The Dialectics of Faith in Coleridge's First Notebook (1794 -1812)

J. Gerald Janzen

IN THIS STUDY, I DISCUSS COLERIDGE'S THINKING about faith as expressed over several years in a series of entries in Notebook 1.[1] These notes are entered in batches in 1794, 1800, 1804 and 1812—in which year Coleridge, looking back at what he had written when he was not yet 24, saw in the notes for two sermons on faith 'proofs of an original & self-thinking Mind.' That notebook and its entries on faith form one bookend of a lifetime's concern of which the other is Notebook 55, used in the very last months of his life, which he entitled, "FAITH, PRAYER, MEDITATION/ FAITH/as the/Soother of Sickness, the/Companion in Solitude;/and the Comforter of the Helpless.—'. Yet, despite the importance of this topic for Coleridge, I have come to the conclusion that faith is subservient to an issue yet more important for him—hope.

Of the eight entries in 1794, (CN I 1-8) two are related to faith: notes for the two sermons 'on Faith' (CN I 6); and on *f18v*, texts or summaries of Job 5:6, 23, and 13:26 (CN I 8). The four entries of 1800 (CN I 869-873) written in December while Coleridge was visiting the Wordsworths and Sara Hutchinson, find Coleridge, in Coburn's words, 'constructing a play on [the] framework' of Lessing's summary of a play about Elizabeth and Essex (CN I 871 and 872). Coburn distinguishes 872 from 871 not by subject matter but by the fact that this paragraph, titled 'Act the Fourth' of the play's outline, is written in Sara Hutchinson's hand. Interestingly, this concluding act concerns 'spirits which love Virtue so metaphysically', that is, 'that men may serve God without the incentives of hope & fear, & purely from the love of God'. We shall have occasion to contrast such hope-less 'love [of] Virtue' with what Coleridge, in the run-up to his notes on Faith, wrote to brother George earlier in 1794. The importance of these 1800 entries in Notebook 1 is the situation in which they are written—happily embedded in his closest relationships, with the Wordsworths and Sara Hutchinson.

The eight entries of 1804 (CN II 2169-76) are for the most part clustered around the third week in August, when Coleridge was touring Sicily. Consisting in on-the-spot observations, they do not obviously bear on the topic of the present paper, except perhaps for the way in which, far from home, he would, on re-visiting this notebook, muse on his discussions of Faith (and hope) and his happier times with the members of the Grasmere household.

The entries of 1812 (CN III 4166-72), are the context in which Coleridge set down that year's evaluation of his 1794 notes on faith, and their content is of such importance for its fuller understanding that I shall discuss each entry separately.

---

[1] Kathleen Coburn points out this is a small notebook, and thus easy for Coleridge to carry on his travels. The entries listed in the paper are all that this notebook contains.

The Sermon Notes in CN 1:6: Their 1794 Context and Content

In her search for a context, Coburn points, first, to Coleridge's letter of 21 Oct 1794 to Southey in which he apparently quotes Mary Evans. She wrote to him, declaring, so Coleridge says, that

> There is a God—Coleridge! Though I have been told (*indeed* I do not believe it) that you do not doubt of his Existence and disbelieve a hereafter,—No! you have too much Sensibility to be an Infidel. You know I never was rigid in my opinions concerning Religion—and have always thought *Faith* to be only Reason applied to a particular Subject—In short, I am the same Being, as when you used to say—We thought in all things alike.[2]

Evans' collocation of 'Faith' and 'Reason' resonates with the second point in Coleridge's projected first sermon: 'II. That the scripture nowhere has it [Faith] in contradistinction to Reason'. If Mary Evans' comments may have provided one spur for Coleridge's notes, Coburn also suggests that 'they may have been written for his brother George, in the summer of 1794, to help repay his debts, or for his own use as a Unitarian preacher.' But Coleridge could have achieved either of these two aims by writing a pair of sermons on *any* topic. Why Faith? Coleridge's 1794 letters to George suggest that his topic may have been chosen as a way of responding to concerns similar those expressed in Mary Evans' letter.

Still in the Dragoons, and nursing a sick comrade, Coleridge received a letter from George, to which he responds with a spirit of abject abnegation (CL I 64, 8 Feb 1794), concluding with the words, 'My Brother—my Brother—pray for me—comfort me, my Brother! I am very wretched—and tho' my complaint be bitter, my stroke is heavier than my groaning.—' One might take this quotation of Job 23:2 as linked in Coleridge's consciousness to three references to Job (CN I 8) in Notebook 1 not long after the notes on Faith.[3] Brother George responds with two letters, offering encouragement and promise of material relief, and urging a return to Jesus College as well as serious reflection on the course of his life. Coleridge responds on Feb 12 (CL I 65), writing,

> What my future Life may produce, I dare not anticipate.—Pray for me my Brother.—I will pray nightly to the Almighty Dispenser of good and evil, that his Chastisements may not have harrowed up my heart in vain!—Scepticism had mildewed my hope in the Saviour—I was far from disbelieving the Truth of revealed Religion, but still farther from a

[2] It should be noted that this letter from ME to STC is not extant, only exists in Coleridge's report, and that what she is made to say is very Coleridgean—that is, it might be a fictional letter, such as we find near the end of chapter 13 of the *Biographia*.

[3] Such an association of Job with the struggles of faith as fidelity surfaces again as late as CN V 6666 where Job is referenced at the very end of *f85*.

