

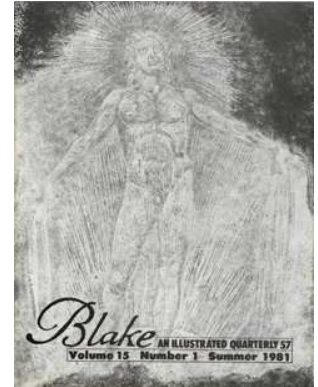
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A R T I C L E

Blake and the Names Divine

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BLAKE AND THE NAMES DIVINE

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In his later works, William Blake occasionally fails to maintain his usual sharp distinction between the God who brought about the fall into matter and uttered the Ten Commandments and the Divine Humanity who manifests as Jesus and is immanent in each individual. What, for example, are we to make of the couplets on plate 3 of *Jerusalem*, which announce that he who spoke on Sinai inspires the epic, or of the Prologue to *For the Sexes: The Gates of Paradise*, which informs us that Jehovah, having written the Decalogue, repents and inters it under His Mercy Seat?

Some commentators have recognized the problem which arises from such passages as these. Sloss and Wallis complain that "Throughout the later writings confusion arises from Blake's use of the terms God, Jehovah, and Jehovah Elohim"; Milton Percival, discussing Blake's treatment of the Incarnation, regrets that "The divine names are not clearly differentiated from one another"; and Kathleen Raine confesses that Blake does not always employ the name Jehovah consistently. Harold Bloom tackles the problem by distinguishing between a "humanizing" and a "Urizenic" Jehovah but does not specify the relations between them. Probing more deeply, Jean Hagstrum sees Christian love transforming Jehovah the tyrant into Christ-Jehovah the compassionate Father, yet we are left to wonder about Jehovah's origin and about his pre-Christian forgiveness of Cain in *The Ghost of Abel*. Anne Mellor's suggestion that Jesus the Imagination absorbs the reasoner Jehovah, reconciling his law and energetic wrath with love and mercy, faces the same objections and makes a puzzle of Jesus' abundant

energy in "The Everlasting Gospel." Bo Lindberg locates the inconsistency in Jehovah Himself, claiming that he favors his sons Satan and Jesus alternately but overlooking the fact that it is Adam, not Jesus, who is Satan's brother in Blake's myth. Finally, Thomas Altizer's argument that Blake's God and Satan have an underlying identity depends heavily on what he admits is "a single symbolic image," namely the Seven Eyes of God, and, as Ronald Grimes points out, he blurs the distinctions between God, Satan, and Urizen.¹

The question at issue should not be confused with two related but distinct problems--the conundrum of who created the cosmos and the puzzle posed by certain statements in Blake's annotations to Watson's *Apology for the Bible*. It has long been recognized² that from *The Book of Urizen* (1794) onwards Creation has two aspects in Blake's system. On the one hand it is "Error" (E555/K617), a degenerate state into which a portion of Eternity falls in a process described in the first chapter of Genesis; on the other hand it is "an act of Mercy" (E553/K614), a limitation imposed on the Fall to make redemption possible. Thus Blake can denounce Creation (the Fall) as the work of the Devil,³ yet praise Creation (the limitation of the Fall) as the achievement of Los, Jehovah, and Jesus.⁴

Once, in 1798, Blake goes beyond the defense of nature as a merciful limitation on the Fall. In annotating Bishop Watson's *An Apology for the Bible*, a riposte to Thomas Paine's Deist tract *The Age of Reason*, Blake states that the Bible tells him that God created nature perfect and that its imperfections

result from Adam's sin; he also endorses the sixth commandment when he condemns Joshua for breaking it, and contrasts lethal "Natural" disasters favorably with Joshua's "Unnatural" carnage describing the Lisbon earthquake as "the Natural result of Sin" (E604/K388). In these notes Blake is attempting to defend Paine at his weakest against Watson at his strongest, for the Bishop is attacking the Deist claim--already refuted by Hume⁵--that a flawless creation reflects the perfection of its Maker. Blake, as Mark Roberts has pointed out,⁶ takes refuge in the traditional Christian doctrine of the Fall. In his anxiety to vindicate Paine, he retreats from the position which he otherwise maintains early and late⁷ that the God of the first chapter of Genesis is a corrupted spirit and he assesses even post-Adamic, fallen nature with its destructive qualities as less morally deplorable than are wicked men.⁸ Towards the end of his annotations, Blake momentarily steps out of his role as a defender of Paine and exclaims, "The Bishop never saw the Everlasting Gospel any more than Tom Paine" (E608/K394). The phrase "the Everlasting Gospel" (from Revelation xiv.6) was, as A. L. Morton notes,⁹ a term used by seventeenth-century English antinomian sects to denote their doctrine, and Blake appropriates it for his own version of Christianity, which is closely related to theirs but equally alien to the orthodox and the Deists of his age.

The distinction between the accusing, lawgiving God and the Divine Humanity (or Poetic Genius) is essential to Blake's Christianity from the early 1790s onwards. In *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (c. 1790-1793), he identifies Jehovah, the Poetic Genius, with Energy, and Satan, the Accuser of the Book of Job, with Reason. Although emotionally Blake leans very heavily towards Energy, he admits that "Reason and Energy . . . are necessary to Human existence" (E34/K149), for he is adapting Boehme's notion of a division of the primal unity into two Principles as the basis of creation and also the source of evil. According to Boehme (in Blake's time known as Behmen), the two Principles can be represented as Wrath, Fire, or the Power of God and as Love, Light, or the Heart of God, and they are identical with the Father and Son of the Christian Trinity--"The Father," states Boehme, "is the eternal Power, or Virtue, and the Son is the Heart and Light. . . ." When separated from the Light or Love, the Fire or Wrath becomes the flames of Hell, yet on that Fire the existence of every created thing depends. Without the Fire, Boehme asks,

where would be the Mobility, Kingdom, Power, and Glory? Therefore we have often said, The Anger is the Root of Life; and if it be without the Light, then it is not God, but Hell Fire; but if the Light shines therein, it becomes Paradise and Fulness of Joy.

