



# Blake

AN ILLUSTRATED QUARTERLY  
VOLUME 19 NUMBER 2 FALL 1985

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# Samuel Palmer's *An Address to the Electors of West Kent, 1832* Rediscovered

BY DAVID BINDMAN

In 1975 I gave a lecture at London University on Samuel Palmer in which I attempted to relate some major themes in his work to the political upheavals of his time. The idea was to demonstrate that the study of politics could be as relevant to the discussion of visionary artists as it was to those like Madox Brown and Courbet who made direct reference to political issues in their paintings. Palmer seemed a good example because his letters of the later 1820s reveal him as bitterly hostile to radicalism and dissent in all its forms. Furthermore Palmer was known to have been moved in the face of the Reform Act of 1832 to produce an anonymous political pamphlet, *An Address to the Electors of West Kent*, by "an Elector." No copy appeared to have survived, but its existence was known from a reference to it in a letter by John Linnell, and Geoffrey Grigson had found some extracts held up for derision in a reform newspaper, the *Maidstone Gazette* for 11 December 1832.<sup>1</sup> In preparing my lecture I made strenuous efforts to find the pamphlet but without success, and I had to rely for my picture of Palmer's political views on the extracts and various passages from his letters. Some time later I mentioned the missing pamphlet to Michael Collinge of the Institute of Historical Research of London University. As it happens he was going shortly afterwards to the Maidstone Public Record office which I had searched in vain, and a few days later he sent me a photocopy of the whole pamphlet. It is here reprinted in full for the first time since 1832, and it is Palmer's longest and most considered piece of prose to have survived, dating from a critical period in his career.

In this introduction I want to discuss briefly the political background to the pamphlet and suggest some possible connections with his art. To a degree I will be following in the footsteps of Geoffrey Grigson who in an article in *Horizon* of 1944<sup>2</sup> and his book on Palmer of 1947 argues that Palmer's political reactions in the period around the Reform Act were symptomatic of his retreat from the visionary basis of his work which led to his eventual departure from Shoreham. The pamphlet as we already know from the published fragments is strongly anti-radical and defensive of the Established

Church which he believed to be the true Apostolic Church through its descent from the pre-Reformation Catholic Church, as he makes clear in a letter to George Richmond of 24 June 1828: "I hope, Sir, that the Lord will confirm you & comfort you in true and sweet affiliation to the Apostolic Church which has only Bishops and pastors (tho' many drones & wolves) in which only are the efficacies of the holy sacraments, the authority and absolution & blessing, the delegated power of Jesus Christ, the eternal shield against the gates of Hell, The chief corner stone . . . the rock St Peter, the indissoluble foundation of the apostles & prophets, stronger than the pillars of the world & the fabric of the universe & the gift of the Holy Ghost."<sup>3</sup> In this devotion to the Church of England Palmer was perfectly consistent throughout his life and he accepted the paternal view of society it implied, but in 1828 it did not alienate him from his friends in the Shoreham circle many of whom were, like John Linnell, themselves dissenters: "Politics we dabble in: Mr. L[innell] though of no party magnifies the peasants; I, also, as you know, of no party, as I love our fine British peasantry, think best of the old high Tories, because I find they gave most liberty to the poor, and were not morose, sullen and blood-thirsty like the Whigs, liberty jacks and dissenters; whose cruelty when they reign'd, was as bad as that of the worst times of the worst papists; only more sly and smoothlier varnish'd over with a thin shew of reason."<sup>4</sup>

The year 1828 saw the final repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts which removed the statutory bar upon non-Anglicans from holding public and municipal offices. The issue neatly polarized political and religious attitudes, with Radicals and Dissenters on one side, and the "old high Tories" and the Church of England, who rightly feared that the Act would spell the end of what Norman Gash calls the "oligarchic Anglican constitution of the eighteenth century,"<sup>5</sup> on the other. For the Church of England the 1820s were years of ever-increasing threat, and Palmer, like Constable who spent much time in the close of Salisbury Cathedral, saw the Church, the repository of all true values, progressively isolated by the spread of dissent, especially in the towns where Angli-

cans were often in a minority. In the countryside the complaints of Radicals gathered around the issue of tithes, the traditional method of paying the clergy whereby a farmer was obliged to give one tenth of his produce either in cash or kind to the local parish. The problems this system created were endless, for assessment could always be at issue; in hard times there was always the cry that the clergy should abate their demands. While some clergy were genuinely poor themselves there were church pluralists who lived very comfortably without ever seeing their parishioners. Furthermore Dissenters normally regarded the Church as an "unscriptural institution" and denied the Church its title to the tithe in the first place. Most threatening from the point of view of the Church was the fact that the issue of tithes could unite farmers and farm laborers in common cause against them.<sup>6</sup>

On what grounds could the Church mount a defense of the system of tithes which made the clergy such an obvious target for Reform? An unsigned article in the *Quarterly Review* of 1830<sup>7</sup> claimed among other things that the Church in consequence of its independence from the state provided a means of betterment for poor men without social advantages. These men having acquired a good education would then return to rural areas the advantage of a learned clergy; here the author quotes Burke: "In retired parishes, the family of the clergyman is often a little centre of civilization, from which gleams of refinement of manners, of neatness, of taste, as well as of science and general literature, are diffused through districts into which they would otherwise never penetrate." In the last resort, however, the anonymous author rests the defense of tithes on more ineffable ideas, in this case those of the mature Wordsworth of the *Excursion*, first published in 1814, in particular the words of the country pastor in Book VI:

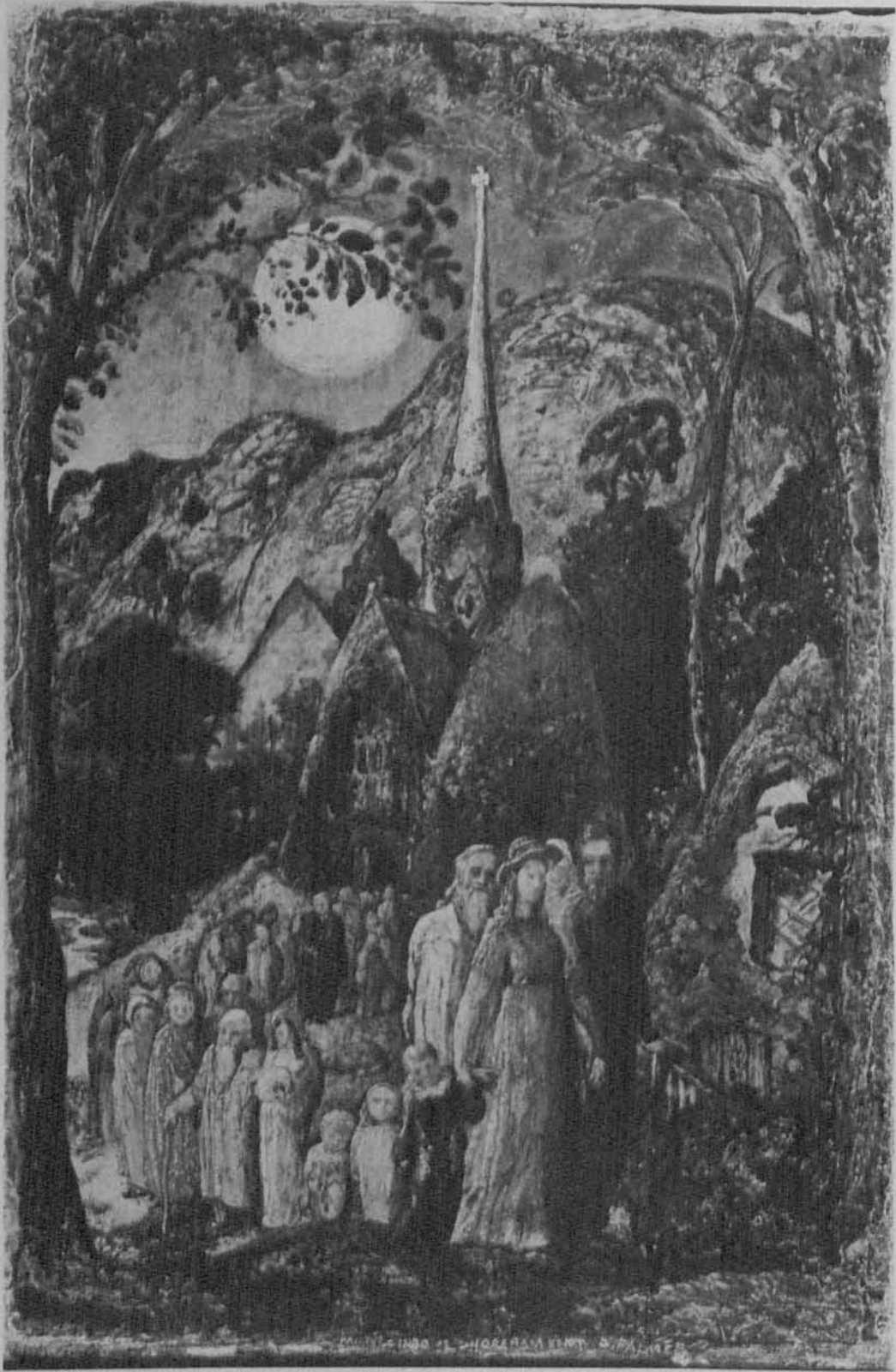
Hail to the state of England and conjoin  
With this a salutation as devout  
Made to the spiritual fabric of her church,  
Founded in truth; by blood of martyrdom  
Cemented; by the hands of wisdom reared  
In beauty of holiness, with ordered pomp,  
Decent and unreprieved. . . .  
And O, ye swelling hills and spacious plains,  
Besprent from shore to shore with steeple towers  
And spires, whose silent finger points to heaven—  
Nor wanting at wide intervals, the bulk  
Of ancient minster, lifted above the cloud  
Of the dense air which town or city breeds,  
To intercept the sun's glad beams—may ne'er  
That true succession fail of English hearts,  
Who with ancestral feeling can perceive  
What in those holy structures ye possess  
Of ornamental interest, and the charm  
Of pious sentiment diffused afar,  
And human charity and Social love.  
Thus never shall the indignities of time  
Approach their reverend graces unopposed;

Nor shall the elements be free to hurt  
Their fair proportions; nor the blinder rage  
Of bigot zeal, madly to overturn:  
And if the desolating hand of war  
Spare them, they shall continue to bestow  
Upon the thronged abodes of busy men  
(Depraved, and ever prone to fill their minds  
Exclusively with transitory things.)  
An air and mien of dignified pursuit,  
Of sweet civility, on rustic wilds.

I have quoted that passage at length because it seems to be in sympathetic accord with the painting by Palmer in the Tate Gallery entitled by him *Coming from Evening Church, Shoreham*, dated 1830. It shows a group of people leaving a village church set in a valley beneath the moon. The bold form of the church is balanced by the warm and homely cottage on the right, and the villagers represent all ages and generations from small children to old men; in the middle distance can be seen the parson in the midst of his flock. The church spire whose "silent finger points to heaven" (in fact Shoreham Church did not have a spire, though most others in that part of Kent do) dominates the village but seems to grow out of the hillside, which with the overhanging trees appears to protect the village. The painting is a representation of the village as part of the natural order of things, under the benign auspices of the Old English Church, which guarantees the indivisible harmony of nature, nation and religion.

The painting, therefore, offers a positive if highly idealized vision of rural life, and one that can be paralleled in Palmer's letters of 1828, like the one already cited. It is all the more striking that the *Address* should be so bleak in tone even though it cannot have been written much more than two years after the painting. It expresses primarily Palmer's rage at the very idea of electoral reform, the supporters of which are seen as nothing less than beasts and despoilers who wish only for the destruction of the Church. The note of hysterical intolerance can be matched with that in a letter to George Richmond of 21 September 1832 in which he repents of the indulgence he had shown to friends even until quite recently:

If people knew how deeply the whole world lieth in wickedness, and how totally it is estranged & set in opposition against God; they would I cannot help thinking, no longer wonder why all kinds of sects & schisms may not equally be term'd the Churches of Christ. . . . Once I was full of this lightness and folly—yea even to the present time my old Adam can see no reason why the sleek & sober Quaker or the meek & moral Unitarian should be beholden to the Church, claiming the power of the keys of the kingdom of Heaven—But blessed be God. I am changed ever since you saw me—I am a free thinker in art in literature in music in poetry—but as I read of but one way to Heaven & that a narrow one it is not for me to chuse which way, I will be saved & make it a pretty speculation or matter of taste, & run to seek my Saviour in holes & corners, but go at once where He is ever to be found, at the Apostolick altar of the Melchisedekian priesthood.<sup>8</sup>



Samuel Palmer. *Coming from Evening Church, Shoreham* (1830). Courtesy of Tate Gallery Publications Department.

Evidently something traumatic had happened to Palmer in the years before 1832, and Grigson astutely pointed out that the early 1830s were the time of the "Captain Swing" riots when unemployed and hungry farm laborers terrorized farmers, particularly in Kent, by setting fire to ricks. In fact Shoreham was right in the heart of the discontents and Palmer by moving there in the late 1820s with the dream of finding "a primitive village where none of the King-choppers had set up business"<sup>9</sup> found himself in a position similar to someone who had recently sought refuge from civilization in the Falkland Islands. By the end of the 1820s more than a third of the population of the Kentish Weald was unemployed following the agricultural recession after Waterloo. According to Hobsbawm and Rudé, in the counties of Southern England by 1828 "Pauperism, degradation, desperation, and sullen discontent were almost universal."<sup>10</sup> In 1829 a disastrous harvest was followed by a cruel winter, and misery increased even further especially in Kent. In 1830 the farm laborers turned to open revolt in the form of rick burning and the destruction of threshing machines, sometimes accompanied by sinister letters in the name "Captain Swing," which became part of life in the area around Shoreham. In retrospect the causes of the revolt can be seen to have lain in local desperation and it was not part of a general uprising. But 1830 was the year of a revolution in France and renewed agitation for Reform in the towns, so one can well see how someone of Palmer's temperament might persuade himself that the pathetic actions of the rick burners were fomented by Jacobins rushing over from France to join with their English counterparts in the destruction of the property-owning classes. The first recorded outbreak came in Orpington on 1 June 1830 and by the end of 20 September fires were reported within the area of a few miles about Shoreham, including one on land belonging to Mr. Love of Filston Hall Farm in Shoreham whom Palmer had described as "one of the best farmers here-about."<sup>11</sup> The revolt was suppressed by the end of the year, but one may presume that the fires consumed not only Palmer's hopes of a rural retreat but also his faith in the "fine old English peasantry."

*An Address to the Electors of West Kent* was published in support of the Tory candidate Sir William Geary in December 1832 in the general election which followed the passing of the Reform Act, which would have further confirmed Palmer's despairing vision of the future. The political imagery of the pamphlet is essentially of the kind popularized by Canning and the *Anti-Jacobin* and also the caricatures of Gillray, in which the movement for Reform even in its most moderate and respectable form was equated unequivocally with the worst excesses of the French Revolution; to support Reform was to open the floodgates to mob rule and the imposition of French atheism and equality, for in Palmer's words it

was "the importation of yesterday, from poor, degraded, dishonoured, Atheistical France." It is easy to see on reading the pamphlet why a radical newspaper should complain of its "gross invectives and foul vituperation," and why it should have offended John Linnell who also complained of its impertinent imitation of Milton. Nonetheless it is full of stirring imagery, even a certain visionary quality which is not incompatible with the rapturous imagination of the Shoreham paintings. This pamphlet deserves to be regarded not as an aberration nor simply the product of disillusionment, but as the other side of the coin of the political and religious vision which is implicit in Palmer's Shoreham paintings. In the last resort Palmer's art is as essentially High Tory in spirit as Blake's is indelibly Radical and apocalyptic.

<sup>1</sup>G. Grigson, *Samuel Palmer: The Visionary Years* (1947), pp. 104-107.

<sup>2</sup>"Samuel Palmer: The Politics of an Artist," *Horizon*, 4 (1944), 314-28.

<sup>3</sup>*The Letters of Samuel Palmer*, ed. R. Lister (1974), I, no. 1828 (4), p. 24.

<sup>4</sup>Palmer, *Letters*, I, no. 1828 (9), p. 31.

<sup>5</sup>N. Gash, *The Age of Peel* (1968), p. 2.

<sup>6</sup>E. J. Evans, "Some Reasons for the Growth of English Rural Anti-Clericalism," *Past and Present*, Feb. 1975.

<sup>7</sup>*Quarterly Review* (1830), pp. 105-47.

<sup>8</sup>Palmer, *Letters*, I, no. 1832 (1), pp. 58-59.

<sup>9</sup>Palmer, *Letters*, I, no. 1828 (11), p. 51.

<sup>10</sup>E. Hobsbawm and G. Rudé, *Captain Swing* (1969), p. 81.

<sup>11</sup>Palmer, *Letters*, I, no. 1827 (3), p. 14.



AN ADDRESS  
TO THE  
ELECTORS  
OF  
**WEST KENT;**

WHICH IS ALSO  
SUBMITTED TO THE ATTENTION  
OF  
ELECTORS IN GENERAL.

---

BY AN ELECTOR.  
1832.

---

“WHATEVER CHARITY WE OWE TO MEN'S PERSONS, WE OWE  
NONE TO THEIR ERRORS.”

---

LONDON:  
JOSEPH SHACKELL, PRINTER, WINE OFFICE COURT,  
FLEET STREET.

262/42



**AN ADDRESS**  
TO THE  
**ELECTORS OF WEST KENT.**

MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN ;

An individual, who has the honour to be of your number, ventures to address you on the subject of the approaching election; and entreats you to afford him a few moments' serious attention; which he claims, not for himself, but for the importance of his subject.

SIR WILLIAM R. P. GEARY comes forward, and offers himself as your Representative; promising an assiduous attention to Parliamentary duties. He will strenuously support the agricultural interest; and such a modification of the tithe laws as may comport with the security of all other kinds of property. He will also promote, to the utmost of his power, every rational, effective and substantial reform. He comes from the heart of the county; and from his family and connections, we cannot but believe him to be a lover of agriculture; an interest now upon the very verge of destruction. SIR WILLIAM is an INDEPENDENT CANDIDATE, and the son of a late INDEPENDENT MEMBER.