> steady Faith.—True and active Faith, the 'Comforter that should have relieved my Soul,[']' was far from me—

I note three things in this passage:

First, the distinction between Belief and Faith, and the implicit distinction between *conceptual* 'Truth' and truth as an aspect of Faith *as action*. In the latter we may detect the seed of what, in the appendix of 1812 to CN 1 6, will become the definition of faith as *loyalty* and *fidelity*—being *true to* someone.

Secondly, I detect resonances, again, with the Book of Job—in his reference to God as 'the Almighty dispenser of good and evil,' insofar as the divine epithet, 'Almighty' is concentrated chiefly in Job (31 out of 48 times in the Old Testament); and in the word, 'chastisement,' which appears only five times in his Bible, and turns up in Elihu's counsel to Job in Job 34:31, 'Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more'.

Thirdly, there is the peculiar notion of 'True and active Faith' as 'the "Comforter that should have relieved my Soul,["]'. This reflexive action of one's Faith as one's Comforter will come to final expression in the title to his last notebook, no. 55 , "FAITH, PRAYER, MEDITATION/ FAITH/as the/Soother of Sickness, the/Companion in Solitude;/and the Comforter of the Helpless.—". One may connect this self-reflexive dynamic to Coleridge's subsequent definition of conscience as 'a testifying state.' If so, his acknowledgement of the lack of a 'true and active Faith' meshes with his acknowledgement of the 'harrowing chastisements' of the Almighty as registering on his conscience.

Shortly after this, and in similar vein, Coleridge writes to brother James of how '[t]he gentle Voice of Conscience, which had incessantly murmured within the soul, then raises it's tone, and speaks with the tongue of Thunder'. (CL I 65, February 20, 1794,). Again one may detect a Joban resonance in the gentle murmuring and then thundering of conscience, a contrast displayed in Job 4:12 and 26:14, especially in the Hebrew word, *shemets*, in both passages as translated, 'whisper,' in the RSV and contrasting with 'thunder' in 26:14.

On March 4 Coleridge writes to George (CL I, #39) of a conversation with a man who sounds like a disciple of Swedenborg. To the man's comment, 'I find . . . from the intellectual Atmosphere, that emanates from, and envelopes you, that you are in a state of Recipiency', he writes, 'He was deceived—I have little *Faith*, yet am wonderfully fond of speculating on mystical schemes—Wisdom maybe gathered from the maddest flights of Imagination, as medicines were stumbled upon in the wild processes of Alchemy—'. The lines are prescient; in his later notebooks Coleridge was ever alert to 'catch' any flies that flew through his 'brain-factory,' as 'cogitabilia' if not 'cogitata'. But, to the end, he was painfully aware that they by themselves did not constitute *Faith*.

On March 30th Coleridge writes to George (CL I, #44) on practical (fiscal) aspects of his return to Jesus College. Then he launches into a long paragraph on the topic of Faith that calls for close examination. I shall intersperse his sentences with my commentary:

> I long ago theoretically and in a less degree experimentally knew the necessity of Faith in order to regular Virtue—nor did I ever seriously disbelieve the existence of a future State—

The opening distinction between theoretical and experimental knowledge seems to imply a similar distinction between faith and belief.[4] For theoretical knowledge is correlated with belief in the existence of a future state, while faith is correlated with moral action. Yet the distinction is not sheer. For he seems to say that a life of regular virtue has its rational and motivational grounds in the existence of a future State—not that such motivation need be calculating or prudential, though it may be, but that the moral life is *teleologically driven*. That is to say, moral action so viewed is *promissory* in character.[5] And a teleology that stops short of its *telos* in a future state—that is confined to this transient world—is destined for the vanity or futility of an Ecclesiastes. He knows this *theoretically*; but 'in a less degree experimentally.' Here Coleridge announces the inner struggle identified classically in William James's essay, 'The Will to Believe', when James writes, '*in abstracto* . . ., we have the right to believe at our own risk any hypothesis that is live enough to tempt our will. . . . *In concreto*, the freedom to believe can only cover living options which the intellect of the individual cannot by itself resolve[.]'[6] As we shall see, the question for Coleridge in this letter is whether belief, or faith, is *itself* an action.

> In short, my religious Creed bore and perhaps bears a correspondence with my mind and heart—

That is to say, his creed is 'splintered,' to use James Mays' felicitous image,[7] as is the relation between his mind and his heart:

> I had too much Vanity to be altogether a Christian—too much tenderness of Nature to be utterly an Infidel. Fond of the dazzle of Wit, fond of subtlety of Argument, I could not read without some degree of pleasure the levities of Voltaire, or the reasonings of Helvetius—but tremblingly alive to the feelings of humanity, and su[s]ceptible of the charms of Truth my Heart forced me to admire the beauty of Holiness in the Gospel, forced me to *love* the Jesus, whom my Reason (or perhaps my *reasonings*) would not permit me to *worship*—My Faith therefore was made up of the Evangelists and the Deistic Philosophy—a kind of *religious Twilight*—

In the opening temporal qualifiers, 'I long ago' and 'nor did I ever', we may detect the implication of an original belief, however notional, followed by a

---

[4] The latter distinction is most fully explored in CN V 6666; but it already lies at the heart of the 1812 addendum (CN I 6 *f6v*) to the sermon notes on faith.

[5] Contrast Coleridge's portrayal, as noted above, of the metaphysical love of Virtue as hope-less (CN I 872).

