A Tale of Two Samuels:
Coleridge & his Father in the Conclusions to BL and OM2

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THE PURPOSE OF THIS ESSAY is to draw attention to the similarity in theme, orientation and tone between the concluding lines of the *Biographia Literaria* (BL II 247-8, hereafter the BL coda) and the final phrases of Fragment 2 of the *Opus Maximum* (OM 213, hereafter the OM2 coda),[1] and to draw some tentative inferences from this similarity. A first draft was more extensive, as I labored to build my own case for the rootage of these lines in Coleridge's childhood experience with his father. But—as such things sometimes happen—on the morning after I completed this first draft, UPS delivered my copy of J. C. C. Mays' *Coleridge's Father: Absent Man, Guardian Spirit* (Friends of Coleridge, 2014); and by the time I had finished a first reading, I realized that Mays had done my work for me with a comprehensiveness and depth far, far beyond anything I could have conceived, let alone accomplished. So rich is this volume, and so persuasive, in its portrayal of the relation between father and son, that I will simply call it in evidence through a series of quotations, and otherwise assume it as background for my own attempts to prolong some of his points. I shall cite *Coleridge's Father* by chapter, section and paragraph as Mays himself has laid out the book (e.g., *CF* 2.8.1), and, like Mays, refer to the father as JC and the son as STC.

1. The BL coda: Father and Son as Star-Gazers

1.1.1 JC and STC each in their own right followed with keen interest the science of astronomy burgeoning before their eyes through the researches and discoveries of figures like William Herschel and (in STC's case) his son John. But when STC was eight years old, and very shortly before his father died, he and his father shared an evening under the stars the significance of which for STC has not hitherto—despite the attention given it by Richard Holmes and Rosemary Ashton—been adequately explored. Now, not only has Mays made that evening experience the centerpiece of his first chapter, under the title, "Sky-Gazing in 'Ecstatic Fit'," but it continues to crop up thereafter like springs fed from an underground stream, or the Gihon in 1 Kings 1 whose origin is the Gihon of Eden. STC's account of this event comes in a letter to Joseph Cottle in 1997:

> I remember, that at eight years old I walked with him one winter evening from a farmer's house, a mile from Ottery—& he told me the names of the stars—and how Jupiter was a thousand times larger than our world—and that the other twinkling stars were Suns that had worlds

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[1] To anticipate Section 4 below, I state here that I accept Luke Wright's arguments for ordering the fragments as follows: OM 3, 1, 2. In this ordering, OM2coda brings OM as a whole to its proper conclusion.

> rolling round them—& when I came home, he shewed me how they rolled round— /. I heard him with a profound delight & admiration; but without the least mixture of wonder or incredulity. For from my early reading of Faery Tales, & Genii &c &c—my mind had been habituated *to the Vast*[.] (CL I 354)

1.1.2 Mays notes that "STC recalled surprisingly few moments of intimacy with his father." But, he goes on, "[t]he star-gazing moment—in all its natural, protected simplicity—is the most positive and contains the furthest vibrations." (*CF* 2.8.1) It communicated to STC "a sense of infinite space and grandeur" (*CF* 1.3.2), a "commitment to openness and wonder." (*CF* 2.8.3) It occasioned "an awakening to a sense of unity by which his understanding of the world was secured." (*CF* 1.3.6) As a result, "sky-gazing remains a motif in STC's poetry, . . . as an image of focused contemplation." (*CF* 1.4.1) In sum, "[t]he moment blended with other occasions and was magnified by need so that it became the *nodus memorandi* of a whole range of pantheistic associations and out-of-the-way speculations. . . . The defining moment echoes through STC's writing and ideas and becomes the fountainhead of his idea of imagination." (*CF* 1.3.4)

1.2.1 Arrested by Mays' words, "magnified by need," I scan the preceding paragraph (*CF* 1.3.3) for clues to what that "need" may have been, and come upon his quotation from CN II 2151, an 1804 note that attempts to capture in words the essence of the star gazing evening. In its import as a staging-point between the epistolary account of that evening to Cottle and the literary account in the BL coda—but also, intriguingly, as tracing an element in STC's self-understanding that I see surfacing in the OM2 coda—the entry requires that I pause to consider it at some length. It reads, in its entirety,

> Saw in early youth as in a Dream the Birth of the Planets; & my eyes beheld as *one* what the Understanding afterwards divided into 1. the origin of the masses, 2. the origins of their motions, and 3. the site or position of their Circles & Ellipses—all the deviations too were *seen* in one intuition of one, the self-same, necessity—& this necessity was a Law of Spirit—& all was Spirit—and in matter all beheld the past activity of others or their own—this Reflection, this Echo, is Matter—its only essence, if essence it be—and of this too I saw the necessity and understood it—but I understood not, how infinite multitude and manifoldness could be one. Only I saw & understood, that it was yet more out of my power to comprehend how it could be otherwise—& in this unity I worshipped in the depth of knowledge that passeth all understanding the Being of all things—and in Being their sole Goodness—and I saw that God is the one, *the* Good—possesses it not, but is it.
>
> <For my own Life—written as an inspired Prophet—*throughout*.> (CN II 2151)