Either of these Principles is incomplete without the other:

Indeed *ALL* is from one Eternal Original, but it severizes itself into a *twofold* Source; a Similitude whereof we have in the Fire, and Light; where the Fire is painful and *consuming*, and the Light meek and giving; and yet the one were a Nothing without the other.¹⁰

Blake was acquainted with Boehme's work many years before he embodied in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* a distortion of his doctrine, making the primal division between God and Satan instead of between Father and Son; many years afterwards he remained Boehme's ardent admirer.¹¹ His treatment in later life of the lawgiving and redemptive aspects of the biblical God and his use of the names Jehovah and Jesus show signs of Boehme's influence, but he had by then come to follow Boehme in associating the First and Second Principles with the Father and the Son.

The Marriage of Heaven and Hell is a bravely anti-dualistic work, but a year or two after finishing it Blake adopts a semi-Gnostic dualism making the egregious and tragic Urizen his demiurge.¹² At this point his interest in the Trinity, evident in *The Marriage*, seems to lapse to reappear during the lengthy period, beginning not later than 1797, in which he composes *Vala*, later renamed *The Four Zoas*.¹³ In this epic, he makes Urizen share the blame for the Fall with Luvah, Vala, and Man himself. Later, in *Milton* and *Jerusalem*, Urizen (an individual) fades into the background being displaced respectively by Satan (a state) and the Spectre of Albion (who is also Satan), in whom the forces that work against a return to the prelapsarian unity are focused: in these poems Satan--the Accuser as distinct from the Miltonic rebel--confronts the Trinity.

The earliest sign that Blake is recovering his interest in the Trinity is a reference to the Holy Spirit (E604/K387) in his annotations, dated 1798, to Watson's *Apology for the Bible*--annotations which, with their allusions to Blake's professing himself a Christian, to the Everlasting Gospel, and to the forgiveness of sins--adumbrate much in his later work. A second mention of the Third Person occurs at the end of his letter of 30 January 1803 to James Blake (E696/K822), and in a late or relatively late addition to Night VIIA of *The Four Zoas* Enitharmon laments, "Such is our state nor will the Son of God redeem us but destroy"¹⁴ (E355/K331). In 1807, Blake represented all three Persons of the Trinity in his painting *The Fall of Man*.¹⁵ His many subsequent allusions need not be detailed.

In Blake's fully developed myth, as in Boehme, the primal division is not the gulf between God and the Accuser but a separation within the Godhead itself. The perfect harmony among the Eternals, who are at once a multitude and a single being,¹⁶ does not always prevail even between the Father and the Son, and there are signs that each can be imperfect when sundered from the other.

There is abundant evidence, both visual and textual, that Blake in his later phase conceives of the Father divorced from the Son as possessing cruel, tyrannical, and destructive attributes. To begin with the paintings, on the left (the sinister side) of the Father at the top of the *Epitome of James Hervey's "Meditations among the Tombs,"*¹⁷ a late work, he inscribes the text--non-biblical though related to Deuteronomy iv.24 and Hebrews xii.29--"God out of Christ is a Consuming Fire." In *Christ the Mediator* (c. 1799-1800),¹⁸ a pale glow round the



head of Jesus makes a Boehmean contrast with the dark flames radiating from the Father, and the latter holds the scepter of worldly power which Satan bears in *The Great Red Dragon and the Beast from the Sea* and *The Number of the Beast is 666* (both c. 1805).¹⁹ Between the fourth and fifth of the Huntington set of Blake's illustrations to *Paradise Lost* (1807),²⁰ the Father undergoes a change. In the fourth painting, *Christ Offers to Redeem Man*, the Father, who embraces the Son, is wingless and, judging from the vacant space on the left of his right hand and forearm, beardless; light radiates from the place where the heads of the Father and Son meet and, like the light in *Jacob's Ladder* (c. 1805),²¹ it progressively darkens as it travels down the picture away from the eternal realm. In the fifth painting, *Satan's and Raphael's Entries into Paradise*, the Father, now cut off from the Son, has become a winged, bearded, Urizenic god hovering over Raphael.²² The sky again grows gradually darker towards the bottom, but though there is still radiance from the Father it is much paler than in the previous illustration and, except for a narrow area immediately above his head, it is streaked with dull yellow-green stripes. This winged figure descends from the image of Urizen which Blake incorporated in 1791 (before he had named the god) in his engraving *The Fertilization of Egypt* based on a rough sketch by Fuseli.²³ It has a successor in the drooping deity who presides over Blake's ninety-seventh illustration to *The Divine Comedy* (1824-1827).²⁴ A comparable contrast may be present within a single painting, *The Fall of Man* (1807),²⁵ where Death--seated in the cave between Sin and Hell, the figures being identifiable from Blake's description (E662/K441) and from one of his paintings of *Satan, Sin and Death* (c. 1808)²⁶--could well be a degenerate form of the Father above. The latter has spiky hair like that of the deity in plate 2 of Blake's *Illustrations of The Book of Job* (1825)--spikes which, as Bo Lindberg has noticed,²⁷ turn out to have been a sign of the bearer's Satanic character as they develop into the hideous projections from the Devil's head in plate 11. If the Father has indeed fallen to become Death, he has acquired in his descent stylized wings and an iron crown, and his beard has shrunk, but his hands and outstretched arms retain their pose (the Urizenic pose of their counterparts in *The Fertilization of Egypt*), his left foot remains a little in front of his right, and his head still inclines to one side--now his right instead of his left. In the complex pattern of the painting, the Father is separated from the Son, the rebel from the heavenly angels, mankind from Paradise, and Paradise from the earth.