[6] William James, in the title essay of *The Will to Believe and other essays in popular philosophy* (New York: Dover Publications, 1956), 29.

[7] Mays, in writing of Coleridge's search for a faith like his father's as 'driven by one who often felt restlessly dispossessed', comments that 'the quality of such faith is more easily perceived through splintered refraction than directly'. J. C. C. Mays, *Coleridge's Father: Absent Man, Guardian Spirit* (Friends of Coleridge, 2014), 5.

period of (relatively unserious) disbelief, the unseriousness signaled in the superficiality of vanity, wit and levity. But then he catches himself and, with a seriousness that goes to the heart of his lifelong splintered struggle, he acknowledges,

> I said—*perhaps bears*—Yes! My Brother—for who can say—*Now* I'll be a Christian—Faith is neither altogether voluntary, nor involuntary—We cannot believe what we choose—but we can certainly cultivate such habits of thinking and acting, as will give force and effective Energy to the Arguments on either side—.'

The splinteredness continues, and informs a fascinating assertion: 'Faith is neither altogether voluntary, nor involuntary'. One is reminded of his characterization, in *BL*, of the creative mind at work as emblem'd in the water insect, where he posits both active and passive, voluntary and less voluntary, moments, or rather, polar components, in that work. While 'we cannot believe what we choose,' he writes, the 'habits of thinking and activity' will throw one's 'effective Energy' into the balance on one side or the other of the Arguments. This 'Jamesian' conclusion anticipates Coleridge's comment, in CN 1:6, *f5* (see below), that 'the evidence of Faith is in exact proportion to its uses—were it greater, it would destroy its uses'. The latter point is that coercive evidence would divest faith of its dimension as a *moral act* (a dimension that will come fully into view in the addendum to CN 1 6) and render it an intellectual necessity. Yet there are those aspects of reality—including the claims of reason—that are not subject to negotiation, and must simply be acquiesced in.

The Sermon Notes in CN 1:6: Their 1794 Content

The first sermon is to develop five points. First, that the Scriptural uses of the word, 'faith,' all betray their relation to 'operations of one faculty'. Secondly, that Scripture nowhere contradistinguishes faith to reason. The third point, developed in a round-about way, implies that the faculty of faith consists in something like loyalty; for he instances it in 'Love to our country.' Acknowledging that the exercise of loyalty (or, as he will say in 1812, fidelity) may be misguided or misdirected, and so may have unintended evil consequences, he proposes that, on balance, its consistent exercise is productive of more good than evil.

The fourth point develops the third, through the observation that 'each mind acts' in 'three modes . . . by its own perceptions . . ., by its own deductions . . ., by believing the perceptions & deductions of others.' Confronting Descartes' question as to whether one can believe one's own perceptions *or* one's own deductions, he refers to 'the strengths & weaknesses of each', and then notes how 'the third [belief in the perceptions and deductions of others] mingles with & assists the first & the second—in common life'. The momentousness of his point here can be missed in the brevity of his statement; but it goes to the heart of his later organic vision in

On the Constitution of the Church and State, and of his repeated emphasis on the need to approach the study of Scripture through the teaching of the Church rather than on an individualistic, *tabula rasa* basis.

So far, Coleridge is talking about faith without reference to 'religious subjects'. This forms the topic of his fifth and final point. In it he proposes to trace 'the process of Faith in the world' as a process of revelation: primaevally, of 'deity & his attributes'; then, through Moses, of 'laws & morals', and finally of 'Immortality by Jesus Christ'.[8]

The second sermon is to contain four points. The first has to do with the point already mentioned, concerning the proportionality of evidences to their intended uses. Implicitly comparing religion to mathematics as grounded in deduction, and astronomy as grounded in perception, he proposes that, as proportioned to their respective intended uses, the 'evidences of Faith are . . . morally equal'. He implies that, were the evidences of faith proportioned to their empirical or deductive grounding, such grounding would 'destroy its uses'. A *moral* relation is by definition a relation of trust and fidelity in respect to realities (as he will later underscore) not evident to the senses.

The second point, which Coleridge will return to repeatedly in the late 'Fly-Catcher' notebooks of 1827–1834, is that the evidence of faith is 'more consonant [not only to the *object* of that faith, but] to the nature & occupations & understanding, of the Many'. Implicit in this point, and explicit later, is the claim on the few (Coleridge's 'Clerisy') to *think* (the) Faith so as to see that and how it is not to be set above Reason properly understood.[9]

Thirdly Coleridge will underscore 'the superiority of the knowledge which we have by faith to the knowledge which we have by Natural Philosophy', in its 'dignity', its 'moral effects', and 'in the comforting of sorrow, in the giving of New Joy, & the exaltation of natural pleasures'. The reference to 'the comforting of sorrow' resonates with his reference, in his letter to brother George (CL I, #34), to his lack of 'True and active Faith, the "Comforter that should have relieved my Soul".' The 'New Joy' I take as a poignant aspiration for what for so long remained for him a *desideratum*.[10] Arresting is his assertion that the final outcome of this is 'the exaltation of natural pleasures'. One elegant elaboration of this point in social dimension comes in CN 5:6290 (8 May 1830). Reflecting on Deut 14:22-29 as a Scriptural example of '*feriae*' or festal holidays, he will there write,

> No part or parcel of our Nature was overlooked or neglected—not even the pleasures of animal Sensation—but because *no* constituent of our existing ~~Hum~~ Nature was excluded, therefore were *all* harmonized, ~~and~~ while the lower sub-ordinated to the higher partook of it's character by virtue of the connection[.]

