COLLECTED LETTERS OF
Samuel Taylor Coleridge

EDITED BY
EARL LESLIE GRIGGS

VOLUME III
1807-1814

OXFORD
AT THE CLARENDON PRESS
1959
To Joseph Cottle

919. To Joseph Cottle

Address: Joseph Cottle, Esqre | Brunswick Square
MS. New York Public Lib. Pub. E. L. G. ii. 107. See Early Rec. ii. 112 and 155, where Cottle prints this manuscript as two letters.

Coleridge's heart-rending outburst was occasioned by a letter from Cottle of 25 April. Bolstered by Southey's unfailing letters of 17 and 18 April, Cottle saw fit to berate Coleridge and to exhort him to renounce opium 'from this moment', to return to Keswick, and to exert 'the ample abilities which God has given you'. Like Southey, Cottle assumed that Coleridge should abandon opium by a mere act of the will. See Rem. 386-6, and Letter 918.

April 26, 1814

You have poured oil in the raw and festered Wound of an old friend's Conscience, Cottle! but it is oil of Vitriol! I but rarely glanced at the middle of the first page of your Letter, & have seen no more of it—not from resentment (God forbid!) but from the state of my bodily & mental sufferings, that scarcely permitted human fortitude to let in a new visitor of affliction. The object of my present reply is to state the case just as it is—first, that for years the anguish of my spirit has been indescribable, the sense of my danger staring, but the conscience of my guilty worse, far far worse than all!—I have prayed with drops of agony on my Brow, trembling not only before the Justice of my Maker, but even before the Mercy of my Redeemer. 'I gave thee so many Talents. What hast thou done with them? '—Secondly—that it is false & cruel to say, (overwhelmed as I am with the sense of my direful Infirmitry) that I attempt or ever have attempted to disguise or conceal the cause. On the contrary, not only to friends have I stated the whole Case with tears & the very bitterness of shame; but in two instances I have warned young men, mere acquaintances who had spoken of having taken Laudanum, of the direful Consequences, by an ample exposition of it's tremendous effects on myself—Thirdly, tho' before God I dare not lift up my eyelids, & only do not despair of his Mercy because to despair would be adding crime to crime; yet to my fellow-men I may say, that I was seduced into the ACCURSED Habit ignorantly.—I had been almost bed-ridden for many months with swellings in my knees—in a medical Journal I unhappily met with an account of a cure performed in a similar case (or what to me appeared so) by rubbing in of Laudanum, at the same time taking a given dose internally.—It acted like a charm, like a miracle! I recovered the use of my Limbs, of my appetite, of my Spirits—& this continued for near a fortnight.—At length, the unusual Stimulus subsided—the complaint returned—the supposed remedy was recurred to—but I can not go thro' the dreary history—suffice it to say, that effects were produced,

1 See Letter 921.
2 According to Cottle, after one of the lectures Coleridge said that a 'dirty fellow' threatened to arrest him for £10. 'Shocked at the idea' Cottle gave him the money. Then in writing to Coleridge on 23 April Cottle said: 'For opium you will ... expose yourself to the liability of arrest, by some "dirty fellow," to whom you choose to be indebted for "ten pounds!"' Rem. 367 and 368.
3 Several words heavily inked out in MS.
To Joseph Cottle

Dr E. himself give of a sceptical Socinian?—Now that M. has done so, please to consult, Far. Regained, Book IV. from line 196.—& then the same Book from line 500.—

920. To Joseph Cottle

Address: J. Cottle, Esqre.
MS. Mr. W. Hugh Peal, Pub. Early Rec. ii. 150. On receiving Letter 919 Cottle wrote that he was 'afflicted to perceive that Satan is so busy with you, but God is greater than Satan. Did you ever hear of Jesus Christ?' He called upon Coleridge to pray: 'Pray earnestly, and you will be heard by your Father, which is in Heaven.' Early Rec. ii. 159–60.

April 26. 1814

O dear Friend!—I have too much to be forgiven to feel any difficulty in forgiving the cruellest enemy that ever trampled on me: & you I have only to thank.—You have no conception of the dreadful Hell of my mind & conscience & body. You bid me pray. O I do pray inwardly to be able to pray; but indeed to pray, to pray with the faith to which Blessing is promised, this is the reward of Faith, this is the gift of God to the Elect. Oh to feel how infinitely worthless I am, how poor a wretch, with just free will enough to be deserving of wrath, & of my own contempt, & of none to merit a moment's peace, can make a part of a Christian's creed; so far I am a Christian—

S. T. C.

921. To Joseph Cottle

Address: J. Cottle, Esqre. | Brunswick Square.

{Circa 27} April 1814.1

Dear Cottle²

Christians expect no outward or sensible Miracles from Prayer—it's effects and it's fructions are spiritual, and accompanied (to use the words of that true Divine, Archbishop *Leighton) *not by

1 J. D. Campbell (Life, 202) suggests that this letter, in which Coleridge 'enlarged, very calmly, on the reasonable expectations a Christian may entertain on the subject of sincere prayer', was probably written 'on the day following' Letter 920.

² In Early Rec. ii. 89, where this letter is printed, Cottle here interpolated the words, 'To pursue out last conversation'.