1.2.2 The most obvious verbal link with the BL coda is the common word, "Echo," in both passages, along with the picture of planetary systems—all this, in both instances, leading to the theme of worship whose focus lies in a God who transcends creation while being present in it. The repeated words "one" and "all," where the "one intuition" is the subjective pole of the objective "one/all," is reminiscent of the ancient *hen kai pan*, "one-and-all" that finally drove STC to his elaborated Trinitarian views. As it is, the reference to God, here, who is "the Good—who possesses it not, but is it," is on the way to the biblical "great I AM" of the BL coda. As Kathleen Coburn notes, this entry echoes the passage in *Religious Musings* (lines 126–158) where the sense of being "Parts and proportions of one wond'rous whole" is anchored in "the present God" and lives toward "the Messiah's destin'd victory."[2]

1.3.1 So much, in brief, for CN II 2151 as a staging-point along the route from the childhood experience and through the letter to Cottle on its way to BL. Now I want to draw attention to features that in my judgment mark this entry as a junction along a route that runs through several notebook entries to arrive at the OM2 coda. It has to do with the theme of prophecy.[3]

1.3.2 Mays refers (*CF* 1.3.3) to this entry as the report of "[STC'S] dream, . . . a dream in which he saw." But on that evening with his father STC was not asleep; he was awake, yet "*as* in a dream" (my italics). The distinction is important. It has to do with STC's construal of the significance of this experience for his life. Specifically, it has do with the question of how we are to construe STC's appended note, "<For my own Life—written as an inspired Prophet—*throughout*.>" How are we to parse these three elements? First, "For my own Life:" Does this identify the entry as a memorandum toward a later account of his own life, such as he sketches in his letter to Poole? Or such as he offers, then, in BL as a *biographia*? In the latter case, the star gazing moment becomes a subtext for that entire work. But perhaps the cryptic allusion is not to the *memorandum*, as "for [a later writing up of] my own life," but to *the experience itself* "as in a dream," that STC, only in retrospect, sees to have been a *prophetic* call?

1.3.3 I note how, repeatedly, STC writes of biblical prophets as in a dream-*like* state. Thus, in a "Mem." On "Prophecy" that he appends to a comment on Genesis 15 (itself concerning a *vision*—Gen 15:1—in which God's promise to Abram is put in terms of the *innumerable stars*), he writes (CN V 6150), "in the stricter sense <of the Word> in the far greater number of Scripture instances takes place in Sleep or States resembling it. Revelation avails herself of the natural constitution of Man, and uses the inherent faculties potenziated

[2] I take the lines, "SELF, spreading still! Oblivious of its own, / Yet all of all possessing! This is FAITH! / This the MESSIAH's destin'd victory," as echoing 1 Cor 3:21-23 and 15:28.

[3] I am indebted to Mays for drawing my attention to CN II 2151, which had previously escaped my notice. Such is the richness of his work, close perusal of which leads one repeatedly to unexpected treasures.

into higher energy as her instrument. Hell-sehen [clairvoyance] a latent faculty in all men, perhaps." Again, in CN V 5786, in reference to Zech 1:15, where he associates prophetic utterance with that of Poetry, he refers to "the so common & natural *fiction* of a Dream" (my italics), and continues, "Would it be More *real*, More *true*, if the Prophet were bonâ fida sound asleep & dreamt, than if the perfect state of his Judgement & all his other intellectual faculties his conscious Imagination called forth these impressive & pregnant natural symbols?" In the immediately following paragraph (CN V 5787), he appears to appropriate to himself the possibility of such a poetic-prophetic role,[4] as his "inherent faculties" are "potenziated," as already in his childhood "intuition" which the appended line in CN V 2151 might be taken to construe, in retrospect, as a prophetic vision and, as such, in some sense a prophetic call.

