened by sudden thaw from the Alps of my Imagination.

My most respectful and tenderest love to dear Mrs. Estlin, and ask

her—" If a woman had murdered  
" her cousin, and there were no  
" other proof of her guilt except  
" that she had a *half-barrel cask* in her  
" possession,—how would that con-  
" vict her?" Answer—It would be  
evident that she had kild-er-kin. As  
I know that now she cannot mortify  
me by pretending not to enjoy the  
joke, she will laugh most intemper-  
ately. Do not ask her the next till  
a quarter of an hour's intermission:  
Why Satan sitting on a house-top  
would be like a decayed merchant?  
Answer—Because he would be imp-  
over-a-shed.

Mr. Wade was talking of Davies  
in Clare Street, and asked me what  
I thought of a *religious attorney*.  
Why (quoth I) I should not doubt  
of his attachment to the *law and the*  
*profits* (i. e. prophets), but should  
think his *Gospel* faith rather question-  
able.

My love to Mr. and Mrs. Hort, and ask Hort (who *hates* a Conundrum,—Why a murderer is like an unborn Jack-afs? Answer—He is an aff-aff-in, i.e. afs in an afs.

You rejoice that the prince and princess are reconciled, although I fear

“That never can true reconciliation grow  
“When wounds of deadly wrong have pierced  
so deep.”

I composed a few lines lately on the Princess, in which I simply expressed sympathy for her without endeavouring to heap odium on her husband. Indeed, as the lines are *addressed to her*, it would have been brutal to have abused her husband to her face.

TO AN UNFORTUNATE PRINCESS.

I sigh, fair injur'd Stranger! for thy fate,  
But what shall Sighs avail thee? Thy poor  
Heart

Mid all the pomp and circumstance of State  
Shivers in nakedness! Unbidden start

Sad Recollections of Hope's garish dream,  
That shap'd a seraph form and named it Love;  
It's hues gay-varying as the Orient Beam  
Varies the neck of Cytherea's Dove.

To one soft accent of domestic Joy,  
Poor are the Shouts that shake the high-arch'd  
Dome :

The Plaudits, that thy *public* path annoy,  
Alas! they tell thee, Thou'rt a Wretch at  
*home!*

Then O! retire and weep! their very Woes  
Solace the guiltless. Drop the pearly Flood  
On thy sweet Infant, as the FULL-BLOWN Rose  
Surcharg'd with dew bends o'er its neighb'ring  
Bud!

And ah! that Truth some holy spell could lend  
To lurethy Wanderer from the Syren's power:  
Then bid your Souls inseparably blend,  
Like two bright Dew-drops bosom'd in a  
flower!"

S. T. C.

The Reviews have been wonderful. The Monthly has *cataraeted* panegyric on my poems, the Critical has *cascaed* it, and the Analytical has *dribbled* it with very tolerable



civility. The Monthly has at least done justice to my Religious Musings; they place it "on the very top of the scale of sublimity"!!!

I shall finish with some verses which I addressed to Horne Tooke and the company who met on June 28th, to celebrate his poll. I begin by alluding to the comparatively small number which he polled at his first contest for Westminster. You must read the lines, two abreast.

Britons! when last ye met, with distant streak  
 So faintly promised the pale Dawn to break;  
 So dim it stain'd the precincts of the Sky  
 E'en *Expectation* gaz'd with doubtful Eye.  
 But now such fair Varieties of Light  
 O'er take the heavy sailing Clouds of Night;  
 Th' Horizon kindles with so rich a red,  
 That, though the *Sun still hides* his glorious  
 head,  
 Th' impatient Matin-bird, *assur'd of Day*,  
 Leaves his low nest to meet it's earliest ray;  
 Loud the sweet song of Gratulation sings,  
 And high in air claps his rejoicing wings!

Patriot and Sage ! whose breeze-like Spirit  
first

[επεα  
πτεροεντα]

The lazy mists of Pedantry dispers'd,  
(Mists in which Superstition's *pigmy* band  
Seem'd Giant Forms, the Genii of the Land !)  
Thy struggles soon shall wak'ning Britain bless,  
And Truth and Freedom hail thy wish'd  
success.

Yes *Tooke* ! tho' foul Corruption's wolfish  
throng

Outmalice Calumny's imposthum'd Tongue,  
Thy Country's noblest and *determin'd* Choice,  
Soon shalt thou thrill the Senate with thy  
voice ;

With gradual Dawn bid Error's phantoms  
flit,

Or wither with the lightning's flash of Wit ;  
Or with sublimer mien and tones more deep,  
Charm sworded Justice from mysterious Sleep,  
" By violated Freedom's loud Lament,  
" Her Lamps extinguish'd and her Temple  
rent ;

" By the forced tears, her captive Martyrs  
shed ;

" By each pale Orphan's feeble cry for bread ;  
" By ravag'd Belgium's corse-impeded Flood,  
" And Vendee steaming still with brothers'  
blood ! "

And if amid the strong impassion'd Tale,  
Thy Tongue should falter and thy Lips turn  
pale ;

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If tranſient Darkneſs film thy awful Eye,  
 And thy tir'd Boſom ſtruggle with a ſigh :  
 Science and Freedom ſhall demand to hear  
 Who practiſed on a Life ſo doubly dear ;  
 Infuſed the unwholeſome anguiſh drop by  
 drop,

Poiſ'ning the ſacred ſtream they could not  
 ſtop!

Shall bid Thee with recover'd ſtrength relate  
 How dark and deadly is a Coward's Hate :  
 What ſeeds of death by wan Confinement  
 ſown,

When priſon-echoes mock'd Diſeaſe's groan!  
 Shall bid th' indignant Father ſaſh diſmay,  
 And drag the unnatural Villain into Day.  
 Who to the ſports of his fleſh'd\* Ruffians  
 left

Two lovely Mourners of their Sire bereft!  
 'Twas wrong, like this, which Rome's *firſt*  
*Conſul* bore,

So by th' infulted Female's name *he* ſwore.  
 Ruin (and raiſed her reeking dagger high)  
 Not to the *Tyrants* but the Tyranny!!

\* Dundas left thief-takers in Horne Tooke's  
 Houſe for three days, with his two Daughters  
*alone*: for Horne Tooke keeps no ſervant.

God who hath bleſſed you, bleſs  
 you! Mrs. Coleridge begs her kindeſt  
 love to you all.



*of S. T. Coleridge.* 25

Once more may God bless you all  
—and your obliged and grateful and  
truly affectionate friend,

S. T. COLERIDGE.

Reverend J. P. Estlin,  
Mrs. Smith's,  
Bridge-end,  
Glamorganshire.

My dear Friend,



AM not yet gone, but I  
go *with* Mrs. Coleridge  
to-morrow morning. I  
thought it advisable to get  
some review-books off my hands  
first. I hope, that you and dear  
Mrs. Estlin arrived safe! God bless  
you both! My Heart must be cold  
in the grave, when it ceases to thrill  
and warm at the mention of your  
names. You met me

sever'd from those amities

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Which grow upon the Heart, and roughly  
push'd  
Naked and lonely to Life's stormy verge—

and you clothed that heart with  
new affections, and drew me back to  
serenity.—Enough!

“ The farewell tear, which even now I pay,  
“ Best thanks you, and whene'er of pleasures  
    flown  
“ My Heart some sweeter image would renew,  
“ Loved, honour'd FRIENDS! I will remem-  
    ber *you!* ”

I have printed *that Ode*—I like it  
myself. A parcel of them will have  
arrived at Parsons's, in Paternoster  
Row, at the same time you receive  
this letter. It occupies two sheets  
Quarto, and is priced one Shilling.  
If you think, after perusal, that the  
composition does credit to the author  
of the Religious Musings (pardon  
my vanity) you will recommend it  
to your friends. I have taken my

motto you will see from Æschylus—  
*ἐφημίοις φροισμίοις* are bloody Presages, I  
believe; but I have sent away my  
Scapula. You know I am a *motto-*  
*philist*, and almost a *motto-manist*—  
I love an apt motto to my heart.  
*Παρακοπα* (page 9) is a good word.  
It is commonly but loosely rendered  
*madness*; it means properly an *excision*  
of mind—so that we see but *one* side,  
and are blind to noonday evidence on  
the other.

Have you preached your anti-  
atheistical sermon? Do you print it  
in London? Let me hear (directing  
to me, Stowey, near Bridgewater,  
Somerset).

Present our respects to Mr. and  
Mrs. Bishop. I hope to hear shortly  
that *he* is safely delivered, for I am  
sure his *heart* is in a state of parturi-  
ence that demands sympathy equally  
with the “*to come*” of your lovely  
sister-in-law.

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Present my respects to Dr. Disney, and my affectionate regards to Mr. Friend, if you see him.

My David Hartley laughs, cries, and fucks with all imaginable vivacity.

Heaven love you, and your grateful and affectionate

S. T. COLERIDGE.

*December 30th, 1796.*

P.S. I have adopted your objection to “urg’d his flight”—it certainly *meant* nothing.

Rev. J. P. Estlin,  
at Mr. Bishop’s,  
No. 21, Essex Street,  
Strand,  
London.

[STOWEY, 1797.]