Surely no person connected with the agricultural interest, and solicitous for the welfare of this great county, can for a moment lend his influence to the opposing faction, who denounce the protecting duties as a "Bread Tax," and taunt SIR WILLIAM with a desire of continuing it. Now as every Kentish farmer, who is in his right wits, conceives some sort of "Bread Tax" to be the very condition of his existence, how could our adversaries be so very simple as to tell him plainly, that his only chance of preserving it was by voting for SIR WILLIAM GEARY? However, as they have been so kindly explicit, I hope, like men of common sense, we shall take them at their word, and vote for SIR WILLIAM, as they advise. Their hostility to Agriculture, which could not long be concealed, notwithstanding any professions they might have made to the contrary, sufficiently bespeaks them to belong to the caste of the Radical Reformers, MOST FALSELY SO CALLED; who are the natural enemies of the farmer, and, by consequence, of the manufacturer; for commerce and agriculture must stand or fall together;—and, therefore, of all national prosperity.

One is almost tempted to believe that some cunning Agriculturist, in disguise, drew up their manifesto,

and laughed at them in his sleeve; for certainly it is its own best refutation. SIR WILLIAM GEARY has promised to support the Agriculturist; and this is the very reason for which agricultural Kent is called upon to repudiate him! *Risum teneatis*. Rome was saved by the cackling of geese: and truly, if the jacobinic citadel might be preserved by similar multitudes, it must be acknowledged to be impregnable!

Thus have they forfeited the support of all sensible farmers; and at the same time disgusted every honest man, whether Whig or Tory, by retailing, in the true spirit of jacobinism, a falsehood respecting the income of the Church, so outrageous; that it looks like a droll burlesque and caricature, even of the flagitious system of misrepresentation and imposture, by which that profligate faction is supported.

With respect to the Candidates themselves, who have been unitedly soliciting your suffrages; nothing can be farther from the writer's intention than to offer them personal disrespect: he would be the first to yield them that deference which all gentlemen have a right to claim from each other in private society: but he feels it his duty to speak very plainly of the faction whose support those gentlemen have deigned to conciliate.

Another objection to SIR WILLIAM is his youth. It is said, "We want men of experience in Parliament." But, beside that often one man of thirty will be found wiser than another of seventy; that multitude of years does not always teach wisdom: that every profession affords numerous instances of the young attaining honours and distinction; and of aged men who could never rise from mediocrity; and that some of our most splendid public characters have signalized themselves when but scarcely out of their minority: how, we should be glad to know, are we to obtain Representatives of great Parliamentary experience, unless by sending them in betimes, we give them an opportunity to acquire it? If we return none but old men, we defeat that object entirely; and our *Council of Ancients* must ever be a bench of venerable novices. But, above all, I would ask, is it not most expedient, that in the great senate of a nation there should be found the energy and fire of youth, as well as the deliberative sagacity of age? The parents of all sublime works are Intellect and Will.

Some have strangely refused to support SIR WILLIAM GEARY, on account of their being, from early associations, attached to the Whigs. Alas! it is but an ill compliment to the Whigs of sixteen hundred and eighty-eight, to mistake for their successors a rabble of incendiaries and jacobins. The politics promulgated by our adversaries are not those of MARLBOROUGH or CHATHAM, but of THISTLEWOOD and BRANDRETH!

NO! Brother Electors!—The Radical upas tree never sprouted from the stock of ancient British Whiggism;

but it is the importation of yesterday, from poor, degraded, dishonoured, Atheistical France.

That once gay nation long led the mode in our more innocent fripperies of dress and fashion: we amused ourselves with her toys and trinkets; and with perfect good humour saw her play the Harlequin to Europe. But she rose in our estimation, when she began to struggle against aristocratic tyranny. She obtained her freedom: and, alas! immediately lost it again, irretrievably; by confiding it, as the people of England are at this moment confiding their own—to revolutionary empirics. Then, when suddenly distracted with an infernal phrenzy, her songs and dances became the yells and contortions of possession; and, in a frantic spasm, she hurled over the Continent fire-brands, arrows, and death: who, with more alacrity than the Kentish patriot, sprang forward, and bound the demoniac?

And shall *we*, even now, bitten with that selfsame madness; while, though somewhat exhausted with her paroxysm, France yet heaves in incurable distraction; shall *we* mistake her ravings for the voice of Delphic Sibyl; and proceed to model, or rather unmodel, every institution of our country, and tumble them all together, into the semblance of that kingless, lawless, churchless, Godless, comfortless, and most chaotic Utopia of French philosophy?

Shall we assay to repair here and there a crumbling pinnacle of our Constitution, by cannonading the buttresses and sapping the foundations?

Shall we invite over the Gaul to help us raze those bulwarks, which he too well knows to be thunder-proof; and put up a pagoda of trash and tinsel on the site?

But now, behold, you are called out, Men of Kent—yes, YOU, whose frown has made the Frenchman shiver—to mince and caper in the ballet of liberalism; and to bring up the death-dance of Parisian assassins and sansculottes!

They were the Men of Kent who dictated terms to the Norman Conqueror: and they are Men of Kent, who are now asked to become morally the vassals of France.

Who does not remember that crisis—God forbid any Englishman should forget it!—when Wordsworth sang,

“Ye men of Kent, 'tis Victory or Death!”

Then, even as one man, rose up this noble county; and with a front of spotless loyalty, scared Napoleon from our shore. O let not their degenerate children crouch to an invasion of much more fatal principles and doctrines.

The mane of the British Lion can receive no decoration from shreds of tri-coloured ribbon; nor will he cut any very majestic figure in the eyes of Europe, if we suffer our new-fangled politicians to retrench his tusks and talons; and to lead him about as a show, with the

Monkey of French innovation mounted upon his back.

O my countrymen, for shame! for shame!—Methinks I see the mouldered heroes of Crecy and Agincourt, of Trafalgar and Waterloo rise up to hoot us from among the nations!

But let it be so no longer! Put on, once more, the invincible armour of old English, of old Kentish loyalty. Strangle the snake corruption wherever you shall find it; and every where promote, in God's name, effectual reform: but leave not your hearths and altars a prey to the most heartless, the most bloody, most obscene, profane, and atrocious faction, which ever defied God and insulted humanity.

You will NOT suffer those temples where you received the Christian name to fall an easy prey to sacrilegious plunderers! You will NOT let that dust which covers the ashes of your parents, be made the filthy track of Jacobinical hyenas!

Farmers of Kent—we are tempted with a share of the promised spoliation of the CHURCH!—There *was* a time when every Kentish yeoman would have spurned at the wretch who should have dared to tickle him with such a bait—to offer him such an insult! But piety and honour are in the sepulchre.

I would fain hope, however, that there are still very few of us who would not experience some shudder of conscience, at the thought of thieving from the Church of England her freehold lands and tenements: few among the uncultivated; few among the vicious: few in our jails and halls: few anywhere, but within the precincts of our political unions. There are gradations even in atrocious felony. It is not every burglar who would violate an altar. But what are we to think of those vassals of perdition who would put forth their hands to the freeholds of the Church: who are not afraid to appear in the presence of their Creator branded with sacrilege! It is scarcely, perhaps, to be regretted, that these lepers are now catalogued, and marked, and numbered, and huddled together in the pest-house of the unionists.

So much for the Church lands. As to the tithe laws, they are about to undergo revision: perhaps very considerable alteration. SIR WILLIAM GEARY has offered to promote any amelioration; any equitable adjustment: nor can any one be more likely to watch the interests of the Kentish farmer closely, during the discussion in Parliament.

But there are some very honest and well meaning persons to be found, who imagine that an abolition of the tithe altogether would relieve the farmer from his present difficulties: who suppose that if the tenth sheaf were not put into the tithe waggon, the farmer would put the value of that sheaf into his own pocket; whereas nothing can be more false; because the tithe is always allowed for in the rent, which would be so much greater if there were no tithe. Land will always be let to the

best bidders; and whatever men will give for a piece of land to-day, knowing it to be subject to tithe; they would give proportionably more for it to-morrow, tithe free; whether the tithe be a real tenth, or seventh, as some say; or whatsoever proportion it bears to the farmer's returns.

Farmers! Messrs. HODGES and RIDER are to attempt two things in behalf of their constituents. In the first place, they will sweep away the "Bread Tax," that is, the protecting duties on foreign corn; which you know will utterly ruin you. But then, they tell you that they will try to abolish the payment of tithe: and who would not gladly be ruined, for the pleasure of seeing the tithe laws abolished! Now it is not unlikely that they may bring about a free trade in corn; because free trade is the fashion: but it is by no means so probable they will succeed in immediately abolishing the tithe, because that can scarcely be done without a revolution. Well; you know that a free trade in corn will throw the farms out of cultivation; starve the whole of the peasantry; and force many of you to emigrate from your native country for ever: but I will show you that the abolition of tithe, at the same moment, would not put a farthing into your hands, to defray the expences of the melancholy passage!

In all matters of sale and traffic

"——— The worth of anything  
Is as much money as 'twill bring."

A tithe-free farm fetches a proportionably high rent: therefore were all the farms tithe free, from the abolition of the tithe laws; all the farms would fetch a rental proportionably increased. What then would the farmer gain by it? Supposing the tithe were doubled: you would go [to] the landlord for an equivalent deduction in your rent—supposing the tithe abolished; he would come to *you* for an equivalent increase. Our mistake lies in not clearly understanding *what it is* that we rent of our landlord. We may, perhaps, imagine that we pay him for the whole of the crops which we produce; and that the tithe card takes away a tenth of that produce, for the whole of which we have made our landlord a consideration: but it is no such thing; we never paid for that tenth: it was not charged in our rent. In short, we pay our landlord for the right of disposing of nine tenths of the produce of his land; and if the other tenth were not removed by the tithe man the landowner would take care to demand it in rent. It is irksome to be put to the proof of anything so self-evident, where every argument is like a truism.

The best informed authors will inform us that the ancient landowners, who built most of our parish churches, left to their children only nine tenths of the profits of the estates which descended to them: the remaining tenth they bequeathed in the shape of the present tithe,

to their respective churches for ever: and that bequest was and is ratified by the laws of our country. Therefore the landowner who is possessed of a thousand acres, receives only the profits of nine hundred: to-morrow, were the tithe law repealed, he would have ten hundred, bona fide disposable to his own use and benefit. Now when we can suppose our landlord not to be aware that a thousand acres are worth a higher rental than nine hundred, then indeed we may expect to be benefited by an abolition of the tithes!

The small tradesman and the poor would be losers indeed, by the proposed innovation: for the money which is in most cases spent and distributed among them by the clergyman's family, would be often drawn away by absentee landlords, and spent at a distance from the parish, if not in a foreign land.

As to the very ancient triple distribution of the tithe, which has been spoken of in certain quarters; one part to the poor; another to the parochial clergy; and a third towards the repairs of the Cathedral; a moment's reflection will convince us of its impracticability at present; when by the blessing of God our parish churches are so vastly multiplied; and I am happy to add, multiplying. The solicitude of the enemy for the beauty of our cathedrals is a little out of character: we may believe it to equal their sympathy for the poor: with respect to whom, be it remembered, that the clergyman *pays his full share of poor-rate upon his income*; to say nothing of the innumerable private charities, and neighbourly benefits conferred on their parishioners, by the great majority of that amiable and venerable, though most shamefully calumniated order.

But the landholder would, in effect, gain little more than the farmer, by the abolition of tithe: for, as the whole income of the Church, divided equally among her clergy, has been calculated scarcely to afford a decent maintenance to each; at least as much as was before levied in tithe, must then be imposed as a tax by government. So long then as the clergy should be decently supported, there would be no transfer of their incomes to the landed proprietor or to any one else. And if a revolutionary government were to ensue, and abolish our religious establishment altogether; which would be one of its first achiev[e]ments; the landholder will not be so simple as to believe that the Radicals would suffer him to sit down quietly with his increased rent: that is, supposing there were any rent to be had, after free trade had emptied his farms and exiled his tenants. No; they will tax him, and fleece him to the skin; and then confiscate his estates. The demagogue is the natural enemy of the landholders: for he finds in them at once the toughest obstacles to his ambition, and the most delicious temptations to his voracity. He will, therefore, spare no pains to decoy and devour them.

I will not attempt to adumbrate the gradations of

slow torment, through which the crew of a triumphant political union would pare down the wretch who should fall into their clutches; condemned of that crime, in their estimation the most inexpiable; the possession of wealth. The spectacle of a whale under the hatchets of his harpooners; or rather of the South American Indian, made through a summer day the amusement of his captors, would present a lively type of the proceedings of these national anatomists with the catalogue of his possessions; and, perhaps, with the members of his person! I most humbly confess myself inadequate to do justice to that consummation of fraud, rapine, outrage, and barbarity, which may be expected from the Radicals of England, improving upon the example of the French Jacobins.

The British landholders are, however, too well aware of the motives of the Liberals, very readily to accept any boon from their hands. But, lest the people at large should be wired in a like gin; I shall take the liberty to exhibit before them, for a few moments, their French neighbours, gulled by the bait, and struggling in the toils: and it is then to be hoped that they will take care not to render themselves most forlorn exceptions to the general verity of the sacred proverb, that "the snare is surely spread in vain, in the sight of any bird."

"Having"—"prepared the public mind, the assembly made a bold attack on the Church. They discovered, by the light of philosophy, that France contained too many churches, and, of course, too many pastors. Great part of them were therefore to be suppressed; and to make the innovation go down with the people, all tithes were to be abolished. The measure succeeded; but what did the people gain by the abolition of the tithes?—not a farthing; for a tax of twenty *per cent.* was immediately laid on the lands in consequence of it. The cheat was not perceived till it was too late."

"But, the abolition of the tithes, the only motive of which was to debase the Clergy in the opinions of the people, was but a trifle to what was to follow."

Then, with respect to the seizure of the landed property of the French Church; which was, beyond comparison, more extensive than that of our own:—"To obtain the sanction of the people to this act, they were told, that the wealth of the Church would not only pay off the national debt, but render taxes in future unnecessary. No deception was ever so barefaced as this; but even this was not wanted; for the people themselves had already begun to taste the sweets of plunder. Avarice tempted the trading part of the nation to approve of the measure. At the time of passing the decree they were seen among the first to applaud it. They saw an easy means of obtaining those fine rich estates, the possession of which they had, perhaps, long coveted. In vain were they told, that the purchaser would partake in the infamy of the robbery; that, if the title of the communities

could not render property secure, that same property could never be secure under any title the plunderers could give. In vain were they told, that in sanctioning the seizure of the wealth of others, they were sanctioning the seizure of their own, whenever that all-devouring monster, the sovereign people, should call on them for it. In vain were they told all this: they purchased: they saw with pleasure the plundered Clergy driven from their dwellings; but scarcely had they taken possession of their ill-gotten wealth, when not only that, but the remains of their other property were wrenched from them. Since that we have seen decree upon decree launched forth against the rich: their account books have been submitted to public examination: they have been obliged to give drafts for the funds which they possessed even in foreign countries: all their letters have been intercepted and read. How many hundreds of them have we seen led to the scaffold, merely because they were proprietors of what their sovereign stood in need of! These were acts of unexampled tyranny; but, as they respected the persons who applauded the seizure of the estates of the Church, they were perfectly just. Several of these avaricious purchasers have been murdered within the walls of those buildings, whence they had assisted to drive the lawful proprietors: this was just: it was the measure they had meted to others. They shared the fate of the injured Clergy, without sharing the pity which that fate excited. When dragged forth to slaughter in their turn, they were left without even the right of complaining: the last stab of the assassin was accompanied with the reflection, that it was just."

"I have dwelt the longer on this subject, as it is, perhaps, the most striking and most awful example of the consequences of a violation of property, that the world ever saw. Let it serve to warn all those who wish to raise their fortunes on the ruin of others, that sooner or later, their own turn must come. From this act of the Constituent Assembly we may date the violation, in France, of every right that men ought to hold dear. Hence the seizure of all gold and silver as the property of the nation: hence the law preventing the son to claim the property of his father: hence the abominable tyranny of requisitions; and hence thousands and thousands of the murders, that have disgraced unhappy France."

These extracts are from pages 169, and 180, of a little book printed at Philadelphia, and reprinted in London about the year 1797: it is entitled, "The Bloody Buoy, thrown out as a Warning to the Political Pilots of America; or, a Faithful Relation of a Multitude of Acts of Horrid Barbarity, such as the Eye never witnessed, the Tongue never expressed, or the Imagination conceived, until the commencement of the French Revolution. To which is added an Instructive Essay, tracing these dreadful Effects to their real Causes."

My Countrymen! the primary sources of all, were

INFIDELITY; and those *principles* of rebellion and plunder, its legitimate offspring, which are now so industriously disseminated among ourselves: and if it be reasonable to anticipate like effects from like causes, we should be holding ourselves in solemn preparation for the worst: yet with no dreary misgiving, that the Providence which has so long signally blessed and protected this island, will forsake us in extremity: but with an ardent faith and confidence that He who has now withdrawn Himself for a while, and from His high and invisible watch tower in the heavens, is beholding the fury of His enemies, and the lukewarmness of his servants; will suddenly descend among us, and deliver us gloriously, at that moment when we shall lay the ark of our liberties on the altar of the sanctuary; and, banded together in one impregnable phalanx of holy patriotism—**SWEAR TO DEFEND THEM IN HIS NAME!**

Is this the rant of a fanatic?—NO. It is the zealous but sober voice of one who dares to speak what millions think: millions, who seem stunned and panic-stricken, by the yelling of a crew of savages, and a thoughtless rabble who follow them. It is the voice of one who would deem it happiness and glory indeed, to die for his country, in some great struggle against some great enemy: but who shudders to take his death at the talons of a club of runnagates whom his fathers would have hissed into the sea! It is the voice of one, who, among other histories, has perused the awful annals of the great French revolution, and has not nodded over the book: wherein rivers of blood, and plains of desolation; conflag[r]ation, assassination, violation, treachery, sacrilege, blasphemy, and every variety of wretchedness, and every enormity of abomination, are as familiar as household words.

And it is to this, Kentish Yeomen, that our heartless adversaries are reducing *us*: it is thus they began in France: and the most ready dupes of the Parisian radicals became the earliest victims of their fury, the moment they hesitated to plunge with them into gulfs of blood.

We charge the Radicals of England; and they will, perhaps, glory in the charge; with having eulogized that revolution through all its stages: with having palliated its atrocities, that they might promulgate its principles. Nor have they, from that day to this, left a stone unturned to accomplish an imitation of it among ourselves. Indeed we cannot refuse to admire the industry and ingenuity of these spiders; though we desire to tear their web: nay we could find in our heart, to pity the unfortunate fowler, who, after completing all his trains and contrivances; and standing ready in mute expectation with his hand half extended toward the prey; should suddenly behold all his nets, and gins, and springes broken in pieces. There will, indeed, be much sympathy, and much surprise, should we venture to transfer these doctors of absurdity, and "architects of ruin" from the

University of Europe to the Academy of Laputa: should our frigid obtuseness be unable to conceive the sublimity of their vast plans for the emancipation of the species; after all the breath which the illuminati of more genial climates have spent upon us:—after all their *performances* on the Continent of Europe, to demonstrate it:—should we still be found unable precisely to apprehend, how the subversion of all government will tend to the security of peace, liberty, and property; and how exceedingly both learning and virtue, and above all religion and piety would be promoted, by the plunder and extirpation of Christian establishments!