1.3.4 If, in the event, his choice of *The Watchman* as a title for his first short-lived periodical may be traced to mundane inspiration, as Lewis Patton notes in *W* xxix, it also had deeper connotations for him. As Patton goes on to observe, in words that resonate with the very last words in this periodical's last issue (*W* 375 and 375n), "'Watchman' was a favourite word of Coleridge's favourite prophets, Ezekiel and Isaiah—a word that bound together his deepest convictions, religious and political, in a union that reveals itself in all his thinking." If CN II 2151 was written in 1804, after that "vain" attempt at a prophetic role, it may indicate his recognition that such a calling was rooted in this childhood visionary experience of the oneness of all things. It is perhaps this deep *self-involving intuition* or *theoria* into organic oneness, deeper than any merely intellectual theory or social-science understanding, that lies at the heart of this "union" of "convictions . . . religious and political." (That union comes to final expression in notebook # 55, a notebook which, under the title, "Faith, Prayer, Meditation," opens [CN V 6892–6894] with a final Trinitarian-Cosmological vision echoing Boehme, the BL coda, and behind that, CN II 2151 and, ultimately, the childhood recollection to Cottle, then closes [CN V 6918] with a similar Trinitarian credo, and in between these bracketing entries [CN V 6890–91, 6895–6917], offers a final series of connected reflections on matters of state, society and economy—not to mention [CN V 6898–6900] the scientific and possibly commercial properties of sputum as a fire-retardant!)

1.3.5 Mays writes (*CF* 1.4.4), of JC's view of prophecy's origin and calling in mystic vision, that "Poet and prophet are permitted to see and hear, and their duty is to declare these things to men." And he goes on immediately to say,

> STC psychologised and philosophised the initial concept, and continued to revise its terms, but the poetic structure remains the same. My argument is that it repeats a movement associated with his father and was shaped by preoccupations preserved in his father's writing. It

[4] "What? Does *his* Voice no longer sound, *his* arrow no longer speed, from the Clouds?"

> depends most of all on that recreation of the singular spot of time I described in the previous section." (*CF* 1 4.5)

These lines clinch, for me, the sense that CN II 2151 is a vital, indeed major link in the connection between the childhood "spot of time," STC's recollection of it in the letter to Poole, and the BL coda.

1.4.1 Another fundamental dimension of this childhood occasion is suggested by Mays' repeated reference to the link between STC's faith and JC's. He writes, "STC inherited from JC … a cast of mind more than particular thoughts, facts and opinions; sustained by a quality of trust, call it faith, which is deeper than knowledge." (*CF* 8.1.4) "His memory was suffused with the immoveable simplicity of his father's religious faith[.]" (*CF* 1.3.8) "In the long term, the example of JC's Christianity proved the most important influence of all. Whatever STC's changes of opinion, he held to his Christian faith in a way many later students of his thinking and personality have failed to comprehend." (*CF* 2.8.5) "The simple, practical faith STC inherited from JC was not an aberration; his later theological musings complete the autobiographical project that *Biographia Literaria* began." (*CF* 2.8.6)

1.4.2 Comments like these, when read in the context of Mays' massive supporting evidence and plausible divinatory interpretation—and in particular, Mays' wonderful characterising phrase, *nodus memorandi* (*CF* 1.3.4)—call to mind Christopher Bollas' coinage of the term, "genera," as a positive counterpart to the term, "trauma," to refer to "the psychic incubation of libidinal cathexes of the object world." If, as Bollas says, we are, each one, "born with our [own] idiom," the elaboration of this idiom "involves selection of specific objects which release idiom to its expression." This process has its roots in the parent-child relation, such that, "these two principles, of trauma and genera, begin as fundamental ego dispositions toward reality, derived from the infant's and child's experience of the mother and the father."[5] In contrast to the effects of trauma, which self-protectively "bind and limit" these dispositions, "[c]hildren who experience parents as contributing to the elaborative dissemination of their personal idiom will subsequently develop an open-mindedness [sic] to the contributing effects of the world." (69) (In the light of such words, we should recall Mays' words on how the star gazing experience with his father communicated to STC "a sense of infinite space and grandeur" [*CF* 1.3.2], and a "commitment to openness and wonder [2.8.3].") Bollas goes on to associate his "genera" with Wordsworth's "spots of time," which (quoting from *The Prelude*) "with distinct preeminence retain / A fructifying virtue, . . . a virtue which irradiates and exalts / All objects through all intercourse of sense."

[5] Christopher Bollas, *Being a Character: Psychoanalysis and Self Experience* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1992) 67-68.