Verbal references to the degeneration of the Father when He is cut off from the Son are also plentiful. A famous passage in "A Vision of the Last Judgment" caustically declares:

Thinking as I do that the Creator of this World is a very Cruel Being & being a Worshipper of Christ I cannot help saying the Son O how unlike the Father First God Almighty comes with a Thump on the Head Then Jesus Christ comes with a balm to heal it (E555/K617)

The repentant God of the Prologue to *For the Sexes: The Gates of Paradise*²⁸ now falls into place--he writes the Law after he has degenerated, but, reunited with the Son in the Christian dispensation, he repents. Similarly, we need no longer be surprised that the lawgiving God should be identified with the true God, Blake's inspirer, in plate 3 of *Jerusalem*.

The names Elohim, Jehovah, and Jesus appear in the list of the Seven Eyes of God which is given in each of Blake's three epics (E366, 106, 202/K351, 494, 686). It is widely agreed that the Eyes--Lucifer, Molech, Elohim, Shaddai, Pa(c)had, Jehovah, and Jesus--constitute seven historical (and religious) periods.²⁹ Though they seem to be individuals from the viewpoint of the Eternals who commission them as guardians of the fallen world, they turn out in *Milton* (32:10; E130/K521) to be states from mankind's standpoint and to be subject to corruption.³⁰ The first six shrink from the self-sacrifice necessary to redeem the fallen, the self-sacrifice



1 Blake, *The Fall of Man* (1807). Courtesy of the Victoria and Albert Museum.

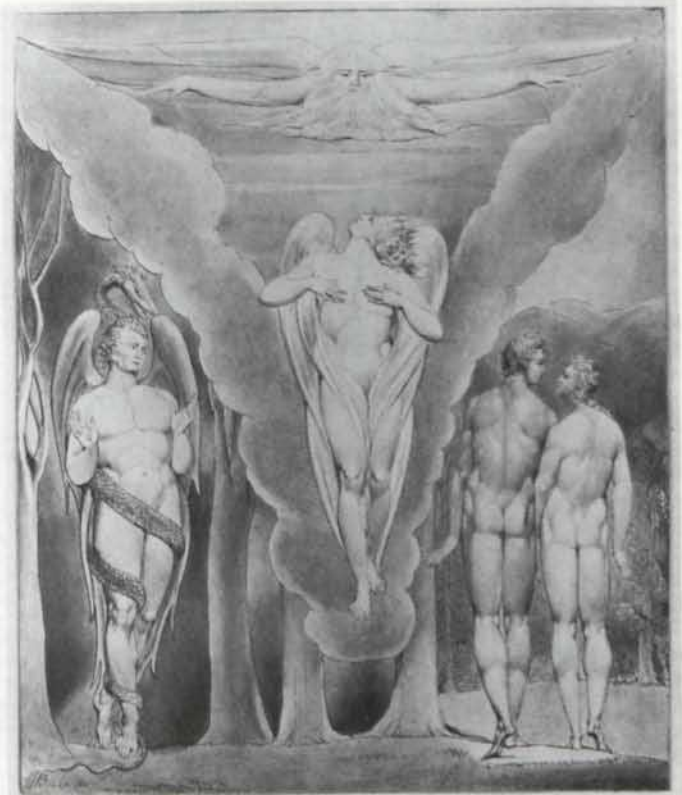
2 Blake, *Epitome of James Hervey's "Meditations among the Tombs."* Courtesy of the Tate Gallery.



3 Blake, *Christ Offers to Redeem Man* (1807), fourth illus. of *Paradise Lost*. Courtesy of the Huntington Library.

4 Blake, *Satan's and Raphael's Entries into Paradise* (1807), fifth illus. of *Paradise Lost*. Courtesy of the Huntington Library.

which only Jesus, the seventh, will consummate. The third and sixth Eyes are Elohim and Jehovah, "Elohim" being a Hebrew plural rendered as "God" in the Authorized Version and "Jehovah" a faulty transliteration of the sacred name piously rendered as "the Lord." Blake frequently employs "Elohim"--the only name used for God from Genesis i.1 to Genesis ii.3--for the "Cruel Being" who is "the Creator of this World,"³¹ and in *Night the Eighth of The Four Zoas*, where he first appears as the third Eye, he creates Adam to endure the sacrificial death he himself shuns (E366/K351). In *Milton*, however, Adam, conceived as the Limit of Contraction, is defined or fashioned by "The Divine hand" before Elohim descends (13:18-23; E106/K494). In *Jerusalem*, "Los who is of the Elohim" is Adam's maker (73:24-28; E226/K713). The fourth and fifth Eyes bear the names Shaddai (Almighty) and Pa(c)had (Terror), which also denote the Hebrew God, and indeed Thomas Altizer's observation that the first six are antithetical to the seventh³² suggests that all six may be aspects of the Father. Jehovah, the last of these six, becomes "leprous," which recalls not only the Urizen of the earlier *America* (16:3, 11; E56/K203) but Jesus' threat in "The Everlasting Gospel" to



the Angel of the Divine Presence, who had written the Law at Sinai:

My Presence I will take from thee
A Cold Leper thou shalt be (E513/K754)³³

Jehovah's leprosy is a consequence of his separation from Christ, and one of his names when he is in this state is the Angel of the Divine Presence, which in Blake always denotes a corrupt being:³⁴ he is the God who covers Adam's and Eve's nakedness in the painting *The Angel of the Divine Presence Clothing Adam and Eve with Coats of Skins* (1803),³⁵ the spiky-haired deity in plate 2 of *Illustrations of The Book of Job* (1825), where he is named in Hebrew "King Jehovah," and the central figure in the Laocoön engraving (c. 1820), where the Hebrew above identifies him as "the Angel of Jehovah" and the Hebrew below as "Jah" (an abbreviation for "Jehovah"), the father of Satan and Adam.³⁶ (The English phrase "The Angel of the Divine Presence" appears on both *Job* pl. 2 and the Laocoön plate.) In "A Vision of the Last Judgment," Blake claims that people often refer to this Angel--who became the patron spirit of the Britain of the fallen world with her oak groves--when they speak of "Jehovah Elohim," this being the name translated as "the Lord God" in the Authorized Version (E549/K610).³⁷

References to imperfection in the Son separated from the Father are rarer than aspersions on the Father separated from the Son, but however much Blake, like Boehme, leans emotionally towards the Son, as he leaned towards Energy in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, they do occur. In conversation with Crabb Robinson, Blake stated that Christ was

wrong to attack the Government and to allow himself to be crucified. On being asked how error was consistent with Christ's divinity, he replied, "He was not then become the father,"³⁸ indicating that the separation of the Persons had led to a temporary lapse from perfection. On a later occasion, he told Robinson that Christ was wrong to expel the money-changers from the Temple, that he "took much after his Mother And in so far he was one of the worst of men,"³⁹ and in *Jerusalem* Los says of him, "by his Maternal Birth he is that Evil-One" (90:35; E247/K736). It is part of Christ's sacrifice to assume from his mother the corruption of the Natural Man, which he must then put off before he can again become one with the Father. The point is repeated in "The Everlasting Gospel":

He took on Sin in the Virgins Womb
And put it off on the Cross & Tomb
(E515/K749)

In this poem Jesus, though dear to Blake, is not flawless. The Father, Himself vindictive in His separation from the Son ("Gods Mercy & Long Suffering / Is but the Sinner to Judgment to bring" [E512/K753]),⁴⁰ rebukes Jesus for his degrading humility:

And when he Humbled himself to God
Then descended the Cruel Rod
If thou humblest thyself thou humblest me
Thou also dwelst in Eternity
(E511/K752)

When God goes on to command "Thou on the Cross for them [i.e. sinners] shalt pray," Jesus indignantly refuses and confesses to past error:

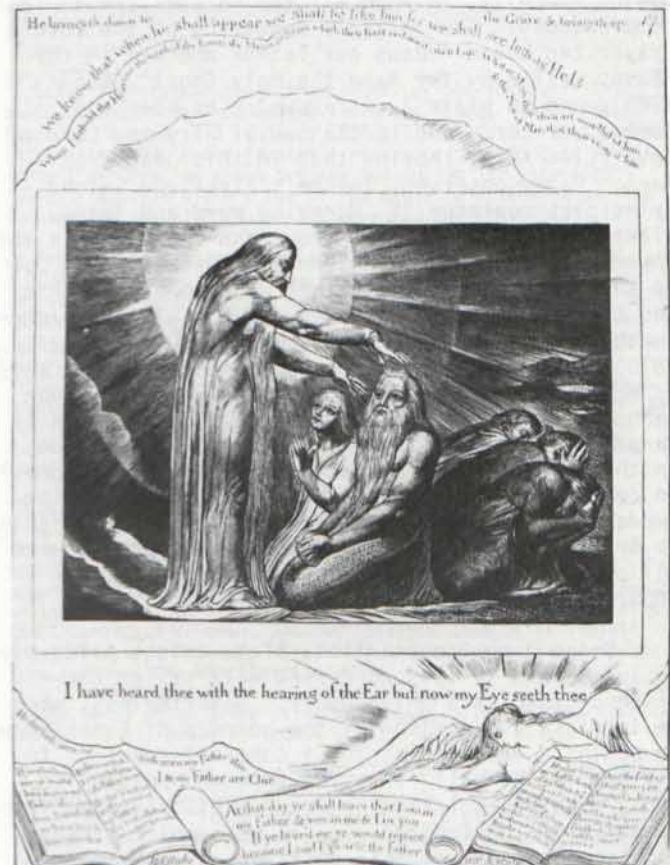
I never will Pray for the World
Once [I] did so when I prayd in the Garden
I wishd to take with me a Bodily Pardon
(E512/K753)⁴¹

Even the Jesus who, as the seventh Eye of God, "Died willing beneath Tirzah & Rahab" (E366/K351), though glorious in self-sacrifice, is not perfect, for the Seven Eyes have to unite with each other and with the Eighth, the sleeping Humanity, to become "One Man Jesus the Saviour" (*Milton* 42:11; E142/K534)--the fullness of the Divine Humanity Itself.⁴²