My dear Friend,

**I** WAS indeed greatly rejoiced at the first sight of a letter from you; but its contents were painful.

Dear, dear Mrs. Estlin! Sara burst into an agony of tears, that she *had* been so ill. Indeed, indeed, we hover about her, and think, and talk of her, with many an interjection of prayer. I do not wonder that you have acquired a distaste to London—your associations must be painful indeed. But God be praised! you shall look back on those sufferings, as the vexations of a dream! Our friend, T. Poole, particularly requests me to mention how deeply he condoles with you in Mrs. Estlin's illness, how fervently he thanks God for her recovery. I assure you he was extremely affected. We are all re-

markably well, and the child grows fat and strong. Our house is better than we expected—there is a comfortable bedroom and sitting-room for C. Lloyd, and another for us, a room for Nanny, a kitchen, and out-house. Before our door a clear brook runs of very soft water; and in the back yard is a nice *well* of fine spring water. We have a very pretty garden, and large enough to find us vegetables and employment, and I am already an expert gardener, and both my hands can exhibit a callum, as testimonials of their Industry. We have likewise a sweet Orchard, and at the end of it T. Poole has made a gate, which leads into his garden—and from thence either through the tan yard into his house, or else through his orchard over a fine meadow into the garden of a Mrs. Cruikshanks, an old acquaintance, who married on the same day



as I, and has got a little girl a little younger than David Hartley. Mrs. Cruikshanks is a sweet little woman, of the same size as my Sara, and they are extremely cordial. T. Poole's Mother behaves to *us*, as a kind and tender Mother. She is very fond indeed of my wife, so that, you see, I ought to be happy, and, thank God, I am so. I may expect your sermon, I suppose, in the course of a fortnight. Will you send me introductory letter to Mr. Howell of Bridgewater, and Toulmin of Taunton? I have fifty things to write, but the carrier is at the door. To poor John give our love, and our kind love to Miss Estlin, and to all friends. To Mrs. Estlin my heart is so full, that I know not what to write. Believe me, with gratitude, with filial respect, and fraternal affection,

Your sincere *friend*,

S. T. COLERIDGE.

May [? 1797].

Friday Morning.

My dear Friend,



WRITE from Crofs, to which place I accompanied Mr. Wordsworth, who will give you this letter. We visited Cheddar, but his main business was to bring back poor Lloyd, whose infirmities have been made the instruments of another man's darker passions. But Lloyd (as we found by a letter that met us in the road) is off for Birmingham. Wordsworth proceeds, lest possibly Lloyd may not be gone, and likewise to see his own Bristol friends, as he is so near them. I have now known him a year and some months, and my admiration, I might say, my awe of his intellectual powers has



increased even to this hour, and (what is of more importance) he is a tried good man. On one subject we are habitually silent; we found our data dissimilar, and never renewed the subject. It is his practice and almost his nature to convey all the truth he knows without any attack on what he supposes falsehood, if that falsehood be interwoven with virtues or happiness. He loves and venerates Christ and Christianity. I wish he did more, but it were wrong indeed, if an incoincidence with one of our wishes altered our respect and affection to a man, of whom we are, as it were, instructed by one great Master to say that not being against us he is for us. His genius is most *apparent* in poetry, and rarely, except to me in *tête-à-tête*, breaks forth in conversational eloquence. My best and most affectionate wishes attend Mrs. Estlin

and your little ones, and believe me  
with filial and fraternal Friendship,

Your grateful

S. T. COLERIDGE.

Rev. J. P. Estlin,  
St. Michael's Hill,  
Bristol.

STOWEY, *Sunday*.

[1797, probably.]

My dear Friend,



WOULD accept your kind  
invitation immediately, but  
that I have a bad foot. A  
scald imperfectly healed,  
and I walked with it; after one day's  
walking I was obliged to return with  
a wound in my foot. But if possible,  
I will ride to Bristol at the end of the  
week. Heaven forbid that there  
should not be worse vices of the  
mind than Prejudice—for *all* of us,

more or less, must necessarily be prejudiced. The worst vice of the Intellect, I believe, is *malignant Prejudice*, and next to this, or perhaps co-equal with it, is *Indifference*. I have sometimes feared, from the dislike, the encreasing dislike, which I find in myself, to all *chirurgical operations*, that my mind is verging to this state; it is certainly much nearer to it, than to any disquietude and restlessness of Temper concerning errors, which do not appear directly connected with vice and misery. I judge so much by the *fruits*, that I feel a constant yearning towards the belief that such tenets are *not* errors. Now all this applies to the present case. I cannot as yet reconcile my intellect to the sacramental Rites; but as I do not see any ill effect which they produce among the Dissenters, and as you declare from your own experience that they have *good*

effects, it is painful to me even simply *to state my dissent*, and more than this I have not done, and, unless Christianity were attacked on this head by an Infidel of real learning and talents, more than this I do not consider myself as bound to do. I never even state my dissent unless to ministers who urge me to undertake the ministry. My conduct is this—I omit the rites, and wish to say nothing about it; everything that relates to Christianity is of importance, but yet all things are not of equal importance: and when the Incendiaries have surrounded the building, it is idle to dispute among ourselves whether an old staircase was placed in it by the original Architect, or added afterwards by a meaner hand. But notwithstanding this, its little comparative importance,—I cannot, I must not play the hypocrite. If I performed or received the Lord's

Supper in my present state of mind, I should indeed be eating and drinking condemnation. But this I need not say to you. As to Norwich, it is an *ugly* place, and an extravagantly *dear* place, and it is very, very far distant from all I love, animate and inanimate, and parties run high, and I am wearied with politics, even to foreness. I never knew a passion for politics exist for a long time without swallowing up, or absolutely excluding, a passion for Religion. Perhaps I am wrong; but so I think. However, I trust to see you by the end of the week. To Mrs. Estlin remember me affectionately, and kiss for me the dear little ones. May Heaven love you and him who ever feels for you the mingled affections of Son, Brother, and Friend!

S. T. COLERIDGE.

Rev. J. P. Estlin,  
St. Michael's Hill,  
Bristol.



[From Racedown Lodge, near Crewkerne,  
*June, 1797.*]

[Portion cut off.]



I WISHED to have written you when it was decided. These causes dissolved in that universal menstruum of apologies, my indolence, made me delay my letter till, I fear, I write at a time when even a letter from a friend will intrude on your fears and anxieties. Believe me, I share them; no hour passes, in which I do not think of, with an eagerness of mind, dear Mrs. Estlin. I feel, at times, sad and depressed on her account—on mine own, I might have said. For, God knows! these are not the times, when we can fear for a dear friend with a moderate fear!



I am at present sojourning for a few days with Wordsworth, at Race-down Lodge, near Crewkerne, and finishing my tragedy. Wordsworth, who is a strict and almost severe critic, thinks *very* highly of it, which gives me great hopes.

When there are two ministers they ought to be either as Brothers—one soul in two heads—or as Father and Son.

I breakfasted with Dr. Toulmin last Monday; the more I see of that man, the more I love him.

I preached for Mr. Howel the Sunday before. My sermon was admired, but *admired* sermons, I have reason to think, are not those that do most good. I endeavoured to awaken a zeal for Christianity by showing the contemptibleness and evil of lukewarmness.

T. Poole gives me notice that you

have, at Midsummer, twenty guineas for me which those have contributed who believe that they are enabling me to benefit my fellow-creatures in proportion to my powers.

Will you be so kind as to call on Mrs. Fricker, and give her five guineas in *my name*; and to transmit five guineas to Mrs. Coleridge. I hope and trust that this will be the last year that I can conscientiously accept of those contributions, which in my present lot, and conscious of my present occupations, I feel no pain in doing.

If this Mr. Reynell settles with me, it will at least provide my immediate household expenses, and, if my Tragedy succeed, Io triumphe!

Give my heartfelt love to dear, dear Mrs. Estlin, and kiss dear Anna, and Alfred and Caroline for me. My kindest remembrances to Mr. and Mrs. Hort, and believe me,

your obliged and truly affectionate  
friend,

S. T. COLERIDGE.

Rev. J. P. Estlin,  
St. Michael's Hill,  
Bristol.

[Racedown Lodge, near  
Crewkerne. 1797.]

My dear Friend,



WROTE to you yesterday, and to-day I must write again. I shall have quite finished my Tragedy in a day or two; and then I mean to walk to Bowles, the poet, to read it to him, and have his criticisms,—and then accordingly, as he advises, I shall either transmit the play to Sheridan, or go to London and have a personal interview with him. At present I am almost shillingless; I should be glad, therefore, if you

could transmit me immediately a *five pound note* of the Bank of England, directed

S. T. COLERIDGE,  
Racedown Lodge,  
near Crewkerne.

I calculate that by this time your anxieties are past; mine will continue till I hear from you. This is a lovely country, and Wordsworth is a great man; he admires your sermon against Payne much more than your last; I suppose because he is more inclined to Christianity than to Theism, simply considered. The lines overleaf, which I have procured Miss Wordsworth to transcribe, will, I think, please you. When I arrive at Bowles's, I will write again, giving you a minute account of the bard, God bless *you*, and *yours*, and all of us!

Most affectionately,  
Your obliged friend,

S. T. COLERIDGE.

Saturday morning.

her eye  
Was busy in the distance, shaping things  
That made her heart beat quick. Seest thou  
that path?  
(The greenward now has broken its grey  
line;)  
There, to and fro she paced, through many a  
day  
Of the warm summer: from a belt of flax  
That girt her waist, spinning the long-drawn  
thread  
With backward steps. Yet, ever as there  
passed  
A man, whose garments showed the Soldier's  
red,  
Or crippled mendicant in Sailor's garb,  
The little child, who sat to turn the wheel,  
Ceased from his toil; and she, with faltering  
voice,  
Expecting still to learn her husband's fate,  
Made many a fond inquiry; and when they,  
Whose presence gave no comfort, were gone by,  
Her heart was still more sad.—And by yon gate  
That bars the traveller's road, she often sat,  
And if a stranger-horseman came, the latch  
Would lift, and in his face look wistfully,  
Most happy, if from aught discovered there  
Of tender feeling, she might dare repeat  
The same sad question.—Meanwhile her poor  
hut  
Sank to decay: for he was gone, whose hand,  
At the first nippings of October frost,

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Closed up each chink, and with fresh bands of  
straw

Chequered the green-grown thatch; and so  
she sat

Through the long winter, reckless and alone,  
Till this rest house by frost, and thaw, and rain,  
Was sapped; and, when she slept, the nightly  
damps

Did chill her breast, and in the stormy day  
Her tattered clothes were ruffled by the wind,  
Even by the side of her own fire, yet still  
She loved this wretched spot, nor would for  
worlds

Have parted hence: and still, that length of  
road,

And this rude bench, one torturing hope  
endeared,

Fast rooted at her heart; and, Stranger, here  
In sickness she remained, and here she died,  
—Last human tenant of these ruined walls.