The sentimental Ceruti said, with his last breath, "The only regret I have in leaving the world, is, that I leave a religion on earth." His words were applauded by the Assembly, the Radical Assembly of France. And it is, no doubt, with many of our own tender hearted liberals, a melancholy reflection; that their most venerable and hoary sages of revolution may, even now, perhaps, not survive *every* civil and religious institution:—that they may "go to their own place," before they have amassed a full legacy of curses for their posterity. However, no exertions have been wanting on their part: their efforts have been alike patient, orderly, united, and energetic. Their army is at last drawn out; and is about to make the grand charge. It has many raw recruits: but many disciplined veterans, and able marshals. Their watchwords are Liberty, and Reform: noble words indeed, but most foully abused. Let us execrate their principles; but imitate, for once, their union and energy. If we are divided, and disorganized; and above all, if we are panic-stricken, every thing is lost. No superiority of numbers will avail us, if we are separated, or wavering, or unprepared. In 1780 eight hundred thousand Londoners looked on in consternation, while a handful of pickpockets ravaged their property for three days! An eye witness of the Bristol outrages declared, that at the beginning, forty persons might have dispersed the rioters easily. On the 9th of November 1830, the leaders of the Radicals not being prepared to show themselves; and being disconcerted by a premature discovery of their plot; their mobs being consequently not so well organized as the police; the latter saved the metropolis from destruction. It was, I think, Marat, one of the Radical Reformers of France, who boasted that with three hundred ruffians hired at a Louis d'or per day, he could govern all France: and why? because all France was dismembered and panic-stricken.

Let us remember the fable of the lion and the bulls.

It is true we vastly, and beyond comparison outnumber the enemy: but then we are men of peace; and they are beasts of prey. We are strongest by day: they ravine in the night; for their optics are adapted to darkness. And it is now a very dark night for Europe. The radicals are elated; for it is a dark and foggy night; when

thieves are always on the alert. They are housebreakers: we are quiet householders, who have drawn the curtains, and retired to rest!

Permit me to suggest to you, Electors of West Kent, that this is no time to multiply party distinctions, or to remember old grudges. We should travel in Caravan; prepared against a horde of thieves far more cruel than wandering Arabs. These highwaymen will rifle us if they catch us singly; but take to their heels over hedge and ditch, should they once meet us walking together on the King's Highway.

Let the *good old Whigs*, the Tories high and low, and the men of no party, for once come together, and twist a threefold cord which may not easily be broken.

It was thus Britain was saved in 1792, from a revolution which our illuminati were then on the very point of effecting. She was saved by nothing less than an inspiration from Heaven: by nothing else than a most sudden, universal revulsion of patriotism; and a simultaneous consociation, from one end of the kingdom to the other. And this revolution our abandoned Liberals had striven to bring about, while the blood of France was yet hot and reeking; and with the stench of that great butchery under their nostrils! In the extension of their philanthropy, which, indeed, they truly allege to be trammelled with no vulgar demarkations of patriotic geography, they were instituting a flesh market for the cannibals of Europe; and preparing to slay their brethren for the shambles. France was too narrow for them: and they were about to enlarge that slaughter-house of Europe by throwing into it the habitations of their fathers.

The French had been smitten with giddiness from God; and distracted with delirious theories, more multitudinous than the tongues of Babel: but it was not while they were aspiring to raise a pinnacle to the skies; but were laying, in the very depths of Hell, the foundations of a charnel-house for Christendom.

But they meted out upon *themselves* the "line of confusion and the stones of emptiness." After laying waste one of the richest countries in the world, to obtain liberty and equality; they fell at once into the most abject military bondage, under a remorseless tyrant; who, wonderful to say, has ever been the pagod of our own most furious republicans and levellers: at whose spoliation of the liberties of Europe they exulted: at whose signal defeat and overthrow, by the blessing of God on the valour of their countrymen, they have scarcely ceased their wailings to this day.

In words, they are peace-makers and philanthropists: in deeds, they are incendiaries and assassins. They extenuated Buonaparte's most unprovoked a[g]gressions and invasions; and had he invaded *their own country*, would have hailed him with acclamations! But, when the standard of Spanish independence was lifted up; no sooner did Wellington and British valour drive him from

the Peninsula, and unbind the nations; than truly, on a sudden, no cloistered maiden was to be found so sensitive, nay, so pious as the Radical! Yes, he who had beheld with sullen indifference the excesses of Robespierre, and with savage transport the exploits of Napoleon; would now, forsooth, doubt the very lawfulness of defensive warfare! He would question whether any true disciple of the Prince of Peace could take up arms! He would faint at the clash of a sword or the beating of a drum!

Gratitude the Radicals do not know. Their insolence ever increases with indulgence. Till they get the power into their hands, they whimper like school-boys; nay they can sob, and lisp, and languish like an infant:—the moment they are elevated, they dash in pieces the dupe who lifted them up. They are a generation of crocodiles, who mimic the wailings of distress, and devour those who come to relieve it.

They can put on the most saintly garb of Apostolic simplicity; and associate with the disciples that they may betray the Master. They are, at present, filled with apprehension, lest Christianity should suffer through an over-fed priesthood; and are most politely assiduous to relieve them of their superfluities: nay, so earnest are they found in this pious work; that even freehold estates, secured by the most indubitable titles to the Church, and legacies entailed upon it with the most awful sanctions, would be alienated at their touch: and signatures, and seals, and stamps, and rolls of parchment, would become dissolved in a moment, in the furnace of their Evangelical charity! Did our fathers pour forth their treasures at the feet of the Redeemer; and, in the most solemn manner, endow the Church with them for ever?—Hark!—these children of Judas Iscariot are inquiring, "Why is not all this sold, and the money given to the poor?["]—But this they say, not because they care for the poor; but because they are thieves, and desire to clutch the bag, and to make off with its contents!" [sic]

The Radicals have long clamoured for Parliamentary Reform, and a full representation, as the national panacea. This has been granted them, even to the extent of their own desires: and are they satisfied? Are they about to treat this reformed Parliament, this darling of their hopes, as nursing mothers?—or have they, while it is yet in the womb, prepared their political unions to hector over, and bully it?

They now declare that this is but a *first step*: it is tolerated, however, because they imagine that they behold in it the dawn and twilight of a republic.

By this faction the Queen has already been most publicly menaced with the scaffold, in terms aggravated by personal insult: and our Sovereign, whose venerable parent's memory is, at present, a favourite butt of their savage vituperation: our beloved Sovereign, whose reign has been hitherto one series of concession; will fall the

earliest victim to their baseness and perfidy; unless it should please the Almighty to dash their projects, and to "turn the counsel of Ahitophel into foolishness."

The English Radical, and the Gallic Jacobin "are brethren; instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united: for in their anger they slew a man, and in their self-will they digged down a wall. Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel." They are the abortions and monsters of the moral universe; uncouth, perverse, and opposite to nature. They will grovel in the dust before a tyrant: but with a gentle and parental Sovereign "their neck is as an iron sinew; and their brow brass." They will cringe under the rod; and bite the hand that caresses them.

And will you, my countrymen, suffer this deplorable faction to pour out, not their representatives, but their delegates over the counties: to send forth their foxes, two by two, into your harvests, tied together by revolutionary pledges; and dragging between them the firebrands of destruction? Samson sent fire-brands to the *Philistine* fields. But *we*, if we make Constituents of these foxes of free trade and liberalism; shall be directing the matches of a starving peasantry to our own garner; and politically, shall light up such a fire in our country, as nothing will extinguish but the waters of desolation.

Samson, in death as in life heroic, brought down upon his head the vault of Dagon; and perished with his foes. But *we* are shattering the citadel of *our own* strength; the tabernacle of our constitution, the temple of our liberties, and the sanctuary of our God. We are tugging at those two main pillars; our loyalty and our piety; and shall be ground to powder, in the crash and perdition of our country.

So fond are mortal men,  
Fallen into wrath divine,  
As their own ruin on themselves t' invite;  
Insensate left or to sense reprobate;  
And with blindness internal struck."

MILTON.

Brother Electors; we have been requested to return to Parliament two Gentlemen, who have, unhappily, ranked themselves under the standard of the, so called, Radical Reformers. Personal remark is remote from my intention: but I would remind you that the Radicals have ever been found adverse to the agricultural interest: that whatever they may pretend; they will, if possible, sweep away your protecting duties.

Farmers! They were the wretched leaders of this wretched faction, who, during the late dreadful fires, strenuously encouraged the incendiaries! Some of the most abandoned of them published cheap tracts for distribution among the poor, stimulating them to fire their master's property. But now, if there be a Radical Par-

liament; the starvation produced by free trade, and the consequent reckless desperation of the peasantry; will supersede the necessity of all other stimulants. If, then, you patronise Radicalism, in any shape, you will have yourselves to thank for the consequences.

Already, the fires have begun. Do you wish them to blaze once more over the kingdom? If you do; send Radicals into Parliament; make Radicals of the poor; and as those principles effectually relieve all classes from every religious and moral restraint; neither property nor life will be for a moment secure. Conflagration has already ravaged your harvests; and assassination and massacre are in its train.

Landholders, who have estates to be confiscated, or laid in ashes: Farmers, who have free trade, and annihilation impending over you: Manufacturers, who must be beggared in the bankruptcy of your country: Fundholders, who desire not the *wet sponge*: Britons, who have liberty to lose: Christians, who have a religion to be blasphemed: now is the time for your last struggle! The ensuing Election is not a question of party politics; much less, a paltry squabble of family interests: but Existence, or Annihilation, to good old England!

Let us then rally once more: Whigs, Tories, Moderates; and especially every Christian man in West Kent;—it may be for the last time;—round the noble standard of Old Kentish Loyalty; and defend it to the last. If we triumph; our children will say of us;—"These were the sacred heroes, who, amid the convulsion of the world, serenely held fast, and transmitted to us the birthright of our liberties: nay, all our glory, in the inheritance of the British Name." If we perish in the contest; let it not be, O Spirit of Albion, as recreants and dastards: but with Thy standard clenched in our grasp; or folded about our hearts!

God prosper the good old cause: it is His Own. Is it the cause of old England: of our beloved Monarch: of our nobles: most truly of all our middle classes; and pre-eminently of the poor; who, in the destruction of commerce and agriculture; of order and property, get nothing of the spoil; but suffer every extremity of wretchedness and famine.

The other cause is that of the Devil and his Angels; masked under a pretended indignation at State tyranny, and Church corruption: witness, again, the great French Revolution: wherein the King, after making every just concession, and much more was savagely murdered: the nobles were massacred and banished: the Clergy butchered by companies, or assassinated at their church doors. A strumpet was dressed up, and publicly adored in the Cathedral of Paris, as the Goddess of Reason: our Saviour was denounced as an arch imposter, and the profession of his religion was prohibited!

The whole Radical and Atheistical party of England is now marshalled against the constitutional and reli-

gious; and Europe is looking on in solemn expectation[.]

The result of the ensuing Election will turn the balance. *One additional Conservative Member may save this great nation:—the vote of any one individual may secure that Member's election.* Every friend to our cause, however humble, should energize as if all depended on himself.

Unanimous co-operation and individual energy may do all things.

Electors; he who has thus taken the liberty to address you, however inadequate to the task; claims, at last, the merit of disinterestedness. Sir WILLIAM GEARY is personally unknown to him: nor will he obtain any sort of benefit by that Gentleman's return to Parliament. He has addressed you, without the instigation of a second person: without the knowledge of Sir WILLIAM, or any of his Committees. The writer receives not one farthing of the great or small tithe: *he has no connection with, or dependence on the Clergy:* he is neither a prophet, nor the son of a prophet. Alas! it is no longer a little cloud of the bigness of a man's hand, which hovers in our political horizon, but a blackness of [word illegible] which it requires no prophetic direction to perceive. He is not accustomed to push himself forward: he loves not to hear himself talk; but would rather have listened while another spoke. He has not obruded into the front ranks of the loyal army: but would be overwhelmed by the sense of such presumption. He has waited long in the rear and outposts, hoping that some stronger arm might be lifted up against the big and boastful Philistine of

Jacobinism, who has hurled defiance alike at the institutions of men and the armies of God. And he has no heartier desire than that while he is picking up these few pebbles from the brook, and cutting out this rustic sling, he may be superseded and borne away by one sudden acclamation of re-kindled patriotism from Guernsey to the Hebrides: that Britain may never become intellectually a province of France: that her wolves of revolution may hear once more the British lion roaring from the cliffs of Kent, and be discomfitted: that we may never like the Trojans; whom old historians repute our ancestors; be undone by the presents of an enemy: but that the liberty and equality which our treacherous neighbours have offered us, as winged steeds to be yoked into the car of human improvement; may be timely suspected to be full of armed men: and, finally: that all our countrymen who have been deceived and over-persuaded by the internal troublers of our peace, may have the true nobility of mind readily and frankly to confess their mistake: and, instead of setting by the ears every class and order of society; may strive as heartily to promote that universal good will, and blessed brotherly union, which are the only root and basis of our prosperity and strength: which are able to lift us up, once more, in the scale of nations; and to constitute Britannia, as she was ever wont to be, the arbitress of the destinies, and the guardian of the liberties of Europe.

FINIS.





## MINUTE PARTICULARS

### Keynes and Blake at Cambridge

G.E. Bentley, Jr.

When Sir Geoffrey Keynes died on 5 July 1982 at the age of ninety-five, he had the greatest Blake collection in private hands in Britain, and his Blake collection was only a small part of the entire library, though it seemed to be where his heart lay. His collections were the basis of his own bibliographies of, inter alia, John Donne (1914; 1932; 1958; 1973), Sir Thomas Browne (1924; 1968), William Harvey (1928; 1953), Jane Austen (1929), William Hazlitt (1931; 1981), John Ray (1941; 1951), Rupert Brooke (1954; 1959), Robert Hooke (1960), Siegfried Sassoon (1962), George Berkeley (1976), and Henry King (1977), and among these the contemporary copies of books by Blake were comparatively small in number. But when to these were added books with commercial engravings by Blake (such as five copies of *Remember Me!* [1825; 1826] in different original boards), proofs, prints, sketches, paintings, imitations, embroidery, facsimiles, and the scholarship of the subject (much of it his own), the size of his Blake collection became substantial, and its interest to students of Blake was unsurpassed of its kind—particularly when displayed by the collector.

The mark of the collector was strongly impressed upon these cherished and beautiful books, from his bookplate, to his manuscript notes on provenance and condition, to his published descriptions of them, and it was exceedingly desirable that the collections should be kept together, both as an aid to scholars of the future—what *has* become of Blake's transcription of a poem by Sheridan which Sir Geoffrey alluded to so tantalizingly in 1964?—and as a memorial to the collector. Sir Geoffrey's intentions altered from time to time, and there seemed to be a strong possibility that the collection would be separated subject by subject, which would have been a great pity.

Fortunately that has not occurred, for the collection of books was sold to Cambridge University Library. There they have been arranged by subject in the exceedingly handsome Keynes Room, which is to be used as a meeting-place for the Syndics of the Library. Not only are the books in a beautiful room, but they are now for the first time gathered in one place, for in his London residence and at Lammas House, Brinkley, not far from Cambridge, the books were scattered in many rooms—

and sometimes shelved five deep. They make a brave display in the Keynes Room, and my only regret when I saw it in November 1984 was that, for reasons of security and convenience, mere scholars will not be able to work there, though they may of course use the books in the rare book reading room.

There was a Keynes exhibition at the University Library in the summer of 1983, without a catalogue, but it is only fairly recently that the final payment has been made for the collection and the books have become officially the property of the University and accessible to readers.

What Blakes are here? In general, everything associated with Blake printed from movable type or in manuscript is in the Keynes Room in the Cambridge University Library. The easiest means of identifying what is there at the moment is Sir Geoffrey's own description of his collection, *Bibliotheca Bibliographici* (1964), supplemented by the card file he made (also in the collection) of about five hundred important works he acquired after 1964. In terms of Blake, the most exciting addition to the 1964 list is *Poetical Sketches* copy P, which was previously described, at least by me, only at second hand. That description should read as follows:

*BINDING*: "BOUND BY RIVIERE & SON" (according to a stamp on the front inner board) in Green morocco, gilt, top edge gilt, other edges untrimmed, with the Advertisement and pp. 57-70 in type-facsimile, the Advertisement of remarkably persuasive quality (titlepage size: 13.7 × 22.1 cm). The book has no MS correction and almost certainly passed at Blake's death to Catherine Blake and thence to Tatham.

*HISTORY*: (1) Acquired from Quaritch about 1900 (according to Keynes, *Blake Studies* [1949]) by (2) General Archibald Stirling of Keir, who added on a flyleaf his initials and a note of 12 February 1921 about the presence of the facsimile gatherings; from him, it passed to (3) Lt.-Col. William Stirling, who sold it; (4) Sold anonymously at Sotheby's, 25 April 1978, lot 50, to (5) Sir Geoffrey Keynes, who sold it in 1982 to (6) CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY.

But there are treasures for the scholar which will not be found in either *Bibliotheca Bibliographici* or in Sir Geoffrey's card-addenda to it. Naturally he did not trouble to list copies of ordinary books which any modern scholar might be expected to own, such as Butlin's *Paintings and Drawings of William Blake* (1981) or Paley's presentation copy of his *Phaidon Blake* (1978). Some of the most interesting features of the collection are the annotations which Sir Geoffrey made in his books, particularly in copies of his own publications. These occasionally contain information of significant value, so minor that Sir Geoffrey thought them scarcely worth printing but which are yet of real interest to those with somewhat lower standards of novelty. For instance, in the interleaved proof copy of his *Bibliography of William Blake* (1921) he annotated the 1868 Camden Hotten facsimile of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*: "Edward Gordon Duff told John Sampson that Lord Houghton

lent his copy of the original [*Copy F*] to Swinburne, and that Camden Hotten made his facsimile without permission, whereat Lord Houghton was much incensed." This provides a persuasive context for the otherwise puzzling relationship between Lord Houghton and Camden Hotten; it was not previously known that "Camden Hotten made his facsimile without permission."

