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A Significant New Blakean Fragment

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The depth saith, It is not in me: and
the sea saith, It is not with me.
It cannot be gotten for gold, neither
shall silver be weighed for the price
thereof.

The appropriateness of this passage to the themes of *TheL* hardly needs pointing out, but it is equally obvious that there is neither rod nor bowl here, and nothing about love.

I propose another candidate, somewhat better than these though far from perfect, Hebrews 9.3-4:

And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant.

The immediate context is a disparaging account of the "worldly sanctuary" of the old covenant. The Epistle as a whole stresses the great change that has come with Christ: as a new and greater high priest he has replaced the old material sanctuary with a new spiritual one, and whereas the old high priest entered the Holy of Holies alone and once a year, Christ has entered it once and for all and we enter it with Him.

The golden pot is described in Exodus 16.32-34, where Aaron the high priest at Moses' command puts an omer full of manna into a pot and lays it up "before the Testimony" (covenant) in the ark. The manna had been sent by God daily as a sign of His grace and love for the Israelites. It would spoil after one day (except on the Sabbath) so there was no point in hoarding it. A Blakean might say it is an error to try to gather up God's love and preserve it in a "holy" place. The quality of mercy is not strained; it droppeth like manna from heaven, and cannot be stored in pots.

The rod of Aaron is described in Numbers 17.1-11. Of the twelve rods representing the twelve tribes only Aaron's blossomed, thereby proving to dissenters that God had indeed chosen Aaron to be high priest with sole privilege of entering the Holy of Holies. Aaron's authority was thus based on supernatural power and privilege, and not, as one might argue such authority should be, on spiritual wisdom. And of course it was the Aaronic priesthood that Christ came to replace (see Hebrews 7.11-17).

Just as the ancient priests wrongly tried to consolidate and preserve spirit and selfishly restrict access to it, so *TheL* wrongly seeks to consolidate and preserve herself, as it were, and rejects love and generosity for their threat to her selfhood.

That the passage from Hebrews lies behind the "motto" gains support from the reference in *TheL* to the "morning manna" that the Lilly will receive in eternity. That in turn refers to the "hidden manna" of Revelation 2.17, the manna

hidden in the ark that Christ, the new high priest, will pass out to all who are faithful to Him.

A Significant New Blakean Fragment

By Donald H. Reiman

Though Blake's *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience* are familiar to all students above the age at which they first visit the zoo, his fragmentary *Songs of Education*--not yet found in the collected editions of Blake's works--are less well known. I have known respected Blake scholars, in fact, who were appallingly ignorant of this seminal work.

Originally intended for a volume in William and Mary Jane Godwin's Juvenile Library, *Songs of Education* was left unfinished when Blake became afflicted by extreme gastric indigestion while reading at the British Museum. His only comment on the work occurs in Barron Field's report of the conversation between Blake and Leigh Hunt at Horsemonger Lane Gaol. When asked by either Hunt or Thomas Massa Alsager (Field is uncertain which) what place *Songs of Education* would have occupied in his *oeuvre*, Blake replied: "I cannot tell how the whole might have developed; certain I am, however, that *Education*, while not consonant with *Experience*, destroys *Innocence*."

Heretofore scholars have been handicapped by having available only brief, disconnected fragments of *Songs of Education*--couplets and quatrains that Blake composed on the letter-covers of Godwin's appeals for money. Recently, however, there has come into my possession an extended passage from the work that incorporates some of the earlier fragments and suggests the tone and purpose, if not the full scope and shape, of the projected volume. While browsing in a bookshop near Exit 10 of the New York State Thruway, I was fortunate enough to discover (and purchase for thirty-five cents) a copy of Swedenborg's *Proverbs of Pisgah*, the excessively rare London edition of 1801 printed by W. E. Inzell for the New Church. Imagine my joy when I discovered that its title page bore the inscription, in a clearly identifiable hand, "W^m Blake/ Poet and Painter/ 1807" and that between the otherwise-unrecorded half-title and the title page was a leaf--artistically sewn in with pastel thread--containing the following lines from Blake's *Songs of Education*:¹

Then woke the spirit of bald William Blake--
Word-lover, foe of orthodoxies' kind;
He swept across two school-infested lands
To chastise all self-satisfied of mind.

Not one to FOSTER DAMONS for a fee,
With rusty KROE BER thumping their stout KEYNES
He drove them to the SHOR; ERE they could flee,
A voice boomed out, inflicting deeper pains:

"I GRANT that publishers who mind the PURSE
SEE VALue* in the books these scholars write.
I'd rather hear a HAG STRUM on a HARP
ER watch RAINE beating down yon blasted BLOOM
Than, with back BENT, LEYn reading through the
night,
Conning their jargon by the PALEY light.

"ADAM'S a GARDNER who has lost his place
Through sad neGLECK, NER do I find it odd
That when aN URMI of the pedants' race
ROSE up, our father left that sacred sod.