Rev. J. P. Estlin,  
St. Michael's Hill,  
Bristol.



[SHREWSBURY.]  
Sunday night.

My very dear Friend,



AFTER a fatiguing journey I arrived here on Saturday night. I left Worcester six o'clock Saturday morning, and we did not reach Shrewsbury till Saturday night, eight o'clock. I preached, of course, morning and afternoon. Like Mr. Row much; he is a sensible, Christian-hearted man, and I am very well. What more can I write? If you were to pay the post, it would go against my conscience to leave so much space unfilled and give you so little for your money; but as it will cost you nothing, why should I stand wringing my dishclout of a brain in order to squeeze out a few dirty drops not worth the having?

Give my kind love to Mrs. Estlin,

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and believe me with fraternal and filial esteem and affection,

Yours,

S. T. COLERIDGE.

To Rev. J. P. Estlin,  
St. Michael's Hill,  
Bristol.

By favour of Mr. Kell.

[Undated, Stowey, *December*, 1797.]

*Saturday morning.*

My dear Friend,



N the morning of Christmas Day I received Mr. Row's letter to you. On Thursday night, eleven o'clock, I received from Mr. J. Wood of Shrewsbury an invitation in the name of Mr. Row's congregation, accompanied with a very kind note from Mr. Row. On this subject

I now entreat your friendly advice; and in order to enable you to give it, I must retrace my life for the last three months. At the commencement of this period I began to feel the necessity of gaining a regular income by a regular occupation. My heart yearned toward the ministry; but I considered my scruples, as almost insurmountable obstacles to my conscientious performance of its duties. Another plan presented itself: that of joining with Mr. Montague in a project of Tuition. Our scheme was singular and extensive: extensive, for we proposed in three years to go systematically, yet with constant reference to the nature of *man*, through the mathematical branches, chemistry, anatomy, the laws of life, the laws of intellect, and lastly, through universal history, arranging separately all the facts that elucidate the separate states of society—savage,

civilized, and luxurious: singular, for we proposed ourselves not as Teachers, but only as Managing Students. If by this plan I could at once subsist my family for three years, and enable myself to acquire such a mass of knowledge, it would doubtless be preferable to all other modes of action for me, who have just knowledge enough of most things to feel my ignorance of all things. The probability, however, of its success was very small. Before I left Stowey it dwindled yet more, and when at Bristol, in all the dependency of the new taxes, the plan appeared absolutely romantic. In the meantime my conversations with you had certainly weakened my convictions on certain subjects, or at least deadened their efficacy. I made up my mind to be a Dissenting Minister, and offered to supply Mr. Row's place for a few Sundays at

Shrewsbury, to see whether I liked the place and whether the congregation liked me, and would endure my opinions, which, softened and modified as they had been, did still retain a degree of *peculiarity*. I returned to Stowey, and wrote to Montague, that if indeed he should procure, and *immediately* procure, the eight pupils at 100*l.* a year, they boarding and lodging at their own expense (for this was his plan), I would join him gladly. But as I did not perceive the *slightest chance* of this, unless it were done *immediately*, I should accept some situation as Dissenting Minister, and that I had no time for delay or wavering.

Well! on Christmas Day morning I received two letters—one from you, *i.e.* Mr. Row's letter to you—one in an unknown hand, but which I supposed to be upon some newspaper



business, and did not open it till some time after I had read and pondered the former. In this I saw the features of *contingency* very strongly marked, and (as I always do on such occasions) to prevent disappointment I checked my hopes. Mr. *Kentish* was to be applied to. I had heard that he was not very comfortably situated at Exeter; and as to Norwich, the same motives which inclined me not only to prefer Shrewsbury, but Shrewsbury out of the question, to reject Norwich, I naturally supposed would have its influence on him—the salary being so much more, the country more delightful, and provisions of all kinds so much cheaper. Supposing that he declined it, still it was uncertain whether the congregation would elect *me*; and that part of Mr. Row's letter (“without some independence  
“ Mr. C. is almost the only man I



“ would wish to settle here,” &c.) increased my doubts. I did not refuse to think, that by gentleness and intellectual efforts, I should compel their respect when they became acquainted with me; but I thought it probable, that such a congregation, in a town so violently aristocratic, would be deterred from electing me by the notoriety of my *political* conduct, and by the remaining peculiarities of my religious creed. My mind was lost and swallowed up in musing on all this, when I carelessly opened the second letter. It proved to be from Mr. Josiah Wedgewood. The following is a copy:—“ Dear  
“ Sir,—My brother Thomas and  
“ myself had separately determined  
“ that it would be right to enable  
“ you to defer entering into an en-  
“ gagement, we understand you are  
“ about to form, from the most ur-  
“ gent of motives. We therefore

“ request you will accept the en-  
 “ closed Draft with the same sim-  
 “ plicity with which it is offered to  
 “ you.

“ Dear Sir, sincerely yours,

“ JOSIAH WEDGEWOOD.

“ P.S.—The draft is payable to the  
 “ bearer of it. I shall be obliged to  
 “ you to acknowledge the receipt of  
 “ it to me at Penzance.” The in-  
 closed draft was for a hundred  
 pound. Well! what was I to do?  
 This hundred pound joined with  
 the guinea per week which I gain  
 from the Morning Post, and which  
 only takes me up two days in the  
 week, would give me the leisure and  
 tranquillity of independence for the  
 two next years, at the end of which  
 time, by systematic study, I should  
 be better fitted for any profession  
 than I am at present. Without this,  
 unless I am elected at Shrewsbury,  
 which I thought more than uncer-

tain, I shall remain necessitous and dependent, and be compelled to sag on in all the nakedness of Talent, without the materials of knowledge or systematic information. But if I accept it, I certainly bind myself to hold myself free for some time at least for the co-execution of the plan of general study with Montague; and in the realization of which I understand that the Wedgewoods are actively interesting themselves, as conceiving it likely to be of general benefit. And this letter was to be answered *immediately*. My friend T. Poole strenuously advised me to accept it, considering how contingent the Shrewsbury plan appeared. I however lingered, I may truly say, almost a sleepless man, Monday night, and Tuesday night, and Wednesday night, regularly sitting up till the post came in, which is not till half-past eleven, anxiously hoping

to receive some letter more decisive respecting Shrewsbury. On the Thursday *morning* I was obliged to acknowledge the receipt of the Draft, having already delayed it beyond all limits of propriety. Well, after a storm of fluctuations, Poole still retaining his opinions, and urging them more decisively, I accepted the Draft in a letter expressive of manly gratitude, and on the Thursday night I received the letter from Mr. Wood! The distress of my mind since then has been inexpressible. The plan which with the eagerness of Friendship you had been exerting yourself to secure for me—how can I bear to think that it should perish in your hand, the very moment you had caught it? Yet, on the other hand, if I send back the Draft, I shall lose the esteem of the Wedgewoods and their friends, to whom I shall appear deficient not

only in consistency, but even in common probity. It will appear to them that I accepted the Draft in words which implied that it had relieved me from a state of great uncertainty,—whereas, in truth, I had accepted it to console myself for a disappointment. Write immediately.

S. T. COLERIDGE.

Rev. J. P. Estlin,  
St. Michael's Hill,  
Bristol.

[Undated, STOWEY, *January*, 1798.]

My Dear Friend,



AFTER much and very painful hesitation I have at length returned the draft to Mr. Wedgewood with a long letter explanatory of my conduct. The first sunny morning that I walk out at Shrewsbury, will make



my heart die away within me—for I shall be in a *land of strangers*. For I shall have left a friend whose sympathies were perfect with my manners, feelings and opinions—and what is yet more painful, I shall have left him unconvinced of the *expediency* of my going, public or personal. I could not *stay* with an easy conscience, but whether I shall be happy so far removed from any who love me, I know not. This I know—I will make myself contented by struggling to do my duty.

I have written to Mr. Wood and to Mr. Row—promising to be at Shrewsbury by the latter end of next week. To-morrow I perform Mr. Howel's duty—the good old man has gone to London with his daughter to seek surgical assistance for her.

I am now utterly without money, and my account stands thus.—I owe



Biggs 5*l.*, Parfons, the bookfeller, owes me more than this considerably; but he is a rogue, and will not pay me. I have not paid Mrs. Fricker her quarterly allowance—in short—

	£	s.	d.
Biggs . . . .	5	0	0
Mrs. Fricker .	5	5	0
A quarter's rent due Dec. 25th	2	2	0

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Maid's wages .	1	1	0
Shoemaker . .	1	13	0
Coals . . . .	2	6	0
Chandler . . .	0	12	0
Sundries . . .	0	12	0
	<hr/>		
	£18	11	0

This is all I owe in the world: now in order to pay it I must borrow 10*l.* of you, 5*l.* of Mr. Wade, and will sell my Ballad to Phillips who I doubt not will give me 5*l.* for it—

I suppose, that my Friends will not withdraw their annual subscription of 5*l.* *this year*; afterwards of course, I should not want it—so that, you see, I propose to anticipate yours, Mr. Hobhouse's, and Mr. Wade's subscriptions. God love you! I will be with you as soon as riches, instead of making *themselves* wings, shall make a pair for *my* shoulders—at present, I am absolutely unfledged.—Yours, with filial and fraternal affection,

S. T. COLERIDGE.

*Saturday Morning.*—My affectionate remembrances to Mrs. Estlin.

