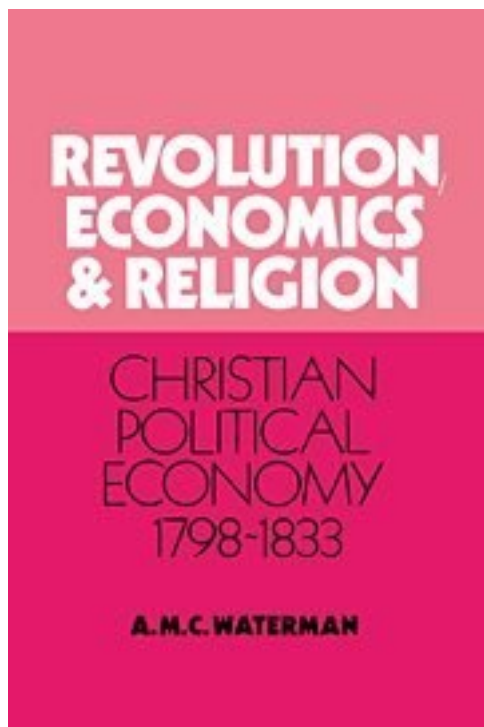


Revolution, Economics and Religion



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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 regime and a 'radical' repudiation of existing institutions. Professor Waterman analyses this story of the 'intellectual repulse of revolution', and describes the ideological alliance of political economy and Christian theology after 1798.

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目录:

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