³ Are you familiar with his works? He resigned his Archbishoprick & retired to voluntary Poverty, on account of the persecution of the Presbyterians—saying 'I should not dare introduce Christianity itself with such cruelties—

27 April 1814

Reasons and Arguments; but by an inexpressible Kind of Evidence, which they only know who have it.—To this I would add that even those who (like me, I fear) have not attained it may yet presume it.—1. because Reason itself, or rather mere human Nature in any dispassionate moment, feels the necessity of Religion; 2. but if this be not true, there is no Religion, no Religion or Binding over again, nothing added to Reason—and therefore Socinianism is not only not Christianity, it is not even Religion—it doth not religate, doth not bind anew—

The first outward and sensible Result of Prayer is a penitent Resolution, joined with a consciousness of weakness in effecting it (yes, even a dread too well grounded, lest by breaking & falsifying it the soul should add guilt to guilt by the very means, it has taken to escape from Guilt—so pitiable is the state of unregenerated man).² Now I have resolved to place myself in any situation, in which I can remain for a month or two as a Child, wholly in the Power of others—But alas! I have no money—Will you write [to] Mr Hoop (a most dear & affectionate Friend to worthless me), to Mr Le Breton, my old Schoolfellow, & likewise a most affectionate Friend, & to Mr Wade, who will return in a few Days—desire them to call on you any evening after 7 o'clock that they can make convenient—and consult with them whether any thing of this kind can be done?—

Do you know Dr Fox?—

how much less a surprise, & the name of a Bishop?—If there could be an intermediate Space between inspired & uninspired Writings, that Space would be occupied by Leighton.—No Shew of Learning! no appearance of Eloquence (and both may be shewn properly & holly) but a something that must be felt even as the Scriptures must be felt.—[Note by S. T. C.]

² At this point Cottle inserted as part of the text Coleridge's footnote on Leighton; he then added Letter 922 and dated the whole Bristol, 1807. The remainder of the present manuscript he printed as a separate undated letter. See Early Rec. ii. 98–99 and 162.

³ Although Coleridge's wish to put himself under restraint, as expressed in this and Letter 919, was the wisest course to be adopted for one in so pitiable a condition, Cottle did not act on it; rather he sent Coleridge's letters to Southey, who negatived any plan for confinement. 'You may imagine', Southey wrote, 'with what feelings I have read your correspondence with Coleridge; Shocking as his letters are perhaps the most mournful thing which they discover is that while acknowledging the guilt of the habit, he imputes it still to morbid bodily causes, whereas after every possible allowance is made for these, every person who has witnessed his habits, knows that for the greater—infinitely the greater part—inclination and indulgence are the motives. It seems dreadful to say this with his expressions before me, but it is so and I know it to be so, from my own observation and that of all with whom he has lived... This, Cottle, is an insanity of that species which none but the Soul's physician can cure. Unquestionably restraint would do for him as much as it did when the Morgans tried it, but I do not see the slightest reason for thinking it

(478)
925. To Joseph Cottle

Address: Mr Cottle | Miss Cottle's Boarding-School, Corner | House in Brunswick Square

[10 May 1814]¹

My dear Cottle

On my return home yesterday I was & continued unwell so as to be obliged to lie down for great part of the evening—& my indisposition keeping me awake during the whole night, I found it necessary to take some magnesia & Calomel—and I am at present so very sick at Stomach (the medicine operating both ways) that I have little chance of being able to stir out of doors this morning—but if I am better, I will see you in the evening.—

I have received the C. of Camb.²—and read with much pleasure the second preface to Alfred,³ which is very well written,⁴ & suited to your intentions. God bless you &

S. T. Coleridge

This note has been detained for want of a messenger a full hour, and more.

926. To Miss Cottle

Address: To Miss Cottle, Brunswick Square.
Pub. Early Rec. 6t. 164.

18th May, 1814.

Dear Madam,

I am uneasy to know how my friend, J. Cottle, goes on. The walk I took last Monday to enquire in person proved too much for my strength, and shortly after my return, I was in such a swooning way, that I was directed to go to bed, and orders were given that no one should interrupt me. Indeed, I cannot be sufficiently grateful for the skill with which the surgeon treats me. But it must be a slow, and occasionally, an interrupted progress, after a sad retrogression of nearly twelve years. To God all things are possible. I treat your prayers, your brother has a share in mine.

What an astonishing privilege, that a sinner should be permitted to cry, 'Our Father!' Oh! still more stupendous mercy, that this poor ungrateful sinner should be exhorted, invited, nay, commanded, to pray—to pray importantly! That which great men

¹ This letter was written the day after Letter 924.
² Coleridge refers to Cottle's *Fall of Combriga*.
³ The third edition of Cottle's *Alfred* was published in 1814.
⁴ These comments concerning the preface to Alfred Cottle transferred to Letter 917.

13 May 1814

most detest, namely, importunity: to this the Giver and the Forgiver encourages his sick petitioners!

I will not trouble you, except for one verbal answer to this note. How is your brother?

With affectionate respects to yourself and your sister,

S. T. Coleridge.

927. To J. J. Morgan

Address: J. J. Morgan, Esqre | Mrs E. Smith's | Ashley Cottage | Box | near Bath
Postmark: Bristol, 14 May 1814.

