

FIG. 1

"AH! WHAT STRENGTH MIGHT I GATHER, WHAT COMFORT  
MIGHT WE DERIVE"

**4** MORE (Henry),  
annotated by COLERIDGE (Samuel Taylor).

**Philosophicall Poems.**

Cambridge: by Roger Daniel, 1647

£38,000

**First Collected Edition.** Small 8vo (160 x 101mm). [28], 37, 36-71, [7], 73-218, [8], 219-253, [5], p. 225, 256-298, [2], 299-436, [2] pp., each part has a separate title-page; numerous woodcut diagrams in the final part.

Title-page a little browned and with a short tear repaired to the lower fore-corner (just touching the imprint), some browning and a little marking in places throughout, closely cropped by the binder in places (occasionally just touching the catchwords, pagination etc and, in a few places, some of the annotations (without obscuring the sense)), early paper repair to upper fore-corner of E8 (just touching the page number), F5 (small repair, blank fore-margin) and some foxing to the lower margin of Bb4, original flyleaf (with manuscript annotations) preserved at the front and with another flyleaf laid down on later paper (preserving the manuscript annotations), flyleaves at end both laid down and strengthened with thicker later paper (preserving the majority of the manuscript annotations).

Mid-19th-century brown morocco, spine lettered in gilt, gilt edges, blue ribbon marker (a little rubbed at the edges, joints just starting).

Wing M2670. Hayward 94.

"Strange and sometimes uncouth as he is, there are lines and passages of the highest poetry and most exquisite beauty": A great influence on Coleridge, extensively annotated by the poet and almost certainly the copy used by Coleridge for his heated discussion (with Southey) of More in *Omniana* (1812).

The first collected edition of More's poems, the celebrated leader of the Cambridge Platonists. The important poem "Psychozoia, or the Life of the Soul" had been first printed in Cambridge in 1642 but appears here in a much longer, revised and annotated form. It was "Psychozoia" which fascinated Coleridge but led to a heated exchange with Southey in *Omniana* - the annotations in this volume reflect that

conflict. Southey wrote of the poem: "There is perhaps no other poem in existence which has so little that is good in it, if it has anything good" (*Omniana* p.157). Coleridge countered that: "Southey must have wearied himself out with the poem, till the mists from its swamps and stagnants had spread over its flowery pots and bowers" (*Table Talk* p.339).

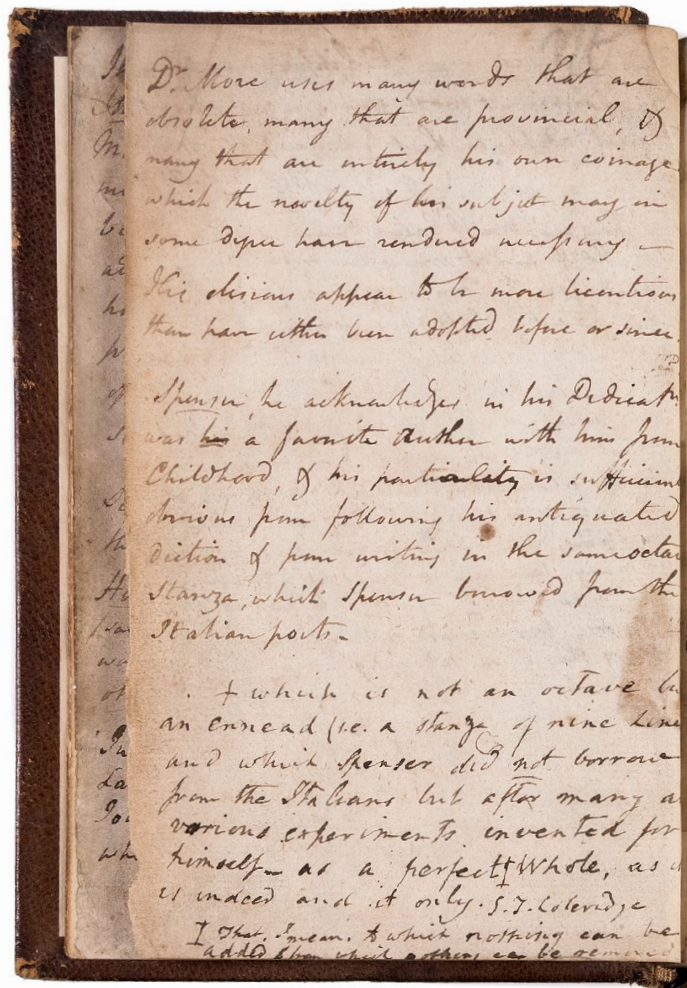


FIG. 2

In George Whalley's "Coleridge Marginalia Lost", a list of books known to have been owned by Coleridge but which have remained untraced, this volume appears as no. 79 (recording ten annotations) and stating that it was last traced in the sale catalogue of Robert Southey's library. A copy of More's *Philosophicall Poems* appears as lot 1998 in the *Catalogue of the Valuable Library of the Late Robert Southey* (1844, bought by "Petheran", presumably John Petheran, London bookseller) where it is marked with an asterix to denote ("at the particular request of some of the Friends of the late Poet Laureate") that the volume contains "his [Southey's] Autograph". This copy certainly belonged to Coleridge but does not have Southey's signature. Some of the short marginal notes may be by Southey and they certainly echo many of his feelings towards More. It appears that Whalley may have been wrong about Coleridge's copy of this book being sold in the sale of Southey's library as we have traced another copy offered for sale in 1818 which has an identical manuscript note in it [see below]. The annotations by Coleridge are typically performative though and provide important evidence for Coleridge's reading of More and his feelings on poetry in general.

