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1798-1833

A. M. C. Waterman

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Malthus's *Essay on Population* was seen in 1798 as a complete refutation of Godwin and all 'Jacobin' ideology. It proved that a state of equality and justice for all was unfeasible; and it demonstrated the inevitability and beneficence of private property and political institutions. But its central theme, the dominance of scarcity in human affairs, presented the theological 'problem of evil' in novel and threatening form.

For thirty-five years both the economics and the theology of the *Essay* were modified and refined: first by Paley, Sumner and Malthus himself, and later by Copleston, Whately and Chalmers. The result was 'Christian Political Economy': an ideological alliance of political economy and Christian theology, congenial to a new 'liberal-conservatism' in the early nineteenth century, which found middle ground between the ultra-tory defence of the *ancien régime* and a 'radical' repudiation of existing institutions. Thanks to Whately's demarcation of 'scientific' from 'theological' knowledge, Christian Political Economy was able to beat off the Benthamite challenge of 'Philosophic Radicalism' and to remain ideologically dominant for most of the nineteenth century. As an unintended outcome of all this ideological polemic, there emerged certain ideas now recognized as fundamental to economic science. Professor Waterman analyses this story of the 'intellectual repulse of revolution', and describes the ideological alliance of political economy and Christian theology after 1798. In doing so, he supplies the missing piece of the jigsaw puzzle of English intellectual history, and offers the first clear analysis of the axial period between the 1790s and 1832.

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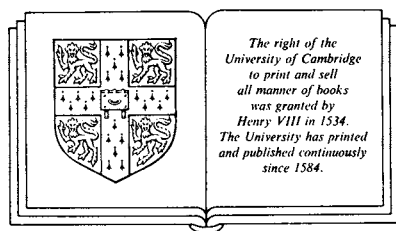
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REVOLUTION, ECONOMICS AND RELIGION

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All apparent opposition to religion which we meet in this age should not blind us to the fact that all intellectual problems are fused with religious problems, and that the former find their constant and deepest inspiration in the latter.

Ernst von Cassirer, *Philosophy of the Enlightenment*.

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An economist with a smattering of divinity who ventures to write a work of history can only hope to succeed if he gets a great deal of help. At every stage of my research for this book I have been dependent upon the generosity of real historians who have pardoned my intrusion upon their turf and have upheld me with their expert knowledge, judgement, criticism and encouragement. Because of the interdisciplinary character of the research I have in addition made heavy demands upon various philosophers, political scientists, theologians, economists and others. And because it has been costly in time and money I have needed the more material support afforded by funding bodies and academic institutions. These acknowledgements are therefore much longer than a book of such modest scope would normally require. They are not intended to implicate my benefactors in the opinions expressed or in any errors committed therein.

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years, I add my own tribute to that of a whole generation of St John's College fellows.

It seems almost impertinent to mention my wife in this context. For though she too has shared in the chores of preparing this book and has borne patiently the many absences of body and mind it occasioned, her contribution is incommensurable with that of any other. I can only hope she thinks it has all been worthwhile.

A. M. C. Waterman
St John's College, Winnipeg

Abbreviations

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| <i>AJR</i> | <i>Anti-Jacobin Review</i> |
| <i>AJRM</i> | <i>Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine</i> |
| <i>AR</i> | <i>Annual Review</i> |
| <i>BC</i> | <i>British Critic</i> |
| <i>BL</i> | British Library |
| <i>CHA</i> | Collection of Chalmers papers in New College, Edinburgh |
| <i>Civ. Dei</i> | <i>De Civitate Dei</i> of St Augustine of Hippo |
| <i>DNB</i> | <i>Dictionary of National Biography</i> |
| <i>DR</i> | <i>Dublin Review</i> |
| <i>EB</i> | 1824 <i>Supplement to Encyclopaedia Britannica</i> |
| <i>ER</i> | <i>Edinburgh Review</i> |
| <i>GM</i> | <i>Gentleman's Magazine</i> |
| <i>MLC</i> | <i>Malthus Library Catalogue</i> |
| <i>MM</i> | <i>Monthly Magazine</i> |
| <i>MR</i> | <i>Monthly Review</i> |
| <i>NAR</i> | <i>New Annual Register</i> |
| <i>NP</i> | <i>The New Palgrave: A Dictionary of Economics</i> (1987) |
| <i>PC</i> | <i>Public Characters</i> |
| <i>QR</i> | <i>Quarterly Review</i> |
| <i>ST</i> | <i>Summa Theologiae</i> of St Thomas Aquinas |
| <i>WR</i> | <i>Westminster Review</i> |