---

8 On this final revelation, compare the earlier comment to George about Virtue and Immortality (CL I #44).

9 See CN V 5812, 6852.

10 Compare his Tetractyc 'aspiration' in CN 5:6454 (September 1830), and his poignant plea at its conclusion; and note the importance of joy revived in 'Dejection: an Ode'.

Coleridge's fourth and final point is weighty for all its brevity: 'Conclude with a reference to the present state of Mankind, as especially demanding Faith—the quotations from Peter'. Though he goes on to cite several passages, they are all Pauline (Rom. 3:3; 9:31-32; 14:20-23; Gal. 3:24), and he gives no indication as to which Petrine quotations he may have in mind. But I believe that we can deduce them from the content of the text which he appends to the end of his notes when he writes, 'Texts to be quoted / Rom. 15:13.'

This last reference—apparently a text for the sermons as a whole—is significant for the way it bears on the fourth point of the second sermon, concerning 'the present state of Mankind'. It reads (in Coleridge's KJV), 'Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing [*en to pisteuein*], that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.' The first thing to note about this text is that although it, like the texts from Romans and Galatians cited a few lines earlier, contains the notion of *faith* (there in the noun form, *pistis*, here in verbal form, *pisteuein*), the emphasis falls on *hope*, and this with both subjective and objective reference—to the faithful person's enjoyment of hope, and to God as the ground of hope.[11] In this way, and especially in its reference to the subjective possession of *joy*, the verse ties in with the last two points in the sermon where the knowledge of faith gives New Joy in place of sorrow and sustains one in face of 'the present state of Mankind'. In relating *faith* to *hope* in this way, Coleridge touches on the issue with which he opened his letter of March 30 to brother George (CL I, #44), when he wrote, 'I long ago theoretically and in a less degree experimentally knew the necessity of Faith in order to regular Virtue—nor did I ever seriously disbelieve the existence of a future State—.' The 'faith' in this sentence serves 'regular Virtue' which in turn is *teleologically* orientated.

Bringing these comments into relation with the observations on his letters to brothers George and James, I propose that they shed light on the existential lenses through which Coleridge was reading and using Romans in this sermon, as well as the existential lenses through which he was wrestling with questions of faith and belief in general. I propose, in respect to the latter, that his sermon notes, by the way they conclude, reflect his *twilight* state of mind in respect to 'beliefs,' propositionally entertained, and his sense of personal despair over how he has disappointed the hopes of his family for him as well as his sense of the groundlessness of a life of 'steady virtue' apart from hope in an afterlife. In respect to the former, I propose that, in selecting as a text for these sermons on *faith* a text that in fact throws its focus on *hope*, he evidences an intuitive resonance with the epistle that, however unconsciously, connects with its central nerve. This may be because, as James Mays has shown, a central theme in his poetry (as, I would claim, in his later notebooks) is the theme of *desiderium*, the sense of longing for something lost and dearly yearned for.[12] It is around this theme of hope and its problematics that some of his most

[11] We have here, I think, the clue to the 'quotations from Peter' that he leaves unmentioned. They would center in 1 Peter 1:3-9, 21.

[12] J. C. C. Mays, *Coleridge's Experimental Poetics* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 5, 46.

poignant later poetry turns. And it is these problematics that for Coleridge give faith its moral and spiritual importance, an importance that I would go so far as to term *ancillary* to hope.

Before I turn to the 1812 addendum to these sermon notes on faith, I want to draw attention to an entry in Notebook 1 that—although it is to be found over a dozen leaves further on than the end of these sermon notes—Kathleen Coburn places in close proximity to them. CN I 8 (*f16v*) consists in three sentences:

> Affliction cometh not forth from the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground. Job.v.6.
>
> The good man in league with all nature. Job v.23
>
> For thou writest bitter things against and maketh me to possess the iniquities of my Youth. Job.xiii.23.

That these entries should be read in close relation to the notes on faith is suggested by several things. First, as I have already noted, there are the virtual quotations of Job 23:2 ('Even to day is my complaint bitter: my stroke is heavier than my groaning') concluding his letter of Feb. 8 to George (CL I, # 33) and concluding his letter of Nov. 3 to Southey (CL I, # 66), as well as the echoes of Job in his letter of February 20 to James (CL I, #35). Secondly, one may note that the tone of bitterness marks this refrain and the third quote in CN I 8. Thirdly, the second half of that third quote, concerning 'the iniquities of my Youth,' resonates with Coleridge's abject confessions to George and others in the latters referred to. Finally, there is the matter of the respective contexts in Job from which these various quotations are drawn.

The first two in CN I 8 are drawn from the first speech of the leader among Job's friends, Eliphaz, in Job 4–5. The speech is noteworthy for its opening and closing encouragement. There is, as yet, no direct accusation or reproach of Job as an individual. At the outset he is implicitly taken to be a righteous man and encouraged to stake his hopes (4:6; 5:16) on that fact. The second text, concerning the 'league' or covenant with nature available to a man who turns to the Almighty in times of trouble, is curiously prescient, in a way, of the theme of 'compact or promise' that Coleridge will sound in his addendum of 1812 to the sermon notes of 1794. To this point, Eliphaz simply situates Job's troubles within the general human lot, as made ambiguous by generic human finitude and fallibility (Job 4:12-21), so that, as Eliphaz says immediately after the first of Job's citations, 'Yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward' (Job 5:7). These two texts, then, in one way or another, touch, in an Old Testament way, Coleridge's third point for his second sermon concerning the superiority of faith over Natural Philosophy 'in the comforting of sorrow, in the giving of New Joy, & in the exaltation of natural pleasures'.