Similarly, in his copy of the Keynes & Wolf *Census* (1953), Keynes inserted a facsimile of a letter from the U.S. artist Francis Lathrop of 9 January 1908 to Mr. [Beverley] Chew (the original is in the Grolier Club Library) offering "the 'Stothard copy' of the Book of Thel [*Copy E*]"—the original Blake, that I spoke about" for \$350. Lathrop had not previously been known to have any original Blake—and Chew is not known to have owned a copy of *Thel*.

In the interleaved copy of his *Bibliography of William Blake* at p. 371 he drew attention to a reference to Blake which has not heretofore been reprinted:

Anon., "Art. VIII. *The Chimney-Sweepers' Friend, and Climbing-Boys' Album* . . . Arranged by James Montgomery . . . Price 9s. London, 1824." *Eclectic Review*, N.S., XXI (June 1824), 558–562.

The review includes on pp. 559–560 a puzzled reference to "The Chimney Sweeper" with a quotation of the poem from Montgomery's book:

We know not how to characterize the song given from Blake's 'Songs of Innocence.' It is wild and strange, like the singing of 'a maid in Bedlam in the spring;' but it is the madness of genius.

Montgomery's book has long been known, but this printing of Blake's poem, showing the "madness of genius," has not. Most accounts of Blake omitted the phrase "of genius."

Finally in his 1921 *Bibliography*, at p. 417, Sir Geoffrey referred to a work by Joseph Hallett Junior which apparently belonged to Blake but which has not heretofore been associated with him in print. It is in three volumes, each with a different titlepage:

A | FREE and IMPARTIAL STUDY of the | HOLY SCRIPTURES recommended: | BEING | NOTES | ON SOME | PECULIAR TEXTS; | WITH | Discourses and Observations | ON | The following SUBJECTS; viz. | I. Of the Quotations from the *Old Testament* in the Apocrypha. | II. Of the *Septuagint* Version of the *Bible*; and the Difference between the Citations, as they lie in the *New Testament*, and the Original Passages in the *Old*. | III. *Christians* not bound by any Authority of the *Law* of | *Moses* in the *Ten Commandments*. | IV. Of the *Doxology* at the End of the *Lord's-Prayer*. Of | blessing the *Eucharistical Elements*, and of Grace before | and after Meat. | V. The Son of God knows the Hearts of Men; and, of Anger, | Catechising, &c. | VI. A Passage in Bishop *Pearson* on the *Creed*, and another | in Bishop *Patrick's* Commentaries examin'd. | VII. Of the Soul; its Immortality, Immateriality, &c. with | the Impossibility of proving a Future State by the Light | of Nature; and of the Place where Good Men shall dwell | after the Resurrection. | — | By JOSEPH HALLETT, Junr. | — | LONDON; | Printed for J. NOON, at the *White-Hart* in *Cheapside*, near | *Mercers-Chapel*. M.DCC.XXIX [1729].

A | SECOND VOLUME | OF | NOTES | AND | DISCOURSES: | CONTAINING | I. A New List of Errors noted in the present

*Hebrew Copies* | of the *Old Testament*. | II. Notes on several Texts of Scripture. | III. Discourses on the Reality, Kinds, and Number of our | Saviour's Miracles; occasion'd by Mr. *Woolston's* Six | Discourses. | The Meaning of the Word, *God*; and the Doctrine of | Providence. | The Nature of *Sacrifices*; particularly of the Sacrifice of | *Christ*. | The Original of *Evil*. | The Nature of *Ordination*. | A Review of the former *Volume*, particularly relating to the | Passage in Bishop *Pearson* on the *Creed*, concerning the | Meaning of the Word, *Almighty*, in the Sixth Article; | and to the Nature of *Anger*. | — | By JOSEPH HALLETT jun. | — | LONDON: | Printed for J. NOON, at the *White Hart* in *Cheapside*, near *Mercers-chapel*. M.DCC.XXXII [1732].

A | THIRD VOLUME | OF | NOTES | ON SEVERAL | Texts of Scripture; | AND DISCOURSES | ON | The original Meaning of | The End of this World. | the *Ten Commandments*. | Circumcision and Bap- | The Lord's Day. | tism. | Moral and Positive Du- | Schism and Heresy. | ties. | The Restoration of the | The Agapae or Love | Jews. | Feasts. | WITH | Two Parables. | — | By JOSEPH HALLETT, Jun. | — | LONDON. | Printed for J. NOON, at the *White Hart* near *Mercers Chapel*, in *Cheapside*. 1736. (British Library)

Sir Geoffrey's note says that in each octavo volume of an untraced set of three volumes in old calf is Blake's autograph, dated 1799, with the price he paid for it (£1.5.0) in the first volume. Sir Geoffrey probably found the reference to Blake's copy of Hallett's book in the Anderson Gallery sale catalogue of The Library of the Late H. Buxton Forman, Part Two (26 April 1920), lot 46, where the price, however, is given as a guinea, not as £1.5.0.

Doubtless other "discoveries" concerning Blake and many other authors remain to be found in the very rich collection of books which passed from Sir Geoffrey Keynes to the Cambridge University Library. But for efficient access to them we must wait for the collection to be catalogued. Many besides myself will hope for the appearance at least of a handlist concerning William Blake as soon as possible.

Over the years Sir Geoffrey clearly changed his mind about the destination of his Blakes; a few he gave away and sold, as is recorded in Robert N. Essick's great catalogue raisonné of *William Blake's Separate Plates* (1981). The final decision was that the Blakes which were printed from movable type and in manuscript should go with the rest of his books to the University Library. Most of the Keynes collection of "paintings, drawings, and prints by William Blake" were handed over to the Fitzwilliam Museum as this article went to press (according to Donald Wintersgill, "Museum Is Given Blakes," *Guardian*, 16 May 1985, p. 5).

One may lament their separation from Blake's purely literary works but recognize that this is a twentieth century commonplace. It is paralleled by the division of the splendid Rosenwald Collection a few years ago between the Library of Congress and the U.S. National

Gallery, and it will be paralleled by the separation of the illuminated and other graphic works in the British Museum Print Room from the typographical and manuscript works in the British Library when the latter eventually finds its new quarters. It is a touching irony that Blake labored all his life to unite the arts of the eye and the ear, the vision and the word, but that this union is posthumously divorced in the disposition of the great collections of his works.

## The Crying of Lot 318; or, Young's *Night Thoughts* Colored Once More

Karen Mulhallen

Sotheby's (London, Monday, 17 December 1984, 2.30 p.m.)

318

Blake (William)—Young (Edward) *The Complaint and the Consolation, or Night Thoughts*, 43 pictorial borders designed and engraved by William Blake and coloured by hand, slightly soiled, three borders slightly offset, a few short tears in margin of explanation leaf and one slightly affecting one border repaired, red straight-grained morocco gilt, uncut, folio, R. Noble for R. Edwards, 1797

The Clarendon edition of Blake's *Night Thoughts*<sup>1</sup> lists and describes 23 colored copies of the engraved work, and refers to one more, the Moss-Bentley copy G<sup>2</sup> recently rediscovered by Thomas V. Lange in a closet of the Lutheran Church of America (*Blake Quarterly* 59, pp. 134–36). To these 24, in 1983, James McCord added the copy housed for over 50 years, but not recorded, in the library of Washington University, St. Louis.<sup>3</sup> While doing research in London in the winter of 1984–85, I came upon yet another unrecorded copy of the *Night Thoughts*, bringing to 26 the number of recorded copies. Following the format of the Clarendon census, I would list this most recent copy as

III-2 (Previously unknown) Grey Death.

*Description:* Handsome, early twentieth century "Arts & Crafts Style" binding in red straight-grained morocco gilt with five raised bands running horizontally across the spine terminating in stamped fruit and leaf motifs. Binding stamp WHS (for W.H. Smith and Sons) on lower border of inner back cover. Spine stamped in gold "Night Thoughts By Edward Young. Designs By W<sup>m</sup> Blake 1797." Pale pink and blue marbled endpapers. All edges uncut. Watermarked in lower right hand corner on ten sheets, pp. iii–iv, 3–4, 5–6, 29–30, 31–32, 49–50, 55–56, 69–70, 85–86, and 91–92, as well as on the "Explanation of the Engravings" sheet which

appears after page 95, "J Whatman 1794."

The prints are in good condition, except for one repair slightly affecting the border of pp. 89–90, a few short tears in the margin of the explanation leaf, some slight soiling, and three borders a little offset. As is usual, in a few instances the plate marks extend slightly beyond the foredge of the leaf, but only five borders have the engraved surface touching the page edge.

*Provenance:* Inscribed on the verso of the title page in pencil in the upper left hand corner is "Baron Dimsdale". According to Sotheby's, this copy was acquired by Charles John, fifth Baron Dimsdale, together with copies of *The Book of Urizen* and *Songs of Innocence*.<sup>4</sup> Sold by Sotheby's (London, 17 December 1984) to Sims, Reed & Fogg, £13,750.

*Pencil Markings:* There are four sets of pencil markings in this copy: Front of fly-title "2.P 7"; verso of title page, upper left, "Baron Dimsdale"; page 50 "1.5" or "1.7", or upside down "6.1", difficult to make out but likely bookseller's price code; verso of Explanation leaf, near gutter in lower right hand corner, "EB".

*Some other distinctive features:* Page 23 has a faint L-shaped line in ink in the bottom margin, as if the plate accidentally skipped in the press, thereby creating a line with the same configuration as one of the etched/engraved lines in the plate.

Pages 23, 26, 27 and 33 use the color red for drapery, clothing and wine, and in some instances the color seems blotchy, as if, as the color dried, the pigment has come out of suspension in patches.

Pages 37 and 70 stand out from all the others in that the foliage and ground are in various shades of green, appearing as a surprisingly naturalistic use of color, especially in comparison to other of the engravings.

The title page to *Night III* displays Narcissa, illustrated in the Sotheby's catalogue in color, as remarkably naked, the slight drapery on the front of her body emphasizing this.

Page 75, Phoebeus, shows quite clearly the coloring technique. The whole page was first washed in yellow, grey was then added to the clouds and hair, then a deeper yellow was added to the sun and to the body of Phoebeus. Finally, his body while still wet was wiped and a pink wash applied. In coloring this plate seems to have a close connection with one copy in the Rosenwald Collection (Copy I-4), where the horses, the sun, and Phoebeus are all golden yellow. In I-4, the gold is set against an iridescent sky of reds, blues, purples and yellows. While it would be difficult to make a case for one as a model for another, the similarity of some of the coloring and the coloring steps as revealed in the Dimsdale copy together suggest a close dating for the two copies.

*Issues raised by the Dimsdale Copy (III-2):* The Clar-

endon census codes copies according to the color of Death's gown on the title page to Night I, the most common color being white (Type I), the next green (Type II), with a single copy, in the Houghton Library at Harvard, being grey (Type III). Grey is the key color for the entire Dimsdale copy. Not only is Death charmingly portrayed in a grey gown, but many other figures are also robed in grey. The angels, for example, from pages 40–42, are depicted with grey wings, whereas in several other copies these are multi-colored with an iridescent effect. And on page 80, the red-faced Thunder God with gold rays emanating from his head is dressed by dramatic contrast in grey clothes while the sea beneath is grey and green.

In III-2 special attention has also been paid to skin, hair and eyes. Death's skin is quite tanned and many figures show very careful highlighting and pale blue veining. Hair is often cap- or wig-like, and the eyes are usually brightly demarcated.

Pages 53–54, 60 and 62 of the Clarendon census discuss the "non-standard" details of Type III, "the colouring of the beard of Time in 11E (NT36)<sup>5</sup> being brown, rather than white or grey as in all other copies." In the Dimsdale copy, however, Time's beard is white, although his topknot by contrast is black. The Clarendon editors conjecture that the Harvard copy was "quite likely to have been done by some possessor of an uncoloured copy for his own enjoyment, or as a forgery" (p. 60). They conclude that III-1 "Stands apart from all others. In such specific details as the colour of Death's garments and the colours of the garments and hair of other figures as well as in its general character, this copy is peculiar. Of all copies it seems most likely to have been done without close reference to any copy that might have had Blake's authorization" (p. 62).

The discovery of the Dimsdale copy necessitates a re-examination of the Clarendon speculations about Type III, and the similarity of III-2 to Type I copies reconfirms the need to be sceptical about fixity of coloring patterns and their dating.

<sup>1</sup>William Blake's *Designs for Edward Young's "Night Thoughts,"* edited by John E. Grant, Edward J. Rose, Michael J. Tolley, coordinating editor David V. Erdman (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), pp. 62–72.

<sup>2</sup>Clarendon *Night Thoughts*, p. 61 and n. 81, p. 92; G.E. Bentley, Jr., *Blake Books* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), pp. 636–46.

<sup>3</sup>James McCord, "An Unrecorded Colored Copy of Young's *Night Thoughts*," *Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly*, 18 (Fall 1984), 116–18. McCord's tally of copies includes Bentley copy T, the Cook copy, which he argues is not included in the Clarendon census. He is incorrect, as this is Clarendon copy I-15.

<sup>4</sup>The Dimsdale copies of the illuminated works are described

in *Blake Books*, pp. 170, 180, 384, and 410. The Sotheby's catalogue states that the *Night Thoughts* was "probably acquired . . . together with copies of *The Book of Urizen* and *Songs of Innocence*." No evidence is given for this assertion, although Michael Heseltine of Sotheby's confirmed the copy's provenance and wrote the catalogue entry. However, *Blake Books* notes that it was the first Baron Dimsdale (1712–1800) who acquired copies of the illuminated books, whereas the Sotheby's catalogue states that it was the fifth Baron Dimsdale who acquired all three.

<sup>5</sup>11E is in the masculine state.

## An Unpublished Poem by S. Foster Damon

Josephine McQuail

On a particularly gloomy winter day in 1984 I attempted to cheer myself up by a visit to my friend John Guillot's bookstore in Charlottesville, Virginia. John, now the proprietor of Magnum Opus in Charlottesville, usually had some tempting volume in the antiquarian section of Heartwood Books, which he managed then. That day he came up with a first edition of S. Foster Damon's *William Blake: His Philosophy and Symbols*, in which, he said, there was an amusing poem inscribed by the author. Sure enough, the flyleaf traced a mysterious exchange involving this book, which fell eventually into its author's hands. The book bears several bookplates, including one of "Richard and Caroline Hogue," and Damon predicated the poem:

From Caroline Hogue  
to S. Foster Damon  
and back again  
April 29, 1941

The poem itself reveals S. Foster Damon's sense of humor, which is quite refreshing! He imagined that

Hamlet once met William Blake  
They chatted, for politeness' sake.  
Said Hamlet: "Do you see that  
cloud?"  
Said William: "Yes! It is a crowd  
Of Seraphim shouting 'Glory!  
Hail!'"  
Said Hamlet: "No. It's like a whale."  
And so they parted, each one glad  
that the other, and not he, was mad.

The readers of *Blake* will understand why I immediately purchased the book. I am happy to share it with the readers of the *Quarterly*, and I would like to thank Morton Paley for suggesting that I submit the poem to *Blake*, and Catherine Brown, S. Foster Damon's literary executor, for giving permission to print it.

## A Pencil Sketch for Blake's Dante Illustrations

Jenijoy La Belle

The Huntington Library is known the world over for its great collection of books, for its splendid eighteenth century paintings, and for its lovely gardens. It now seems also to be the place for discovering previously unknown drawings by William Blake. In 1982 a pencil sketch of Blake's "Pestilence" was discovered in a group of uncatalogued drawings which apparently had been languishing in the Library's rare book stacks for many years.<sup>1</sup> Recently, yet another Blake drawing has come to light.

Since December 1916, the Huntington Art Gallery has owned an important pencil sketch for Blake's Dante Illustrations, "The Six-Footed Serpent Attacking Agnolo Brunelleschi."<sup>2</sup> This somewhat rubbed and stained yet powerful drawing has long been firmly pasted down on all four edges to its backing mat, probably supplied by A.S.W. Rosenbach, the great book dealer from whom Henry E. Huntington acquired this and many other Blake materials.<sup>3</sup> Late in December of 1984, Carol Verheyen, the Preparator/Registrar for the Huntington Art Collections, decided that the preservation of the drawing required its removal from the highly acidic mat board. As soon as the operation was completed, she found on the verso a pencil sketch of a standing woman (illus. 1) near the left margin of the sheet. The figure may be holding something in her right hand, but stains in the paper and some abrasion obscure this area. The verso also bears the number "8/16" in pencil—perhaps a price or other notation made by a dealer.

The basic features of the woman's anatomy, the slightly *contrapposto* stance with her head in profile but her body twisting towards us, and the qualities of the draftsmanship are all representative of Blake's work. The hesitancy and sketchiness of the lines, while hardly indicative of Blake's theories about firm and determinate bounding lines, are nonetheless typical of his drawing style late in his life. In his description of a stylistically similar work, a "sketch, probably for 'Bunyan's Dream,'" (Butlin No. 830), Butlin has nicely characterized this technique as one "in which a multitude of lightly sketched lines gradually picks out the main forms."<sup>4</sup> Several of the Dante drawings left at an early stage of development (e.g., Butlin Nos. 812.68, 812.70, 812.71, 812.83, 812.100) also exemplify this method. Thus all features of the newly discovered drawing, including of course its presence on the verso of a known work by Blake, indicate that it too is from Blake's hand. It was probably sketched

in the period when Blake was working on the Dante designs, ca. 1824–1827.

There are a good many females in Blake's art generally similar to the Huntington sketch, but none that I can find is identical. The drawing has all the qualities of a preliminary design, and the first possibility that springs to mind is that it relates to one of the large Dante watercolors. Martin Butlin has suggested in correspondence that the Huntington drawing is an early version of the figure second from the left margin in "Beatrice Addressing Dante from the Car" (illus. 2). If this is indeed the case, then it seems likely that this verso drawing was executed prior to the composition on its recto ("The Six-Footed Serpent Attacking Agnolo Brunelleschi") because the latter is probably a preliminary drawing for the engraving of 1826–1827 rather than for the slightly earlier watercolor.<sup>5</sup>



1. Blake. Pencil sketch of a standing woman, ca. 1824–1827, on the verso of "The Six-Footed Serpent Attacking Agnolo Brunelleschi." Sheet 24.5 × 32.9 cm; image 17.5 × approx. 5.5 cm. Huntington Art Galleries, accession no. 000.43 verso.