14 May, Saturday [1814]

2. Queen's Square—

My dear Morgan

If it could be said with as little appearance of profaneness, as there is feeling or intention in my mind, I might affirm: that I had been crucified, dead, and buried, descended into *Hell*, and am now, I humbly trust, rising again, tho' slowly and gradually. I thank you from my heart for your far too kind Letter to Mr Hood—so much of it is true that such as you described I always wished to be. I know, it will be vain to attempt to persuade Mrs Morgan or Charlotte, that a man, whose moral feelings, reason, understanding, and senses are perfectly sane and vigorous, may yet have been *mad*—And yet nothing is more true. By the long long Habit of the accused Poison my Volition (by which I mean the faculty *instrumental* to the Will, and by which alone the Will can realize itself—its Hands, Legs, & Feet, as it were) was completely deranged, at times frenzied, dismembered itself from the Will, & became an independent faculty: so that I was perpetually in the state, in which you may have seen paralytic Persons, who attempting to push a step forward in one direction are violently forced round to the opposite. I was sure that no ease, much less pleasure, would ensue: nay, was certain of an accumulation of pain. But tho' there was no prospect, no gleam of Light before, an indefinite indescribable Terror as with a scourage of ever restless, ever coiling and uncoiling Serpents, drove me on from behind.—The worst was, that in exact *proportion* to the *importance* and *urgency* of any Duty was it, as of a fatal necessity, sure to be neglected: because it added to the Terror above described. In exact proportion, as I *loved* any person or persons more than others, & would have sacrificed my Life for them, were they sure to be the most barbarously mistreated by
silence, absence, or breach of promise.—I used to think St James’s Text, ‘He who offendeth in one point of the Law, offendeth in all’, very harsh; but my own sad experience has taught me it’s awful, dreadful Truth.—What crime is there scarcely which has not been included in or followed from the one guilt of taking opium? Not to speak of ingratitude to my maker for the wasted Talents; of ingratitude to so many friends who have loved me I know not why; of barbarous neglect of my family; excess of cruelty & Charlotte, when at Box, and both ill—(a vision of Hell to me when I think of it!) I have in this one dirty business of Laudanum an hundred times deceived, tricked, nay, actually & consciously lied.—And yet all these vices are so opposite to my nature, that but for this free-agency-annihilating Poison, I verily believe that I should have suffered myself to have been cut to pieces rather than have committed any one of them.

At length, it became too bad. I used to take [from] 4 to 5 ounces a day of Laudanum, once . . . [ounces, i.e., near a Pint—besides great quantities of wine] From the Sole of my foot to the Crown of my head there was not an Inch in which I was not constantly in torture: for more than a fortnight no [sleep] ever visited my Eye lids—but the agonies of [remorse] were far worse than all—Letters past between Cottle, Hood, & myself—and our kind Friend, Hood, sent Mr Daniel to me. At his second Call I told him plainly (for I had sunk out the night before & got Laudanum) that while I was in my own power, all would be in vain—I should inevitably cheat & trick him, just as I had done Dr Tuthill—that I must either be removed to a place of confinement, or at all events have a Keeper.—Daniel saw the truth of my observations, & my most excellent friend, Wade, procured a strong-bodied, but decent, neat, elderly man, to superintend me, under the name of my Valet.—All in the House were forbidden to fetch any thing but by the Doctor’s order.—Daniel generally spends two or three hours a day with me—and already from 4 & 5 ounces has brought me down to four tea-spoonfuls in the 24 Hours.—The terror & the 4 MS. mutilated by removal of signature. A British pint contains twenty fluid ounces.

G. W. Tuthill (1777–1833) had been Mary Lamb’s physician in 1810. It is not clear when Coleridge was under his care. Lamb Letters, ii. 112.

In the summer of 1813 Coleridge engaged Tuthill’s services for Washington Allston, who had fallen ill at Salt Hill on the way to Clifton. ‘Mr. and Mrs. Allston left London, accompanied by Morse and myself’, writes G. R. Leslie; ‘but, when we reached Salt Hill, Allston became too ill to proceed, and it was determined that Morse should return to town and acquaint Coleridge with the circumstances. . . . [Coleridge] came to Salt Hill the same afternoon, accompanied by his friend Dr. Tuthill [sic].’ Autobiographical Recollections. By the late Charles Robert Leslie, ed. Tom Taylor, 3 vols., 1860, i. 88.

14 May 1814

Till a day or two after that I would rather not see you.

[Signature cut off.]

928. To J. J. Morgan

Address: J. J. Morgan, Esqre. | Mrs Smith’s | Ashley | Box | near Bath


Postmark: Bristol, 15 May 1814.

Sunday, 15 May, 1814.

2. Queen’s Square.

My dear Morgan

To continue from my last—Such was the direful state of my mind, that (I tell you with horror) the razors, penknife, & every possible instrument of Suicide it was found necessary to remove from my room! My faithful, my inexcusably patient Friend, WADE, has caused a person to sleep by my bed side, on a bed on the floor: so that I might never be altogether alone—O Good God! why do such good men love me! At times, it would be more delightful to me to lie in the Kennel, & (as Southey said) ’unfit to be pulled out by any honest man except with a pair of Tongs.’—What he then said (perhaps) rather unkindly of me, was prophetically true! Often have I wished to have been thus trodden & spit upon, if by any means it might be an atonement for the direful guilt, that (like all others) first smiled on me, like Innocence! then crept closer, & yet closer, till it had thrown it’s serpent folds round & round me, and I was no longer in my own power!—Something even the most wretched of Beings (human Beings at least) owes to himself—and this I will say & dare with truth say—that never was I led to this wicked direful practice of taking Opium or Laudanum by any desire or expectation of exciting pleasurable sensations; but purely by terror, by cowardice of pain, first of mental pain, & afterwards as my System became weakened, even of bodily Pain.