But the third quotation in CN I 8, like the quotation in the letters to George and Southey, is drawn from Job's speeches. By chapter 13, Job's friends have begun to turn on him, and by chapter 23 their accusations have become vicious. While chapter 13 opens with Job addressing his friends and accusing

them of 'lying for God', by its end Job has given up on them and addresses his complaint directly to God. In chapter 23 Job does not even respond directly to Eliphaz's third speech, nor does he address God directly. Rather, he falls into a soliloquy cast in an optative mood, sighing, in 23:3 (the verse immediately following the one he quotes to George and Southey), 'Oh that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat!' This 'if only' tone will mark the very last entry in his last notebook (CN V 6918).

The Addendum of 1812 (CN I 6 f6v): Context and Content

The Context for the 1812 addendum has two dimensions. One is the personal and social situation of his own life by this point and the other consists in other entries, reflecting that situation, which he makes in CN I and other notebooks at this same time.

In the interval between 1794 and 1812, three developments in Coleridge's life contextualize the addendum in a way that both deepens and amplifies its concise but pregnant terms. The first is his deeper descent into opium addiction and the bouts of despair into which its incapacitating effects led him. The second is the worsening impression this descent made on his friends until, like the turn of Job's friends, they finally despaired of the ruin they saw him making of his life and reprobated what they saw as his moral shortcomings in dealing with his addiction and in caring for his wife and family. The rupture with the Wordsworth household in 1810 was only superficially patched up in May of 1812. The third is his spiritual crisis while on Malta, a crisis that resolved his theological issues concerning the figure of Jesus and issued in a firm adherence to the Divinity of Christ and his own developing version of a Trinitarian understanding of God. No longer was he to dwell in a 'a kind of *religious Twilight*', as he put it in 1794 to George.

The importance of the rupture and unsatisfactory resolution for Coleridge is indicated in the notebooks in various ways. The complicated interlacing may be untangled as follows:

(1) On August 15, 1803, Coleridge had set out with William and Mary Wordsworth on a tour of Scotland in a horse-drawn cart. But, as Rosemary Ashton observes, the trip was not a success because '[Coleridge] and Wordsworth did not get on.'[13] Finally he took his leave of them, concluding his entry for August 27–29 (CN I 1471 *f26v*) with the note, 'Tuesday, Aug. 30, 1803—am to make my own way alone to Edinburgh—'. In October of 1812 he inserts this note (see also CN III 4162): '< O Esteesee! That thou hadst from thy 22nd year indeed made *thy own* way & *alone!* >'. That his '22nd year' is meant to predate his marriage to Sara Fricker and his first meeting with the Wordsworths is clear from the 1812 entries that precede and follow this one. A propos of his marriage, see CN III 4160, 'On the causes of domestic unhappiness'.

(2) CN IV 4164, which Coleridge dates as '*Septr 1812*', consists of extracts

[13] Rosemary Ashton, *The Life of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1996), 218.

in German from Schiller's *Don Carlos* which give indirect expression to his own sense of an utter break with and farewell to Sara Hutchinson as a result of the break and its unsatisfactory resolution. This note is entered into Notebook 16. On Sept. 29, 1812, in Notebook 21, Coleridge enters a 'Grand Rule in case of Quarrels between Friends and Lovers' (CN IV 4165). The essence of the rule is '[n]ever to say, hint, or do any *thing* in a moment of anger, or indignation, or sense of ill treatment; but to be passive[.]' One is to hold any such comment 'till their Love has returned toward you, & your feelings are the same as they were before[.]' Implicit in this rule is the note of a hope for eventual improvement in relations, and therefore a fidelity to the relation despite its present difficulty. The resonance of this rule, therefore, with what lies at the heart of the 1812 addendum to the 1794 notes on faith, is palpable.

Now comes an observation to be kept in mind in relation to an entry soon to follow in Notebook 1. Coleridge concludes, '*you knew this before*, & yet because you were in kindness, you never felt an impulse to speak of it—then surely now now, when you may perpetuate *what would otherwise be fugitive*—/' (Italics added.)

(3) In October of 1812 Coleridge inserts a number of entries at various points in Notebook 1. The first, CN III 4166, is begun on *f2*, which from 1794 had contained only one line at the top of the page ('Cities among the ruins of the world like cottages in some Castle ruined'), and it ends on *f2v*. I shall return to the matter of the placement of this note in a moment. For now, we may note how it continues the thought of CN III 4165. The entry is dense with implication, for it engages the *moral* question of how one person is to *read* another person, in such fashion as, implicitly, to respect the privacy of the depths of the other's soul—what he here refers to as the other's *Adyt*, or inner sanctum. Coleridge confesses to 'one of the strangest and most painful Peculiarities of my Nature', which 'consists in a sudden second sight of some hidden Vice, past, present, or to come, of the person or persons with whom I am to form a close intimacy'. This faculty, 'as an act of my own Spirit, . . . seems to have offended against some Law of its Being'[.] The issue here is how one 'spirit' relates *morally* to another 'spirit' in the other's inmost being.