The woman in the newly revealed verso sketch and the much more highly finished figure in "Beatrice Addressing Dante" have similar feet and leg positions, torsos, and extended right arms. Indeed, the two women are about the same size and are similarly situated in relationship to the edges of the sheets of paper on which they appear, suggesting that even in the sketch Blake was thinking about the location of his figure within a larger design. However, the head positions and hair of these two women are very different, and the left arm of the sketched woman is not shown. Actually, the head in profile with the face turned slightly upward and the coiffure with hair piled up on top of the head associate the pencil drawing with the central figure (second from the right) who looks toward Beatrice standing on the chariot. It seems as though Blake has made use of the preliminary figure by dividing her characteristics between two women in the finished composition. While the newly discovered drawing is far from being a major work, it does provide some interesting insights into Blake's methods of developing a composition as he moved from first thoughts on paper to a highly wrought watercolor design.

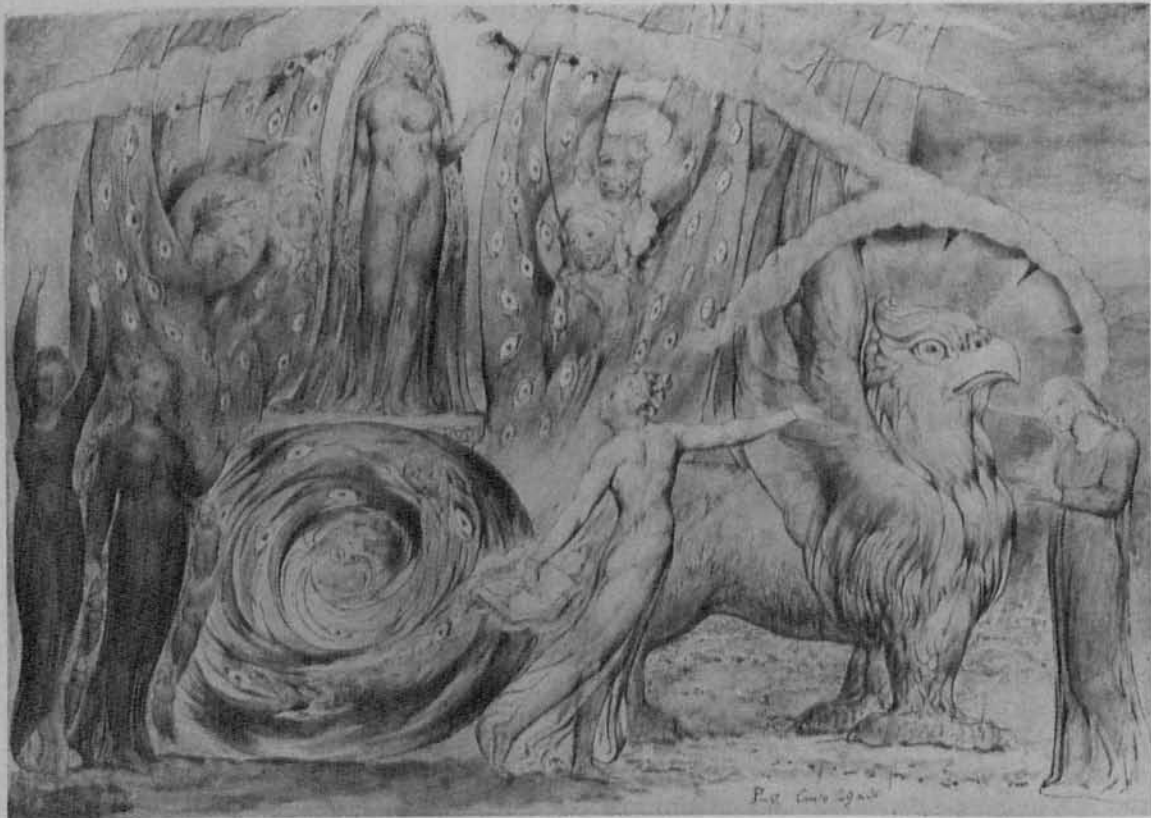
<sup>1</sup>See Shelley M. Bennett, "A Newly Discovered Blake in the Huntington," *Huntington Calendar* (July–August 1983), 2–4; and Bennett, "A Newly Discovered Blake at the Huntington," *Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly* 18 (1984–85), 132–39.

<sup>2</sup>C.H. Collins Baker, *Catalogue of William Blake's Drawings and Paintings in the Huntington Library*, revised edition by R.R. Wark (San Marino: Huntington Library, 1957), p. 46, pl. xxxvi; Martin Butlin, *The Paintings and Drawings of William Blake* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1981), No. 822, pl. 1073 (hereafter cited as "Butlin No. —").

<sup>3</sup>To the provenance information supplied by Butlin, No. 822, I can add that this drawing is very probably the design for "Dante's 'Inferno'" offered for sale in Rosenbach's catalogue 18 of 1916, *Catalogue of A Remarkable Collection of Rare and Choice Books Manuscripts and Autograph Letters*, item 17, with a collection of other works by Blake including the Thomas set of *Comus* designs for \$29,000. This entire group was acquired by Henry Huntington in December 1916 for \$17,200 (according to Rosenbach's receipt of 1 January 1917 in the Huntington Archives). I am grateful to Robert N. Essick, who is now completing a new catalogue of all original Blake materials at the Huntington, for this information.

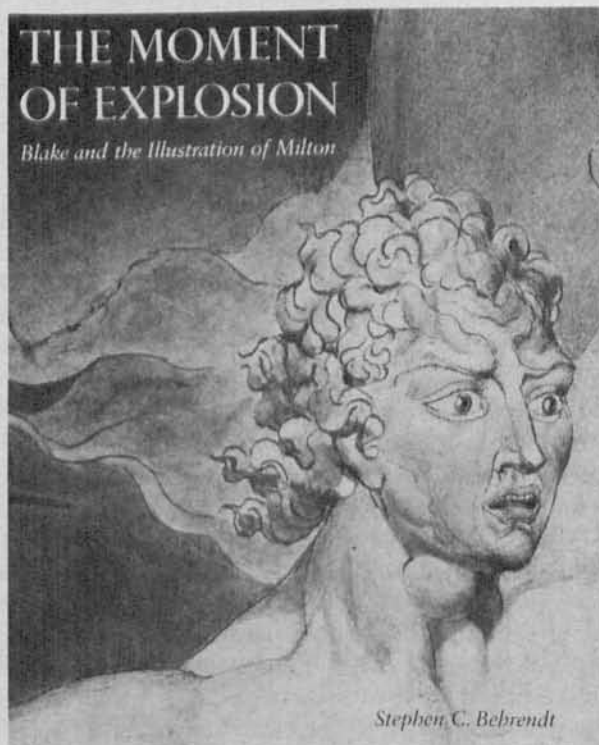
<sup>4</sup>Butlin, *William Blake*, catalogue of the Tate Gallery exhibition (London, 1978), p. 147. In correspondence, Butlin has accepted the newly discovered drawing as Blake's work.

<sup>5</sup>As Butlin points out under his No. 822, the Huntington recto drawing, which he dates to 1826–1827.



2. Blake. "Beatrice Addressing Dante from the Car," ca. 1824–1827. Pen and watercolor, 37.2 × 52.7 cm. Tate Gallery, London.

## REVIEWS



**Stephen C. Behrendt.** *The Moment of Explosion: Blake and the Illustration of Milton.* Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1983. 235 pp., 24 color plates, 54 b&w illus. \$32.50.

**Edward Hodnett.** *Image and Text: Studies in the Illustration of English Literature.* London: Scolar Press, 1982. 280 pp., 42 illus. \$35.00.

Reviewed by Karl Kroeber

Behrendt presents us with a conscientious study of Blake's Milton illustrations, which he regards as undertaking to "correct not only Milton but also the presumed faults of his eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century critics" (p. 1). Blake's designs accomplish this double correction by abstracting the spiritual or symbolic essence of the poetry, rediscovering and realigning Milton's mythical

and metaphorical structures in order to induce in the reader a visionary perception comparable to the artist's. This alertness to Blake's concern for his art's effect is salutary. Behrendt, naturally enough, begins with a discussion of *Milton* that leads logically into an analysis of *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* illustrations. The crux of his findings is developed in the second chapter treating "The Theme of Choice," in Behrendt's view "central to all Blake's Milton illustrations" (p. 34), and the foundation for his correcting both in his poetry and in his illustrations what he took to be misreadings of Milton. The centerpiece for all such considerations must be, of course, *Paradise Lost*, and for Behrendt the epic proves the core of Blake's re-orienting of tradition, deformed in part by Milton's own obscuring of the true thrust of his poem. Blake's re-clarifying of Milton's self-obscuring pivots on insistence that the Son is the "absolute hero of *Paradise Lost*," effecting and providing "the paradigm for eternal spiritual and imaginative resurrection" (p. 185). Behrendt's thesis is difficult to disagree with, and it is no denigration of his good sense and perspicuity to suggest that his book's most exciting feature is its eighty large, clear illustrations, most of Blake's designs, of course, but including well-chosen examples from other Milton illustrators. The bibliography, however, is highly "selected" indeed, and the index of names only is virtually useless.

Hodnett's book is far more provocative and stylistically surprising. The chapter on Blake seems a shade more impressive than other chapters, but its manner is, I should judge, representative. On p. 87 we are told of Blake that "nudes were his stock in trade, and he did his best to draw them correctly." Our man gets an E for effort here, but later in the paragraph the accolade is a bit clouded: "By reducing most of his figures to nudes, by picturing types rather than individuals, and by generalizing or eliminating backgrounds, Blake sought to achieve a sense of universality, and to a degree he succeeded." One does wonder what degree of universality might be regarded as successful. Pressing on to p. 92, however, one encounters a reference to "Enitharman," to add new diversity to Blake's sexual ambiguities in *Urizen*, the passage climaxing, if that is the word: "The extraordinary title-page design pictures Urizen as a naked long-bearded man huddled cross-legged on an open book writing with a quill in both extended hands. The colours are said to have been mixed with glue and applied by a second impression of the plate." I wish I had space to explore fully Hodnett's sequiturs, but I can at least suggest a possible source for that quill in both extended hands: it is found on p. 102, where we are reassured, sort of, that "Blake probably got his effects unintentionally to a certain extent." Particularly when dealing with an eccentric like Blake, a scholar can't be too careful.

# THE CONTINUING CITY

William Blake's *Jerusalem*

MORTON D. PALEY



Morton D. Paley. *The Continuing City: William Blake's Jerusalem*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983. 330 pp., 22 illus. \$57.00

Reviewed by V.A. De Luca

*Jerusalem's* reputation as a great English poem is essentially a post-war phenomenon. Indeed this reputation, in so far as it commands reasonably wide assent in the profession, is largely a product of the past twenty years, gathering its momentum from the enthusiasms of the apocalyptically inclined sixties. By the time the poem began to be taken seriously, the New Criticism, with its emphasis on nuances of language and subtleties of formal technique, was well on the wane. The older modes of literary scholarship—the elaboration of historical background, the tracing of sources and influences, the inventorying of themes and formal features—were even more remote to nascent Blakeans. The criticism of Blake's longer poems found its distinctive voice in an impassioned translation or paraphrase of themes, in which a

certain evangelical impulse played no small part. This enthusiastic approach was enormously valuable for kindling a widespread interest in Blake, and only now is it beginning to give way to more specialized and technical kinds of inquiry into his work. But the approach also led to an impoverishment in our sense of the ways in which *Jerusalem* works as a poem and of its place in a historical and cultural context. Because of its belated arrival in the canon, the study of *Jerusalem* has passed from fervent interpretation to scholarly specialization without having paused to offer a clearly outlined, basic *description* of the thing itself. Categorical description, the forte of the older modes of criticism and regularly applied to poems whose reputation consolidated earlier, say, *The Canterbury Tales*, *The Faerie Queene*, or *The Prelude*, has not until now figured significantly in work on *Jerusalem*—much to our cost.

These circumstances heighten the importance of Morton Paley's much-awaited study. As Paley himself points out, "at this point we do not need yet another recension of the beliefs of an idealized Blake" (p. 32), and in *The Continuing City* he avoids any such thing. The originality and strength of the book lie in its refusal of a thematic centering, in its disinclination to translate Blake's poem into an argument or to impose an argument of the author's own devising. Although Paley refrains from stating what he considers the aim of his study to be, that aim is clear enough from the design of the whole: to explore the essential frames of reference in which an adequate study of *Jerusalem* might begin. It attempts more or less to describe in an orderly fashion what the poem contains, where it finds its models, and how it works. Sometimes, as in the introductory chapter and occasionally elsewhere, this approach involves a survey of familiar material (such as a review of the poem's publishing history and of its critical reception) that is readily available in other secondary sources. The inclusion of such material indicates that Paley aims ultimately not for novelty but for comprehensiveness. Indeed, in its range of coverage and its willingness to stoop to the familiar and to basic facts, *The Continuing City* resembles nothing so much as those impressively magisterial introductions that one or two generations ago would accompany critical editions of major texts—say, Maynard Mack on *The Essay on Man* in the Twickenham Pope or Frank Kermode's introduction to the Arden *Tempest*. It is precisely this sort of treatment—erudite but plain-speaking, objective, comprehensive, topically subdivided—that *Jerusalem* has sorely lacked, as it has lacked the honor of a definitive annotated critical edition (a need, incidentally, that Paley recognizes). *The Continuing City*, more leisurely in pace, more loosely textured, is perhaps not quite in the class of Mack on Pope, but the comparison serves to suggest the kind of scholarly company that Paley's work keeps and the importance of what



he has accomplished.

Like the imaginative city that gives the book its title and provides the subject of its central chapter, this work too is a structure with many gates, each leading from a different direction to the sanctuary of the poem itself. There are chapters on the verse of *Jerusalem* and its relation to period styles and theories, on approaches to the reading of the designs, on the millenarian framework and its symbolism, on the dramatis personae, and on the formal organization. This varied set of concerns calls for a range of different skills in handling them, and although certain chapters do rise above others in distinction, virtually all parts of the work display a shrewd common sense, a facility in discovering relevant connections, a resourcefulness in posing interesting kinds of issues to address, and a thorough command of background information.

Paley is at his best when he has tangible kinds of evidence before him to engage his attention. He clearly likes to gather and correlate information, to probe it for its implications, and to dispose it in orderly arrangements for his reader. The role of literary historian seems particularly congenial, and one of the most impressive things in *The Continuing City* is the devotion that Paley bestows in detailing a tradition of analogues to Blake's four-gated city. As Paley proceeds methodically from Ezekiel, Revelation, and Josephus, through such later visionaries of millennial architecture as Villapandus, Lightfoot, and John Wood, the very accumulation of examples gives the reader a vividly heightened sense of the perennial force of the visionary impulse, a process aptly caught in Blake's trope of Golgonooza, "ever building, ever falling" (*Milton* 6.2), only to give rise again in successive prophets. As a summary account of sources and analogues for Blake's city of vision, this part of Paley's book is likely to remain definitive; future students of the subject will want to consult it before any other account.

But the triumph of Paley's empirical approach comes not in his investigations of literary history but in his analysis of *Jerusalem's* form. His skill in handling formal matters is evident early in the book, in the chapter on versification, where through an array of resourceful and patiently applied methods—scansion, syntactical analysis, comparison with analogues—he arrives at characterizations that are virtually always on the mark (e.g., "pauses do not typically create a balanced tension, as often in Augustan poetry, but rather appear to resist the onrush of the verse and then yield to it; . . . enjambement transfers energy from one line to another and creates a sense that statements [not always sentences] are structural units" [p. 51]). The best treatment of form in the book is reserved, however, for last. In this chapter, simply called "Form," Paley unquestionably makes his most useful contribution to the criticism of *Jerusalem*.

After surveying some possible models for the poem's peculiarities of organization (the most interesting of which, from the Blake critic's point of view, is Handel's *Messiah*), he launches into a scrutinizing analysis of the work's construction. There is a valuable exposition of the problem of the two extant arrangements of plates in Chapter 2, and although this treatment cannot be taken as definitive (the interested reader may wish to compare Paley's findings with my own somewhat different account of the same matters, previously published in these pages [Spring 1983]), it demonstrates clearly that a critical understanding of *Jerusalem's* foundations cannot proceed without a firm bibliographical understanding. More important still is Paley's comprehensive and illuminating attempt to chart the recurrences of the important narrative and thematic motifs in the poem. Borrowing his technique from synoptic tabularizations of the four gospels (why has no one thought of applying this technique to *Jerusalem* before?), Paley analyzes these motifs into their component parts and pinpoints their recurrences on a spatial grid representing *Jerusalem's* four chapters. As a result any reader consulting these tables may henceforth take in at a glance the location of the major narrative strands and motifs, the distribution of their recurrences throughout the poem, and the weight of concentration Blake gives to each. At once a concordance of *Jerusalem's* motifs and a map of its thematic structure, these tables are likely to prove an indispensable reference tool.

Paley's close investigations of the poem's construction pay off in some finely judicious observations on the rationale of the structure of the whole. Usefully distinguishing what he calls the "organization" of the work (its "official" symmetrical division into four equal chapters) from its "form" (small, potentially shiftable gatherings of plates, or synchronous narrative events recurring in unpredictably distributed clusters), he concludes that Blake's technique, in effect, is to set the two kinds of order in a kind of antagonism to one another: "The organizational container reinforces the expectation of a strong narrative line, an expectation which is subverted time after time in the work itself"; "regularity is an aspect of what I have called the 'container'; the poem and the designs build up a tension with that regular order" (pp. 302, 307). From this strong insight it follows that "attempts to view the chapters as discrete units depend upon rationalizing after the fact, and quite different chapter constructions could be so rationalized" (p. 303). One hopes that this firmly persuasive observation will lay to rest finally all those by now wearisome attempts to allegorize *Jerusalem's* four-part scheme as a thematic medley or as stages in a conceptual argument. The schematic divisions of the text, it would seem, confer meaning no more readily than rhyming or isochronous meter do in prosody. They are formal points

of departure for an unpredictable play of intellectual and emotional energy, the definite outlines from which an infinite potential recoils.