My Prayers have been fervent, in agony of Spirit, and for hours together, incessant! still ending, O! only for the merits, for the agonies, for the cross of my blessed Redeemer! For I am nothing, but evil—I can do nothing, but evil! Help! Help!—I believe! help thou my unbelief!—

Mr Daniel has been the wisest of physicians to me. I cannot say, how much I am indebted both to his Skill and Kindness. But he is one of the few rare men, who can make even their Kindness Skill, & the best and most unaffected Virtues of their Hearts professionally useful.

Anxious as I am to see you, yet I would wish to delay it till some
3 days after the total abandonment of the Poison. I expect, that this will commence on Tuesday next.—

Dr Estlin has contrived not only to pick a gratuitous quarrel with me, but by his female agents to rouse men who should be ashamed of such folly, for my saying in a Lecture on the Paradise Regained, that Milton had been pleased to represent the Devil as a sceptical Socinian. Alas! if I should get well—woe to the poor Doctor, & to his Unitarians! They have treated me so ungenerously, that I am by the allowance of all my friends let loose from all bands of delicacy. Estlin has behaved downright cruel & brutal to me.—

I scarce know what to say or to bid you say to Mary or to Charlotte—for I cannot, of course, address myself to the reason of Women—& all that their common sense, their experience, & their feelings, suggest to them, must be irreversibly against me. Nevertheless, strange as it must appear to them & perhaps incredible, it is still true, that I not only have loved ever, and still do love them; but that there never was a moment, in which I would not have shed my very blood for their sakes—At the very worst, I never neglected them but when in an hundred fold degree I was injuring myself. But this I cannot expect women to understand or believe—& must take the alienation of Mary’s & Charlotte’s esteem & affection among the due punishments of my Crime—

I am as much pleased as it is possible I can be at present in the present state of my body & mind at the improving state of your Affairs. Nothing would give me truer delight, than being recovered, to be able by my exertions to aid you: and assuredly, either this will [be] the case, or my Death.

I ought to say, that Mr Daniel is sanguine respecting my total recovery: tho’ he admits, that after the Landanum has been totally discontinued, there must be a long process to remedy the ravages in my constitution, which it has caused, & to bring down my carcase to something like a bulk proportionate to my years—but I am an Englishman, & he is an American!—I was in my bitterest affliction glad to hear that his Picture had been noticed, however unworthy & by such a scurvy set of Judges. I intreated Bird to call on him and intreat him to write to me, tho’ but two Lines—but I fear, Allston, tho’ the very best & prime, is an American!

I dare not ask you to give my Love to Mary—it is sufficient, that she has it. As soon as I am better, if I do not come over, I will write & ask you to come over hither after Miss Brent’s Return from London—

Your affectionate Friend
S. T. Coleridge

930. To William Allen

Address: William Allen, Esqre. | Plough Court | Lombard Street | London Post-pay’d


Postmark: Bristol, 19 May 1814.

19 May, 1814
2. Queen’s Square, Bristol.

Dear Sir

I take a great liberty which yet, I trust, your Humanity will excuse in consideration of the calamitous state of my Health: tho’ Heaven’s Master be praised, by the skill and kindness of my Physician, who has attended me twice & three times a day for months past, almost the only relict and sediment of my Disease

1 William Allen (1770–1843), Quaker, scientist, and philanthropist, was a strong abolitionist. In 1792 he entered Bevan’s chemical establishment at Flough Court.
COLLECTED LETTERS OF
Samuel Taylor Coleridge

EDITED BY
EARL LESLIE GRIGGS

VOLUME IV
1815-1819

OXFORD
AT THE CLarendon PRESS
1959
To John M. Gutch

1000. To John M. Gutch

Address: Proof | Mr Gutch | Small Street | Bristol
MS. Yale University Lib. Hitherto unpublished.
Postmark: 9 April 1816.

Dear Gutch

From the second or third day after my arrival in town to the present day I have been confined to my bed, with a Physician & another medical man attending me almost the day thro'—I have not even been able to see Lord Byron, or present my play—I am better—and will send off a proof sheet as soon as possible.

S. T. C.

P.S. But I am, of course, as weak as an infant.

1001. To Lord Byron

Address: Lord Byron | Terrace | Piccadilly | With a Manuscript—

42, Norfolk Street, Strand.
Wednesday, 10 April, 1816.

My Lord

Scarceley had I arrived in town when I became indisposed: about the third day most seriously: and the interval has been passed in bed with a physician or Medical attendant almost constantly at my side. The strength of my constitution has prevailed over the effects of year-long errors, and imprudences commenced most innocently, and grown into the Tyranny of Habit before I was aware of my Danger. I refer to the daily habit of taking enormous doses of Laudanum which I believed necessary to my Life, tho’ I groaned under it as the worst and most degrading of Slaveries—in plain words, as a specific madness which leaving the intellect uninjured and exciting the moral feelings to a cruel sensibility, entirely suspended the moral Will.

Video meliora proboque,

Deteriora sequor—

was the motto of my Life—as far as this process of slow self-destruction was concerned.—Yet let me say that long ago I should have been a free man, had I not been persuaded by medical men

1 This letter is written on p. 240 of the proof-sheets of signature Q of Sibbaldine leaves. As the postmarks show, the signature left Bristol on 4 April, arrived in London the next day, and was returned on the 9th.