"He could not TAYLER to their sketches Gray
Eden's bright scenes, and so he fled away.
From that day on, the CUR RAN wild, small FRYE
Anatomized each WITT REICH merrily."

The prophetic thunder ceased. Another spoke:
"I tells yer, gov'ner, this, an' no mistake--
That last loud chap ain't none of Billy Blake.
'Aven't yer 'ERD, MAN? 'e's a Cockney bloke!"

* Another MS reads "PERCIVALue"

1 I have edited the fragment heuristically according to the following principles: (1) all substantive features of the text have been transcribed literally; (2) all accidental features have been emended to conform to my notion of what constitutes communicative English.

Nobodaddy: Through the Bottomless Pit, Darkly By L. Edwin Folsom

The names of Blake's poetic characters are, of course, vast in their associations, often incorporating puns, connotations and anagrams based upon key words or Biblical, classical, and historical characters.¹ Nobodaddy, the farting, belching "Father of Jealousy" (E 462) who hides himself in clouds and loves "hanging & drawing & quartering / Every bit as well as war & slaughtering," (E 490) has received general critical agreement as to the significance of his name. "Old daddy Nobody" and "Nobody's daddy"² seem logical expansions of the compact name of this destructive divinity who appears in several of the Notebook poems and who manifests himself elsewhere as Urizen, Winter, the Will, and the Old Testament God.³ But "Nobodaddy," it should be noted, is also a close anagram of the name of a character who appears in two of Blake's favorite Biblical books, Job and Revelation: Abaddon (Hebrew for "destruction"). Anagrammatized, "Abaddon" becomes "Nobadad." He is "the angel of the bottomless pit" who appears in Revelation 9:11 and is mentioned in Job 26:6.⁴

Like Blake's Nobodaddy, who hides himself in clouds and thrives in "darkness & obscurity," (E 462) Abaddon exists, too, in an obscure beclouded place; when an angel of the apocalypse

opens the shaft of Abaddon's realm, there "arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit" (Rev. 9:2).⁵ Abaddon is the king of the locusts that are released during the apocalypse in order to torture but not to kill "those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads" (Rev. 9:4). Old Nobodaddy, who is (with his love of "hanging & drawing & quartering . . . war & slaughtering"), like Abaddon, the personification of destruction, reflects nonetheless Abaddon's less than humane decision to torture but not to kill: "To kill the people I am loth," (E 490) swears Nobodaddy solemnly and hypocritically. And in his satiric verse, "When Klopstock England Defied" (E 491), Blake portrays Nobodaddy ordering a miniature apocalypse, with Blake himself commanded by Nobodaddy to inflict torture but not death on the infidel Klopstock. As the smoke rising from Abaddon's bottomless pit accompanies the release of the locusts, Nobodaddy's "Fart[ing] & Belch[ing] & cough[ing]" (l. 4) bring on "a ninefold yell" from "all the devils that were in hell" (ll. 13-14), and the moon "blush[es] scarlet red" (l. 11) in a parody of "the moon [becoming] as blood" (Rev. 6:12) when the sixth seal is opened. No seal is opened in Blake's poem, however; rather, Klopstock's bowels are sealed shut as Blake obeys Nobodaddy and inflicts "nine fold pain" (l. 28) on the hapless German poet who "defied" England by attempting to carry on Milton's legacy in German, reason enough to be fit, like those in Revelation, for torture. Klopstock's plight--not to be relieved until "to the last trumpet it was farted" (l. 20)--can be likened to that of the men tortured by the locusts, who, in their pain, "shall . . . seek death, and shall not find it . . ." (Rev. 9:6). Nobodaddy, however, ultimately withdraws his sadistic, destructive orders and by the end of the poem Blake characteristically begins to pity Klopstock: "From pity then he redend round / And the Spell removed unwound" (ll. 29-30).

Abaddon, then, the embodiment of destruction, sadistic torturer of any man who failed to gain God's favor, cloud-obscured and smoke-hidden angel of the bottomless pit, is an ideal Biblical model for Blake's Nobodaddy, whose name reflects Abaddon's in a scrambled, "dark and obscure" way.

1 See the informative footnotes explaining the origins of many of the names in David V. Erdman, *Blake: Prophet Against Empire*, rev. ed. (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, 1969), especially the notes on pp. 25, 253.

2 See Erdman, *Prophet*, p. 179.

3 See Harold Bloom, *Blake's Apocalypse* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1963), p. 106, and Northrop Frye, *Fearful Symmetry* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1947), pp. 62-63.

4 Abaddon also appears as a place of destruction in Psalms 88:11 and in Proverbs 15:11. In the King James Version, Abaddon is translated into "destruction" in the passages in Job, Psalms, and Proverbs, but remains in the Hebrew form "Abaddon" in Revelation. Revelation 9:11 tells us that the "name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon." Blake, of course, chooses to work with the Hebrew name.