1.4.3 In this connection I would like to explore Mays' allusion, in *CF* 12.7.2, to the relation between JC and STC as analogous to the *perichoresis*, the "intercirculation," between the Father and the Son in classical Trinitarian theology. Not only should one not "take offence" at this analogy, but, following STC, one *should* so construe the inter- (and, indeed, intra-) human relation, as well as the relation between the Trinitarian God and the Creation. Specifically—in linking this to Bollas' reference to Wordsworthian spots of time as '*genera*-tive'—I connect the perichoretic character of the JC/STC spot of time with Edward Kessler's discussion of STC's use of the "eddy" metaphor.[6] While, according to Kessler, the "eddy," as a "patterned energy" suggesting "the union of opposing forces" (15), bespeaks the dimension of the *permanent* in experience, its connotations of stasis leave Coleridge unsatisfied in his sense of the *progressive* dimension. Needing "a metaphor that could yoke eddy with progression, stasis with forward motion," he writes, "[t]he forward-moving stream is finally the controlling metaphor." (23-24) The metaphor that Kessler takes STC to need is in fact supplied in CN II 2832:

> The quiet circle in which Change and Permanence *co-exist*, not by combination or juxtaposition, but by an absolute annihilation of difference / column of smoke, the fountains before S^{t} Peter's, waterfalls / God!—Change without loss—change by a perpetual growth, that <once constitutes & annihilates change> the past, & the future included in the Present / / oh! It is aweful.

If the term, "God!" is not simply an ejaculatory exclamation over the "aweful" prospects afforded in these natural images, but a reference to the divine *perichoresis* as a "quiet circle" (the "*peace* of God that passes all understanding?),[7] then we have, here again, the expression of a sense of the Whole that could go in a pantheistic direction save for its later Trinitarian developments. In the case of the "eddying/perichoretic" experience of father and son under the stars, that experience both *endured unchangingly* and became the generative *nodus* for change and growth. In this sense, the "child" *continues* to "father" the man. Mays writes, "For STC, the moment under the stars guaranteed the quality of his faith, which he glossed in *Aids to Reflection*: 'There is small chance of Truth at the goal where there is not a child-like Humility at the Starting-post' (*AR* 192)." (*CF* 12.3.1) I take STC's comment to reflect a "child-like" quality in both STC and his father, eddying in and flowing from this star-gazing perichoresis of father and son. The "permanence" of this "patterned energy" of implicit faith is the hidden spring and support of all STC's ongoing strivings toward the Truth.

1.5.1 At this point, I want to draw the figure of Jacob Boehme, and his

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[6] Edward Kessler, *Coleridge's Metaphors of Being* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979) 15.

[7] Compare STC's reference, in CN IV 5249 (quoted in OM 206n377), to "the circulation and choral eddying of the Divine Life, the eternal Act of Communion."

Aurora, into the picture. That Boehme informed STC's Trinitarian thinking, and the cosmological imagery in which he repeatedly presented it, is evident from his many marginalia to Boehme's work. Of special interest is the resonance, in his copy of the *Aurora*, between Boehme's cosmological imagery for the Trinity as excerpted at CM I, 564 (excerpt 7) and his marginal comment to another passage at CM I, 576 (on excerpt 22), a comment that then becomes the BL coda. Following several earlier references to Boehme, Mays writes,

> The most relevant feature of STC's Boehme connection in the present context is its early beginning. . . . [T]he possibility arises whether the stargazer brought the volume of Boehme containing the *Aurora* with him from Ottery, retrieved from among his father's possessions, along with the stray volume of *Arabian Nights*. If he did, it might help explain why he persisted so long with a book he did not understand, as well as why he had the book in his possession for what appears to have been an extended period. (*CF* 12.4.9)

Mays continues, "Again, if it was indeed first chosen as a sentimental memento, this might confirm its high place in his father's estimation as well." But the term, "sentimental memento," is not strong enough. D. W. Winnicott (whom McFarland refers to, in OM cxxxi, as, along with others, a modern exponent of psycho-social development of which STC's analysis in OM 2 was "prescient") would refer to this *nodus memoranda* as a "transitional object," in which the child, in process of weaning, invests in the object—a teddy bear, the "Linus blanket" of the American comic strip, *Peanuts*—the personal qualities, tantamount to the personal presence, of the mother or other parental figure. If I may offer two personal examples: whenever, after all these decades, I peel a yellow onion, the eye-stinging impact pungently evokes the presence of my mother for whom I performed the same service seventy-odd years ago. Similarly, I cannot take up a handsaw and saw a board along the line I have drawn with a square, without the sight of the flying sawdust, and the whiff of *resin* in my nostrils, evoking the resonant presence of my father, for whom as a child I would hold the end of the board so that it would not fall off near the end of the cut and splinter. If Mays' heuristic speculation is correct, concerning the journey of JC's copy with STC to Christ's Hospital, then, I propose, every time STC took up the Boehme volume, and every time he annotated his own multi-volume set, it evoked the memory and the presence, as guardian spirit in that memory, of his absent Father—and nowhere more vividly than when he composed the marginal note to Boehme that, with only minor changes, became what I am calling the BL coda.