Rev. J. P. Estlin,  
St. Michael's Hill,  
Bristol.

[STOWEY, 1798 ?]

*Tuesday Night.*

My Dear Friend,



F you have never been a slave to the superstition of impulses, you will marvel to hear that I arrived at Stowey on Friday last, by dinner time. I left Mr. Wedgewood's on Thursday evening, just time enough to keep an engagement I had made to sup with a Mr. Williams of Nottingham, at the White Lion. There I slept—awoke at five in the morning, and was *haunted* by a strange notion that there was something of great importance that demanded my immediate presence at Stowey. I dressed myself, and walked out to dissipate the folly—but the Bridgewater Coach rattling by, and the coachman asking me if

I would get in—I took it for an omen—the superstitious feeling recurred—and in I went—came home, and found—my wife and child in very good health! However, as I must necessarily be in Bristol in a few weeks, I the less regret my strange and abrupt departure. T. Poole informs me that there is a letter for me at your house—if so, be so kind as to send it to Mr. Cottle's for me. T. Wedgewood did not speak a word to me about *the circumstance*, only that I should *bear* from him. So I know nothing relating to myself so far, which you do not know.

Have you given over the thoughts of editing Butler's Analogy with notes? If the Unitarian Society would publish it in their tracts, I would willingly and *immediately* undertake it *with you*—adding a disquisition on Hume's system of

caufation—or rather of non-caufation. This is the pillar, and confeffedly the *fole* pillar, of modern Atheifm ;—if we could clearly and manifettly detect the fophifms of *this* fyftem, I think that Butler’s Analogy *aided* by well-placed notes, would answer irrefiftibly all the objections to Chriftianity founded on *a priori* reasonings, and thefe are the only reasonings that infidels ufe even with plaufibility. I have fent you Payne’s letter to Erskine,—it was fent to me privately by the Editor of the Morning Poft, for they do not venture to *publish* it. There are fome ludicrous blunders—exemp. gratiâ—this erudite Philofopher mistakes Mofes’s autograph for the publication of the law, and afferts that the law was not known till Hilkihah (Chronicles ch. xxxiv.) *pretended* to have found it. Mr. Ireland *pretended* to have found a *copy* of Lear in

Shakespere's own hand, *ergo*, we have proof that the tragedy was *not* composed by Shakespere, and never heard of till the thirty-seventh year of the reign of George the third! Erudite logician! There is annexed a sermon in defence of Deity with one or two good remarks in it, but the *proof* is very idle, and the definition of Deity—i.e., a being whose power is equal to his will—in all probability applies equally to a maggot. There is, however, an argument against the *Bible* quite *new*—"I (the said Thomas Payne) "could write a better book myself"—and therefore it cannot be the word of God. Now, unless we suppose Mr. Payne mistaken (which is hard to suppose on a subject where he must be so impartial a judge, i.e., his own genius) this argument is quite unanswerable!

I mentioned the Unitarian So-



ciety, because I propose to myself no pecuniary profit, but could not sustain, on the other hand, any pecuniary loss.

My kind love to Mrs. Estlin, and believe me with gratitude, esteem, and fervent affection, ever, ever yours,

S. T. COLERIDGE.

[Undated, Shrewsbury.]

My very dear Friend,



ANSWER your letter to Mr. Row, because it is probable that I must say all that he would say, and that I shall have to say what he could not say for me. We have talked over the affair seriously, and at the conclusion of our conversations our opinions have nearly coincided.

First of all I must give you the *information* which I have received on this affair, and then I will proceed to make some direct observations on your very kind letter. In a letter full of elevated sentiments Mr. Josiah Wedgewood offers me from himself and his brother Thomas Wedgewood, “an annuity of 150*l.* for life, legally secured to me, *no condition whatever being annexed.*” You seemed by the phrase of “a family in this neighbourhood,” to suppose that the offer proceeded from or included the Wedgewoods at Cote House; this is not the case. Josiah Wedgewood lives in Staffordshire. Now nothing can be clearer than that I cannot accept the ministerial salary at Shrewsbury and this at the same time. For as I am morally certain that the Wedgewoods would not have thought it their duty, or rather would have found it to be *not* their

duty, to have offered me 150*l.* yearly, if I had been previously possessed of an 150*l.* regular income, it follows indisputably that I cannot accept the first 150*l.* with the determination to accept the latter 150*l.* immediately after. But (independently of the *animus donantis* which is conclusive in this case) were I to accept the salary at Shrewsbury, I *would not* accept the annuity from the Wedgewoods. Many deserve it equally, and few would want it less. It is almost equally clear to me, that as two distinct and incompatible objects are proposed to me I ought to choose between them, with reference to the advantages of each, and not make the one a dernier resource if the other should fail. No, anteriorly to the decision of the congregation here, I will send the Wedgewoods a definitive answer, either accepting or declining the offer. If I accept

it, I will accept it *for itself*, and not to console me for a disappointment in the other object, which I should have preferred if I could have ensured it. Now then I can state clearly the Question on which I am to decide. "Shall I refuse 150*l.* a year for life, as certain as any fortune can be, for (I will call it) another 150*l.* a year, the attainment of which is not yet certain, and the duration of which is precarious?" You answer, "Yes! the cause of Christianity and practical Religion demands your exertions. The powers of intellect, which God has given you, are given for this very purpose, that they may be employed in promoting the best interests of mankind." Now the answer would be decisive to my understanding, and (I think you know enough of me to believe me when I say that were the annuity

1,500*l.* a year instead of 150*l.*) it should be decisive on my conduct, if I could see any reason why my exertions for Christianity and practical Religion depend, I will not say on my being at Shrewsbury, but on my becoming a stipendiary and regular minister. It makes me blush, I assure you, sitting *alone* as I now am, at the idea of mentioning two such names as I am about to do, with any supposable reference to my own talents, present or to come, but *the kind is not altered by the degree*. Did Dr. HARTLEY employ himself for the promotion of the best interests of mankind? Most certainly. If instead of being a physician he had been an hired Teacher, that he would not have taught Christianity *better*, I can certainly say, and I suspect, from the vulgar prejudices of mankind, that his name might have been less efficacious. That, however, is



a Trifle. A man who thinks that Lardner defended Christianity because he received 50*l.* or 60*l.* a year for preaching at Crouched Friars, must be such a booby that it cannot be of much consequence what he thinks. But, Lardner! do you really think, my dear Friend, that it would have been of much detriment to the Christian world if the author of the *Credibility*, &c., had never received or accepted the invitation at Crouched Friars? Surely not. I should be very unwilling to think that my efforts as a Christian minister depended on my preaching regularly in one pulpit. God forbid! To the cause of Religion I solemnly devote all my best faculties; and if I wish to acquire knowledge as a philosopher and fame as a poet, I pray for grace that I may continue to feel what I now feel, that my greatest reason for wishing the one and the



other is, that I may be enabled by my knowledge to defend Religion ably, and by my reputation to draw attention to the defence of it. I regard every experiment that Priestley made in Chemistry as giving *wings* to his more sublime theological works. I most assuredly shall preach often, and it is my present purpose alternately to assist Dr. Toulmin and Mr. Howel one part of every Sunday while I stay at Stowey. "I know" (you say) "that it was from the "purest motives that he thought of "entering into the ministry." My motives were as pure as they could be, or ought to be. Surely an *especial* attachment to a society, which I had never seen, was not one of them; neither if I were to permit myself to be elected the Minister here, should I consider the salary as the payment of my services, my stated and particular services to the people

*here*, but as a means of enabling myself to employ all my time both for their benefit and that of *all* my fellow beings. Two modes of gaining my livelihood were in my power. The *press* without reference to Religion, and Religion without reference to the *Press*. (By the *Press as a Trade* I wish you to understand, reviewing, newspaper writing, and all those things in which I proposed no fame to myself or permanent good to society, but only to gain that bread which might empower me to do both the one and the other on my vacant days.) I chose the latter. I preferred, as more *innocent* in the first place, and more *useful* in the second place, the *ministry* as a Trade to the *press* as a Trade. A circumstance arises, and the necessity ceases for my taking up either—that is, as a means of providing myself with the necessaries of Life. Why should I not

adopt it? But you continue—"And  
"I cannot but rejoice that he has it  
"in his power to demonstrate this"  
(*i.e.*, the purity of my motives) "to  
"the satisfaction of others." It is  
*possible*, then, that some may say,  
"While he wanted money, he was  
"willing to preach the Gospel in  
"order to get it; when that want  
"ceased, his zeal departed." Let  
them say it. I shall answer most  
truly—While I could not devote my  
time to the service of Religion with-  
out receiving money from a particular  
congregation, I subdued the struggles  
of reluctance, and would have sub-  
mitted to receive it. Now I am  
enabled as I have received freely,  
freely to give. If in the course of  
a few years I shall have appeared  
neglectful of the cause of Religion, if  
by my writings and preachings I shall  
not have been endeavouring to pro-  
pagate it, then, and not till then,

the charge will affect me. I have written you as the thoughts came uppermost. I might say a great deal more. I might talk of Shrewsbury in particular, and state particular reasons of attachment to Stowey, but I choose to confine myself to generals. Anterior to my conversation, Mr. Row thought on the whole that I ought to accept the annuity. He desires me to say, that he will leave this place on the Wednesday of next week for Bristol. I will serve for him as long as he chooses.