Paley's finest critical insights, then, are reserved for matters of form. In its handling of theme and meaning, however, the distinction of *The Continuing City* is oddly enough not so assured. The two explicitly thematic chapters "The Myth of Humanity" (Albion-Vala-Jerusalem) and "The Prophetic Myth" (Los-Enitharmon-Spectre) are not themselves problematic; they do not bring many new large-scale insights to bear on these "myths" (there are many gratifying small illuminations) but the mode of exposition is as lucidly and as rationally organized as we are likely to find in any commentary on Blake's longer poems. The chapter on "Art" however raises problems of a larger order, for here Paley's concern is explicitly with the search for meaning itself and the principles according to which such a search might be based. Using five designs from *Jerusalem*, chosen as exemplary of differing kinds of interpretative problems posed by the visual side of Blake's work, Paley hopes to show "How to Read Blake's Pictures" (p. 89). As usual, his principles are sensible, his observations keen, and his references learned. But the discussion as a whole begs the question of what it means to "read" a picture. It proceeds on the assumptions that interpretation is a self-evident desideratum and that the meaning of a picture is to be found in a presumed doctrinal intention paraphrasable in words. But such assumptions merely extend to the world of designs that yearning for a "re-cension of beliefs" or for "rationalizations after the fact" about which Paley is properly skeptical elsewhere in the book as a program for Blake criticism. Paley appears somewhat uncomfortable with the otherness of the pictorial medium, with the evasiveness of its response to demands that it serve a signifying role; hence his preference that ambiguous "readings" of certain designs be settled on one side of the argument or the other. Yet one needs to ask why Blake takes refuge intermittently in pictures at all, if the pictures can be re-spoken as words conformable to unequivocal words that the poet has already used.

Take, for instance, what from the standpoint of interpretation are the two most difficult of Paley's five exemplary cases. According to various critics the crucifixion scene on pl. 76 depicts either a vegetated Christ, in which case we are to deplore Albion's posture of reverence, or a Christ sacrificing himself in divine Friendship, in which case we are enjoined to imitate Albion's *imitatio*. But are we to assume that Blake's advice regarding which attitude we should choose is somehow encoded in the visual lines of the picture? It seems more likely that the design is an invitation to choice, not a determination of it. After alluding to the crucifixion in various contexts, positive and negative

throughout *Jerusalem*, Blake is saying, in effect, here is the thing itself, the visual sign for a permanent act or reality, a "Representation of what Eternally Exists. Really & Unchangeably." (VLJ, E 554). He who would see in this visual depiction a display of divine love and he who would see a religion of atonement with a corpse as centerpiece see, to borrow a phrase from Wallace Stevens, nothing that is not there in the design itself. The alternatives are both encoded in its iconographic details and in the religious assumptions of viewers, whether liberated or benighted. Paley is on the right track when he suggests that it is better to trust our intuitive response to designs such as this than to consult some doctrinal abstract of Blake's thought for our opinion. But what is required here is an intuitive response to the crucifixion itself, not to a "message" of the poet regarding it. Perhaps the function of this design, and many others in *Jerusalem* as well, is to suspend the strongly directive voice of the poet and to yield to the spectator the opportunity to test his or her own imaginative capacities in an act of *seeing*.

The same point holds for the other difficult case among Paley's samples. The notoriously recondite chariot vision on pl. 41[46] is, as Paley admits, "almost a Rorschach test for Blake scholars." Prolific with unknown metamorphic forms and half-recognizable iconographical hints at accessible meaning, it virtually begs for interpretation. But what it so conspicuously invites it then proceeds to impede. Paley is inclined to see this design as a dark vision, a triumph of Vala, but if one is inclined to view the design as a representation of the fulfillment of apocalyptic prophecy, the supports for such a reading are also readily available. If the woman in the chariot is clothed, and hence Vala, as Paley argues, one might point out that Jerusalem also appears clothed on pls. 26 and 92; the older bearded figure embracing the woman appears somber, but no more somber than he does in similar embraces in the indisputably ecstatic and apocalyptic contexts of pls. 96 and 99; and the last line of verse on pl. 41, directly over the design of the embracing couple, refers to "The Bride and Wife of the Lamb" (J 41.28). As for the drawers, one might be reminded, as Paley is, of certain pictorial sources that suggest Covering Cherubs or rides through the underworld; but iconography even more readily yields, in response to the lion-maned, human-faced, ox-hooved, eagle-guided creatures depicted here, the traditional scriptural emblems of the Four Living Creatures that surround the Divine Vision; from Blake's own works one might point to the collaboration of serpents, eagles, lions, and men in *MHH* 15 to bring grand works of art into being, or to those vehicular serpents on which energetic children joyously ride in *America* 11 and *Thel* 6. To collect counter-evidence against Paley's position is not, however, my point here; it is not a question of

right and wrong interpretations. If Paley's treatment falls short of a full response to the complexities that pl. 41 poses, it is not for any lack of skill in the reading of emblems; rather, it is because he bypasses an issue that Blake's technique in many parts in *Jerusalem* raises insistently: why does the "Rorschach" effect appear so frequently in the designs (and not just the designs) unless Blake is making a point about the process of signification itself?

If a design or a passage of verse (such as the notorious vortex passage in *Milton* 15) perennially begets fresh interpretations and controversy, while continuing to frustrate the formation of a consensus opinion, then the interpretive effort becomes not a vehicle for overcoming a difficulty but rather a signifier of that difficulty; "difficulty" itself is foregrounded as the "message." Perhaps spots such as the design on pl. 41 have been established as interpretive Free Zones, fashioned so as perpetually to invite and to evade univocal readings. Such points might act as vortices in the surface of accessible meaning, drawing us down into the depths where all meanings are seen as potential, as "regenerations terrific or complacent" varying according to our perceptions or to the turns in a visionary conversation dramatic. The unreadable (or too variously readable) chariot of pl. 41 compacts such a conversation in a tightly determinate visual form.

Plausibly, Paley might respond to this argument with one of his own interpretive principles: "Interpretations according to which mutually exclusive meanings are seen as equally valid are not likely to be helpful. We should remember Blake's love of the definite" (p. 118). What one finds helpful of course depends on what one is asking the poem to supply; if it is a series of securely identifiable "correct" meanings, then Paley's cautions are well taken. But generally Blake praises the definite not as an attribute of meaning but as an attribute of form; it is a quality of the bounding outline, or to use Paley's own terminology, the regularity of the "container," and it applies to the incisive visual clarity of the signifier, not to the possibilities of the signified. For within the walls of the definite there ricochets its antonym the infinite, equally loved, a surging and ultimately untameable waywardness that will not abide our question or accommodate itself to our paraphrases. Despite some excellent remarks in Chapter II on the "Titanic striving" of Blake's sublime mode in *Jerusalem* and on the effort of its "language to abandon its function as mediator and to become meaning itself" (p. 64), in general Paley shows little responsiveness to this wayward element in the poem. It is a lack that demarcates the limits of his study of the subject.

I speak of limits not in any pejorative sense. A different kind of critical approach would have curbed the excellence that *The Continuing City* achieves in its

own kind, and one can only be grateful for a study that manages to pack between two covers as many valuable observations as it does in such a wide range of contexts. If one ventures to weigh the actual achievements of this work against the possibilities that it has neglected to explore, it is simply because the appearance of a major book on a great English poem impels us to take stock of the critical tradition gathering around that poem, locating the book in hand within the tradition by glancing at what has gone before and what might come after. *The Continuing City* functions as a practical guide; it is not surprising that Paley invokes the "helpful" as a principle in reading Blake's designs, for such a principle underlies his whole enterprise. This is indeed a genuinely helpful book, seeking everywhere to accommodate the strangeness and difficulty of *Jerusalem* to our understandings and vice versa, and its commonsense approach accomplishes what had to be accomplished sooner or later. But one suspects that a future criticism will make strangeness and difficulty its very theme, bringing to the fore a Blake who is himself anything but accommodating. Such a criticism is likely to differ as much from Paley's lucid, well-rounded course of instruction as that mode differs from the evangelical commentaries of the past generation, mentioned at the outset. Newer readings will have come to terms with a sensibility that in mood and in expressive tendency can be brooding, obsessive, devious, secretive, sometimes even brutal, even as it is also radiant and humane. Here lies a fruitful direction for the criticism of *Jerusalem* to take, not because a conception of Blake as problematic is desirable for its own sake (though a certain clearing of the air of pieties is always welcome) but because an unsentimental gauging of the human complexities and strenuous tensions in his work will serve to underscore his genius and to deepen our own thought. One need only glance at the history of Wordsworth criticism in the past twenty years to see the effects of a resourceful phenomenological probing of ambiguities; not only is Wordsworth now seen as a difficult proto-modern poet but he has moved to the center of that revival of Romantic concerns which has so significantly nourished the most venturesome and vital strands of recent critical discourse. To establish Blake, a poet of equivalent genius, in a similar nourishing and energizing role is an enterprise that all of us should want.

Nevertheless, as a conspicuously Orcan figure of our own day once phrased it, if you can't always get what you want you can get what you need. Before anyone can scale the craggiest heights or probe the gloomiest caverns of Blake's most demanding poem, there needs to be an expertly conducted exploration of the basic terrain, and this Paley has provided. As it stands, *The Continuing City* is the most significant and useful book on *Jerusalem* that we have.

G. E. Bentley, Jr., Robert N. Essick, Shelley M. Bennett, Morton D. Paley. Preface by Robert R. Wark. *Essays on the Blake Followers*. San Marino, California: Huntington Library and Art Gallery, 1983. 71 pp., 51 illus. \$8.00

Joseph Viscomi. *Prints by William Blake and His Followers*. Ithaca, New York: Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University, 1983. 36 pp., 18 illus. No price stated.

Reviewed by Raymond Lister

Samuel Palmer, the most important of William Blake's followers, was a few years ago in the news in England on account of the crude fakes of his work, executed by the late Tom Keating, which appeared on the London art market. Several of us said at once that they were not authentic; others appeared to give them their blessing. Some were reproduced in the book *Samuel Palmer* by James Sellars (London, 1974)<sup>1</sup> and one in the *Burlington Magazine*.<sup>2</sup> One at least was accepted by the late Edward Croft-Murray of the British Museum, and Martin Butlin of the Tate Gallery said there was "a considerable case for their being by the artist."<sup>3</sup> Which surely all goes to show that enthusiasm, even when combined with academic scholarship, is not always supported by perfect connoisseurship.

But the fact remains that this all did Palmer's reputation considerable harm if only temporarily, for when leading experts, especially if they are also important museum officials, are deceived into accepting fakes as original works, and when the fakes are illustrated in a leading art journal and in an otherwise scholarly book, people begin to ask themselves if the original artist's work is as good as it is reputed to be, considering that it apparently could be so easily faked as to deceive such expert opinion. This point is often put to me by those outside art circles. Even on Keating's own assessment his fakes were "crude daubs,"<sup>4</sup> so the non-expert must have found it doubly puzzling that, if Palmer were such an outstanding artist, experts should have been prepared to accept the "daubs" as original work. Consequently the non-expert observer could hardly be blamed for thinking Palmer a lesser figure than before.

The books under review, especially the Huntington volume, should do something towards correcting this. Indeed few of those who even glance over the reduced

reproductions in the Huntington book would possibly imagine that Palmer could have been the same man who made the fakes. The essays in the book provide further evidence of the way in which the authentic Palmer thought and worked, how he translated his visual and literary experiences into original works of his own, how his own complicated personality acted as a catalyst on his reading of, for instance, the poems of Milton, or on his visual experience of the drawings and paintings of Claude Lorraine, transforming each experience into visions of the English countryside with, later on, accents derived from his visits to Devon, Wales, and Italy.

In the first essay, G. E. Bentley, Jr., places the Palmer circle, "The Ancients" as they called themselves, in the Blake milieu, noting, correctly, the prudery and religious conventionality of some of them. Strangely, they seem to have had little comprehension of the mind of their great mentor. It is practically certain that one of them, Frederick Tatham, destroyed much of Blake's work on religious grounds. Again, when Eliza Finch wrote her memoir of her husband, Francis Oliver Finch, another Ancient, she did not even mention Blake; the Finches were Swedenborgians and Blake had thrown the beliefs of that sect aside, so obviously his views rankled. And in a letter of 27 June 1862 to Anne Gilchrist, who was preparing her late husband's life of Blake for press, Palmer advised: "Pray don't send to the printers any extracts made from the book itself [*The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*] which has not been looked over and prepared for the press as I saw this evening an indecent word in the text—at least a coarse one."<sup>5</sup> To which he added a footnote: "I would recommend the same caution as to all Blake manuscripts not already prepared—on account of other matters which 'crop up' now and then and which would be considered BLASPHEMOUS and might ruin the sale of the work if shown up in any illnatured review."<sup>6</sup>

As a matter of fact Palmer had little, if any, understanding of the bulk of Blake's poetry. The lyric poems he could no doubt appreciate, but when it came to the mythological books he was all at sea. "His poems were variously estimated," he wrote. "They tested rather severely the imaginative capacity of their readers. Flaxman said they were as grand as his designs, and Wordsworth delighted in his *Songs of Innocence*. To the multitude they were unintelligible. In many parts full of pastoral sweetness, and often flashing with noble thoughts or terrible imagery, we must regret that he should sometimes have suffered fancy to trespass within sacred precincts."<sup>7</sup>

In truth these young followers of Blake followed him in a very limited way. Edward Calvert was in a visual sense more influenced by him than any other member of the circle; in his few engravings references to Blake may be traced again and again.<sup>8</sup> There is a

little of Blake in Richmond's early work, and Palmer's visionary mode had been developed before he ever met Blake, although after they had met the younger man made considerable borrowings. Even so, the influence of the old man was mainly through his wood-engravings for Thornton's *Virgil* and his *Job* engravings, and to a lesser extent through his designs for *Songs of Innocence* and through a few of his watercolors. Within a few years of his death the Ancients were each going separate ways: George Richmond as a fashionable portrait painter, Calvert as a painter of idealized classical scenes, and Palmer as a landscape painter developing along more conventional, though far from uninteresting lines; F. O. Finch had always painted Claudean landscapes and continued to do so. Here and there there is a backward glance at Blake, as in Calvert's "A Young Shepherd on a Journey"<sup>9</sup> which is an almost exact copy of Blake's illustration to the line "With wand'ring feet unblest . . ." in Thornton's *Virgil*. Nevertheless the impact of these little engravings on the young men was, for a few years, enormous; and if the period of their ascendancy was brief, it did enable them to produce, at least for that time, work as compelling as anything they were to produce in the future.

Robert N. Essick's essay on "John Linnell, William Blake, and the Printer's Craft" is, as one has come to expect from him, an elegantly written and well argued study. The influence of Samuel Palmer's father-in-law, John Linnell, among the Ancients has not often been seriously considered, and it is refreshing to see it given some prominence here. But who has influenced whom it is sometimes difficult to decide; some early Linnells, drawn or painted before the two men had met, seem to be precursors of works by Palmer (for example "Primrose Hill"<sup>10</sup> and "Twilight"<sup>11</sup>), whereas his "The Weald of Kent,"<sup>12</sup> drawn years after Linnell's first meeting with Palmer, might almost be the work of the younger man.

Essick's study is, as its title implies, concerned with printmaking rather than with drawings, but much the same remarks apply: Linnell's etchings, "Sheep at Noon" and "Woodcutters Repast" (both 1818) again look like precursors of later work by Palmer, especially in the composition and shape of those watercolors he called "Little Longs."

But the most compelling part of this section is Essick's analysis of the engraving techniques used by Blake and Linnell, in which he endeavors to demonstrate Linnell's influence on Blake, especially in their jointly executed plates (for example in "Wilson Lowry," begun in 1824). It is illuminating, too, to read his remarks, brief though they are, on the relationship between Palmer's only known wood-engraving, "Harvest under a Crescent Moon," and Blake's *Virgil* wood-engravings. It is, he writes, "very close in size, mood, and technique to Blake's *Virgil* cuts. Palmer once noted that Blake

particularly admired some of Claude Lorrain's paintings because, 'when minutely examined, there were, upon the focal lights of the foliage, small specks of pure white which made them appear to be glittering with dew.' The *Virgil* wood engravings, with their bold but skillfully deployed flick work, exhibit a graphic equivalent to this technique. In turn, Palmer's single effort in wood achieves its moon-lit effects through an almost identical, if slightly less energetic, use of the graver."

Shelley M. Bennett, who compiled an attractive catalogue of the 1982 Huntington Library and Art Gallery exhibition, *Prints by the Blake Followers*, contributes an essay entitled, "The Blake Followers in the Context of Contemporary British Art." In this Palmer and his circle are considered against the background of the work of Turner, Constable and other Romantics. Bennett, also with considerable originality, compares them with certain aspects of the Pre-Raphaelites; one piquant comparison concerns their similar surface textures: "The dense rich surfaces of the meticulously worked plates, wood-blocks and drawings of the Blake followers produced a glowing, often jewel-like effect. The Pre-Raphaelites obtained a similar luminosity in their oils by working on a wet white ground which created a bright cloisonné-like clarity and sparkle."

Bennett also makes interesting points concerning portraits by the Palmer circle, claiming that they were indebted in some measure to Blake's Visionary Heads, and drawing attention to "their frontal, almost iconic presentation." She makes a similar point about Linnell's portrait of John Varley, painted against a star-studded sky which, she writes, combined with "the fixed, hypnotic stare of the eyes," produces "an emotionally charged, almost visionary, effect quite different from Lawrence's slick grand-manner exhibition-style portraits." She might, more tellingly, have used George Richmond's later portraits as a comparison instead of those of Lawrence.

If I have a minor criticism of Bennett's essay (and this also applies in places to the other essays) it is of her continual reference to the "Shoreham circle" and to the "Shoreham period." Shoreham, though highly important to the young men as a place of spiritual recreation and inspiration, was their center for only a brief period; Palmer alone was there for any length of time and the other members of the circle were only intermittent visitors. Moreover, some of Palmer's most intensely visionary works—the great sepia watercolors of 1825—were completed before he moved there. There is nothing against using "Shoreham" as a convenient label—and that is doubtless what Bennett has done—but this ought to be kept in perspective.

The final chapter in *Essays on the Blake Followers* is by Morton D. Paley and is entitled "'To Realize After A Sort the Imagery of Milton': Samuel Palmer's Designs for *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*." It is in many ways the

most interesting in the book, for it deals with a group of watercolors, painted in Palmer's later years, which have attracted little critical attention during the present century, though there is now strong evidence of a revival of interest.<sup>13</sup> Commissioned by Leonard Rowe Valpy, John Ruskin's solicitor, the series contains some of the most powerful works created by Palmer during his middle and old age.

Milton's influence on Palmer was strong; he loved especially *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*. He also loved *Comus*, which provided subjects for an earlier series of watercolors, which though splendid in many ways, are less vital than the Valpy watercolors. In the later Miltons Palmer drew on the experiences of a lifetime, and it is possible to discover in them recollections of his visionary years, of his visit to Italy, and of his work in Devon, Surrey and Wales. His technique had matured impressively since his early years, and he was now a complete master of the watercolor medium. Incidentally, it is not surprising that Keating did not attempt to forge works in Palmer's later style with its formidable mastery of technique. The mannerisms present in the works of the 1820s and early 1830s made them misleadingly more inviting, though even here Keating did not come within miles of making convincing forgeries.