1.5.2 This brings me to Mays' statement, concerning Chapter 1 of *Coleridge's Father*, that "[It] turns on the ostensible narrative of *Biographia Literaria* and discusses why JC, who must be reckoned to be the primary, formative influence on STC's literary sensibility, is omitted." (*CF* p. 7) But is he

omitted in name only? When Mays writes, "[t]he childhood vision described for Poole in 1797 resonates through STC's writing," he concludes that general statement with the illustrative parenthesis, "(e.g. *BL* II, 247-48)." Those lines, which I am calling the BL coda, are themselves a "choral echo" of "the childhood vision," and thereby an evocation of the presence of his "guardian spirit." Insofar as they reproduce the marginal note to Boehme's *Aurora*, they are a palpable invocation of that spirit. With eyes sharpened to this "spoor," the present author, as a native North American, would track the footprints of that guardian spirit among the leaves of BL wherever the name, "Boehme," appears. Thus, the footprint on BL I 146, where STC writes, "how dare I be ashamed of . . Jacob Behman?" Then, the footprint on BL I 149, where STC speaks of those who "have most distinguished themselves by their scorn of Behmen," as especially noteworthy. For it echoes Behmen's own sentiment, and even his word, "scorn," in the excerpt of Boehme's own words in CM I 575, words that most immediately trigger STC's marginal comment that then becomes the BL coda. And when STC, in BL, shortly goes on to write of the "fulness of heart and intellect" which he finds in writers like Jacob Behmen, by this time we may detect an allusion to the "fullness of heart and intellect" of his own father. But, as I would gladly acknowledge, if my North American eye is correct in thinking to see clear traces of JC ever so lightly treading in these footsteps of Behmen on the way to the starlit evening in the BL coda, it is because, as with STC to young Sotheby, Mays has trained my eye.

1.6.1 In Chapter 12, Mays writes, "More important than the details I listed in the previous section is the impetus that set father and son thinking in a similar direction. The father travelled part of the journey and the son, inheriting the mode of travel as it were by birthright, took the process of exploration further." (*CF* 12.2.1) If that "birthright" was communicated most indelibly in that star-lit "spot of time," and if, as Mays writes, "[t]he simple, practical faith STC inherited from JC was not an aberration; his later theological musings complete the autobiographical project that *Biographia Literaria* began"(*CF* 2.8.6), then, even if STC fails to mention his father explicitly anywhere in BL, surely its concluding lines, by their thematics, orientation, and tone, imply the presence of JC, not only at the end, but in and throughout BL, more powerfully and comprehensively—precisely because conveyed in this "generative" and "irradiative" root image—than any amount of explicit and particularized reference.

2. Comparing the BL coda (BL II 247-248) and the OM2 coda (OM 2, 213 [f253r])

I want, now, to propose that what I am calling the OM2 coda serves a similar function in OM. I shall begin by comparing the two codas:

The BL coda

Religion passes out of the ken of Reason only where the eye of Reason

> has reached its own Horizon; and Faith is then but its continuation: even as the Day softens away into the sweet Twilight, and Twilight, hushed and breathless, steals into the Darkness. It is Night, sacred Night! the upraised Eye views only the starry Heaven which manifests itself alone: and the outward Beholding is fixed on the sparks twinkling in the aweful depth, though Suns of other worlds, only to preserve the Soul steady and collected in its pure *Act* of inward adoration to the great I AM, and to the filial Word that re-affirmeth it from Eternity to Eternity, whose choral echo is the universe.
>
> *theoi monoi doxa—(Glory to God alone)*
>
> FINIS

The OM2 coda

> . . . we must begin, therefore, with the doctrine of the Ideas, as antecedent, but only because ancillary, to the more important truths by which religion rises above philosophy, even that most religious philosophy which, listening in childlike silence in the outer courts of the temple, blended fragmentary voices from the shrine with the inward words of her own meditation.

2.1.1 These passages appear to have been composed within, at most, half a dozen years of one another. That they articulate a core concern of STC's during this period is reinforced, as already seen, by the way the first reproduces a marginal note to Boehme's *Aurora* (CM I, 576) with at least one minor addition ("hushed and breathless, steals") which then seems in turn to gloss that marginal note. To appropriate George Whalley's editorial comment on a series of STC's marginalia to the *Aurora*, the BL coda and the OM2 coda constitute "points of temporary focus in a continuously developing heuristic process in which C was seeking either to render the relation of God to the world or to find a symbolic scheme for representing all phenomena in the organic and inorganic realms." (CM I 555-56)

2.1.2 To start, then, by comparing these two codas at their extremities: *Both passages end* in a similar stationary posture, the first in an "adoration" that joins the universe in choral echo of the filial Word, the second in an attitude of "meditation" within a temple. This posture and attitude is "inward," over against the "outward Beholding" as in that temple's "outer courts." The "fragmentary voices" (as will shortly be seen) are both human and divine, paralleling the universe's (and STC's) "choral echo" and the filial Word's re-affirmation of the divine "I AM." (Do we have, in the blending of these "fragmentary voices," an intimation of the *perichoresis* in the BL coda?)