Yours most affectionately,  
S. T. COLERIDGE.

P.S.—To this add that the annuity is independent of my health, &c. &c., the salary dependent not on health, but on twenty caprices of twenty people.

Rev. J. P. Estlin,  
St. Michael's Hill,  
Bristol.

Monday, May 14th, 1798 [Stowey].

My dear Friend,



TOUGHT to have written to you before; and have done very wrong in not writing. But I have had many sorrows, and some that bite deep; calumny and ingratitude from men who have been fostered in the bosom of my confidence! I pray God, that I may sanctify these events by forgiveness and a peaceful spirit full of love. This morning, half-past one, my wife was safely delivered of a fine boy; she had a remarkably good time, better if possible than her last, and both she and the child are as well as can be. By the by, it is only three in the morning now. I walked in to Taunton and back again, and performed the divine services for Dr. Toulmin. I suppose



you must have heard that his daughter, in a melancholy derangement, suffered herself to be swallowed up by the tide on the sea-coast between Sidmouth and Bere. These events cut cruelly into the hearts of old men; but the good Dr. Toulmin bears it like the true practical Christian,—there is indeed a tear in his eye, but *that* eye is lifted up to the Heavenly Father. I have been too neglectful of practical religion—I mean, actual and stated prayer, and a regular perusal of scripture as a morning and evening duty. May God grant me grace to amend this error, for it is a grievous one! Conscious of frailty I almost wish (I say it confidentially to you) that I had become a stated minister, for indeed I find true joy after a sincere prayer; but for want of habit my mind wanders, and I cannot *pray* as often as I ought. Thanksgiving is pleasant in



the performance; but prayer and distinct confession I find most serviceable to my spiritual health when I can do it. But though all my doubts are done away, though Christianity is my *passion*, it is too much my *intellectual* passion; and therefore will do me but little good in the hour of temptation and calamity.

My love to Mrs. E. and the dear little ones, and ever, O ever, believe me, with true affection and gratitude

Your filial Friend,  
S. T. COLERIDGE.

Rev. J. P. Estlin,  
St. Michael's Hill,  
Bristol.

[LONDON, 1800.]

Saturday, March 1st.

My very dear Friend,



WHEN I received your letter, some three minutes ago, I turned to my Guide des Voyageurs en Europe to know where Marburg was. I guess it to be Marburg in the Bishoprick of Padderbourn, between Frankfort and Cassel. If so, I have not been within forty miles at least of it, having never been many miles below Cassel,—at all events the name of the person you mention is wholly unknown to me. I once knew a Miss Bouclere in Devonshire. As to myself, I am *fagging*, and am delivering to the press some plays of Schiller's. I shall soon however slide away from this place, and devote myself to works of more importance.

I have seen Mr. and Mrs. Barbauld two or three times—once at their own house—admirable people! Dr. Disney's sons, at all events the younger, with his shirt collar half-way up his cheek, gave me no high idea of the propriety of Unitarian Dissenters sending their sons to Established and Idolatrous Universities. It may be very true, that at Hackney they learnt, too many of them, Infidelity. The Tutor, the *whole* plan of education, the place itself, were all wrong—but many will return to the good cause, in which alone plain practical Reason can find footing—but at Cambridge and Oxford they will not learn Infidelity perhaps, or perhaps they may,—for now 'tis common enough even there, to my certain knowledge—but one thing they *will* learn—indifference to all Religions but the Religion of the *Gentleman*. *Gentlemanliness* will be the word, and

bring with it a deep *contempt* for those Dissenters among whom they were born. We Dissenters (for I am proud of the distinction) have somewhat of a simple and *scholarly* formality perhaps: God forbid we should wholly lose it! but with the young men at Oxford and Cambridge “*the gentleman*” is the all-implying word of honour,—a thing more blasting to real virtue, real liberty, real standing forth for the truth in Christ, than all the Whoredoms and Impurities which this Gentlemanliness does most generally bring with it. My dear friend! in the crowded, heartless party at Dr. Disney’s, O! how I did think of *your* Sunday suppers, their light uncumbrous simplicity, the heartiness of manner, the literary Christianness of conversation. Dr. Disney himself I *respect*, highly respect: in the pulpit he is an *apostle*, but *there—there it stops*.

My best and overflowing love to Mrs. Estlin, kisses and love to your children. Sara is better. Hartley rampant.

Heaven bless you, and your affectionate friend,

S. T. COLERIDGE.

Mrs. Coleridge begs to be remembered to you and dear Mrs. Estlin "with *all, all, all* my heart." There you have her own words.

P.S. Nothing is more common than for conscious infidels to go into the *Church*. Conscious Arians or Socinians swarm in it. So much for the *morals* of Oxford and Cambridge. With their too early reasonings, and logic-cuttings, and reading Hume and such like trash, the young Dissenters are prone to Infidelity, but do you know any instance of such an Infidel accepting an office that implied the belief of Christianity? It cannot be said, that this is owing to *our* pre-



ferments being so much smaller : for the majority are but Curates in the Established Church, or on small Livings, and not so well off as George Burnet was, or Sam. Reed would have been, but this is it, my dear friend ! The Education, which Dissenters receive among Dissenters, generates conscientiousness and a scrupulous turn : will this be gained at the wine parties at Cambridge ? The truth is, Dr. Disney himself sees only with too much pleasure the Gentlemanliness. I say thus much, my dear friend ! because I once heard you speak in commendation of that which I am now deprecating.

P.S. The more I see of Mrs. Barbauld the more I admire her—that wonderful *propriety* of mind ! She has great *acuteness*, very great—yet how steadily she keeps it within the bounds of practical Reason. This I almost envy as well as admire—my



own subtleties too often lead me into strange (though God be praised) transient out-of-the-wayneſſes. Oft like a winged\* ſpider, I am entangled in a new-ſpun web, but never fear for me, 'tis but the flutter of my wings—and off I am again!

The little man ſo full of great affections, you cannot love him better than I.

\* By the bye, there is no ſuch creature. But in ſimiles, if a phœnix, why not a winged ſpider?

Rev. J. P. Eſtlin,  
St. Michael's Hill,  
Briſtol.

82 *Unpublished Letters*

GRETA HALL, KESWICK.

July 26, 1802.

My dear Friend,



DAY after day, and week after week, have I been intending to write to you. To enumerate all the causes of the delay (superadded alas! to my inveterate habits of procrastination) would make my present letter a very different one from what I wish it to be, a doleful instead of a cheerful one. I am at present in better health than I have been, though by no means strong or well — *and at home all is Peace and Love.* I am about shortly to address a few letters to the *British Critic* on the use of the definitive article, and the inferences drawn from it by Grenville Sharp, and since attempted to be proved in a very learned and

*industrious* work by the Rev. C. Wordsworth, a fellow of Trinity, our Wordsworth's brother. Sharp's principle is as follows:—When *και* connects two nouns (*not of the plural number, and not proper names*) if the article *ὁ*, or any of its cases, precedes the first of the said Nouns or Participles, and is not repeated before the second Noun or Participle, the latter always relates to the same person, that is expressed or described by, the first Noun or Participle, *ex. gr.* Ο Θεος και Πατηρ του Κυριου ημων, &c., 2 Cor. i. 3.—Τυχικος ο αγαπητος Αδελφος και Διακονος, &c., Eph. vi. 21, from which rule he deduces absolute assertions of the Godhead of Christ from Acts xx. 28, Eph. v. 5, 2 Thessal. i. 12, 1 Timoth. v. 21, 2 Timoth. iv. 1, Titus ii. 13, 2 Peter i. 1, Jude 4. Kit Wordsworth's book is occupied in proofs that *all* the *Greek* Fathers, and many

—and those the most learned—of the Latin Fathers, did so understand these texts, when from the nature of the Arian controversy, it would have answered their purposes much better to have understood the words according to our present versions. The first thing that stared me in the face, and which I afterwards found true, is that all the instances but two are, to all intents and purposes, *proper names*, and consequently fall within Grenville Sharp's own exception. The two instances which I have not found used as proper names are Titus ii. 13, and 2 Peter i. 1. Now if you know any proof of  $\Sigma\omega\tau\eta\rho$  being used without an article in any place where it stands by itself, in the same manner as Christ is, and God, and as  $\text{Κυριος}$  I can prove to be in a hundred instances in Greek, you would serve me, and what is a much greater inducement

to you, throw light on a very important subject; or if you know any instance in which Sharp's rule is falsified. In English now, *exem. causâ*, we might say, As I walked out to-day, whom should I meet but the carpenter and shoemaker of our village? It would certainly be more *accurate* to say the carpenter and *the* shoemaker; but the accuracy of special pleading is to be found in few books, nor is it necessary. You would know that I had met *two* persons, because you know that the trades of carpenter and shoemaker are not one in this country, whereas if I had said, the carpenter and joiner, though the form of grammar would have been the same, you would have known instantly that I had met but *one* man. If you recollect in Aristophanes, &c., or the Septuagint, any instances to this purpose, you would oblige me by trans-



mitting them to me. Unfortunately, I have none of the Greek Fathers, neither have I the Septuagint; but I have found much that I want in Suicerus's *Theaurus Patrum*, which I was lucky enough to buy for its weight at a druggist's. In these letters I purpose to review Horsley's and Priestley's controversy, and in these you will see my *Confessio Fidei*, which as far as regards the doctrine of the Trinity is *negative* Unitarianism, a *non liquet* concerning the nature and being of Christ, but a condemnation of the Trinitarians as being wise beyond what is written. On the subjects of the original corruption of our Nature, the doctrines of Redemption, Regeneration, Grace, and Justification by Faith, my convictions are altogether different from those of Drs. Priestley, Lindsey, and Disney; neither do I conceive Christianity to be tenable