Blake uses "the Names Divine / Of Jesus & Jehovah" (E266/K771) in two ways. Sometimes--as in the Prologue to *The Gates of Paradise*, the *Laocoön*, and the second Job engraving--"Jehovah" denotes the Father separated to a greater or lesser extent from the Son. More often, this sacred name is reserved for the Divine Humanity, who can manifest as Father, Son, or Holy Spirit, but in whom the Father and Son

5 Blake, *Illustrations for The Book of Job* (1825), plate 2. Courtesy of the Tate Gallery.

6 Blake, *Illustrations for The Book of Job* (1825), plate 17. Courtesy of the Tate Gallery.



are contained. (Since the Holy Spirit, according to the Western tradition, proceeds from the Father and the Son, there is no question of its becoming cut off or incomplete.) It is Jehovah the Divine Humanity whose Covenant is the forgiveness of sins,⁴³ whose Spirit is the Divine Mercy,⁴⁴ whose visions inspire the poet,⁴⁵ and who, as the Father, "maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."⁴⁶ In the fragmentary illuminated manuscript of the early chapters of Genesis that Blake prepared in his last years, he tries to distinguish the fierce, fallen Elohim from the merciful Jehovah. He inserts each of these names once, and only once, in the King James text, making the serpent promise Eve "ye shall be as Gods (Elohim)" (iii.5) and making Eve acknowledge after Cain's birth, "I have gotten a man from Jehovah" (iv.1). Jehovah also appears, standing opposite Christ, on both versions of the title-page preceding the text, where the Holy Ghost strides over their heads emphasizing the balance between them. However, some of the drawings (often indistinct) which punctuate the text show the Elohim--the Father separated from the Son and often accompanied by two angels--creating first the universe and then, probably, Adam, from whom he splits off Eve. The final sketch seems to depict Jehovah, the Divine Humanity, kissing the brow of Cain, over whose birth He presided and on whom He now places, as Blake's chapter heading tells us, the mark of forgiveness.⁴⁷

Occasionally, as in "The Everlasting Gospel," Blake employs the name Jesus for the Son severed from the Father, but usually he indicates by it the Divine Humanity, in whom all the Persons are in fact comprehended. Thus Blake's rendering of the Lord's Prayer can begin "Jesus our Father who art in thy Heavns call'd by thy Name the Holy Ghost" (E658/K788), and in plate 3 of *Jerusalem* he speaks of "Jesus our Lord, who is the God of Fire and Lord of Love" (E144/K621) showing that in this Jesus, as Morton Paley observes, Boehme's First and Second Principles coalesce.⁴⁸ Marrying word and image, Blake uses the quotations from John x and xiv in the lower margin of his seventeenth illustration to Job to show that within the Father who appears in this and the four preceding plates the Son also is present. In the Rosenwald drawing of the Last Judgment (c. 1810), some of the divisions represented in *The Fall of Man* are healed: at the top of the design human beings, as Blake tells us (E552/K613), are again in Paradise, and the Father is reunited with the Son in the person of Jesus sitting on Jehovah's throne.⁴⁹ In conceiving the Godhead thus, Blake is following Swedenborg, who condemned conventional Trinitarianism as tritheistic and held that the three Persons were all present in Christ, whom he regarded as the incarnation of Jehovah.⁵⁰

Being a poet and artist, Blake thinks primarily in images and is less concerned with strict consistency than is a philosopher. Nevertheless, when he is first overwhelmed by the horrors of Experience he begins a long search for a coherent solution to the problem of evil. Passing through non-dualism and a quasi-Gnosticism, he reaches his final position about 1800. Confronted with an apparent contradiction at the heart of this position, a grossly in-

consistent use of the name Jehovah, critics have tended to be evasive or perfunctory. However, an investigation of the problem reveals that Blake develops a daring theology rooted in Boehme to enable him to sustain with equal fervor a passionate devotion to the Trinitarian God of Christianity and an unrelenting protest against the life-denying cruelty of the moral law and the created universe.

¹ D. J. Sloss and J. P. R. Wallis, ed., *The Prophetic Writings of William Blake* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1926), II, 185-86; Milton O. Percival, *William Blake's Circle of Destiny* (1938; rpt. New York: Octagon Books, 1964), p. 141; Kathleen Raine, *Blake and Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), II, 315, n. 53; Harold Bloom, *Blake's Apocalypse: A Study in Poetic Argument* (New York: Doubleday, 1963), p. 367; Jean H. Hagstrum, *William Blake: Poet and Painter* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), pp. 117, 128; Anne Kostelanetz Mellor, *Blake's Human Form Divine* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), pp. 244-47; Bo Lindberg, *William Blake's Illustrations to the Book of Job* (Abo, Finland: Abo Akademi, 1973), pp. 82-88; Thomas J. J. Altizer, *The New Apocalypse: The Radical Christian Vision of William Blake* (n.p.: Michigan State University Press, 1967), pp. 136-38; Ronald L. Grimes, *The Divine Imagination: William Blake's Major Prophetic Visions* (Metuchen, N. J.: Scarecrow Press, 1972), pp. 154-55; 161, n. 67. For the brotherhood of Adam and Satan see the Laocoön engraving--David V. Erdman, ed., *The Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, 4th printing, rev. (New York: Doubleday, 1970), pl. 3 and p. 270, or Blake, *Complete Writings with variant readings*, ed. Geoffrey Keynes, rev. (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 775. These two editions are henceforward referred to as E and K respectively, the letter being followed by a page number. Quotations are taken from the former, indications of textual variation being omitted. For quotations from Milton and *Jerusalem*, plate and line numbers are also given.

