

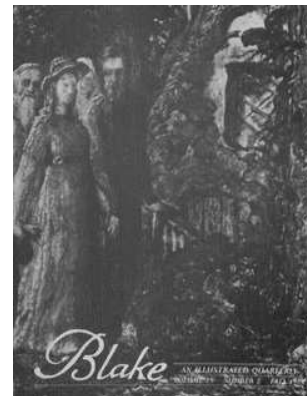
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Keynes and Blake at Cambridge

G. E. Bentley, Jr.

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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. | rities. | 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.)

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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*¹ lists and describes 23 colored copies of the engraved work, and refers to one more, the Moss-Bentley copy G² 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.³ 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^m 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*.⁴ 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, Phoebus, 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 Phoebus. 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 Phoebus 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-