on the Priestleyan hypothesis. I read Lardner often; not so much for the information I gain from him—which is, however, very great—but for the admirable modesty and truly Christian spirit which breathes through his works, and which I wish to imbibe as a man, and to imitate as a writer, well aware of the natural Impetuosity and *Warburtonianism* of my own uncorrected disposition. My dear Friend, believe no idle reports concerning me; if I differ from you, and *wherein* I differ from you, it will be that I believe *on the whole more* than you, not less, of which I give, I trust, the best proof in my power, by breeding up my child in *habits* of awe for Deity, and undoubted Faith in the truth in Christ. I thank you from the bottom of my heart for the pleasure and instruction which I have received from your sermon on

the Sabbath, which I have read *repeatedly*, and shall take occasion to speak of, as in my humble opinion incomparably the best work that has been written on the subject, as far as I have seen, and a sufficient answer to (what I had before believed unanswerable) Paley's objections. It grieved me that you should have the word *genius* so emphatically (p. 26) to Evanston, for surely you wrote it unthinkingly. Is not Evanston egregiously a *weak* and *vain* man? God forgive me if I *speak* uncharitably, I am sure I do not feel so; but his book on the dissonance of the Evangelists struck me as the silliest and most vapid book I ever perused. Σφοδρα τοι σμικρος ων τον νουν, ως αν εκ των αυτου λογων τεκμηραμενον ειπειν, φαινεται—the Papias among the Unitarians (Lardn. vol. ii. p. 108). I wish you would give us in some form or other, in maga-

zine or separate publication, a real history, in the spirit of Lardner, of all that can be collected of the opinions of the Jews and Jewish doctors, concerning the Messiah, antecedent to the time of Christ and since that time. I have been rather dissatisfied with Lardner's answer to the fourth and last objection to the philosophical explanation of the Dæmoniacks. Do be so good as to look to the passage, vol. i. p. 483. Dr Lardner intimates that it was not Christ's business to instruct men in physics—that it was foreign to his mission,—that he was engaged in teaching the principles of *true* religion, and that any debate on this error might have diverted him from his main work. The Jews were not in danger of idolatry,—there was therefore no urgent necessity,—and he adds two instances in which our Lord studiously declined to concern himself with

things foreign to the office of a prophet. Now the first of these instances seems to me to weigh against Lardner. Christ might have confuted a dangerous error without involving any question of natural or metaphysical philosophy; he did not decide for or against the doctrine of pre-existence; but he most effectually quashed the pernicious *moral* error of attributing all affliction to direct judgments of God upon the individual so afflicted. If the Evangelists had in any one passage merely called the Dæmoniacs diseased men, or insane men, "whose diseases are believed by the people to proceed from Dæmons," or diseases the true causes of which are not revealed to us, but which are believed to proceed from Dæmons, there would have been, I conceive, no physical hypothesis implied, and yet the Gospel saved from [the] apparent ignominy

of having confirmed . . . . its author . . . . so wild and inhuman. In Dr. Lardner's second instance, I . . . . agree with him that "it could not but . . . . work to decide" that cause, as the brother required. On this . . . . appears to me that if Christ had done so, he would have . . . . institutions of individual property, and the alliance of spiritual . . . . authority with concerns of a purely secular nature. But to . . . . orderly.—1. It was not his business to instruct men in natural . . . . *Answer.* True! But it was a grievous *moral* error as well as physical absurdity, and might have been removed without any decision in physics, at least so far as that his religion could not have been chargeable with aiding and *confirming* it. 2. It was foreign to his mission, which was to instruct men in the principles of true Re-



ligion. *Answer.* True principles cannot be taught but by the subversion of false ones. This is eminently the practice in the Gospel of Christ; more than half of Christ's Discourse on the Mount is consumed in exploding errors; elsewhere He is open and urgent in the same—ever so with St. Paul. Do, my dear friend! read what Lardner says, p. 462, 463, and 464, and then decide in your own mind on the baseness and pernicious effects of such a superstition. You know human nature too well not to know that a mind in terror of Spirits, and attributing diseases to their malice, though it may not be strictly *idolatrours*—but that it is impossible that it can be a *worshipper* of the true God in the proper, Christian, and spiritual meaning of worshipping, in Spirit and in Truth. But not only did it imply frightful corruption in the great article of



all Religion, the moral attributes of God; but it must needs have had a bad effect, and an anti-social influence on the intercourse between man and man. It is not fair, my dear Sir! to state it as a mere popular *opinion*; it was a reigning and inveterate superstition, accompanied by the most wicked practices; all the impostures and delusions of Exorcism, *vide* p. 486, 487. Yet so far are these Exorcists from being condemned by Christ, that their Innocence is cited by him to prove his own. Matt. xii. 27, 28. Dr. Lardner's Exposition of these two verses, p. 489, appears to me exceedingly arbitrary, and utterly destitute of probability or plausibility. Indeed, I confess it shocked me, in so dear and every way excellent a man. If you see this matter in a different light, and approve of Lardner's Exposition, I will state my objections to it at

length; at present I have no room on my paper. 3. It was not immediately connected with his mission, and there was no urgent necessity. *Answer.* It was (*ως μοι δοκει*) immediately connected with His mission. For how could those be deemed sane or proper judges of true miracles, who gave evidence in favour of false ones? St. Paul (as Dr. Lardner himself shows, p. 453) directly asserts the existence of wicked Spirits swarming in the air, and in a state of enmity to man. Eph. vi. 11, 12. Without pressing at all too hardly on the nature of evidence, I think we may be permitted to say that men who believed that six thousand Spirits dwelt in the body of one man, and after they were forced to leave it went into two thousand pigs, three Devils to one pig, must have been credulous or unreasoning men, and might, as

far as this remained without a counterbalance, have been fairly challenged as unfit to be upon a jury in a question of miracles. But God be praised! we can show that an ample counterbalance did exist; yet still Christianity is chargeable with having confirmed and *taught* a pernicious error. The infidelical argument from Christian wars, crusades, &c., is childish. Christianity was the pretext, not the cause; but of the horrible burnings and drownings of thousands of men and women as Witches, and all the irreverent and inhuman feelings towards aged and hypochondriacal people, Christianity might seem to have been directly and properly the cause; for when the Physicians and natural Philosophers earnestly laboured to inculcate humane and true views on this subject, they were silenced by the authority of the Gospel, and

their efforts for a long time frustrated, as you may easily convince yourself by reading the controversies concerning Witches. I have stated the argument, as I wish to state every argument, with as much force as if I were a complete convert to it. I hope to hear from you on this subject, and then I will give you all I can say in solution of the difficulty, which I confess appears to me a very serious one.

I meant to have said much to Mrs. Estlin, and I am at the end of the paper. May God preserve her, and you, and your little ones.

Your affectionate and grateful friend,

S. T. COLERIDGE.

Rev. Mr. Estlin,  
Bristol.

Dec. 7, 1802.—CRESCELLY, NEAR  
NARBARTH, PEMBROKESHIRE.

My dear Friend,



TOOK the liberty of desiring Mrs. Coleridge to direct a letter for me to you, fully expecting to have seen you; but I passed rapidly through Bristol, and left it with Mr. Wedgewood immediately—I literally had *no time* to see any one. I hope, however, to see you on my return, for I wish very much to have some hours' conversation with you on a subject, that will not cease to interest either of us while we *live* at least, and I trust that is a synonyme of “for ever!”

As Mr. T. Wedgewood, however, is rapid in his movements, and sudden in his resolves, it is possible that



we may strike up directly through Wales into the North, without taking Bristol in our way; I must therefore request that you will be so good as to re-direct any letter or letters, which there may be for me, to T. B. Allen's, Esq., Crescelly, near Narbarth, Pembrokeshire, by the return of post.

[Have you seen my different essays in the Morning Post?—the comparison of Imperial Rome and France, the "Once a Jacobin, always a Jacobin," and the two letters to Mr. Fox? Are my politics yours?]

[Have you heard lately from America? A gentleman informed me, that the progress of religious Deism in the middle Provinces is exceedingly rapid, that there are numerous congregations of Deists, &c., &c. Would to Heaven this were the case in France! Surely,



religious Deism is infinitely nearer the religion of our Saviour than the *gross* idolatry of Popery, or the more decorous, but not less genuine, idolatry, of a vast majority of Protestants. If there be meaning in words, it appears to me that the Quakers and Unitarians are the only Christians, altogether pure from Idolatry, and even of these I am sometimes jealous, that some of the Unitarians make too much an *Idol* of their *one God*. Even the worship of one God becomes *Idolatry*, in my convictions, when instead of the Eternal and Omnipresent, in whom we live and move and *have* our Being, we set up a distinct Jehovah, tricked out in the *anthropomorphic* attributes of Time and *successive* Thoughts, and think of him as a *Person*, from whom we *had* our Being. The tendency to *Idolatry* seems to me to lie at the root of all our

human vices—it is our original Sin. When we dismifs *three Persons* in the Deity, only by subtracting *two*, we talk more intelligibly, but I fear, do not feel more religiously—for God is a Spirit, and must be worshipped in Spirit.

O my dear Sir! it is long since we have seen each other—believe me, my esteem and grateful affection for you and Mrs. Estlin has suffered no abatement, or intermission—nor can I persuade myself, that my opinions, fully stated and fully understood, would appear to you to differ *essentially* from your own. My creed is very simple—my confession of Faith very brief. I approve altogether and embrace entirely the *Religion* of the Quakers, but exceedingly dislike the *sect*, and their own notions of their own Religion. By Quakerism I understand the opinions of George Fox rather than those of Barclay—

of S. T. Coleridge. 101

who was the St. Paul of Quakerism.  
—I pray for you, and yours!!