² See, for example, P. Berger, *William Blake: Poet and Mystic*, trans. Daniel H. Conner (London: Chapman and Hall, 1914), pp. 103-09, 117-23; S. Foster Damon, *William Blake: His Philosophy and Symbols* (1924; rpt. Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1958), pp. 194, 476; Northrop Frye, *Fearful Symmetry: A Study of William Blake* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947), pp. 135, 138; J. G. Davies, *The Theology of William Blake* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1948), p. 97, n. 3; and Peter F. Fisher, *The Valley of Vision* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1961), pp. 245-46.

³ Annotations to Bacon's *Essays* (E615/K403) and G. E. Bentley, Jr., *Blake Records* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), p. 318.

⁴ *Jerusalem* 73:16-28 (E226/K713); *ibid.* 49:52-55 (E197/K680); *ibid.*, pl. 77--11. 21-22 of the blank verse (E230/K718).

⁵ David Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (1779), Part X. The Lisbon earthquake undermined the faith of the most illustrious Deist--Voltaire.

⁶ *The Tradition of Romantic Morality* (London: Macmillan, 1973), pp. 114-16. Cf. also Frye, *Fearful Symmetry*, p. 131.

⁷ He is identified, for example, with Urizen in *The Book of Urizen* (1794) (25:39-42--E82/K236), with the Elohim as opposed to Jehovah in conversation with Robinson (Bentley, *Blake Records*, p. 545), and as the maker of the Natural Man in the chapter headings of the fragmentary illuminated manuscript of Genesis (E667/K933--dated 1826-27 by Keynes).

⁸ It is just possible, however, that, as Bernard Blackstone implies--*English Blake* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1949), p. 361, n. 1--the poet is here identifying "the heaven and the earth" of the first verse of the Bible with that which existed prior to any fall, "the Eternal Creation flowing from the Divine Humanity in Jesus" (E543/K444), the Nature that shrank before the shrunken eyes of Har and Heva (E66/K246).

⁹ *The Everlasting Gospel: A study in the sources of William Blake* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1958), pp. 37-40.

¹⁰ *The Three Principles of the Divine Essence* iv. 7 and xxv. 70, and *Mysterium Magnum* vii. 15, in *The Works of Jacob Behmen, The Teutonic Theosopher* (London, 1764-81, I, 21, 274, and III, 30.

¹¹ Letter to Flaxman, 12 Sept. 1800 (E680/K799) and Bentley, *Blake Records*, p. 313. For *The Marriage*, see n. 38 below.

¹² Only semi-Gnostic because Los voluntarily descends with Urizen to ensure that the material universe will not be wholly maleficent. Cf. Stuart Curran, "Blake and the Gnostic Hyle: A Double Negative," *Blake Studies*, IV (Spring 1972), 117-33; and W. J. T. Mitchell, *Blake's Composite Art: A Study of the Illuminated Poetry* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), pp. 131, 136.

¹³ The title-page is dated 1797. For a discussion of Blake's conception of the Trinity, see Frye, *Fearful Symmetry*, pp. 52-53.

¹⁴ The line is not included in H. M. Margoliouth's reconstruction of the earlier version of the epic--*William Blake's Vala: Blake's Numbered Text* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956).

¹⁵ Reproduced as pl. 49 in Morton D. Paley, *William Blake* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1978). The Holy Spirit above Christ's head is somewhat faint.

¹⁶ Cf., for example, *The Four Zoas*, Night the First:

Then those in Great Eternity met in the Council of God
As one Man for contracting their Exalted Senses
They behold Multitude or Expanding they behold as one
As one Man all the Universal family & that one Man
They call Jesus the Christ & they in him & he in them
Live in Perfect harmony . . . (E306/K277)

It is part of Albion's error to declare on the brink of his fall,
"We are not One: we are Many" (*Jerusalem* 4:23; E145/K622).

¹⁷ Reproduced and described in Martin Butlin, *William Blake: a complete catalogue of the works in the Tate Gallery*, rev. (London: Tate Gallery, 1971), pp. 54-55. Morton D. Paley, in *Energy and the Imagination: A Study of the Development of Blake's Thought* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), states that the Father here represents Boehme's First Principle (p. 44). Cf. also Mellor, *Blake's Human Form Divine*, p. 244.

¹⁸ Reproduced as color pl. VIII in Geoffrey Keynes, *William Blake's Illustrations to the Bible* (London: Trianon Press, 1957) and in black and white as pl. 34b of Anthony Blunt, *The Art of William Blake* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959). For description and analysis, see Blunt, pp. 66-67; Mellor, *Blake's Human Form Divine*, p. 249; and David Bindman, *Blake as an artist* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1977), pp. 124-25.

¹⁹ Reproduced as pl. 124 of Bindman, *Blake as an artist*, and facing p. 89 of Martin Butlin, *William Blake*, 2nd impression, rev. (London: Tate Gallery, 1978). Cf. also the scepter of the Virgin in *The Queen of Heaven in Glory* (1824-27), reproduced as pl. 99 of Albert S. Roe, *Blake's Illustrations to the Divine Comedy* (1953; rpt. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1977).

²⁰ Reproduced as pls. IV and V of C. H. Collins Baker, *Catalogue of William Blake's Drawings and Paintings in the Huntington Library*, 2nd ed. (San Marino, Cal.: Huntington Library, 1969). My remarks are based on an examination of the originals.

²¹ Reproduced in color as pl. 17 of William Vaughan, *William Blake* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1977). I have also examined the original in the British Museum.