(4) Entry, 4166, as noted, was started on *f2*, following the brief 1794 entry at the top of the page, and concluded at the bottom of *f2v*. A few lines then were squeezed in, near the top of *f2* and between CN I 5 and the beginning of CN III 4166. To Coburn it is unclear whether the squeezed-in lines were inserted there as a retrospective heading to 4166, or whether there simply wasn't more room for a postscript to 4166 on *f2v* (*f3* being already full as the first page of the sermon notes of 1794). Whether heading or postscript, the squeezed-in lines read as follows:

> <A compact ~~with~~ of the Noumena to place themselves in a [?monas/*moral*] state—each to forbid himself to be conscious of another's acts except through the senses.>

I note the following:

First, there is the word, 'compact', which will shortly turn up again, with similar meaning, in the addendum to the sermon notes on Faith.

Secondly, there is the false start, 'with,' which might suggest a unilateral compact (given Coleridge's comment in 4166 about a Peculiarity of his own Nature) between Coleridge's 'Noumenon' and those of others. Coleridge corrects this impression by positing 'a compact' *of* 'the Noumena to place themselves in a state', the compact thus being multilateral.

Third, it is a compact in which 'each is to *forbid* himself to be *conscious* of another's acts *except through the senses*. Several things are implied in the compact as so self-stipulated. (a) The possibility remains of one's becoming aware, *subliminally*, of another's acts.[14] (b) In this heading/postscript to 4166 Coleridge makes the moral point with regard to one's own consciousness of another's acts 'except through the senses', that is, through that other person's overt actions. In *Aids to Reflection*, Coleridge will assert (p. 79) that the first 'foot-marks' of the acts of one's own will are not known *to oneself* except through 'allegories, which the Sense or Imagination supplies to the Understanding'. This will suggest that one can become aware of the movements of one's will through one's actions as manifest in one's own bodily acts as self-sensed; as when, in a Freudian slip such as a racist remark by a self-styled integrationist, one catches oneself and tries to cover up by exclaiming, 'I can't believe I said that!' Or one may read the movements of one's will through images or thoughts that arise into consciousness—movements of the will that, in one instance (see *AR*, p. 78), arise in response to and perhaps concert with the movements of the indwelling Divine Spirit. Either form of 'outness' (to use the term that occurs in 4166 proper), whether through action or imagination, is *symbolic*.

Before we leave the 4166 heading/postscript, there is the question of the problematic reading: is the 'state' into which one 'compacts' oneself a *monas* or a *moral* state? The word is difficult to decipher. In a way, the issue is immaterial; for the compact, as a self-prohibition, is by definition *moral*; and the effect of the compact is for each to place oneself in a *monas* state. The latter's reverberation with the term, 'monastery', as alongside Coleridge's just-used term, *Adyt*, lends further attractiveness to the latter option. Finally, though the term is not used, Coleridge's doctrine of *conscience*, as *radicative* of consciousness, is palpably all but explicit, but here with a delicious twist. If the root meaning of conscience is *con-scire*, here the compact of consciences is a compact to *not* know 'the other', consciously, in the very depths, but only as the 'other' steps forward out of it in symbolic garb.

(5) Four more entries from 1812 into various open pages of Notebook 1 remain to be considered, but they can be noted quickly. On *ff7-7v*, following note 4167 at the bottom of *f6v*, Coleridge writes (CN III 4168) of 'that *much-suggesting* Feeling Mood, with which we look back on our youth' when the

[14] Such a possibility, indeed actuality, is implied in the dynamics of transference and counter-transference in current psycho-therapy, where at times a direct but subterranean interaction between counselor and counselee seems to lie behind a realization that surfaces in the mind or actions of one or another party.

result is a sense of past, present and future as all part of one undifferentiated scene, analogous to one standing on 'a plain, where all was the same,' and the present is merely the point from which one turns arbitrarily to the 'N. or S'. This might imply a sense of oneself as in a compact with oneself—one's various actions, for instance—through time,[15] on analogy with one's contemporaneous compact with others. Turning forward to *ff 15v-16*, Coleridge then launches a reflection, inspired by Moravian practice, on '[t]he Desirableness of having each Soul watched over, as it were, by its Sister—Brother by Brother—so as to prevent or considerably check all growth of Evil'. The entry cautions against too intense and unrelieved such watching of Soul upon Soul. As such it seems to flow naturally out of CN III 4166. Immediately, then, Coleridge enters a short note (CN III 4170 *f16*) on '*Sour* Look of Jove that changed at once the Sky-blue Heaven to angry *Red*.' The topic and tone reflect the relational problematics that he was exercised over at this time. The following note (CN III 4171 *ff16v-17v, 19*) appears to be entirely unrelated to those problematics, in exploring the maxim, 'Exceptio probat regulam', 'the exception proves the rule'. The burden of this entry is that the maxim applies to *facts*, where an exception (a person born with one arm) does not disprove the rule that human beings as such have two arms; whereas in matters of *theory* one exception is sufficient to disprove the proposed (or currently adopted) rule. I am tempted to wonder whether this entry might in fact apply, unwittingly, to what Coleridge has apparently already written in the addendum. I shall return to this question. Meanwhile, at *ff 19v-20* of Notebook 1 (CN III 4172) Coleridge reflects on the 'Sympathy of Joy' that might exist between Lover and Beloved, especially 'the flush, the overflow, the rapture, after long absence'. In this entry we hear one poignant expression of the *desidirium*—the sense of longing for something once enjoyed and now lost—that stalked Coleridge's life to the very end.