S. T. COLERIDGE.

Rev. J. P. Estlin,  
St. Michael's Hill,  
Bristol.

UNIV. OF  
CALIFORNIA

ALLAN BANK, GRASMERE, 3 Dec., 1808.

My dear Sir,



WHEN I was last at Bristol, not only was my Health in a far worse state than I had resolution to make known; but my mind was halting between Despondency and Despair. On my return to the North, I summoned up courage, and put my case fairly under the care and judgment of a Physician, and I have now almost recovered my former nature. If it were in my power to make you con-

conscious of what passes within me, you would deduce one proof of this from the distinct images of my early Friends, that now so often rise up before "that inward eye which is "the Bliss of Solitude," and the lively affections of attachment and gratitude which accompany them. What I feel towards you, my dear sir, and that I have never forgotten or undervalued your warm and zealous friendship when I was nakedly my own undisciplined Self, friendless, homeless, fortuneless, I give you now a slight proof of; yet the best in my power, by unbofoming myself to you. For years I had with the bitterest pangs of self-disapprobation struggled in secret against the habit of taking narcotics. My conscience indeed fully acquitted me of taking them from the weakness of Self-indulgence, or for the sake of any pleasurable sensation, or exhilaration of spirits—

in truth the effects were the very contrary. From the difuse my spirits and pleasurable feelings used gradually to increase to the very hour, when my circulation became suddenly disturbed, a painful and intolerable yawning commenced; soon followed by a violent bowel complaint . . . . [torn out] . . . . gave proof that the liver had ceased to perform its proper functions,—in short I had the strongest convictions that if I persisted, I should die. Still however, I had no other ground for this conviction than my own feelings, and therefore was never sure, that I was not acting guiltily. At length I made a fair trial under the eye of a Physician, determining, whatever might be the result, henceforward never to conceal anything of any kind from those who loved me, and lived with me. The result was, that it could not be abandoned without



loss of life,—at least, not at once, but such has been the blessed effect upon my spirits of having no secret to brood over, that I have been enabled to reduce the dose to one *sixth* part of what I formerly took, and my appetite, general health, and mental activity are greater than I have known them for years past. O! had you conjectured the inward anguish that was consuming me (for it is a goodness of Providence to me that I cannot do wrong without severe self-punishment), both in your heart and in that of dear Mrs. Estlin's, pity would have suspended all condemnation for my real or apparent neglects of the duties which I owe to my friends, my family, and my own Soul. I look onward to my future exertions with humble confidence. By the work, of which you have here the Prospectus, I have received strong encouragements to the belief, that I



shall do good. As I am almost sure, that in the subjects admissible in such a work, our Principles are the same, I have no immediate motive to detail to you the Tenets in which we differ. Indeed the difference is not as great as you have been led to suppose, and are [*sic*] rather philosophical than theological. I believe the Father of all to be the only Object of Adoration or Prayer; the Calvinistic Tenet of a *vicarious* Satisfaction I reject not without some Horror, and though I believe that the Redemption by Christ implies more, than what the Unitarians understand by the phrase, yet I use it rather as an X Y Z, an unknown Quantity, than as words to which I pretend to annex clear notions. I believe, that in the salvation of man a spiritual process *sui generis* is required, a spiritual aid and agency, the nature of which I am wholly ignorant of, as a *cause*, and

only imperfectly apprehend it from its necessity and its effects.

As to "THE FRIEND," I make no request to you. You will do me all the good you can, compatible with the approbation of your own mind. I have received promises of support from men of very high name in the literary world—and as to my own efforts, I consider the work as the main pipe of my intellectual Reservoir. The first Essay will be on the nature and importance of *principles*. The blindness to this I have long regarded as the disease of this discussing, calculating, *prudential* age (and to prove this, and to show its consequences in morality, taste, and even in the common goings-on of daily life, is my paramount object for the whole work).

Remember me to Mrs. Estlin, as one who in his inmost Being has never ceased to be her and your ob-

*of S. T. Coleridge.* 107

liged and affectionate friend, with  
most unfeigned respect,

S. T. COLERIDGE.

Rev. J. P. Estlin,  
St. Michael's Hill,  
Bristol.

[BRISTOL.]

*Tuesday, 5 April, 1814.*

My dear Sir,



ραδὺς καὶ σκνηρός τις ὢν φύσει  
πρὸς το γράφειν, I have had,  
alas! other both external  
and internal obstacles, and

those of a sort the most heart-appal-  
ling, to the realization of a resolve  
I had made—to wit, that of writing  
to you at large on the deeply in-  
teresting subject of your Work on  
Universal Restitution. I speak within  
bounds, when I say that I have care-

fully read through the *whole* five times, independent of partial and defultory references: and my own private judgement is fixed. It is this: that in the Court, which you have selected, and to the Judges or opponents, to whom and for whom you have argued, you have gained the Cause *completely*. I scarcely know how to *fancy* a mind so obstinately illogical as, assenting to your premises (the *remedial* ends of all just punishment; the inconsistency of the adjunct with its principal in the term "*vindictive* justice;" and its further incompatibility with the infinite LOVE, which God *is*; &c.) could refuse his assent to your conclusions. The writer of the illiberal article in the Eclectic Review among many other uncharitable over-fights, forgot the first duty of a candid Critic—that of asking, to whom and for whom was the work written?

His proper language as an orthodox, or (if I might coin a more modest expression, a pleistodox = *ως τοις πλειστοις δοκῆι*) man should have been something like the following:—"The  
"opponents, to whom alone this work  
"is controversial, assume the same  
"premises as the author: and we  
"cannot conceive how *they* can  
"object to his deductions. If the  
"Scriptures present difficulties to the  
"advocate of limited and remedial  
"Punishment, they present them ten-  
"fold to the annihilators—from  
"whose system nature itself recoils.  
"As Deists, the latter class might  
"have something plausible to say for  
"themselves; but as Christians, and  
"as deeming themselves, of course,  
"obliged to acknowledge the resur-  
"rection of all men, the worst as  
"well as the best, their system be-  
"comes monstrous, and represents the  
"Supreme Being in a light scarcely



“less blasphemous to his Wisdom  
 “than to his Goodness. For our-  
 “selves, we hold it sufficient to say:  
 “*Non nobis!* To those of our faith,  
 “who deny the premises *in toto*, the  
 “book was not written, and unless  
 “Dr. Estlin should address a proof  
 “of the Premises (which in his pre-  
 “sent work would have been super-  
 “fluous) to all Christians in general,  
 “we shall content ourselves with the  
 “open declaration of this our dissent.  
 “Considered as a literary work, the  
 “arrangement is orderly and natural,  
 “the language simple and correct,  
 “and the whole composition breathes  
 “a sincere, open, and most affectionate  
 “spirit.”

This, my dear sir, is my own  
 opinion of your Discourses. If you  
 felt inclined to ask, what then my  
 faith is as to this awful subject, I should  
 refer to your own Book, to the quo-  
 tation from Jeremy—that is my



creed. I believe, that punishment is essentially *vindictive*, i.e. expressive of abhorrence of Sin for its own exceeding sinfulness: from all experience, as well as *a priori* from the constitution of the human Soul, I gather that without a miraculous intervention of Omnipotence the Punishment must continue as long as the soul, which I believe imperishable. God has promised no such miracle, he has covenanted no such mercy, I have no right therefore to believe or rely on it. *It may* be so, but wo to me! if I presume on it. There is a great difference, my dear Sir! between the assertion "It is so!" and "I have no right to assert the "contrary!"

I take the liberty of enclosing for your kind acceptance a ticket of admission to my Lectures (which commence this evening) for yourself, family, and friends. Should you, or

Mrs. E., or any of your family, have leisure or inclination, believe me, the more you bring, the more service you will do me. I am asking a *favour* by the same act by which I would give a humble proof, that notwithstanding difference of creeds, I can never cease to *remember* that I am your *greatly obliged*, nor, I trust, to *feel* myself your *grateful* friend,

S. T. COLERIDGE.

Dr. Estlin,  
St. Michael's Hill.

*Saturday Night, April 9, 1814.*

[Bristol.]

Dear Sir,



AND is it possible that you can reject, and drive from your presence “a friend, “once dear to your Heart,” unquestioned? unheard? I have this

very moment returned home: and on eagerly opening your note was, as it were, thunderstruck: and I have no reason to believe that I should have guessed the cause, had it not been for an accidental speech of Mr. Le Breton's to me, after my Lecture. "At a certain phrase of yours, (said he) I looked round to see whether Dr. E. was there." I instantly replied to him—would to Heaven, he had been! the very sight of Him would have made it impossible that so foolish an expression should have entered into my mind, much less have been uttered by me. And (I continued) yet I solemnly declare, that to the best of my Belief I should have been just as likely to have used it, being in a similar tone of mind, at the time that I was myself a most sincere and fervent Unitarian.

