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D I S C U S S I O N

Suggestion in connection with previous discussion
of “The Little Boy Found”

Niels Christian Hertz

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⁶ Mr. Tolley reminds me that the clearest example of androgyny in *Songs* is the main figure in the tailpiece design, Pl. a, which is reproduced in Wicksteed.

⁷ I have heard it alleged that the negroid coloration in this picture is the accidental result of the deterioration of the tempera. After having studied it quite closely twice I doubt that the allegation is correct. But if there is any evidence of accident having produced design this should be presented where all can read it.

⁸ In contrast with places 4, 7, 8, 20, and 21 where a small strip was added to the plate and the area was painted as water. In later copies of plates 12 and 23 indications of water are added in paint but the plates themselves were not similarly enlarged.

⁹ In Blake's cosmic myth we can also ask how it is that one can get lost in spite of essential innocence. Here the final design of the *Paradise Lost* series, "The Expulsion," is particularly apposite, since the angel Michael is depicted as an androgynous guide who grasps the hands of those adult children, Adam and Eve, and leads them down from freedom. The nadir of human fortunes is represented, it may be added, in the great picture "Pestilence: Death of the First Born," which is also in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. There Michael's Satanic aspect is inflated, as it were, by the four wild horsemen in the background of the "Expulsion" until he has become a giant reptile sowing the tares of disease. Conversely his polite but firm policeman's role in the "Expulsion" is represented by the diminished angel, seen between the Satanic legs, who modestly guards the way out as the Covering Cherub. The sequel to this, in turn, is shown in another great picture, "The Angel Binding the Dragon," which is in the Fogg Museum. The action here occurs in the time of the end when the alliance between Michael and Satan has been broken as a result of the further degeneration of Satan from a smiter with disease into a dragon old. This consolidation of error, brought about by the redemptive action of Christ in history, which I trace in the conclusion of this piece, is nevertheless not sufficient for Michael to free himself entirely by belated positive action. As some critics have previously noted, one coil of the chain is looping Michael's shoulder, presumably because his ages of complicity have taught him some bad habits.

¹⁰ This key symbol in *Songs* also appears on pls. 2, 7, 28 (in some copies), and 36, and in more attenuated forms on pls. 3, 4, and 53 as well as in pls. 5, 8, 9, 18, 20, 24, 27, 28, 34, 36, 38, (41), (43), 51, and 53, where the motif becomes a tree and clinging vine.

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[In connection with previous discussion of "The Little Boy Found" in the *Newsletter* (#2, 7-9; #3, 17-18; #6, 29-32), we have an interesting suggestion from Mr. Niels Christian Hertz, who is writing a dissertation on *The Gates of Paradise* at the University of Copenhagen. Mr. Hertz writes "I thought it might be relevant in connection with 'the nightgowned adult' to mention a passage in Rev. i.13 describing 'one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.'"]

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... introduction to Blake, (New Haven, 1964).
... "The Colors of Prophecy," *The Boston, CC (January, 1965)*.