The 1812 Addendum to the Sermon Notes of 1794

The addendum of 1812 (on *f6v*) to the sermon notes of 1794 is pregnant with Coleridgean thematics along the lines that I have tried to open up.

> The whole, or sum total of the applications of the word, Faith, reducible to Fidelity—as Loyalty to God, Fidelity to our fellow creatures—hence the most grievous of Injuries not to be believed—resented as a wrong, which seems to imply an original compact, or promise between each Spirit & all Spirits in their depths of Being below, & radicative of, all Consciousness.

This analysis of faith as in essence *fidelity* becomes a hallmark of Coleridge's thinking. If one experiential measure of the morally felt bonds of *fidelity*—morally felt, as unsensually sensed in the quality of that 'testifying state' by

[15] Compare the parenthetical sentence (CN I 6 *f6v*) with which Coleridge concludes his 1794 sermon notes: ('Memory itself an act of faith, in many cases'.)

which Coleridge speaks of conscience—lies in the friendship known among one's most intimate aquaintances as well as ordinary daily relationships, then this addendum asserts the necessity of fidelity in reference to problematic relationships—that is, and Wordsworth is on his mind at this moment, those relationships in which one has felt betrayed by an apparent infidelity on the part of the other person. Thus Coleridge writes, 'hence the most grievous of Injuries not to be believed—resented as a wrong'. Yet *in the face* of those entries, and the aggrieved resentment that still burns within, he can assert that even *such* injuries are *not to be believed*.

What does he mean by 'not to be believed'? Does it mean that he is not to believe that he has been wronged and injured? The answer, I suggest, lies in his lifelong distinction, and personal struggle (coming to fullest expression in CN V 6666), between faith and belief, where faith consists in fidelity, an act of will, and belief refers to a conceptual understanding of the nature of things, an understanding formulated in significant measure from one's experience of life's phenomena. For Coleridge, faith as fidelity would go deeper than belief can reach. For Coleridge, such faith as tied to one's beliefs would constitute idolatry, in that it would take the deliverances of experience in the temporal world to be decisive for one's convictions and actions as responsive to ultimate claims. For Coleridge, faith is glad when it receives the support of belief; but when belief, whether under the impress of the current zeitgeist or the stress of personal experience, would seem to contradict faith, then, as he will come to say,

> a firm act of adhesion ~~to~~ on the part of the moral Will to an Idea presented by the Reason (and Reason in relation to the moral & personal life Will or Conscience) without or even against the Belief is still *Faith*. O hear the affectionate mournings & complaints of Job & of the Psalmist respecting their *unbelief*— (CN V 6666 *f85*)

I shall limit myself to two further elements in this late conclusion which thematically connect with the 1812 addendum. First, and perhaps only peripherally, there is the way in which Coleridge associates the struggles of faith with the Book of Job. Secondly, and more materially, there is the association of faith/fidelity with *conscience*. For while the *term* does not occur in the addendum, it is palpably implicit there, as that which is *radicative* of consciousness.

When, then, Coleridge says, 'not to be believed', and one hears underneath this apparently generalized statement his current personal struggles with the injury received from the Wordsworths, one may say that (in the spirit of his concurrent reflection in CN III 4166) he will not presume to judge them in their inmost depths or *Adyt*. At the level of their actions and his *sense* of those actions he will entitle himself to be aggrieved and to mourn (like Job). But even there, as he says in 4165, he will not 'say it' to them 'till their Love has returned to you, & your feelings are the same as they were before'. Until then, he will (strive to) remain faithful to what he must trust is most true of them in that

inmost depth where they, like he, are joined in an 'original compact or promise' with 'all Spirits'. But, to underscore what, though palpably implicit, is only implicit and therefore easily missed—the insight here does not proceed from the general to the particular, but in the other direction. It proceeds from *the claims of his own conscience*, as a faculty which in his 'depths of Being' *claims* such loyalty of him toward these erstwhile bosom companions, and it is his sense of this *moral* claim (as of a 'testifying state' within him), that *implies* the reality of a general 'original compact or promise'.

Now I want to examine the components in the phrase, 'original compact or promise'. In his contemporaneous comment in CN III 4168, Coleridge reflects on 'that *much-suggesting* Feeling Mood, with which we look back on our youth' when the result is a sense of past, present and future as all part of one undifferentiated scene. Earlier, I suggested that this might imply a sense of oneself as in a compact with oneself—one's various actions, for instance—through time on analogy with one's compact with others contemporarily. In my view, such an undertone to 4168 is suggested by the temporal dimensions of the phrase, 'original compact or promise'. For if 'promise' is orientated toward the future of the present, 'original' grounds the present in an originating past. Implicit in this pairing is the pairing of memory[16] and hope.