2 Joseph Adkins (1796–1818), an ‘old acquaintance’ of Morgan’s. See Letter 1002.

3 Ovid, Metamorphoses, vii. 20–21.

10 April 1816

[1001]

that it would be fatal to leave it off at once—and as to leaving it off by degrees, it is mere ignorance of the nature of the Distemper that could alone inspire the hope or belief—

To the wisdom of my physician and the great firmness, inflexibility, and constant watchfulness of the Apothecary I owe the happy knowledge, not only that the direful practice may be at once abandoned even after 15 years habit without danger, but with a very speedy restoration of such sensations as enable the patient to bear with a smile & without distraction of Thought bodily pains which looked at thro’ the magic glass of an opium-poisoned imagination would have maddened him with fear and horror—

I have troubled your Lordship with this account, because I really must appear an inexplicable Being without it. I am so very weak that it is not in my power at present to wait personally on your Lordship; and therefore have taken the Liberty of sending, as my proxy, my excellent and faithful Friend, Mr Morgan, who has been my Amanuensis and Counsellor during the composition of my later works, and who takes with him to your Lordship a tragic Romance on the plan of the Winter’s Tale—only that what in Shakespeare is a first Act I have called a Prelude. As this irregularity is announced in the very title, a Christmas Tale, I do not think, it will be any great Objection—The passiveness of Zapolya in the last Act seems to me the greatest; but if the first four were approved of, I doubt not, I could re-write the 5th, or rather re-plot it, so as to make the Mother (the Meropé or Lady Randolph of the Play) more prominent. The Lines, which I think might be omitted in representation are either marked with inverted Commas, or added at the end of the Play with the pages marked to which they belong. Doubtless, many more must be cut out; but I thought that the choice

1 Coleridge probably refers to Aaron Hill’s Meropé (1749), an an adaptation of Voltaire’s tragedy. E. S. Maffei in 1713 and George Jeffrey in 1731 also wrote plays with the same title.

2 Lady Randolph, a character in J. Home’s tragedy, Douglas, first acted in 1756.

3 Professor Francis Christensen has kindly sent me the following note drawn from his unpublished dissertation, Harvard, 1934:

Although the names of persons and places in Zapolya were drawn from history, the story was not. [See note to Letter 271.] The plot consists of two parts—a plot within a plot. For the main plot, the story of the usurpation of an infant’s right to a throne, Coleridge drew from The Winter’s Tale (hence his sub-title ‘A Christmas Tale’) and Cymbeline, and, as he acknowledges here, from Douglas and Meropé. For the subplot, the usurper’s treachery toward one of his supporters, he drew from The Rape of Lucrece and from the story of Edgar, Ethelwold, and Elfrida, possibly from such plays as Massinger’s The Great Duke of Florence (1655), Aaron Hill’s Elfrida (1709–10), later recast as Ethelwold (1781), and Mason’s Elfrida (1758).

(627)
would better belong to the Actors themselves and acting Manager during the Rehearsal.1

At all events, your Lordship will be so kind as to read it over as a Poem at least.—I shall immediately re-commence the regular Tragedy,2 which alone I had designed for you in the first instance; but from the wretched state of my mind and body sunk under it.—

After this week it is my hope and intention to pass a month at Highgate, boarding and lodging in the House of a respectable Surgeon and Naturalist3 for the perfecting of my convalescence mental no less than bodily.

In Drayton’s Moon-calf your Lordship will find a very lively description of the War-wolf4—Of course, it is supposed to exist only in the fancies & fears of the ignorant Rusties—I remain your Lordship’s much obliged and grateful Servant,

S. T. Coleridge

1002. To James Gillman

Address: J. Gillman, Esquire | Surgeon | Highgate MS. Yale University Lib. Pub. with omits. Letters, ii. 657. B. H. Coleridge’s text, which is taken from Gillman’s Life, 273, is both inaccurate and incomplete. In April 1816 Joseph Adams sent the following explanatory letter to Gillman:

Hatton Garden, 9th April, 1816.

Dear Sir,

A very learned, but in one respect an unfortunate gentleman, has applied to me on a singular occasion. He has for several years been in the habit of

As he had planned, Coleridge submitted Zappolya to Covent Garden immediately on his arrival in London. By 9 April it had been rejected, and he sent it to Lord Byron for consideration at Drury Lane. Coleridge was informed that it would not do as a Play, but that it would answer very well as a Melodrama with some slight alteration. On 6 May 1816 Morgan reported to Gutch that Lord Essex and Douglas Kincaird had ‘promised ... to bring out part of the Tragedy [Zappolya] next season at D.L. ... [I] am to dine with ... Kincaird one day this week to settle what alterations they wish... They take the last part, 4 Acts—and add Songs & Music.’ [MS. Coleridge family.] On 8 June Coleridge assured Murray that Kincaird intended to produce the adapted play ‘next Christmas’. Subsequently Coleridge was treated with ‘insolent and unflealing caprice ... by the classical committee’ and all efforts to deal with the management, of which the personnel had changed, proved abortive. See Letters 991, 998, 1007, 1011, 1043, 1053, and 1213; and Lamb Letters, ii. 177 and 196.

1 Coleridge did not complete this ‘regular Tragedy’. See Letter 1038.

2 James Gillman.

3 About the fields religiously they went,

With halowing charms the Wervolf thence to fray.