2.1.3 *Both passages begin* by indicating the means of access and movement toward that station. In the first, "Religion" *passes out of the ken* of "Reason,"

while in the second, "religion" *rises above* "philosophy." But, just as "the doctrine of Ideas," as "that most religious philosophy" (of Plato to Plotinus? Of Boehme?) is not only *antecedent*, but *ancillary*, to the final station or stance, and thereby already in some sense religious, so "Faith" is but the *continuance* of "Reason." And one is tempted to construe the "Horizon" (of both Reason's reach and empiricism's probings) on analogy with the curtain in the tabernacle of Moses or the temple of Solomon that veils the shrine itself from its outer courts.[8]

2.1.4 Among other parallels, is the correspondence between "hushed and breathless" and "childlike silence," and between "sacred Night" and (what will shortly become evident) the *nocturnal* setting of the silent child in the temple before the shrine. That shrine (as will appear) is the sanctuary of "the great I AM" whose self-proclamation to Moses at the Bush becomes a key *theologumenon* for STC. Then, there is the correspondence between the implied inward ear of the child in the temple and the inward eye of the sky-gazer, reminiscent of STC's counsel to Sotheby that a poet "must have the *ear* of a wild Arab listening in the silent Desert—the *eye* of a North American Indian tracing the footsteps of an Enemy upon the Leaves that strew the Forest[.]" (CL II 811)

2.1.5 Finally, I return to the line, in the BL coda, "It is Night, sacred Night!" For all the glorification of luminous Reason during the heyday of the Enlightenment, a starlit night under a full moon cannot be matched for numinosity. It is no accident that Psalm 8, which opens by celebrating God's glory *above* the heavens, identifies God's creative handiwork in its nocturnal manifestation featuring the moon and the stars. It is as though the Sun of Divine Reason is itself visible only through its reflections in the creation, and in humankind as its *imago*. Indeed, if I may venture a speculation of my own as to the conversation that passed between father and son on that starlit night, I wonder if JC might not have drawn on the language of Psalm 8, which would surely have arisen, in any case, in the regular pattern of worship led by this priestly father and attended by his child. The upshot, in any event, is that the line, "It is Night, sacred Night!" attests the numinous depth and resonance of that fateful evening. No wonder so many of Coleridge's religious "thought-flies" were entered in his notebooks at night within the sanctuary of the room

[8] It is probably coincidental (but we know that he did read BL) that Whitehead, in a paragraph in *The Function of Reason* that stands in closest relation to STC's doctrine of Reason, adopts a similar image. He writes, "The speculative Reason . . . is a tropism to the beckoning light—to the sun passing toward the finality of things, and to the sun arising from their origin. The speculative Reason turns east and west, to the source and to the end, alike hidden below the rim of the world." (Alfred North Whitehead, *The Function of Reason* [Boston: The Beacon Press, 1967] 65; original edition, Princeton University Press, 1929.) For Whitehead's image, but as entertained in the mind of one self-confined to "outward Beholding," compare his friend and one-time colleague, Bertrand Russell, who writes, in the Prologue to his three-volume autobiography, of "that terrible loneliness in which one shivering consciousness looks over the rim of the world and into the cold unfathomable lifeless abyss." Bertrand Russell, *The Autobiography of Bertrand Russell: The Early Years, 1872-1914* (Boston: Bantam, 1969) 3.

the Gillmans converted especially for him.

3. The OM2 coda as a Tale of Two Samuels

3.1.1 I turn, now, to consider the OM2 coda in itself. The scene palpably echoes the nocturnal (sic) scene in 1 Samuel 3. The young Samuel, dedicated to God as a nazirite even before his conception, and after his weaning offered to the service of Israel's sanctuary in Shiloh, becomes, in effect, an orphan, adopted, *de facto*, by the priest, Eli. (In 1 Sam 3:6 Eli calls the child, "my son.") One may assume that the young boy's formation for sanctuary service includes not only practical instruction in what he is to do, but also rudimentary teaching about the God to whom the sanctuary service is dedicated. Such talk might well include stories about this God such as a young mind is capable of entertaining and enjoying—even as the biblical story in 1 Samuel 3 is itself a favorite today in places where the Bible is still read to children.