Paley discusses the Milton watercolors with great perception, relating them to other contemporary interpretations of the same themes, and contrasting their conception with that of similar works by William Blake, in the course of which he demonstrates Palmer's artistic independence, at least in his maturity, of the older man.

Yet it is a pity that he does not write more of the influence of earlier artists on these works. Of these the influence of Claude Lorrain is the strongest; indeed "A Towered City" seems to have been based largely on an idealized view of Tivoli in Claude's *Liber Veritatis*,<sup>14</sup> which Palmer probably knew through the mezzotints of Richard Earlom, published in 1777. But Paley is absolutely right when he claims that among those of his contemporaries who painted subjects from Milton, "only Palmer captures the enticing atmosphere of poetic mystery we find in 'The Bellman' and 'The Lonely Tower.'"

It is to be hoped that Paley's impressive essay will help to initiate a more widespread interest in these works which, even if they lack the intense visionary qualities of the artist's more youthful work, remain sublime evocations of the mind of the poet whose work they illustrate. They are also a survey in old age of the artist's lifetime of artistic endeavor, of wide reading and of deep thought; akin to what W.B. Yeats called "An old man's eagle mind."<sup>15</sup>

Joseph Viscomi's survey, *Prints by Blake and His Followers*, is more specialized than *Essays on the Blake Followers*, but within its self-imposed limits it is a successful little work. It contains, in addition to the essay,

a catalogue of an exhibition held in March and April 1983 at the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art at Cornell University. It is a shame that the unique impression of Welby Sherman's mezzotint "Illustration to Byron's *Sennacherib*," now in the British Museum, did not come to light soon enough to have been discussed by Viscomi, for it is a remarkable little work, a tiny plate that seems to show the influence of John Martin. It is to be included in the big exhibition *Palmer and "The Ancients"* at the Fitzwilliam Museum during the coming autumn [1984].

Incidentally, Viscomi is not quite right in claiming that George Richmond's "The Robber" and "The Shepherd" were the only plates he executed, for later, in 1844, he made a first class etching of Filippino Lippi's portrait of Masaccio in the Uffizi Gallery, Florence.<sup>16</sup>

Viscomi's discussions of technique are always trenchant. To take an example, his argument against Bo Lindberg's views of how Blake prepared the designs on his *Job* plates are convincing. I do not know what studies Viscomi has made during his career, but it would not surprise me if he were a practical engraver, as he seems to be familiar with nuances of technique that usually become apparent only to a practitioner.

But the author is at his best in discussing the engravings of Calvert, that wonderful world of *multum in parvo*, of callipygous beauties, of Christian allegories in classical landscapes. Here again he analyzes with intelligence the practical methods used by Calvert, explaining how he arrived at his effects; this is particularly fascinating in the case of his lithographs.

Of Palmer, Viscomi's remark that "compared to the vibrantly free etched lines of James McNeil Whistler and Seymour Haden, Palmer's etchings are paintings executed with needles and acid" is perceptive. Palmer's approach to etching was always that of a painter—how could it be otherwise?—so it is strange that he was so cautious in his attitude to *retroussage*,<sup>17</sup> a device which gave to his etchings some of their most painterly effects.

To sum up, these two books, small though they are, are serious studies which should help to bring greater understanding to Blake's followers, and should also help to show those who were misled by the Keating forgeries how to look at their works.

<sup>1</sup> Plates 41, 43, 78, 87, 89.

<sup>2</sup> August 1965, p. 439.

<sup>3</sup> *The Times*, 16 July 1976, pp. 1-2.

<sup>4</sup> *The Times*, 20 August 1976, p. 13.

<sup>5</sup> Raymond Lister, ed., *The Letters of Samuel Palmer* (Oxford, 1974), p. 657.

<sup>6</sup> *Letters*, p. 661.

<sup>7</sup> *Letters*, p. 509.

<sup>8</sup> Raymond Lister, *Edward Calvert* (London, 1962), Chapter 5, *passim*.

<sup>9</sup> c. 1860. British Museum.

<sup>10</sup> 1811. Fitzwilliam Museum.

<sup>11</sup> c. 1819. Private collection, England.

<sup>12</sup> 1833. Fitzwilliam Museum.

<sup>13</sup> Arnold Fawcus, Sir Geoffrey Keynes, Raymond Lister and Graham Reynolds, *Samuel Palmer: A Vision Recaptured* (London, 1978); Helen Irwin, "Samuel Palmer, Poet of Light and Shade," *Apollo* (August 1981), pp. 109–13.

<sup>14</sup> Reproduced in Michael Kitson, *Claude Lorrain: Liber Veritatis* (London, 1978), plate 67.

<sup>15</sup> "An Acre of Grass" from *Last Poems* (1936–39).

<sup>16</sup> Raymond Lister, *George Richmond* (London, 1981), p. 176, pl. XXIX.

<sup>17</sup> Increasing the strength of the lines by dropping a piece of muslin on to the plate to drag up the ink in them before a print is taken.

**William Blake. *America: A Prophecy and Europe: A Prophecy*. Facsimile Reproductions of Two Illuminated Books with 35 Plates in Full Color. New York: Dover Publications, 1983. \$5.95**

**William Blake. *Songs of Experience*. Facsimile Reproduction with 26 Plates in Full Color. New York: Dover Publications, 1984. \$3.00**

**Reviewed by Jenijoy La Belle**

Dover Publications has made a fine reputation for itself by publishing well-made paperbacks useful to students and scholars. Among its Blake titles are *Drawings of William Blake* (1970) and a reduced facsimile reproduction of Richard Edwards' 1797 edition of Young's *Night Thoughts* (1975). In 1971 Dover embarked upon the production of color facsimiles with an original-size reproduction of copy B of *Songs of Innocence*. Some of the plates are fuzzy and the backgrounds are a little too dark, but for only two dollars (later raised to three), the volume is valuable for handy reference and classroom use. Dover has recently issued two further volumes containing color reproductions of three illuminated books.

*America* and *Europe* are reproduced original size in a single pamphlet-style paperback. The brief "Publisher's Note" includes the following information: "The present volume reproduces the complete copy M of *America* (printed on paper made in 1799), whereas the complete *Europe* reproduced here includes colored plates from copies B and G of that book and the black-and-white plate

from copy K (all these copies are privately owned). Note that *Europe* contains two plates numbered 9—referred to in the present edition as 9(a) and 9(b)—and has no plate numbered 11." Some of this information is wrong, and the whole statement is misleading. Copy M of *America* and B of *Europe* are indeed in private collections, but copy G of *Europe* is now in the Pierpont Morgan Library and copy K has been in the Fitzwilliam Museum since 1950. The comment about two plates numbered 9 implies that this repetition appears in original copies of *Europe* and that none contains a plate numbered 11. This is not the case at all. Both copies B and G are numbered consecutively, and the presence of two plates numbered 9 in the facsimile results from its composite nature. In copy G, plate 12 (following the plate numbers in Bentley, *Blake Books*) is numbered 9, while the same number is given to plate 13 in copy B.

The Publisher's Note implies that the Dover reproductions were made directly from the original copies cited. I am highly suspicious of this—partly because none of the owners of the originals is named and also because there is no statement of permission to reproduce. Further, the mixture of three copies of *Europe* is exactly the same as that appearing in the Blake Trust/Trianon Press facsimile of 1969. The copy of *America* reproduced by Dover is the same as the one used by the Blake Trust for its 1963 facsimile. The Dover reproductions of both illuminated books show distinct boundary lines between contiguous colors, and this feature is typical of the Blake Trust method of stencil coloring, rather than of Blake's own method with its gentle gradations of tones. Thus it would appear that the Dover volume is based on two Blake Trust facsimiles and that these are the books "privately owned" (perhaps by Mr. Hayward Cirker, founder and owner of Dover?). Since the volume lacks any reference to the Blake Trust, I assume that no permission was necessary.

Using the Blake Trust facsimile of *America* copy M as a standard, I find that most of the plates in the Dover reproduction have acceptable color fidelity. The only major problem would seem to be a dulling of the blue tones, particularly on plates 3 and 5 (as numbered in copy M). The sunburst on plate 7 has lost some of its brilliance, and the outlining of the ram and the two figures has become a little unfocused. Several other plates suffer from indistinct outline in design areas, but the only really bad reproductions are plates 8 and 9. Both have a brown tint to the white paper in text areas, and this browning has seriously affected the blues on plate 8 and the greens on plate 9. Clearly, the Dover reproductions are not suitable for the detailed analysis of Blake's hand coloring. No one, however, should expect an inexpensive reproduction to provide the basis for such analyses. The Dover reproductions are certainly adequate for many other types of studies.

The color work in the *Europe* facsimile is also generally satisfactory. Three plates, however, have a distinct color shift not found in their Blake Trust archetypes: plate 9 (inscribed "6" in the reproduction) has been given a rather ghoulish green tint; plate 11 (inscribed "8") has the same brown shift found in some of the *America* plates; and the final plate is a little too yellow. I would not be surprised to find variations among copies of the Dover volume—particularly if they continue to print from the same transparencies. The later printings of the Dover *Songs of Innocence* show just this sort of decay of both color and sharpness of outline.


In addition to the reproductions, the volume includes exceedingly brief summaries of the poems and descriptions of the designs. The latter seem to be summary paraphrases of Sir Geoffrey Keynes's notes on the designs in the Blake Trust facsimiles. The Dover volume concludes with a transcription of the texts. Lacking any indication to the contrary, the typographic texts appear to be new transcriptions rather than reprints of a previously published edition. The details of punctuation do not follow Keynes, Erdman, Stevenson, or Bentley.

Dover's new facsimile of *Songs of Experience* has the same format as its 1971 *Innocence* facsimile. The two volumes are clearly meant to be companions. In this later volume, the publisher's only reference to the copy reproduced is a statement on the verso of the typographic title-page that the facsimile is based on "a copy printed ca. 1826." On the back cover, this same date is given rather misleadingly as the date of *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*. The appearance of the Dover plates makes it clear that the work reproduced is the *Experience* section from *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*, copy Z, with Blake's inscribed plate numbers, but not his hand-drawn framing lines, eliminated. For unexplained reasons, the frontispiece to *Experience* is also omitted. Copy Z is well known from the fine Blake Trust facsimile of 1955. The appearance of fairly definite boundary lines between colors in the Dover reproduction makes me suspect that, once again, Dover is silently reproducing the work of the Trust. It is even possible that the plates are based on the 1967 Orion Press/Rupert Hart-Davis reproductions of Z, reissued in 1970 by Oxford University Press. These complete reproductions of copy Z are themselves based on the Blake Trust facsimile, and thus the Dover volume could be a reproduction of a reproduction of a reproduction. (I doubt that this is what Blake meant by "Fourfold Vision.") In comparison to all of these possible forebears, Dover's plates show a strong and most unfortunate shift towards a magenta tint. This feature, plus the fact that about half the plates seem a little out of focus, make the volume less handsome and less useful than the *America/Europe* facsimile. The *Experience* volume concludes with a transcription of the text.

Although I've been rather grumpy about the prob-

lems, these are nice volumes (particularly for the classroom) and well worth having—as long as they are not treated with the same sort of trust we give to the real Trust facsimiles. Dover is to be congratulated for producing these books and for offering them for a song.

Selections from  
**William Blake's**  
*Songs of Innocence & of Experience*



given new musical settings by  
**Gregory Forbes**

***Selections from William Blake's Songs of Innocence and of Experience; Musical Settings by Gregory Forbes, Ecchoing Green Records, 1983. A Companion to the New Musical Settings by Gregory Forbes. Gregory Forbes. Kingston, Ontario: Quarry Press, 1983. 48 pages. Together \$27.70; with a set of 20 slides, \$35.70. Slide set only, \$11.20. Prices include shipping.***

**Reviewed by Joseph Viscomi with Margaret LaFrance**

As Ruthven Todd points out, "no one can fully understand the *Songs* divorced of their setting."<sup>1</sup> Some fine, hand-colored facsimiles have made it possible to read Blake's illuminated poetry as graphic art consisting of text and illustration in complex relations. In short, to read it as originally presented. Or have they? Poetry and painting were only two of the "three Powers in Man of



conversing with Paradise which the flood did not Sweep away" (K 609). The third Power was Music, and music, according to Cunningham, was an integral part of the composing process as manifest in the illuminated print: "As he drew the figure he meditated the song which was to accompany it, and the music to which the verse was to be sung, was the offspring too of the same moment."<sup>2</sup> Must the poetry's setting, then, be musical as well as visual?

That music was important to Blake, there can be no doubt. According to Gilchrist, Blake "was very impressionable . . . to simple national melodies . . . though not so to music of more complicated structure." At the Linnells', he "would sit by the pianoforte, tears falling from his eyes, while he listened to the Border Melody" sung by Mrs. Linnell. Even then, as late as 1825, he "still sang, in a voice tremulous with age, sometimes old ballads, sometimes his own songs, to melodies of his own."<sup>3</sup> Blake is recorded as having died with a song on his lips, while some of our earliest accounts of him as a poet emphasize his singing.<sup>4</sup> At Mrs. Mathew's salon, "he was listened to by the company with profound silence and allowed by most of the visitors to possess original and extraordinary merit."<sup>5</sup> And although Blake "was entirely unacquainted with the science of music, his ear was so good, that his tunes were sometimes most singularly beautiful, and were noted down by musical professors."<sup>6</sup> In *An Island in the Moon* (c. 1784), in large part a satire of salon society, Quid, Blake's caricature of himself, continually bursts into song. True, Gittipin, Gimblet, Obtuse Angle, and the other Islanders may not have been musically sophisticated, but Blake's real salon audience certainly was. "Being a musical house," the Mathew gatherings included accomplished singers like Elizabeth Billington, composers like Thomas Billington, famous musicologists like Dr. Charles Burney (perhaps one of the music professors?) and Flaxman, who evidently "sang beautifully, having an excellent and beautiful voice."<sup>7</sup> Singing to people who knew a thing or two about music suggests not only that Blake was confident of his voice and compositions, but that he actually was a good singer. Like the Italian saying: If you want to see if you can sing, go to where women wash clothes; if they stop singing, you're good.

That Blake should sing while he worked is as natural as words and images generating and being generated by melodies. It is more interesting, though, that the simultaneity in the illuminated printing process of melos, logos, and graphics is manifest in the reception of the illuminated print. In the "Introduction" to the *Songs of Innocence*, music, singing, and writing, though executed sequentially by the Piper, come together in the form of the book, so that "all [who] read" the "happy songs . . . may joy to hear" (K 111). Reading is hearing

the songs, the melody being the activity of mind as it reads. As Blake says, "Nature has no Tune, but Imagination has" (K 779). Because "Melody," like "Invention [and] Identity," is one of the "Objects of Intuition" (K 474), the songs are given settings each time they are read. Historically, it is the only time the three Powers do come together, for Blake is not known to have passed out illuminated prints as song sheets as he read or sang them.

Gregory Forbes, with his album of twelve songs selected from *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*, sixteen "facsimiles of Blake's coloured engravings," a set of twenty slides, and a large size illustrated commentary, attempts to combine the aural and visual Blake within a historical context.<sup>8</sup> His "aim . . . in writing . . . has been to bring the listener to an understanding of the song lyrics in a way that Blake intended them" (p. 9). Blake's exact intentions, of course, aren't known, since he never wrote down the music (it is not "lost," p. 7),<sup>9</sup> but Forbes reasons that "because [Blake's] sympathies were always with the common people . . . traditional folk music stylings are especially appropriate for Blake's songs" (p. 7).<sup>10</sup> So, "to bring Blake to the people," he based his aural reconstructions on children's hymns, folk ballads, and Elizabethan songs, as well as "the street music of Blake's London, the jig and reels of itinerant fiddlers and pipers" (p. 7), and used contemporaneous instruments, such as guitars, flutes, flageolets, violin, and hand-drums. From *Innocence* he has set "Introduction," "The Shepherd," "The Lamb," "The Divine Image," "Laughing Song," "The Echoing Green" [side A]; from *Experience* "Introduction," "London," "A Little Girl Lost," "The Garden of Love," "The Tyger," "Ah! Sun-flower" [side B]. The songs were chosen to represent "the main themes of the complete cycle" (p. 8). Blake's contrary states and their accompanying symbols and images are discussed in some detail (pp. 24-27), but the song order, instrumentation, and arrangement of the reproductions do not pair contrary states or make explicit the connections within or between the two sets.

The slides are for "classroom presentation," to be viewed "while listening to the music," an audio-visual presentation which Forbes believes will "project [the listener] into that time when Blake created each illustration and, at the same time 'meditated the song which was to accompany it'" (p. 10). The slides, which are of the same plates as the reproductions, plus Linnell's sketch of Blake and the three title pages to *Songs*, are used not only to accommodate a student audience, but because they "are much clearer and more vivid than the printed reproductions, and the lyrics can be read without difficulty" (p. 8). Indeed, the 16 photomechanical reproductions (the songs, frontispieces, and "The Voice of the Ancient Bard," which is not set to music), though printed on fine, heavyweight ivory paper, are in no way

facsimiles. None is easily readable; all give a poor idea of what illuminated prints look like. The copy is not identified, but seems to be copy Z without the frame lines.<sup>11</sup>

Introducing Blake through song and image is both creative and practical, and a logical extension of what W.H. Auden said—or almost said—somewhere: "No poetry is good poetry that is not good when read aloud." One would think that the voice of the balladeer could easily join those of piper, bard, and prophet, and, like theirs, add to our understanding and enjoyment of Blake. But, unfortunately, the Donovan-like style of these settings does little to enhance the inherent musicality of Blake's words—let alone reveal the meaning of the songs.<sup>12</sup> Missing here is the poet's ear for what a poet said.

A familiarity with eighteenth-century folk stylings and ballad structures may be necessary to capture the popular sounds of Blake's age, but it is no assurance of communicating the spirit of Blake's poems. Because of the musical limitations of Forbes' compositional style, the settings too often seem like impositions on, rather than expositions of, the text. Indeed, the style seems even more limited than it is because Forbes, perhaps confusing the distinction between simplicity and monotony, not only sings all the songs himself, but uses only one instrument, the guitar, as the dominant accompanimental instrument in all of the settings. While his guitar playing is more than adequate, his voice is not the sort that can sustain interest for an entire album. While Forbes does incorporate other instruments throughout the album, using sometimes as many as six musicians, he uses them in such limited and subordinate ways that their presence almost frustrates more than it pleases. The flute, for instance, which he uses to represent the innocent Piper, often plays trills in the background, which are meant to sound pastoral and serene. But the trills rarely grow organically from the musical context, seeming instead to have been a concept of innocence thought of and tacked on after the setting was complete. A more successful use of other instruments is in the jig-like sections that follow "Laughing Song" and the "Introduction" to *Songs of Experience*, although in both instances, the jigs go on so long that we lose the initial freshness of the idea. And, while this type of postlude certainly captures the energetic spirit of the former, it seems a questionable ending to the latter.