²² Jean Hagstrum (*Poet and Painter*, p. 126) notes that in the fourth design Christ hides the face of the Father but does not mention the latter's reappearance in the next illustration. Nor does David Bindman, who sees in *Christ Offers to Redeem Man* the wrathful Father in despair (*Blake as an artist*, pp. 188-89). The hovering figure is identified by Baker as "the Eternal Father" (*Catalogue*, p. 18), by Marcia R. Poinson as "the Almighty" (*Milton and English Art* [Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1970], p. 147), and by Edward J. Rose as Milton's God the Father, an "Aged Presence" who "tries to pervert Messiah by sending him to rout the rebel angels" ("*Blake's Illustrations for Paradise Lost, L'Allegro, and Il Penseroso: A Thematic Reading*," *Hartford Studies in Literature*, 2 [1970], 40-67).

²³ See Blunt, *Art of William Blake*, p. 41 and pl. 21; Albert S. Roe, "The Thunder of Egypt," in *William Blake: Essays for S. Foster Damon*, ed. Alvin H. Rosenfeld (Providence: Brown University Press, 1969), pp. 158-95; and John Beer, "Blake, Coleridge, and Wordsworth: Some Cross-currents and Parallels 1789-1805," in *William Blake: Essays in honour of Sir Geoffrey Keynes*, ed.

Morton D. Paley and Michael Phillips (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), pp. 231-59.

²⁴ Reproduced as pl. 97 of Roe, *Illustrations to the Divine Comedy*.

²⁵ See n. 15 above. I have inspected the original in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, on which it is clear that Death's feet are not shackled as seems possible from the reproduction.

²⁶ Reproduced as pl. 82 of Kathleen Raine, *William Blake* (New York: Praeger, 1971).

²⁷ *Blake's Illustrations to Job*, pp. 82-83, 204.

²⁸ For commentary on this Prologue, see Emily S. Hamblen, *On the Minor Prophecies of William Blake* (London: Dent, 1930), p. 372; George Wingfield Digby, *Symbol and Image in William Blake* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), pp. 14-19; William Blake, *The Gates of Paradise*, ed. Geoffrey Keynes (London: Trianon Press, 1968), I, 8; John Beer, *Blake's Visionary Universe* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1969), pp. 36-38; Mellor, *Blake's Human Form Divine*, p. 227.

²⁹ E.g. Damon, *Philosophy and Symbols*, pp. 388-89; Percival, *Circle of Destiny*, pp. 242-50; Frye, *Fearful Symmetry*, pp. 128-34; Hazard Adams, *William Blake: A Reading of the Shorter Poems* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1963), p. 63; Paley, *Energy and Imagination*, pp. 135-41. Edward Rose persuasively suggests that in Eternity the seven are simultaneous or co-existent--"Illustrations to *Paradise Lost*," p. 54, n. 8. John Adler--"A 'Triumphing Joyfulness': Blake[,] Boehme and the Tradition," *Blake Studies*, I (Spring 1969), 109-22--associates the Eyes with the Kabbala's ten Sephiroth and Boehme's Seven Spirits of God; Kathleen Raine--*Blake and Tradition*, II, 210-13--identifies them with seven fallen Sephiroth.

³⁰ Cf. Damon, *Philosophy and Symbols*, p. 424; Raine, *loc. cit.*; and John Howard, *Blake's Milton: A Study in the Selfhood* (Cranbury, N. J.: Associated University Presses, 1976), pp. 45-46, 83, 93-95, and 181-82.

³¹ From the passage quoted above. Cf. also the references to the Elohim in the prose introduction, *Jerusalem*, pl. 27 (E170/K649), and in Bentley, *Blake Records*, p. 545.

³² *New Apocalypse*, p. 137.

³³ Emily S. Hamblen--*Minor Prophecies*, p. 386--expounds this passage, and Michael J. Tolley--"Blake's 'Edens Flood' Again," *Notes and Queries* 213 (January 1968), 11-19--notes its apparent inconsistency with the favorable references to the Holy Spirit present at Creation which precede and follow it. See also Tolley, "William Blake's Use of the Bible in a Section of 'The Everlasting Gospel,'" *Notes and Queries*, 207 (May 1962), 171-76.

³⁴ For this Angel see Damon, *Philosophy and Symbols*, p. 296, and *A Blake Dictionary: The Ideas and Symbols of William Blake* (Providence, R. I.: Brown University Press, 1965), p. 23; Tolley, "Blake's Use of the Bible," p. 174, and "Blake's 'Edens Flood' Again," pp. 13-17; Northrop Frye, "Blake's Reading of the Book of Job," in *Essays for Damon*, pp. 221-34; Lindberg, *Blake's Illustrations to Job*, pp. 203-04; and Jenijoy La Belle, "Words Graven with an Iron Pen: The Marginal Texts in Blake's *Job*" in *The Visionary Hand: Essays for the Study of William Blake's Art and Aesthetics*, ed. Robert N. Essick (Los Angeles: Hennessey and Ingalls, 1973), pp. 527-50.

³⁵ Bindman, *Blake as an artist*, pl. 112 and p. 138.

³⁶ See n. 1 above. Irene Tayler, in "Blake's Laocoön," *Blake Newsletter* 10 (Winter 1976-77), 72-81, argues that Laocoön is a prophet corrupted by giving his allegiance to the war and dominion of the Covenant of Priam instead of to the forgiveness of sins of the Covenant of Jehovah; yet she mentions that he is himself identified with Jehovah. His being the Father in a degenerate form resolves the contradiction.

