

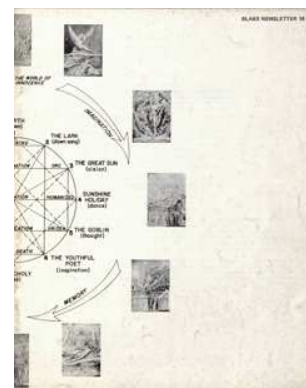
AN ILLUSTRATED QUARTERLY
BLAKE

M I N U T E
P A R T I C U L A R

“Bring out number, weight & measure in a year of death”

Louis Middleman

Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly, Volume 4, Issue 4, Spring 1971, p. 147



head in Blake's figures, he will have begun to understand the nature of the language that I am trying to use in my books, and will have been rescued from the net of abstraction that always lurks in any attempt to seize Blake through interpretative commentary.

MINUTE PARTICULARS

LOUIS MIDDLEMAN: CARNEGIE-MELLON UNIVERSITY

"Bring out number, weight & measure in a year of dearth"

William Blake's use of the Bible is copiously documented, but it has as yet gone unnoticed that one of the Proverbs of Hell, "Bring out number, weight & measure in a year of dearth," is built on a close translation of the Aramaic writing on the wall (Daniel 5.25-28), "mene, mene, tekel, upharsin," or "numbered, numbered, weighed, divided."

Blake announces in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* the advent of a new heaven consequent upon the destruction of a rationalistic epistemology based on a reductive materialism. The writing on the wall appeared at the feast of Belshazzar, last king of Babylon, prophesying the fall of his kingdom, the biblical analogue of Blake's prophecies against the Babylon of Newton, Bacon, Locke, and other despicable "Angels."

JOHN ADLARD: HIGHBRIDGE, SOMERSET

"The Garden of Love"

And I saw it was filled with graves,
And tomb-stones where flowers should be;
And Priests in black gowns were walking their rounds,
And binding with briars my joys and desires.

Most writers on Blake appear to find the stanza too simple to need much comment, but R. B. Kennedy, editing for Collins' Annotated Student Texts, remarks: "The joys and desires seem almost personified as children."

This suggests that few, if any, readers know that binding with briars was to be seen in graveyards in Blake's day and up till Victorian times. A writer in *Notes and*