From *Innocence*, "The Lamb" is the setting that works best. In this song, Forbes' compositional techniques (a small melodic range, and repetitive rhythms and harmonies) enhance the text. Here the gentle arpeggiation in the guitar and the quiet flute obligato lend a lovely simplicity to the song without becoming monotonous or saccharine. These same compositional techniques do not, however, work in every song. Indeed, in "The Divine Image," Forbes' style actually destroys the mean-

ing of the poem. The melody for the first line ("Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love") is mi, re, ti, do, a seemingly inoffensive and simple arrangement of tones. But when this melody is imposed on the text, and in the syllabic rhythm of the text, the effect is unsettling at best. The seventh step of the scale (ti) is unstable because of its half-step proximity—and its consequent need to "pull"—to tonic (do). That the word "peace" occurs on ti and is then given rhythmic stress (i.e. a longer note value) is not only awkward and unaccomplished writing, but it destroys the very peacefulness and harmony that the words (as a phrase) are trying to convey.

From *Experience*, "London" and "Ah! Sun-flower" are the best. In "London," the drone bass note successfully portrays the hopeless plodding of downtrodden people and the wailing guitar notes become the cries of the "chimney sweeper" and "youthful harlot." In this song, Forbes' technique of repeating his melodies by couplets rather than stanzas (a technique which contributes to the stasis of many of the settings) works very well as a way of accentuating the key words and images. The coda to "Ah! Sun-flower," which goes on almost as long as the song itself (but, unfortunately, at such a reduced audio level that it is difficult to hear), features a guitar solo by Thomas Handy, the improvisatory nature of which is a welcome change from Forbes' consistent and controlled guitar accompaniments to the songs. One only wishes that Forbes had been this adventurous in all of his settings.

The commentary is in two parts and, with forty-eight pages of wide double columns of type, is quite extensive. "William Blake and the Age of Revolution," the first section of part I, examines the "Political," "Industrial," "Intellectual," "Social," and "Romantic" revolutions of Blake's day, and his reactions to them. "William Blake's Life and Writing," the second section, focuses on those events of Blake's life and his other writings that have a "bearing on the *Songs*" (p. 9). "The Poetics of the Songs," section three, analyses the form, diction, and symbolism of the poems and discusses the main literary devices Blake employs. Irony, unfortunately, is not included, but an erroneous definition of illuminated printing is. Part II is primarily an explication of each of the twelve songs and designs, with a very "Select Bibliography." The booklet is decorated with monochrome vignettes from *Jerusalem* and other illuminated books, none of which is identified or discussed in the text.

The background material is mostly derived from Bronowski's *William Blake and the Age of Revolution*, while the interpretation of the *Songs* is mostly derived from Wicksteed and Hirsh. Oddly, though, Forbes ignores the latter's sense of change and the former's warning of reading Blake backwards, in favor of reading the songs within Blake's "system," an approach more in keeping

with Adams and Gleckner.<sup>13</sup> At any rate, Forbes has written a very solid introductory text, with Blake intelligently placed in his time, and the poems, "London" and the "Garden of Love" in particular, given fine, detailed explications. The page or two on each poem is designed to help the student read the poem, literally, by identifying verbs, nouns, antecedents, and parallel structures, and by pointing out important biblical and historical allusions, key words, symbols, and recurrent images.

In the discussion of the poems, of diverse "revolutions, . . . and how [Blake] reacted to them" (p. 11), it is obvious that Forbes knows his audience well. His definition of Experience for woman as sexual repression, for example, and his comments about the marriage of love (and thus Blake's own marriage), the arranged marriage, and the influence of the role of women in the American Colonies on Blake, Wollstonecraft, and other writers, will, I think, be of particular interest to high school students ("Social Revolution: Marriage and Women's Rights," p. 15). So, too, will many of the facts he cites: "A teenage boy could be hanged for minor theft. There were 150 crimes punishable by hanging (although murder was not one of them); most of them were crimes against public property" (pp. 11-12); "there were 50,000 prostitutes, not counting mistresses kept by men of wealth," in Blake's London (p. 16); "of the 70 years of Blake's life, Britain was at war for 35" (p. 11).

Some of his facts, though, are wrong. He defines engraving as a technique in which "a design was copied on to a copper plate with an acid-resistant varnish; when acid was applied to the plate, the design would remain in relief" (p. 23). In other words, he confuses engraving with relief etching, as well as the concepts of negative and positive (using them to mean reverse and regular writing). He cites Todd and Hayter's 1948 experiments as the last word, ignoring Essick's *William Blake, Printmaker* (Princeton University Press, 1980), a careful reading of which would have prevented these and a number of other technical errors.<sup>14</sup> And he sees the stimulus for illuminated printing in the printing of the *Poetical Sketches* (1783). It is, however, highly unlikely that Blake sought "an inexpensive method of self publication" because the apology in the advertisement proved an "embarrassing experience" (p. 19). Publishing juvenilia was very fashionable (especially in the 1770's and 1780's) and, though Blake was certainly no "untutored youth," excusing its merit quite common;<sup>15</sup> fashion and convention are still to be seen in Byron's preface to *Hours of Idleness*, 1807. Besides, Blake was given the book in sheets; that he made no attempt to distribute it cannot be attributed to one offending page, which could have been easily extracted.

We can dismiss the idea that for five years Blake was actively looking for an alternative means for pub-

lishing his works—or four years, if the "illuminate the manuscript" phrase in *An Island in the Moon* (1784) is misinterpreted as referring to illuminated printing. He would have been one very unimaginative printmaker had he not known that texts could be illustrated and multiplied on one page by etching or engraving; the former, after all, is the method Blake used for three of his illuminated books, and one or the other method is what all eighteenth-century writing engravers and trade card makers used to print and illustrate their texts. Why Blake used relief etching instead of any other method and waited till 1788 to begin experiments are important questions, but they go unanswered when relief etching is pictured as a major breakthrough after years of trying and searching.<sup>16</sup>

The picture of Blake as a graphic artist is a bit out of focus in other ways, too. Forbes inadvertently perpetuates an image of Blake that we recognize as Victorian, though its originator was himself a contemporary of Blake's. Borrowing from Cunningham, Forbes pictures Blake as "a man of tireless industry, and after a day's work . . . for other artists and booksellers . . . he would paint or write through the night" (p. 20). Cunningham says: "During the day [Blake] was a man of sagacity and sense, who handled his graver wisely, and conversed in a wholesome and pleasant manner; in the evening, when he had done his prescribed task, he gave loose to his imagination."<sup>17</sup> But the image of an artist who "engraved by day," as though in some shop, but "saw visions at night"<sup>18</sup> while laboring in his own studio, presents a schizophrenic artist and a melodramatic scene worthy of George Sand, and one which appeals to those who need conflict in order to see meaning in what would otherwise be plotless day-to-day living. But there was no physical or temporal separation between Blake's commissioned works as an engraver or designer and his own work in relief etching. All the plates were executed at home, in his own studio, cut and drawn on the same tables, proofed and printed with the same ink, on the same press. Blake did not work in a copperplate printer's workshop, or a large engraving studio, or a pressroom. It is a mistake to think of him as a craftsman constantly under someone's watchful eye, or under the pressure of deadlines like nineteenth-century wood engravers working for the *Illustrated London News*.

The image of Blake as a mere craftsman, and not just a mistaken notion of the relation between invention and execution (a relation beyond the scope of this or probably any introductory text), is partly responsible for the idea that Blake "wanted . . . skill of hand,"<sup>19</sup> an idea that Blake fought so hard to overcome. Why the "Tyger" looks like a harmless cat, for example, cannot be explained by a lack of skill on Blake's part, or, as Forbes suggests, a case in which Blake, "in executing the drawing . . . ended up with a creation quite different

from what he had in mind" (p. 44). Picturing Blake as a nineteenth-century craftsman is not only misleading, but contradicts Cunningham's own image of Blake as a multitalented artist "sketching designs, engraving plates, writing songs, and composing music" all at the same time<sup>20</sup>—of a man conversing with Paradise with all his Powers.

Forbes' settings are not art songs or compositions like those of Benjamin Britten, Ralph Vaughan Williams, or George Rochberg.<sup>21</sup> Nor are they "Airs simple and ethereal to match the designs and poems of William Blake," which, as Gilchrist admits, "would be a novelty in music."<sup>22</sup> As simple folk songs, they are more successful at introducing Gregory Forbes than the spirit of William Blake. The settings are not "aural facsimiles," but, then, what is appealing in theory is almost always impossible in practice. Whatever the album's scholarly merit, and despite the commentary's minor misrepresentations, Forbes' triadic presentation (and sound argument for such a presentation) ought to stimulate lively and imaginative discussion about the *Songs* in and out of the classroom.

<sup>1</sup> *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* (Norwood, Pa.: Norwood Editions, 1973), p. viii.

<sup>2</sup> Allan Cunningham, *Lives of the Most Eminent British Painters, Sculptors and Architects; Blake Records*, p. 482.

<sup>3</sup> Alexander Gilchrist, *Life of William Blake* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1942), p. 41.

<sup>4</sup> Fredrick Tatham; *Blake Records*, p. 305.

<sup>5</sup> J. T. Smith, in Gilchrist, p. 41.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> Tatham; *Blake Records*, p. 521. For a list of possible guests at the Mathews' and of the pleasure gardens and theatres where Blake would have heard popular music, see B.H. Fairchild, *Such Holy Song* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1980), p. 7.

<sup>8</sup> The basis for the album project is the series of workshops Forbes conducted for secondary school children in "Frontenac County, Ontario, Canada, and later presented . . . at two conferences of the Ontario Council of the Teachers of English. All of these were arranged by David Schleich of St. Lawrence College, Kingston" (p. 47). With the encouragement of Schleich, also editor of Quarry Press and tom-tom player on "The Tyger," Gregory Forbes seems to have done everything himself, including writing the accompanying commentary. Despite its elaborate presentation, the project is quite Blakean in spirit. The logo for Echoing Green Records (a company certainly created for this project) is the Piper from the *Innocence* title page, while the record label is "The River of Life," printed in green, with its flute players on either side of the spindle hole.

<sup>9</sup> There is an odd use of sources and significant omissions. Forbes describes the music as "lost," referring, one assumes, to those tunes Smith says were "noted down by musical professors." However, he never refers to Smith, but to Cunningham's statement that Blake "wanted the art of writing it down" (p. 7), which leaves the reader with the impression that Blake's unrecorded musical notations are missing or lost. Cunningham also notes that if they "equalled many of his drawings and some of his songs, we have lost melodies of real value" (*Blake Records*, p. 482).

<sup>10</sup> Forbes is certainly correct to argue that an understanding of the music of Blake's day is the first step to hearing the poetry as Blake meant us to hear it. But I think he overstates the case when he says that "not much has been written about Blake's musical sources since very little is known about the subject; the study must be based almost entirely on Blake's lyrics" (p. 47). By citing only one work in the bibliography on the subject, Martha England's "Blake and the Hymns of Charles Wesley" (*Bulletin of the New York Public Library*, 70 [1966], 7-33), he makes clear the need for his album project at the expense of strengthening it as an introduction to the subject, about which much is actually already known. What is not known is if Blake's familiarity with popular ballads derived from reading or singing them. Forbes does mention (p. 22) Thomas Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765), a copy of which Blake owned; but not Christopher Smart's *Hymns for the Amusement of Children* (3 editions between 1770-1775); Joseph Ritson's *A Select Collection of English Songs* (1783), for which Blake engraved several plates; nor any of the contemporary essays on the relation between music and poetry, like John Aiken's *Essays on Song-Writing* (1774); Ambrose Philips' "Letter on Song-writing," in *The Guardian*, #16 (1713); Anselm Bayly's *The Alliance of Musick, Poetry, and Oratory* (1789); or Daniel Webb's *Observations on the Correspondence between Poetry and Music* (1769); nor does he mention recent theoretical work, like Bertrand H. Bronson's *Music and Literature in England in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Los Angeles: Clark Memorial Library of the University of California at Los Angeles, 1953), or Herbert M. Schueller's "Correspondences between Music and the Sister Arts, According to Eighteenth-Century Aesthetic Theory" (*Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 11 [1953], 334-59). These works may be too esoteric for Forbes' audience of high school students, but he seems not to have read them himself or six works that are crucial to discussing the influence of hymns and popular ballads on Blake's poetry: Albert B. Friedman's *The Ballad Revival: Studies in the Influence of Popular on Sophisticated Poetry* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1961), George Sampson's "The Century of Divine Songs," in *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 29 (1943), Martha England and John Sparrow's *Hymns Unbidden: Donne, Herbert, Blake, Emily Dickinson, and the Hymnographers*; Nick Shrimpton "Hell's Hymnbook: Blake's *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* and Their Models," in *Literature of the Romantic Period: 1750-1850*, Ed. R. T. Davies and B. G. Beatty (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1976), pp. 19-35; John Adlard's *The Sports of Cruelty: Fairies, Folk-Songs, Charms and other Country Matters in the Work of William Blake* (London: Cecil & Amelia Woolf, 1972); and, most important, B.H. Fairchild's *Such Holy Song: Music as Idea, Form, and Image in the Poetry of William Blake* (Kent, Ohio: Kent University Press, 1980).

<sup>11</sup> The reproductions seem to be of 6 and 8 color offset reproductions of copy Z, published by Rupert Hart-Davis Ltd. in 1967. Forbes mentions twice (pp. 23, 47) that the first color facsimile of the *Songs* was 1967, which, of course, is not true, but it does seem to indicate that he used the 1967 volume to make his "facsimiles." (Hard to believe that offset lithography could have undone so many!) For a list of early color facsimiles of the *Songs*, see *Blake Books* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1978), pp. 432-39. For a history of Blake facsimiles, see Robert N. Essick's review of the Manchester Etching Workshop facsimiles, *Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly*, 19 (1985), 39.

<sup>12</sup> The Donovan album they recall most clearly is *A Gift from a Flower to a Garden* (Epic, 1967), which is probably only coincidence, but it is interesting to note that Donovan in this two-record set seems to think he's Blake. As a "minstrel," he sings his "poems" so that "all may see and know . . . that God is Love," sings one of them to experienced "youth" and the other to innocent "children of the dawning generation." The texts of the 12 songs for children are printed and illustrated with pen line drawings, and the sheets form both a booklet and a song cycle.

<sup>13</sup> Jacob Bronowski, *William Blake and the Age of Revolution* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965); Joseph H. Wicksteed, *Blake's Innocence and Experience* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1928); E.D. Hirsh, Jr., *Innocence and Experience: An Introduction to Blake* (New Haven: Yale University Press), which was published in 1964, not "1927" (p. 47); Hazard Adams, *William Blake: A Reading of the Shorter Poems* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1963); Robert Gleckner, *The Piper and The Bard* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1959).

<sup>14</sup> A few technical corrections: Blake's apprenticeship was not to the Society of Antiquaries but to Basire, the Society's official engraver (pp. 23, 26). Illuminated books of the Middle Ages were not "hand-printed" (p. 19), nor is "illuminated printing" a "technique that married the arts of engraving with watercolor painting" (p. 7). It is doubtful that "Blake was a victim of technological change in that engraving was a dying craft, gradually giving way to lithography in the first two decades of the 18th century [sic]" (p. 13). Forbes means, of course, the nineteenth century, but during this period the most popular reproductive method was aquatint, the mainstay of the picturesque view industry, and engraving, even after Hullmandel set up his lithography press, 1817-1818, was in great demand, because the development of steel engraving (1822) made it possible to print tens of thousands of impressions with great detail and without loss of quality.

<sup>15</sup> Margaret Ruth Lowry, *Windows of the Morning: A Critical Study of William Blake's Poetical Sketches, 1783* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940), pp. 39-41.

<sup>16</sup> For a discussion of why Blake chose to use relief etching when other, more conventional, methods would have enabled him to combine text and illustrations on one plate, see my *The Art of William Blake's Illuminated Prints* (Manchester: Manchester Etching Workshop, 1983), pp. 1, 19-20.

<sup>17</sup> *Blake Records*, p. 488.

<sup>18</sup> P. 501.

<sup>19</sup> P. 485.

<sup>20</sup> P. 482.

<sup>21</sup> Britten, *Songs & Proverbs of William Blake*, for baritone and piano, op. 74 (London: Faber & Faber, 1965); Williams, *Ten Blake Songs*, for voice and oboe (London: Oxford University Press, 1958); Rochberg, *Blake Songs*, for soprano and chamber ensemble (New York: Leeds Music Corp., 1963). There is, admittedly, a thin line between poor translation and exciting variation. New settings of a song or play can become works of art in their own right, celebrating the original and displaying what may have been hid. It seems that musicians have been more successful in creating new works of art based on Blake's songs than have other artists. Illustrations of Blake's poetry struck Ruthven Todd as "the most horrible of all things"—though, admittedly, he had the "whimsical drawings of some cheery, chintzy girl, who is 'so fond of Blake as he inspires her so much.' From such nightmares as these, Good Lord, Deliver us!" (Todd, *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*, p. viii). He is apparently referring to (and quite rightly, I think) Pamela Bianco's line drawings in *The Land of Dreams* (New York: Macmillan, 1928).

<sup>22</sup> Gilchrist, p. 41.

## NEWSLETTER

### ASECS CLIFFORD PRIZE



The American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies is currently soliciting nominations for its 1984-85 James L. Clifford Prize. The Prize carries an award of \$300 and goes to the best nominated article, an outstanding study of some aspect of eighteenth-century culture, interesting to any eighteenth-century specialist, regardless of discipline. The following rules also apply: (1) The article should not be longer than 7500 words. (2) The article must have appeared in print in a journal, festschrift, or other serial publication between July 1984 and June 1985. (3) The article may be nominated by a member of the Society or by its author. (4) Nominations must be accompanied by an offprint or copy of the article and must be postmarked by February 1, 1986 and sent to the ASECS office. (5) The winning author must be a member of the Society at the time of the award. Nominations or inquiries should be sent to the following address: ASECS, R.G. Peterson, Executive Secretary, St. Olaf College, Northfield, MN 55057, (505) 663-3488.