Coleridge begins by providing a long passionate summary note of his feelings on More on the front flyleaf of this volume:

**"Ah! what strength might I gather, what comfort might we derive, from the Proclo-plotinian Platonists' doctrine of the soul, if only they or their Spinosistic imitators, the nature-philosophers of present Germany, had told or could tell us what they meant by I and we, by pain and remorse! Poor we are nothing in act, but everything in suffering".**

A number of notes [fig.2] on the following leaf (taken from 18th and early 19th-century assessments of More) describe how Spenser was "a favourite author with him [More] from childhood" and remarks on the use of "the same octave stanza, which Spenser borrowed from the Italian poets".

Coleridge responds to this correcting the previous note: "...not an octave, but an ennead...which Spenser did *not* borrow from the Italians, but, after many and various experiments, invented for himself, as a perfect whole, as it is indeed, and it only". Coleridge then signs this note boldly "S.T. Coleridge" a clear indication that his annotations were intended to be read by others and echoing Jackson's assertion that Coleridge was "a brilliant writer in the minor and somewhat suspect genre of marginal commentary" (H.R. Jackson, "Coleridge as Reader", in *The Oxford Handbook of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* ed. Frederick Burwick (2009) p. 273).

Alongside the two long notes by Coleridge on the front leaves (approximately 120 words - signed near the end of the second note "S.T. Coleridge"), there is also a long note on the recto of the rear flyleaf (approx 250 words, also signed "S.T. Coleridge") [fig.4] and a shorter three line note (referring to a section of the printed text) on the



*What mere Logomachy! 23 All is first assumed*  
 in the definition of body:  
 and then  
 proved by applying the impossibility of the definition

Adde unto these, that the soul would take pains  
 For her destruction while she doth aspire  
 To reach at things (that were her wofull gains)  
 That be not corporall, but feared higher  
 Above the bodies sphere. Thus should she tire  
 Her self to 'stroy her self. Again, the mind  
 Receives contrary forms. The feverish fire  
 Makes her cool brooks and shadowing groves to find  
 Within her thoughts, thus hot and cold in one she binds.

*by applying the impossibility of the definition*

Nor is the chang'd by the susception  
 Of any forms: For thus her self contraire  
 Should be unto her self. But Union  
 She then possesseth, when heat and cold are  
 Together met: They meet withouten jarre  
 Within our souls. Such forms they be not true  
 You'll say. But of their truth lest you despair,  
 Each form in purer minds more perfect hew  
 Obtains, then those in matter we do dayly view.

*of this impossibility. 25 The Materialist*

For there, they're mixt, soild and contaminate,  
 But truth doth clear, unweave, and simplifie,  
 Search, sever, pierce, open, and disgregate  
 All ascititious cloggings; then doth eye  
 The naked essence and its property.

Or you must grant the soul cannot define  
 Ought right in things; or you must not deny  
 These forms be true that in her self do shine:

*These be her rule of truth, these her unerring line,*

*aye! but this is not 26 That I mean*

Bodies have no such properties. Again,  
 See in one cluster many arguments

Comprisd: She multitudes can close constrain  
 Into one nature. Things that be fluent,

*or body:* As flitting time, by her be straight retent

Unto one point; she joyns future and past,

*or soul:* And makes them steddy stand as if present:

Things distant she can into one place cast:

*defy* Calls kinds immortal, though their singulars do waste.

*the bulk of your definition.*

Upon

27

Upon her self she strangely operates,  
 And from her self and by her self returns  
 Into her self; thus the soul circulates.  
 Do bodies so? Her axle-tree it burns  
 With heat of motion. This low world she spurns,  
 Raiseth her self to catch infinity.  
 Unspeakable great numbers how she turns  
 Within her mind, like evening mist the eye  
 Discerns, whose muddy atomes fore the wind do fly.

28

Stretcheth out time at both ends without end,  
 Makes place still higher swell, often creates  
 What God near made, nor doth at all intend  
 To make, free phantasms, laughs at future fates,  
 Foresees her own condition, she relates  
 Th' all comprehension of eternity,  
 Complains she's thirsty still in all estates,  
 That all she sees or has no're satisfe  
 Her hungry self, nor fill her vast capacity.