3.1.2 W. R. L. Moberly offers a masterful study of the hermeneutical core of the story, in the initial "mingling" of the story's "fragmentary voices" and their eventual sorting out, as young Samuel, who at the outset "did not yet know the LORD" (1 Sam 3:7), comes to say (1 Sam 3:10), "Speak, for thy servant heareth." [9] Addressing what he takes to be the chapter's pivotal issue, "the repeated call of God to Samuel and Samuel's mistaken response," he identifies that issue as being "whether Samuel can hear the voice of God as the voice of *God*." (451) In words that parallel STC's agenda throughout OM 2, Moberly asks, "Granted the reality of God and of His self-revelation—a basic biblical presupposition—how is this reality to be discerned by human beings?" Moberly's acute analysis turns on his central insight into Eli's "ancillary" relation to Samuel as surrogate father. He writes,

> [T]he situation is in principle something regular and natural, a situation presupposed by much Jewish and Christian practice over the ages, that the parent and teacher of a child stands *in loco Dei*, representing and mediating God in the only way that a child can understand and respond to until the child becomes sufficiently old and mature to begin to perceive and respond to God as God and as distinct from the parent/teacher. (459–60)

3.1.3 When one reads the OM2 coda against the backdrop of 1 Samuel 3, several things snap into focus. First, these lines take the preceding psycho-social and philosophical discussion in OM 2 and re-frame it in biblical terms, implicitly centering that discussion in the first divine Idea which STC increasingly identifies and exposits in terms of the I AM of biblical tradition and subsequent theological reflection. But, secondly, one cannot but gasp at

[9] W. R. L.Moberly, "To Hear the Master's Voice: Revelation and Spiritual Discernment in the Call of Samuel," *The Scottish Journal of Theology* 48.4 (1995) 443–468.

the sudden recognition that, in ending OM 2 in this fashion, STC has implicitly inscribed himself into the scene through the figure of the biblical Samuel from whom his own name is ultimately (and, in some sense, immediately) derived.

3.2.1 The biblical significance that JC would have attached to the naming of his youngest son is suggested by two converging perspectives. The first is provided by Mays' comment on JC's naming of STC's brother Luke. Observing that, for the most part, JC's children received only one "given" name, Mays ponders why Luke was given a middle name, "Herman," when there was no relative or other local figure after whom such a name would be chosen. Mays proposes that "Herman" comes from a Dutch physician and humanist, Herman Boerhaave, and that this "cognomen," on top of "Luke" after the biblical physician, was intended "to reinforce the sense of his child's destiny." (*CF* 10.1.3) Mays goes on (*CF* 10.1.4), "If JC did indeed decide on his seventh son's future so firmly at birth (or rather baptism), there is something both arbitrary and whimsical about his cementing the decision by names drawn from both biblical and medical history."

3.2.2 What then of Samuel Taylor Coleridge? Richard Holmes writes that he " was christened after his godfather, Samuel Taylor, a local worthy." [10] Mays fills in the picture as follows: Robert Bowden, brother to STC's mother, as a widower married a second time to Mary Taylor, whose brother, Samuel, "was a respectable member of the Ottery vestry." (*CF* 5.4.2) STC's naming seems thus to be doubly and sufficiently determined, by familial and by ecclesial association. But—and here is my second line of convergence—STC tells us that his father had destined him for ordination in the church; and if, as in the case of Luke, that destiny was reflected in his name, the father, a scripture-saturated priest, cannot have been oblivious to its biblical roots and the context of the biblical Samuel. In view of that context, in the form of the priest and surrogate father, Eli, I venture the speculation that the name, "Samuel," signaled not only JC's hopes for his son but also something of what that son's future would mean for his (JC's) own compromised sense of vocation. (If the reader's "outward ear" catches the familial and ecclesial reasons for the choice of little Samuel's name, the "inward ear" may catch the biblical and vocational reason.)[11]

3.2.3 Moberly writes, of Eli, "The fact that it is through the help of Eli that Samuel is enabled to hear the word of YHWH takes on further significance when set in wider narrative context. For Eli is a compromised figure." (463) Moberly refers here to the corruption of Eli's priest-sons, and the general low state of religious affairs in Israel at that time, all of which present Eli as presiding over an era that is coming to a sorry end of which his own life is a living example. Yet he is able to serve as a vehicle through which the torch is

[10] Richard Holmes, *Early Visions* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1990) 2.
[11] Compare Mays' remark at *CF* 1.2.11, and his footnote comment referencing Philo.

passed to Samuel, and, through Samuel, to a new era under Saul and then David. By the time of STC's birth, JC's early hopes and achievements, as represented in his *Miscellaneous Dissertations* and his *Critical Latin Grammar*, had withered on the vine. Is it too much to suggest that, behind the other reasons for naming this last son Samuel Taylor, JC's biblical imagination envisaged a continuation, in this youngest child, of his own failed hopes for himself? Under the section heading, "The Gift Half Understood" (*CF* 12.2), Mays sums up his argument:

> Every father affects the character of his son somehow, . . . but a case can be made for JC as the most directly influential father in the English Romantic generation of writers. He was positively formative during the time he was alive and also, in an unusual way, to an equal extent after his death. What was transmitted was less a set of specific familial preoccupations . . . than curious habits of mind. More important than the details I listed in the previous section is the impetus that set father and son thinking in a similar direction. *The father travelled part of the journey and the son, inheriting the mode of travel as it were by birthright, took the process of exploration further.*[12] The shared intention ran deep and, for all but a few years in adolescence, perhaps, made up a resemblance STC was always happy to admit.
>
> (*CF* 12.2.1, my italics)

Whether or not I am right in identifying a biblical dimension to JC's naming of STC, the concluding lines of OM 2 surely betray such a construal on STC's part, a construal that shows, beneath his stated dislike of his first name (as a "gift mis-understod"?), a profound if belated sense of its vocational significance for him. Indeed, if Mays is correct in saying (in regard to JC's and STC's common treatment of a certain geometric figure in relation to verbal tenses), "[t]he reflection of JC's thinking in STC once again clarifies what can be dimly but certainly seen there" (*CF* 9.6.4), the same might be claimed for how the OM2 coda sheds a further (and more probing) light on JC's reasons for naming his last son *Samuel*. When we consider that biblical Samuel emerges from that scene to become a *prophet* (1 Sam 3:19-20), and that STC, in CN II 2151, in 1804 described his childhood sky-gazing experience as a *beholding* and associated it with himself as a *prophet*, the naming seems all the more prophetic.

4. A Concluding Proposal Concerning the OM2 coda

If the concluding lines of OM 2 constitute a coda analogous to the concluding lines of BL II, such a conclusion may bear on the still not completely settled

[12] One may compare the relation, in the Bible, between Abram and his father Terah. While Abram is classically celebrated for his faith, in response to a call to *leave* his country and his father's house, a close comparison of Gen 12:5 with Gen 11:31 suggests that that call was mediated to him through his sense of his father's uncompleted journey.

question of the ordering of OM 1, 2, and 3. Specifically, it might be taken to add one more piece of evidence in support of Luke Wright's argument that the proper order is OM 3, 1, 2.[13] In such a reading, not only does the figure of biblical Samuel implicit in the OM2 coda's concluding image recapitulate STC's preceding analysis of the way in which infant and child come to the knowledge of God through its parents, but that scene, with its locus in a shrine dedicated to Israel's God who is self-identified in Exod 3:14 as "I AM," brings to a concluding focus the exposition, earlier in OM 2, of the *perichoretic* Trinity.[14] We may pick up that exposition at OM II 189 (*f223*), where STC appeals to Moses (the "the Hebrew Legislator") and the annunciation to him of the "I AM," as representing a divine mystery whose proclamation of self-subsistent actuality STC prefers to render as "That which I will to be I shall be." (OM II 189 [*f225*]). Eventually, he comes to characterize this self-subsistent divine life in terms of "divine reciprocation" and "intercirculation," echoing the *perichoresis* of "the Greek Fathers." (OM 205-6 [*f266-268*]). Against such a background, and as a derivative of that divine internal life, we may discern a perichoretic dynamic in the mingling of fragmentary voices in the shrine scene with which OM 2 ends.

Douglas Hedley, in his study of the relation between philosophy and religion in *Aids to Reflection*,[15] comments that, in AR, "Coleridge is pursuing the ancient vision of philosophy as a spiritual exercise." (97) Further, in his chapter tellingly titled, "Inner word: reflection as meditation," he places AR within "a tradition of spiritual writing . . . in which philosophy, the search for genuine wisdom, is closely allied to prayer." (99) His words may be extended from AR to BL and then to OM, the latter leaving us (if we accept Wright's ordering) at the point where we are invited to join these two Samuels in the shrine.

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[13] Luke S. H. Wright, "On the Divine Ideas: The Systematic Theology of Samuel Taylor Coleridge," in Jeffrey W. Barbeau, *Coleridge's Assertion of Religion: Essays on the Opus Maximum* (Leuven: Peeters, 2006) 53-72.

[14] And might one suggest an analogy between BLcoda and the lines on Imagination that conclude BL I, where each passage centers in "the infinite/great I AM"? If, as Mays says, "The defining moment [under the stars] . . . becomes the fountainhead of [STC's] idea of imagination" (*CF* 1.3.4), then this celebrated, or rather, lamented brevity of definition may be accounted for: like BLcoda, this definition may be calculated to call for the reader to *envisage* with one's *inward eye* what STC is getting at.

[15] Douglas Hedley, *Coleridge, Philosophy and Religion:* Aids to Reflection *and the Mirror of the Spirit* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000)