³⁷ The verse which Blake cites here as alluding to this spirit--Exodus xiv.19--actually speaks of "the angel of Elohim."

³⁸ Bentley, *Blake Records*, p. 311. This statement may be anticipated by the Devil's declaration on pl. 6 of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*: "Know that after Christ's death, he became Jehovah" (E35/K150). If so, the Son there represents reason, the Father energy--cf. Martin K. Nurmi, *Blake's Marriage of Heaven*

and Hell: *A Critical Study* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University, 1957), pp. 36-37; John Beer, *Blake's Humanism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1968), p. 25; William Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, ed. Clark Emery (Coral Gables: University of Miami Press, 1963), pp. 52-54; and Joseph Anthony Wittreich, Jr., *Angel of Apocalypse: Blake's Idea of Milton* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1975), pp. 211-12. But all three Persons of the Trinity are probably forms of energy, and Satan, the Accuser of the Book of Job, their rational contrary: Harold Bloom--*Blake's Apocalypse*, p. 81--sees the Son as "human desire" and the Father as "Desire removed from all encumbrances." The fact that Milton's Satan is Messiah from the biblical viewpoint and that Jesus acts "from impulse, not from rules" (E42/K158) supports this view.

³⁹ Bentley, *Blake Records*, p. 548. For this aspect of the incarnate Jesus, cf. Jean H. Hagstrum, "Christ's Body," in *Essays in honour of Keynes*, pp. 129-56.

⁴⁰ Margaret Bottrall, in *The Divine Image: A Study of Blake's Interpretation of Christianity* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1950), pp. 21-26, 89-90, and Kathleen Raine, in *Blake and Tradition*, II, 235 and 313, n. 14, offer explanations of this vindictiveness.

⁴¹ Hazard Adams finds unresolved confusion in this passage (*Shorter Poems*, p. 197). Cf. also Raine, *Blake and Tradition*, II, 313-14. A few lines earlier Jesus displays a wrath which might be thought more characteristic of the Father; however it is not here contended that Blake's Father and Son embody precisely the qualities of Boehme's First and Second Principles, but that, like those Principles, each is incomplete and therefore imperfect without the other. For Jesus' character in the poem, see Jean Hall, "Blake's Everlasting Gospel," *Blake Studies*, 4 (1971), 61-72.

⁴² Sloss and Wallis observe--*Prophetic Writings*, I, 280-81--that "Jesus is normally the Divine Humanity and not merely one of its agents." Harold Bloom notes--*Blake's Apocalypse*, p. 441, n. 6--that in having all seven Eyes comprehended in Jesus, Blake is following a hint in Revelation v.6. Cf. also Damon, *Philosophy and Symbols*, p. 368.

⁴³ *Jerusalem* 61:24-25 and 98:23, 45 (E210, 255/K694-95, 745, 746); "The Everlasting Gospel," prose (E792/K757); *The Ghost of Abel* 2:22-24 (E270/K781).

⁴⁴ Annotations to Wordsworth's *The Excursion*, E656/K784.

⁴⁵ The subtitle and dedication of *The Ghost of Abel* (E268/K779).

⁴⁶ Matthew v.45, alluded to in Blake's inscriptions on his illustrations to Dante (E669/K785).

⁴⁷ My statements are based on an examination of the MS., which is in the Huntington Library, San Marino, Calif. For the chapter headings, see E667/K933. The title-pages are reproduced as pls. XXXII and XXXIII of Baker, *Catalogue*, and the two following pages in *Blake: An Illustrated Quarterly*, 11 (Spring 1978), 242-43. For the balance between the Father and the Son, cf. Piloo Nanavutty, "A Title-page in Blake's Illustrated Genesis Manuscript," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 10 (1947), 114-22. See also Damon, *Philosophy and Symbols*, pp. 220-21, and *Dictionary*, p. 151; John E. Grant, rev. of *Dictionary* by Damon, *Philological Quarterly*, 45 (July 1966), 533-35; and n. 9 to Grant, "Envisioning the First Night Thoughts," in *Blake's Visionary Forms Dramatic*, ed. David V. Erdman and John E. Grant (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), 304-35.

⁴⁸ *Energy and Imagination*, pp. 257-58. Damon finds here "the synthesis of Moses and Jesus" (*Philosophy and Symbols*, p. 434), while Jean H. Hagstrum contrasts this combination of wrath and love with the division of wrath from pity on pl. 54 of the poem ("The Wrath of the Lamb": A Study of William Blake's Conversions," in *From Sensibility to Romanticism: Essays Presented to Frederick A. Pottle*, ed. Frederick W. Hilles and Harold Bloom (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), pp. 311-30).

⁴⁹ Reproduced Damon, *Dictionary*, illus. I. Anne Mellor makes the same observation about the Jesus in the 1808 Petworth painting of the Last Judgment (*Blake's Human Form Divine*, p. 223). The device can be traced back to the Pollok House version of 1806.

⁵⁰ See, for example, *The True Christian Religion*, 170, and *The Doctrine of the New Jerusalem Concerning the Lord*, 30-31. J. G. Davies (*Theology of Blake*, p. 37), Margaret Bottrall (*Divine Image*, pp. 44-45), and Kathleen Raine (*Blake and Tradition*, II, 202) make some of these points. Morton D. Paley--"A New Heaven is Begun": William Blake and Swedenborgianism," *Blake: An Illustrated Quarterly*, 13 (Fall 1979), 64-90--observes that Blake's interest in Swedenborg seems to have revived around 1800, which is about the time that he showed a renewed awareness of the Trinity.