29

But I'll break off; My Muse her self forgot,  
 Her own great strength and her foes feebleness,  
 That she her name by her own pains may blot,  
 While she so many strokes heaps in excess,  
 That fond grosse phansie quite for to suppress  
 Of the souls corporal tie. For men may think  
 Her adversaries strength doth thus her presse  
 To multitude of reasons, makes her swink  
 With weary toyl, and sweat out thus much forced ink:

30

Or that she loves with trampling insultations  
 To domineere in easie victory.  
 But let not men dare cast such accusations;  
 Against the blamelesse. For no mastery,  
 Nor fruitlesse pomp, nor any verity  
 Of that opinion that she here destroys  
 Made her so large. No, 'tis her jealousie  
 'Gainst witching falshood that weak souls annoyes,  
 And oft doth choke those chearing hopes of lasting joys.

The

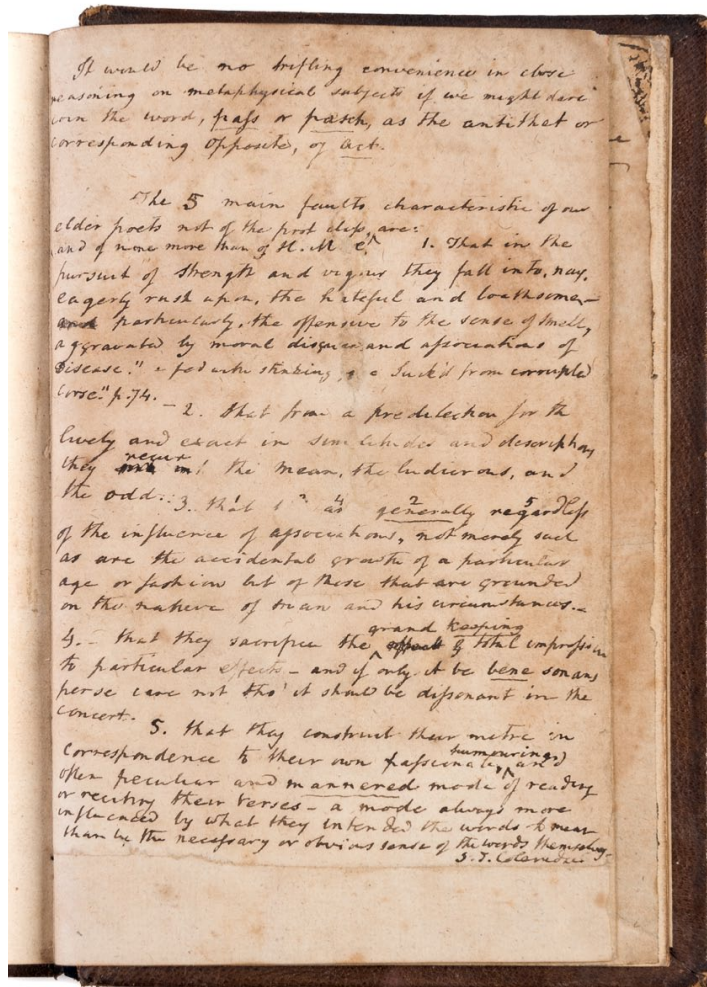


FIG. 4

verso of the flyleaf, a five line note in the preface (Hrv) to *Psychathansia* responding to the printed text, a long annotation [fig.3] filling almost all of the blank space between the printed text on p.128 (*The Immortality of the Soul*), and a short marginal annotation a few leaves later at p.135 and a 10 line annotation in the blank space between the printed text on p.353 (*Notes upon Psychozoia*).

There are various additional notes throughout which may be by Robert Southey of which some are single words but others short notes. Southey in *Omniana* is predominantly concerned with More's borrowings from other poets and the annotations in this volume largely tend to note similarities with poets such as Milton, Spenser and Chaucer. A note on p.7 likens More's text to "Milton in Lycidas" with a note below observing a similarity to Spenser. There are other references to Spenser on p.26, 99 and 297 and Milton on p.32 (*Comus*), 69, 96, 145 (*Comus*), 149 (*Paradise Lost*) and 244 (*Comus*).

The annotations by Coleridge were published in George Whalley's *Coleridge Marginalia* (Princeton University Press, 1980) from a 19th-century transcription (itself based on transcriptions) in the *Transactions of the Royal Society of Literature* (2nd series IX (1870) p.433). **This book has been unavailable to scholars since the 19th century**, despite the continued interest in the influence of More and the Cambridge Platonists on Coleridge's work. The annotations in the book which are not by Coleridge also require further research as they clearly provide evidence of a detailed reader of More who had a good knowledge of Milton and Spenser.

**Provenance:** 1. Henry Bradshawe (d.1698), nephew of the regicide John Bradshaw, Lord President of the Commonwealth Council (1602-1659), signature on the title-page [fig.1] 2. Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834), poet, with numerous annotations both before and in the text (a number signed S.T.C or S.T. Coleridge). 3. This copy appears to have been offered as no. 1524 in *A Catalogue of Old Books in Various Languages* (1822) by Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme & Brown which lists a copy of More's *Philosophical Poems* with a manuscript note reading: "more uses many words that are obsolete many that are provincial, and many that are entirely his own coinage", matching the note on the flyleaf of this copy. £15s. This would make it impossible to have been the copy offered in Southey's sale in 1844. 4. Alexander Macmillan (1818-1896), publisher and co founder of Macmillan Publishers, his bookplate on the front pastedown.