In terms of Coleridge's Pentadic Logic—where Thesis and Antithesis constitute contemporary opposites held in dynamic tension by a mediating Mesothesis, all three originating in a Prothesis and converging toward a Synthesis—*collateral* Fidelity to each and every Spirit would seem to consist in a mediating act of Will that intersects with a *temporal* Fidelity grounded in primordial memory and orientated (in the face of what Coleridge in his 1794 concluding sermon note referred to as 'the present state of Mankind') toward ultimate hope. As such a Mesothesis, *fidelity* literally 'hangs onto' all things in hope. If I may co-opt Paul's words on 'charity' in 1 Corinthians 13, Mesothetic *fidelity* is Prothetic *love* acting in *hope*, in that it mediatingly 'beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things'.[17] In the terms of this paper's title, faith as fidelity moderates the dialectics of hope and despair; in turn, it is their twinned energies that give faith its *energeia*.

But since 'the present state of Mankind', or at any rate the present state of Coleridge's personal life and relationships, again and again drove him to the brink of despair and even, at times, of suicide or at least suicidal ideation, the polar opposition of memory and hope issues repeatedly for him in the polar opposition of hope and despair. Three poetic expressions of this come to mind. The first lies in the poem, 'Constancy to an Ideal Object', in the line where 'like strangers shelt'ring from a storm, / Hope and Despair meet in the porch of Death!' Read through the lens of Coleridge's Pentadic Logic, these lines may imply that the polar tension between these two powers is not finally

[16] I note that, in the parenthesis concluding his 1794 sermon notes, Coleridge writes, 'Memory itself an act of faith, in many cases.'

[17] One could perhaps say that for STC—ESTESE, as he emblazoned it in homespun derivation from the Greek verb, *histemi*, 'to (cause to) stand—fidelity 'holds all things together in hope', imaging the one 'in whom all things hold together [*synesteken*]' (Col 1:17 RSV).

resolvable short of that ante-chamber. The second lies in the poem, 'The Visionary Hope' which, perhaps significantly, is to be dated most probably to 1810, the year of the break with the Wordsworths. The poem opens with the despairing cry, 'Sad lot, to have no Hope!' Yet by the end of the first stanza it identifies 'One deep full wish' which 'never could his heart command,' which would be 'to be no more in pain'. And the second stanza identifies that which lies deeper than this deep wish and resists its narcotizing command:

> That Hope, which was his inward bliss and boast,
> Which waned and died, yet ever near him stood,
> Though changed in nature, wander where he would—
> For Love's Despair is but Hope's pining Ghost!
> For this one hope he makes his hourly moan,
> He wishes and *can* wish for this alone!

What is this 'one hope', which remains, now, 'though changed in nature'? It would appear to be, as he goes on to say, a hope 'Pierced, as with light from Heaven'. Such hope, whether it would cause his 'disease' to 'vanish' or 'let it stay,' should 'give / Such strength that he would bless his pains and live'. The pivotal lines, here, are those in which 'That Hope, . . / Which waned and died, yet ever near him stood.' How could it wane and die yet stand ever near him? If, I suggest, it underwent a death and resurrection issuing in a change in its nature. And somehow, I suggest, in these lines we see again the working of internal processes at a depth that constitutes the experiential ground of Coleridge's articulated Pentadic or Polar Logic. For if we recall that in this logic Polar Opposites are never absolute but stand in a mirroring relation in which each contains a trace of the other within it, then we may understand how 'Love's Despair is but Hope's pining Ghost!'

If, in this context, we take Love to be the Prothetic ground of Hope and Despair, this suggests a Love which is decidedly *un*Platonic. For it is a love that is not content to idle in static perfection, but a love that makes the dynamic venture of *life*, in which, as Christopher Smart puts the matter, the deepest issues are 'Determined, dared and done!'[18] It is a love that, finally, is willing to 'take pains', to the extent of bearing the pains even of despair for the sake of the hope that stands ever near it and points beyond it.

What then of the later 'Work without Hope'? Amid 'All Nature' which 'seems at work', Coleridge finds himself 'the sole unbusy Thing, / Nor honey make, nor pair, nor build, nor sing'. How is it that he alone is 'unbusy'? 'And would you learn the Spells, that drowse my Soul? / Work without Hope draws nectar in a sieve; and Hope without an object cannot live.'

Here, it would seem, the mirroring complementarity of Despair and Hope are so evenly balanced that they cancel each other out. The result, for the moment, is that the dynamism of life, its *energeia*, falls into a drowsy spell of lassitude and inactivity. Here we may recall the repeated expressions, in the

[18] So the last line of Smart's *A Song to David*.

notebooks, of self-laceration over his self-diagnosis as lacking in *will*, a diagnosis shared by such intimates as Southey and the Wordsworths and thereby amplified in the inner chambers of his conscience. I suggest that this diagnosis badly misfires. When one contemplates the magnitude of Coleridge's actual literary output, as achieved under the crippling burden of his addiction and ill health, and his profound disappointment in his longings for a *home* in the form of a 'helpmeet' who would also be a soul-mate, one can only conclude that, this sonnet to the contrary notwithstanding, Coleridge, somehow, heroically, managed to work without hope, which is to say, he managed to work in *faith*, where faith was the nullpoint of the twin energies of hope and despair. During those periods when little or nothing was done, except to issue promissory notes that kept bouncing at the time, I suggest that he was overwhelmed by the very *energies* of both hope and despair, energies at *both* poles of an intensity that signaled both his sense of *potential* (as he called it, Power) and his countervailing sense of not being up to the task that loomed gigantically before him through the morning mist of that potential. It was, I suggest, this very challenge that generated the drowsy spells that left him to lament, more than once, that he possessed power but no strength. Yet the energy of thought that bursts through the seams of his notebook prose, not to speak of his published works, gives the lie to this lament.