[Drayton, The Man in the Moone, 12-15.)

See also Zappolya, Part II, i. 1. 389-40:

Madam, that wood is haunted by the war-wolves,

Vampires, and monstrous—

(628)

13 April 1816

taking large quantities of opium. For some time past, he has been in vain endeavouring to break himself off it. It is apprehended his friends are not firm enough, from a dread, lest he should suffer by suddenly leaving it off, though he is conscious of the contrary; and has proposed to me to submit himself to any regimen, however severe. With this view, he wishes to fix himself in the house of some medical gentleman, who will have courage to refuse him any laudanum, and under whose assistance, should he be the worse for it, he may be relieved. As he is desirous of retirement, and a garden, I could think of no one so readily as yourself. Be so good as to inform me, whether such a proposal is absolutely inconsistent with your family arrangements. I should not have proposed it, but on account of the great importance of the character, as a literary man. His communicative temper will make his society very interesting, as well as useful. Have the goodness to favour me with an immediate answer; and believe me, dear sir, your faithful humble servant. (Gillman, Life, 270-1.)

Gillman’s date of 9 April for the letter above is highly suspect. ‘After this week’, Coleridge wrote to Byron on 10 April, ‘it is my hope and intention to pass a month at Highgate ... in the House of a respectable Surgeon—evidence that he had seen Gillman and made preliminary arrangements. Equally unreliable is Gillman’s statement that Coleridge called one evening and proposed to begin his residence the next, but that ‘the approaching day’ brought instead Coleridge’s letter of 13 April. Actually, the letter itself contains the first proposal of a specific date—‘Monday Evening’, 15 April—for the beginning of Coleridge’s domestication at Highgate; and the London postmark (7 o’clock 18 April 1816 night) and the official stamp (To be delivered by 10 o’clock next Sunday morning) prove conclusively that it reached Gillman the 14th. See Gillman, Life, 270-6. Campbell and Chambers are both misled by Gillman’s rambling and inaccurate account.

On 15 April, as he had planned, Coleridge arrived at Highgate. There he remained until his death.

Postmark: 13 April 1816.

42, Norfolk St. Strand—Saturday Noon, [18 April 1816]

My dear Sir,

The first half hour, I was with you, convinced me that I should owe my reception into your family exclusively to motives not less flattering to me than honorable to yourself. I trust, we shall ever in matters of intellect be reciprocally serviceable to each other. Men of sense generally come to the same conclusions; but they are likely to contribute to each other’s enlargement of View in proportion to the distance, or even opposition of the points from which they set out. Travel and the strange variety of situations and employments on which Chance has thrown me in the course of my Life might have made me a mere man of Observation, if Pain and Sorrow and Self-miscomplacence had not forced my mind in on itself, and so formed habits of meditation. It is now as much my nature to evolve the fact from the Law, as that of a practical man to deduce the Law from the Fact.

[With regard to the Terms] permit me to say, [that I offer them

(629)
as proportioned to my present ability; and least of all things] to my sense of the service. But that indeed cannot be [payed] for: it must be returned in kind by esteem and grateful affection.

And now of myself. My ever-wakeful Reason, and the keenness of my moral feelings will secure you from all unpleasant circumstances connected with me save only one: viz.—Eviction, and the cunning of a specific madness. You will never hear any thing but truth from me—Prior Habits render it out of my power to tell a falsehood, but unless watched carefully, I dare not promise that I should not with regard to this detested Poison be capable of acting a Lie.—No sixty hours have yet passed without my having taking [taken?] Laudanum—tho' for the last week comparatively trifling doses. I have full belief, that your anxiety will not need to be extended beyond the first week: and for the first week I shall not, I must not be permitted to leave your House, unless I should walk out with you.

—Delicately or indelicately, this must be done: and both the Servant and the young Man must receive absolute commands from you on no account to fetch any thing for me. The stimulus of Conversation suspends the terror that haunts my mind; but when I am alone, the horrors, I have suffered from Laudanum, the degradation, the blighted Utility, almost overwhelm me.—If (as I feel for the first time a soothing Confidence it will prove) I should leave you restored to my moral and bodily Health, it is not myself only that will love and honor you—Every friend, I have (and thank God I spite of this wretched vice I have many & warm ones who were friends of my Youth & have never deserted me) will think of you with reverence.

I have taken no notice of your kind apologies—if I could not be comfortable in your House & with your family, I should deserve to be miserable.

I presume, there will be no Objection to Mr Morgan coming to me, as my literary Counsellor and Amansensis at ½ past 11 every morning & staying with me till ½ past 3. I have been for so many years accustomed to dicta[te] while he writes that I now cannot compose without him. He is an old acquaintance of Dr Adams’s: and has kindly left his family for a month at Calne in order to be with me during such hours, as I should be otherwise alone.

If you could make it convenient, I should wish to be with you by

1 The words enclosed in brackets are inked out in the manuscript. The text of this paragraph as printed by Gillman and E. H. Coleridge reads as follows:
With respect to pecuniary remuneration, allow me to say, I must not at least be suffered to make any addition to your family expenses—though I cannot offer anything that would be in any way adequate to my sense of the service: for that, indeed, there could not be a compensation, as it must be returned in kind, by esteem and grateful affection.