First, dear Sir! let me entreat

you to consider that my Lectures, with exception only of the general Plan of leading Thoughts, are literally and strictly extempore, the words of the moment! Next, let me hope that the expression used by me has not been represented with all the palliating circumstances. Whoever was your Informer, can likewise tell you that the immediately preceding part of the Lecture had been of a (*for me*) unusually cheerful and even mirth-exciting nature—and in speaking of a sublime Invention of Milton, unsupported by the natural and obvious sense of the Text (for had it been a mere quotation, like that of “Let there be Light! etc.,” where had been *his* Sublimity?) I said in previous explanation these very words: “*for Milton has been pleased to represent Satan as a sceptical Socinian.*”

Now had I said, that Milton had

represented Satan as convinced of the prophetic and Messianic character of Christ, but sceptical concerning any higher claims, I should have stated the mere matter of fact—and can I think it possible that you should for ever withhold your affection and esteem from me merely because most incautiously and with improper Levity, I confess and with unfeigned sorrow, I conveyed the very same thoughts or fact in a foolish Phrase? Permit me, Sir, to ask you one Question. Have you ever had reason to suppose or suspect, that in my expressions of gratitude and affectionate esteem toward you, I have been ever influenced by a single selfish expectation, or the most distant interested motive? Has that been *my* character? or if it had been, can it be supposed that deliberately and with malice *pre-pense* I could have openly insulted a body of Christians, not only com



prizing a large number of the wealthiest and most respectable Citizens of Bristol, but among these full half of all, whom I knew most intimately, most respect, and who have been most kind and attentive to me, as MM. Castle and family, and Brothers, Mr. Danvers, etc.

Dear Sir! Let not tomorrow's Prayer offered to our common Father for forgiveness pass without an inward forgiveness of me for an offence, which, I call Heaven witness, was never intended—which was the result of a momentary Levity, for which I should be most eager to make any apology, public or private, as far as is consistent with the truth—namely, that it was a mere Levity, and not meant to convey any serious sarcasm on the opinions you profess. I do again assert, that as far as I know my own heart and nature, it is my full conviction, that in the same

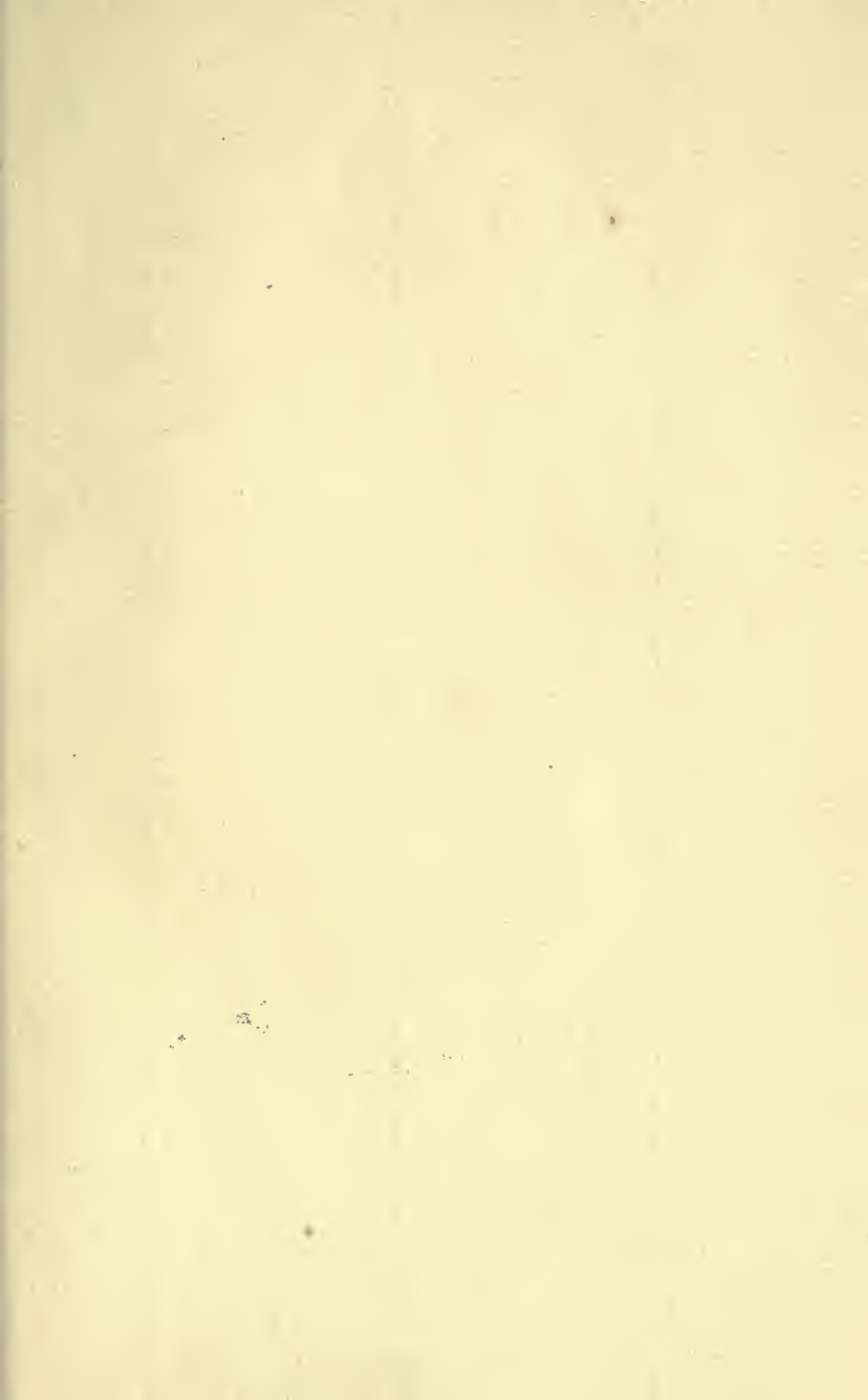


careless mood of mind I should have been just as likely to have used the same words to the same purpose at the time that I was myself a zealous Socinian, and let Danvers or any one who knew me then intimately in my unguarded Talk, decide whether I have said aught improbable in this assertion. I hope, I need not say, that it is the desire of being present to you in your kind wishes, and not any great pleasure I find in *visiting*, except as far as I at once enjoy and gratify friendly feelings, has occasioned you the trouble of reading this long Letter from him, who (however unkindly you may think of him) will ever be and avow himself with high esteem your obliged and grateful,

S. T. C.

Dr. Estlin,  
St. Michael's.



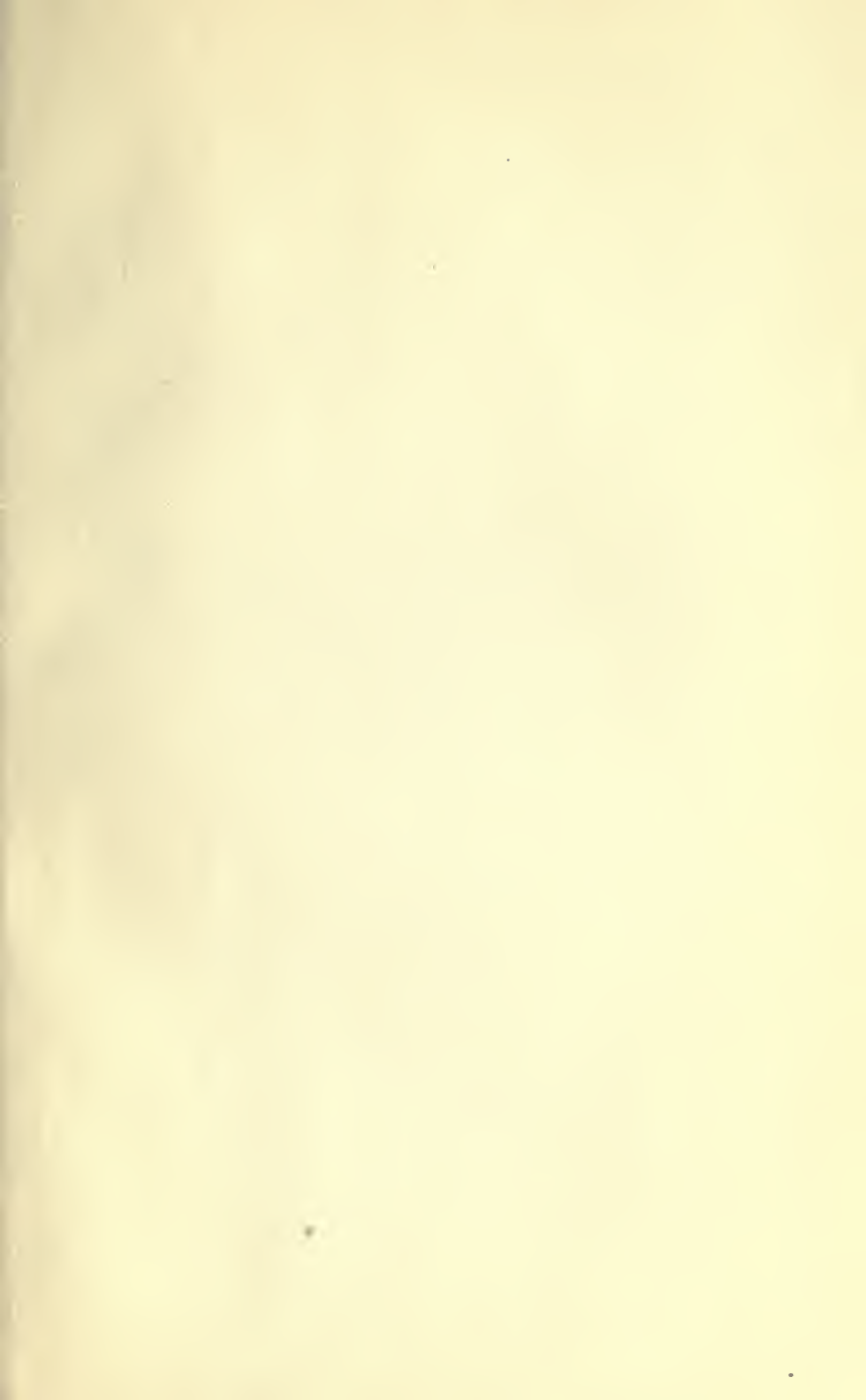












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