14 April, 1816

Dear Sir,

It is so common a thing to be misunderstood, and so difficult to avoid it in a general conversation on any complex subject, that not having had the pleasure of meeting you since our last Discussion, I thought it would not be unpleasant to you if I explained myself in a more orderly way on what I take to be the only rational process of Evidence for the truth of Christianity.—Viz.—

1. That assent to a fact, if fact it be, which every man must procure for himself, by self-examination or experience.—Do I need any other assistance to be or become that which I ought to be—to redeem me from the state of consequences of my past contrarily to it—and to save me from the future?—Revelation, III. Chapt. V.

17. 18.—

2. Do the promises of Christ correspond to this self-experience, as remedy to disease—supposing them true?—If both these are assented to,

[8.] Do the doctrines said to have [been] taught by Christ and his immediate Disciples, including these promises, (taking them as plain honest men would in the obvious sense of the words and context, and while it is yet undetermined whether they are or are not the words of divine wisdom, or not rather of mere enthusiasm, & consequently while it is bad logic (the logic of prejudice to wit) to say—This is absurd: and therefore this cannot be the sense of the passage)—Do these Doctrines, as propounded in the books attributed to John and Paul for instance, contain any thing incompatible with Reason, i.e. Are they logically and metaphysically possible? For instance, suppose that John or Christ himself had said that X was at once three and yet one, and three in the very same

1 On the evening appointed, writes Gillman, Coleridge came, bringing in his hand the proof sheets of Christabel.' (Life, 276.) This is pure invention, since the tentative arrangements for the publication of Christabel had taken place on 12 April, only three days before Coleridge arrived at Highgate. See Letter 1004 for a note concerning Murray’s meeting with Coleridge.
COLLECTED LETTERS OF
Samuel Taylor Coleridge

EDITED BY
EARL LESLIE GRIGGS

VOLUME VI
1826-1834

OXFORD
AT THE CLARENDON PRESS
1971
be in his head. Woman's head must be in her heart. But how it is possible that a man should entirely separate and exclude the mysteries—i.e. the philosophy of Christianity—from the Traditions, as contained in the three Gospels καθον, καθον καθον, and profess to believe the latter for their sake, and on that ground alone to receive this nondescript 'It = O, or if it pretend to anything not as clearly delivered in the Old Testament and in the Greek moralists, a vain boast—and yet affect to smile with contempt at the quack doctor's affidavits or [on?] oath before the Lord Mayor—this would make me stare, if aught could excite wonder in my mind at any folly manifested by knowing folks. Now your male Unitarians are all of this class—they are knowing fellows. Never once have I met, or heard of, a philosopher, or a really learned Priestleyan or Belshamite;—Lardner, a dull man, but as far as industry of itself can make a dull man a man of learning, certainly a learned man, at all events a man of systematic reading, seems to me to have oscillated between Sabellianism and Socinianism;—but men—the Socinists were Christians—though grievously inconsistent in their logic. But it is not in the ways of logic that we can be raised to heaven.¹

1736. To J. H. Green

Address: J. H. Green, Esquire &c. &c. &c. &c. 36 Lincoln's Inn Fields.
Postmark: Highgate, 29 March 1832.

My very dear Friend.

On Monday I had a sad trial of intestinal pain and restlessness; but thro' God's Mercy, without any craving for the Poison, which for more than 80 years has been the guilt, debasement, and misery of my Existence.² I pray, that God may have mercy on me—tho' unmanly impatience of wretched sensations, that produced a disruption of my mental continuity of productive action I have for the better part of my life yearning [yearned?] towards God, yet having recourse to the evil Being—i.e. a continued act of thirty years' Self-poisoning thro' cowardice of pain, & without other motive—say rather without motive but solely thro' the good a tergo of unmanly and unchristian fear—God knows! I in my inmost soul acknowledge all my sufferings as the necessary effects of his Wisdom, and all the alleviations as the unmerited graces of his

¹ Cf. Table Talk, 4 Apr. 1822.
² Coleridge began taking opium regularly in 1801. See Letter 400, the Introduction to vol. iii. of the present edition, and E. H. Coleridge's note in Letters, ii. 760-1.

(894).

29 March 1832

Goodness. Since Monday I have been tranquil; but still, placing the palm of my hand with its lower edge on the navel, I feel with no intermission a death-grasp, sometimes relaxed, sometimes tightened, but always present: and I am convinced, that if Medical Ethics permitted the production of a Euthanasia, & a Physician, convinced that at my time of Life there was no rational hope of revalescence to any useful purpose, should administer a score drops of the purest Hydro-cyanic Acid, & I were immediately after opened (as is my earnest wish) the state of the mesenteric region would solve the problem.

I trust, however, that I shall yet see you, as Job says, 'in this flesh'—& I write now tho' under an earnest conviction of the decay of my intellectual powers proportionate to the decay of the Organs, thro' which they are made manifest, & which you must have perceived, of late, more forcibly than myself—I write, my dear friend! first to acknowledge God's Goodness in my connection with you—secondly, to express my utter indifference, under whose name any truths are propounded to Mankind—God knows! it would be no pain to me, to foresee that my name should utterly cease—I have no desire for reputation—nay, no wish for fame—but I am truly thankful to God, that thro' you my labors of thought may be rendered not wholly unsemisative. But in what last Sunday you read to me, I had a sort of Jealousy, probably occasioned by the weakened state of my intellectual powers, that you had in some measure changed your pole. My principle has ever been, that Reason is subjective Revelation, Revelation objective Reason—and that our business is not to derive Authority from the mythoi of the Jews & the first Jew-Christians (i.e. the O. and N. Testament) but to give it to them—never to assume their stories as facts, any more than you would Quack Doctors' affidavits on oath before the Lord Mayor—and verily in point of old Bailey Evidence this is a flatterer representation of the Paleyian Evidence—but by science to confirm the Factual, kindly afforded to beginners in Arithmetic. If I lose my faith in Reason, as the perpetual revelation, I lose my faith altogether. I must deduce the objective from the subjective Revelation, or it is no longer a revelation for me, but a beastly fear, and superstition.

I hope, I shall live to see you next Sunday. God bless you, my dear Friend! We have had a sad sick House—and in consequence, I have seen but little of Mr Gillman, who has been himself ill—and likewise Miss Lucy Harding. For me, it is a great blessing & mercy, Life or Death, that I have been & still remain quiet, without any

¹ Cf. Job xix. 38; 'And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.'
To J. H. Green

craving, but the contrary. Compared with this mercy, even the felt and doubtless by you perceived decay & languor of intellectual energy is a trifle counter-weight.—

Again, God bless you, my dear friend! | and
S. T. Coleridge—

1737. To William Rowan Hamilton


April 4, 1832.

Through bodily weakness and the multiplied professional avocations of my young friend, Mr. Gillman’s medical pupil, I have not been able in the wilderness of my books, that for sixteen years have always been intended to be catalogued and put into some arrangement, I have not been able as yet to find the first volume of Kant’s Miscellaneous Essays. They are in five volumes, and for the most part consist of the publications anterior to the famous Critik of the Pure Reason. But—have you misunderstood me? I have no translation, and am aware of none—or are you a reader of the German? If so, I trust that I shall, before you quit London, still succeed in rummaging out the two lost volumes, one essay in Latin being an excellent introduction to Kant’s revival of the distinction between the Noumenon = Nomen, Intelligible, Nomen—and the Phenomenon—all potential Entities, that are only in and for the mind and the sensations. With great respect, my dear sir, I remain your afflicted but respectful, &c.

1 Coleridge refers to Kant’s Vernische Schriften, ed. J. H. Tischtrunk, i-iii, 1799, iv. 1807. There is no fifth volume. The British Museum has two incomplete sets of this edition with MS. notes by Coleridge: ii-iv (C. 46, a. 0) and i-ii (C. 126, a. 7). In 1816 Coleridge returned Crabb Robinson’s copy of vols. i-iii of the other set of the Vernische Schriften. (See note to Letter 1019.) These three volumes, which contain annotations by Coleridge, are now in University College Library, London.

2 Kant’s Kritik der reinen Vernunft, 1781. Coleridge’s annotated copy of the 1799 edition is in the British Museum.

3 Kant’s De mundi sensibilis atque intelligibilibs forma et principii, 1770, is in vol. ii of the Vernische Schriften and is followed by a German translation. In a manuscript note in De mundi (C. 126, e. 7), Coleridge discusses the work as an important forerunner of the Kritik der reinen Vernunft. (From information kindly supplied by Mr. B. A. Rowley.) See also Letter 1125.

6 April 1832

1738. To William Rowan Hamilton


[April 6, 1832.]

Dear and respected Sir,

I have little hope that this scrawl will reach you in time, but since the receipt of your kind letter, this morning, I cannot but feel self-accused, if from any neglect on my part you should leave England without having seen Mr. Green, 36 or 46, I forget which, in Lincoln’s-Inn Fields; it is at some five or six doors, Covent-gardenward, beyond the Royal College of Surgeons. You will be pretty sure of finding him at home if it should be in your power to call before 11 or 12 o’clock.

I am much weaker than when you saw me: and have but feeble hope of the accomplishment of your kind wishes. God’s will shall be done! He knows that my first prayer is not to fall from Him, and the faith that He is God, the I AM, the God that heareth prayer—the Finite in the form of the Infinite = the Absolute Will, the Good; the Self-affirmant, the Father, the I AM, the Personality—the Supreme Mind, Reason, Being, the Plurima, the Infinite in the form of the Finite, the Unity in the form of the Distinctness; or, lastly, in the synthesis of these, in the Life, the Love, the Community, the Parochia, or Inter[circle]lulation—and that there is one only God! And I believe in an apostasy, absolutely necessary, as a possible event, from the absolute perfection of Love and Goodness, and because Will is the only ground and antecedent of all Being. And I believe in the descension and condescension of the Divine Spirit, Word, Father, and Incomprehensible Ground of all—and that he is a God who seeketh that which was lost, and that the whole world of Phaenomena is a revelation of the Redemptive Process of the Deus Patiens, or Deitas Objectiva beginning in the separation of Life from Hades, which under the control of the Law = Logos = Unity—becomes Nature, i.e., that which never is but nature est, is to be, from the brute Mulitity, and Indistinctness, and is to end with the union with God in the Plurima. I dare not hope ever to see you again in the flesh—scarcely expect to survive to the hearing of you. But be assured I have been comforted by the fact you have given me, that there are men of profound science who yet feel that Science—eine its most flourishing state, needs a Baptism, a Regeneration in Philosophy—so call it, if you refer to the subjective feeling—but if to the Object, then, despite of all the contempt squandered on poor Jacob Bohmen and